

## REPORT

LIVABLE OAKVILLE (OFFICIAL PLAN) COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE: JULY 10, 2016

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**FROM:** Planning Services Department

**DATE:** July 5, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Updated Provincial Plans: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) and the Greenbelt Plan (2017)

**LOCATION:** Town wide

**WARD:** Town wide

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### RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the report dated July 5, 2017, entitled *Updated Provincial Plans: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) and the Greenbelt Plan (2017)* be received.

### KEY FACTS:

- On May 18, 2017, the province completed the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review and released updates to four provincial land use plans that work together to manage growth, build complete communities and protect the natural environment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- The two updated plans that apply to the Town of Oakville are The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017), and The Greenbelt Plan (2017).
- The main goal of the Growth Plan, 2017 remains supporting complete communities, which means a community “designed to support healthy and active living and meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime.”
- The focus for accommodating growth will be through intensification directed to the built up area and prioritized through a structure of strategic growth areas.
- This intensification will be characterized by higher densities that make efficient use of land and infrastructure and that support transit viability.
- The report present highlights of the updated Growth Plan organized into key themes of importance for the Town of Oakville including implementation, growth

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management policies, employment areas, infrastructure, transportation, climate change and protecting natural heritage and water.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In February 2015, the province initiated the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review to examine the four provincial plans that work together to manage growth, build complete communities and protect the natural environment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). The four plans are:

- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe,
- The Greenbelt Plan,
- The Niagara Escarpment Plan,
- The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

Through the review, the province undertook two rounds of engagement and invited comments from municipalities, organizations, stakeholders and the public. The town participated in these opportunities by submitting comments directly to the province, providing input through Joint Submissions with the Halton Area Planning Partnership (HAPP) as well as by attending open house meetings and formal training sessions. A chronology of the town's engagement throughout the review is attached in Appendix A.

On May 18, 2017, the province completed the review and released updates to the four plans. This report presents an overview of updated provincial land use plans that apply to the Town of Oakville:

- The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017), and
- The Greenbelt Plan (2017).

## **COMMENT/OPTIONS:**

### **The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017**

The main goal of supporting complete communities is refined and expanded through the updated Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (Growth Plan. 2017). A complete community "is designed to support healthy and active living and meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime."

Fundamental to supporting complete communities is the focus for accommodating growth through intensification that is directed to the built up area and prioritized through a structure of strategic growth areas. This intensification will be

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characterized by higher densities that make efficient use of land and infrastructure and that support transit viability.

Additional policies in Growth Plan, 2017 have been clarified and strengthened to:

- Require planning for the development of high quality compact urban form through site design and urban design standards,
- Require housing strategies to be aligned with land use and to plan for a full range and mix of housing in the context of existing housing stock and to provide for diversity in unit size in multi-residential development,
- Direct municipalities to collaborate and consult with allied sectors to facilitate the coordination and planning of public service facilities and community hubs,
- Require the adoption of a complete streets approach to planning the street network, to provide direction for transit-supportive urban form and to elevate the importance of active transportation in planning and design.

As well, the Growth Plan, 2017 provides detailed direction for municipalities to take an integrated, sustainable and cost effective approach to land use planning. There are new requirements for consideration of asset management plans, watershed planning, master plans for water, wastewater and stormwater and environmental assessments.

Finally, the planning framework in the Growth Plan, 2017 also confirms fundamental goals of managing growth, protecting the natural environment and supporting economic development. The following sections present highlights of the updated Growth Plan organized into key themes of importance for the Town of Oakville.

### ***Implementing the Growth Plan***

The province has built upon the measures introduced in Growth Plan 2006 to streamline the implementation of the Growth Plan, 2017, further highlighting the importance of this work across the GGH. The intent of these measures is to avoid the lengthy delays and disputes that marked the first round of Growth Plan implementation from 2006.

One significant measure is assigning the responsibility for implementing key policies of the Growth Plan, 2017 to upper- and single-tier municipalities. For the Town of Oakville, the upper-tier municipality is the Region of Halton; Oakville and Halton share a history of collaboration and a productive working relationship.

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The upper- and single-tier implementation responsibility is established through the concept of a municipal comprehensive review (MCR) which is defined as

*“A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality under section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan”*

It should be noted that despite the shift in responsibility through this definition, the *Planning Act* establishes the province as the approval authority for upper- and single-tier municipal official plans.

From a timing perspective, the Growth Plan, 2017 came into effect July 1, 2017. All planning decisions made on, or after this date will conform to the Growth Plan. The planning horizon for the Growth Plan, 2017 is to 2041.

### ***Policies for Where and How to Grow***

Underpinning the support for complete communities are the policies for managing growth. Building on the Growth Plan, 2006, population and employment forecasts (growth forecasts) remain a foundational component and will continue to be used across the GGH to coordinate planning for growth.

With respect to growth forecasts, and as an example of how the authority of an MCR is invoked, the Growth Plan, 2017 states that

*“Upper- and single-tier municipalities will undertake integrated planning to manage forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan ...which will be implemented through a municipal comprehensive review and, ... include direction to lower-tier municipalities.”*

For the Region of Halton, the Growth Plan, 2017 forecasts a population of 1,000,000 and employment of 470,000 by the year 2041, a portion of which will be allocated to the Town of Oakville. According to the 2016 Census, Oakville's population was 193,832 while Halton's population was 548,435. At the time of writing this report, employment figures from the 2016 Census had not been released but are scheduled for November 29, 2017.

The Growth Plan, 2017 now has a more explicit policy framework for directing growth to settlement areas with stronger links to transit, infrastructure and public service facilities. The land use concept for the Growth Plan, 2017 is identified in Figure 1. The Town of Oakville is considered a Settlement Area with the exception of the lands north of the 407 and Bronte Creek Park, which are identified as Greenbelt Area.

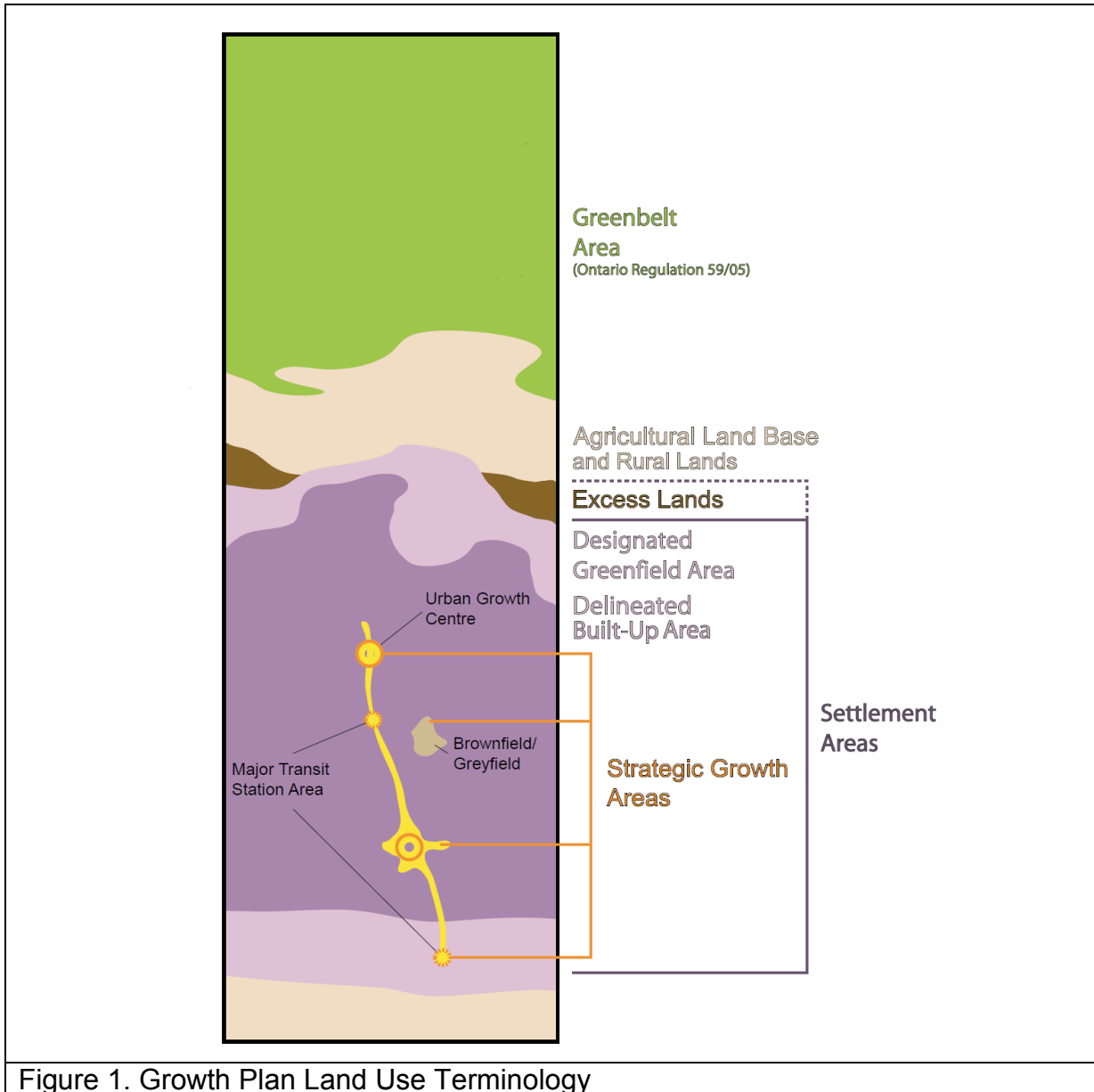


Figure 1. Growth Plan Land Use Terminology

The Growth Plan, 2017 establishes a hierarchy of intensification areas that are known as strategic growth areas. Midtown Oakville remains the town's Urban Growth Centre while Bronte Go station is identified as a Major Transit Station Area.

Intensification and density targets remain an important tool for planning and managing growth in the Growth Plan, 2017. Intensification targets are expressed as a percentage of annual residential development within the built-up area while density targets are expressed as the combined number of residents and jobs per hectare.

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The Growth Plan, 2017 contains an expanded list of permitted net-outs” in calculating the Designated Greenfield Area target including rights-of-way for linear infrastructure, cemeteries, employment areas and a broad range of natural environment areas.

There are four specific targets for Oakville to be phased in over time, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Targets for Planning and Managing Growth			
Timing	2017	Next MCR (by 2022)	2031-41
Intensification Target	40%	50%	60%
Designated Greenfield Area Density Target	50 r+j/ha	60 r+j/ha	80 r+j/ha
Urban Growth Centre Density Target	200 r+j/ha	200 r+j/ha	200 r+j/ha
Major Transit Station Area Density Target	150 r+j/ha	150 r+j/ha	150 r+j/ha

### ***Employment Areas***

Significant changes have been made to the employment area planning policies in the Growth Plan, 2017. The updated employment policies focus on the regional significance of employment areas through a more coordinated approach.

Upper- and single-tier municipalities are now required to complete an employment strategy in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, the province and appropriate stakeholders. The employment strategy will require municipalities to establish minimum density targets for employment areas that reflect the type and scale of employment and identify opportunities to intensify employment areas that can be accessed by transit or active transportation.

The Growth Plan, 2017 introduces new concepts and modifies another term to clarify that employment areas can take on a range of scales and a mix of employment uses. The terms established or modified that relate to employment areas in the Plan are as follows:

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*“Prime Employment – a new concept that can be used to protect employment areas that are low density and land intensive such as manufacturing, logistics or warehousing.”*

*“Office Parks – a new term to define employment areas with high concentrations of offices with high employment densities. These areas are to be supported with connectivity with transit, a mix of amenities and open space to support the labour force, and transportation demand measures to reduce the reliance on single occupancy vehicles.”*

*“Major Office - The definition of Major Office has been modified. The threshold for major office development has been reduced from 10,000 square metres or 500 jobs to 4,000 square metres or 200 jobs and the supporting policies that identify where major office development should be located has been strengthened to direct Major Office development to Strategic Growth Areas with existing or planned frequent transit.”*

It should be noted that frequent transit is defined in the Growth Plan, 2017 as public transit that runs at least every 15 minutes in both directions throughout the day and into the evening every day of the week.

As discussed in a previous section, the definition for Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) has been scoped to apply to upper- and single-tier municipalities. The justification for employment land conversions are now to be completed through an MCR by an upper- and single-tier municipality and approved by the Province. In the local context, Halton Region already has an Employment Area overlay in their Official Plan; lands under the protection of the overlay can only be converted to non-employment uses through a MCR completed by the Region.

New policy direction has been provided in the Growth Plan, 2017 to provide increased flexibility when planning for retail uses in Employment Areas. Municipalities now have the flexibility to prohibit major retail uses in employment areas or establish maximum size and scale threshold limits for any major retail uses that are permitted or prohibited.

### ***Infrastructure and Addressing Climate Change***

The Growth Plan, 2017 provides direction to support the planning for infrastructure in an integrated manner by providing for the long-term protection of corridors and low impact design to increase resiliency and combat the effects of climate change. This includes directions for municipalities to develop stormwater master plans for serviced settlement areas and direction that official plans must contain policies that

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identify actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals that align with the:

- Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015
- Climate Change Action Plan, 2016

The updated Growth Plan, 2017 continues to recognize transit as a first priority for major transportation investment through policies that support a coordinated approach to transportation system planning, land use planning and transportation investment. *Section 2.1 – Context* of the Growth plan provides the following statement:

*“...it sets out a regional vision for transit and seeks to align transit with growth by directing growth to major transit station areas and other strategic growth areas including urban growth centres, and promoting transit investments in these areas.”*

Policy directions are provided that require municipalities to identify priority transit corridors in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan, 2017 and complete detailed planning for the Major Transit Station Areas along the corridors. The priority transit corridor in Oakville is the Lakeshore West Go Train line.

### ***Protecting Natural Heritage and Water***

To emphasize the requirement for integrated planning, there are revised and new policies in the Growth Plan, 2017 related to protecting natural heritage and water that align with the policies of the Greenbelt Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement.

These including stronger requirements for watershed planning and the completion of subwatershed plans related to large-scale development to ensure growth and infrastructure decisions take into account the sustainability of water resources.

The Growth Plan, 2017 also provides new and strengthened policies for natural heritage systems (NHS), key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features. This includes the delineation of a regional NHS for lands outside of settlement areas.

However, it is important to note that the Town of Oakville is considered a settlement area, with the exception of the Greenbelt Plan lands, and so the proposed NHS does not apply to the town. Protection of Oakville’s natural heritage system, within the settlement area, will continue under the Livable Oakville Plan and the North Oakville Plans, which rely on the Region’s Official Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement.

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**Additional Guidance**

The province will continue to support the implementation of the Growth Plan, 2017 through the development of additional guidance documents, including:

- Watershed Planning
- Intensification Targets
- Municipal Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventories and Community Emissions Reduction Plans
- Land Needs Methodology

It is anticipated that this process will include engagement with municipal stakeholders with various components rolling out through the balance of 2017.

Guidance and collaboration to develop an agricultural system as well as the identification and mapping of a region-wide natural heritage system is expected in 2017 but these new systems would not apply to the Town of Oakville.

**The Greenbelt Plan, 2017**

The coordinated review produced new additions to the Greenbelt Plan including minor parcel and boundary adjustments in Niagara, Hamilton and Halton Hills as well as the addition of 21 Urban River Valleys. For Oakville, the new Urban River Valleys designated in the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 are Bronte Creek, Sixteen Mile Creek and the upper portion of Fourteen Mile Creek, as shown in Figure 2.

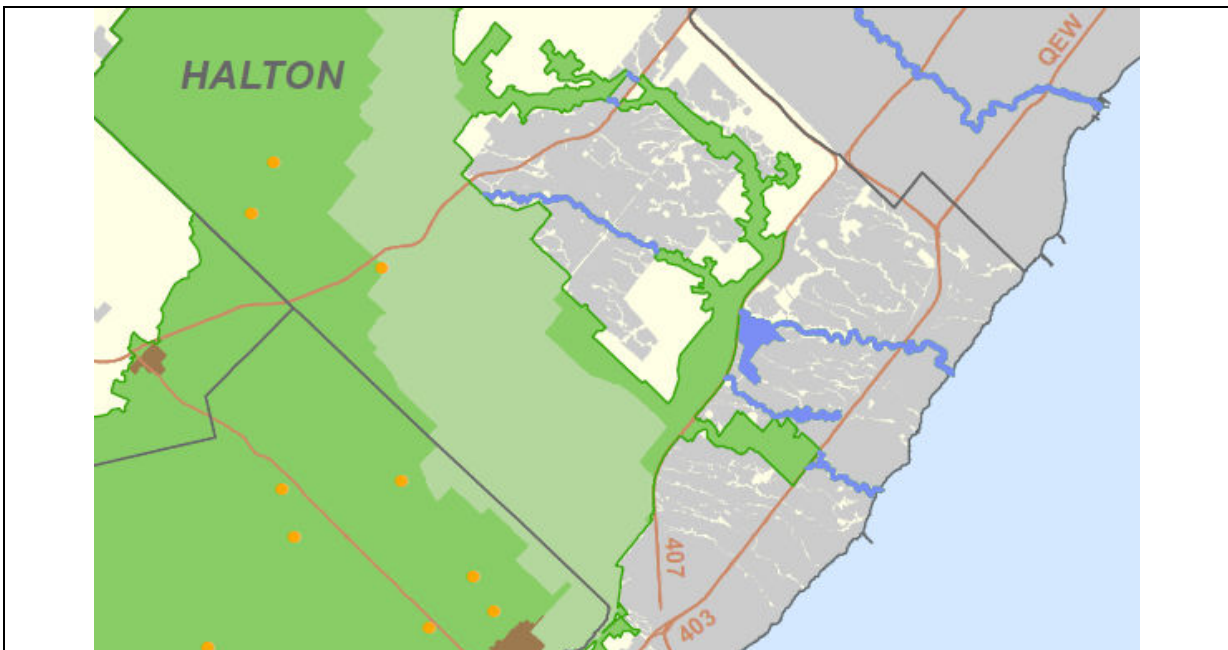


Figure 2. Urban River Valleys designated in Oakville.

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## **NEXT STEPS:**

Further analysis of the updated policies of the Growth Plan, 2017 and Greenbelt Plan, 2017 and their implications for the Town of Oakville will be conducted through the town's ongoing Official Plan Review and subsequent reporting to the Livable Oakville Sub-Committee. Collaboration with the region and involvement in their Official Plan Review will also continue.

Conformity with the Growth Plan, 2017 and Greenbelt Plan, 2017 ultimately will be achieved through amendments to the town's Official Plan. All planning decisions made on, or after July 1, 2017 will conform to the Growth Plan.

## **CONSIDERATIONS:**

### **(A) PUBLIC**

No public engagement was required for this report.

### **(B) FINANCIAL**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS**

There are no impacts on other departments & users arising from this report.

### **(D) CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS**

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to:

- be the most livable town in Canada

### **(E) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY**

## **APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – Chronology of Town Participation in the Review

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