

REPORT

LIVABLE OAKVILLE (OFFICIAL PLAN) COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

FROM: Planning Services Department

DATE: August 31, 2017

SUBJECT: Employment and Commercial Review - Draft Policy Changes and Directions for Related Projects

LOCATION: Town wide

WARD: Town wide

Page 1

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the report entitled *Employment and Commercial Review - Draft Policy Changes and Directions for Related Projects*, dated September 11, 2017, be received.
- 2) That staff proceed to engage with the public on the draft policies and directions for related studies in coordination with public consultation events being held for the Speers Road Corridor Study.

KEY FACTS

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- On May 11, 2015, Planning and Development Council received a report commencing the town's five-year Official Plan Review.
- The Employment and Commercial Review is a major component of the town's ongoing Official Plan Review.
- At its meeting on November 1, 2016, the Subcommittee received a report entitled *Employment and Commercial Review: Summary Report*, which provided background information, technical analyses (e.g., supply and demand) and policy directions from Dillon Consulting.

- On May 18, 2017 the province released the updated Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe which included significant changes to employment area planning policies.
- This report provides analysis and directions to accommodate the various inputs to the Employment and Commercial Review including the technical analysis and policy directions provided by Dillon Consulting (Appendix A), updated policies from the Growth Plan, 2017, comments received from stakeholders (Appendix B), and employment land conversion requests (Appendix C).
- This report also provides draft land use policy and schedule changes to the Livable Oakville Plan (Appendix D) for review and discussion prior to the preparation of a proposed amendment to the Livable Oakville Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Employment and Commercial Review is part of the town's five-year official plan review. The study is intended to assist the town to proactively plan for employment and commercial growth to 2041 and beyond. The objective of the project is to:

- confirm the town's employment and commercial land supply and ability to meet projected needs to the year 2041;
- assess the current employment generating land use designations and policies;
- identify any lands that are appropriate for employment land conversions; and
- provide policies and directions to facilitate the town's goals and objectives for employment and commercial growth to 2041

The study was initiated at the end of 2014 when a multi-disciplinary team led by Dillon Consulting was retained to provide technical analysis (e.g. employment and commercial demand and supply analysis) and policy directions.

At its meeting on November 1, 2016, the Livable Oakville Council Subcommittee (LOCSC) received a report entitled *Employment and Commercial Review: Summary Report*, which included Dillon Consulting's final report. The background information, technical analysis and policy directions provided in the *Summary Report* was the culmination of Dillon's work and provides the basis for the draft policies and directions prepared by town staff.

Table 1: Previous Reports to the Livable Oakville (Official Plan Review) Council Subcommittee

Meeting Date	Report Title
March 21, 2016	<i>Employment and Commercial Review: Preliminary Directions Report</i>
July 25, 2016	<i>Employment and Commercial Review: Commercial Demand and Supply Analysis</i>
September 6, 2016	<i>Employment and Commercial Review: Employment Land Demand and Supply Analysis</i>
November 1, 2016	<i>Employment and Commercial Review – Summary Report</i>

On May 18, 2017 the province released the revised Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. As of July 1, 2017, all planning decisions must conform to the 2017 Growth Plan. The revised Growth Plan provides for significant policy changes to employment area planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).

Planning Considerations

Town staff have developed draft policies and policy directions for other studies to ensure the town is well positioned to continue to accommodate employment and commercial growth. The development of draft policies and directions include consideration of market trends, provincial plans and stakeholder comments. The following section provides an overview of the factors that assisted in the development of the draft policies and policy directions.

Employment and Commercial Review: Summary Report – Prepared by Dillon Consulting

The technical analysis completed by Dillon consulting reviewed and analyzed the macro economics and market trends impacting Oakville. Within the broader GHTA, the report concluded that employment growth will be driven by demand for a broad range of goods producing, knowledge-based and employment supportive sectors. Specific to Oakville, it was noted that the town is positioned to attract knowledge-based employment sectors and locational qualities such as proximity to transit, and amenities/services will play an important role to retain and support office investment. In addition, the strong prospects for employment growth will drive the need for population related employment (i.e. retail commercial, personal service, and institutional).

Employment Market and Demand

The study concluded that the town's employment land supply is sufficient to accommodate projected employment growth to 2041. In addition, several

opportunities were identified to support employment area planning in the town to 2041. Of note, the study identified,

“The emergence of Innovation Districts as a new form of employment development for Ontario provides an opportunity for clustered knowledge-based employment growth which may be more favourable than standalone office development in nodes and corridors”

Commercial Market and Demand

The study found that to support projected commercial growth to the year 2041, additional commercial space beyond what is currently designated would be required. In addition, Oakville is well served with respect to retail selection but the ‘Northwest’ section of the town is under served compared to other areas of the town.

Dillon Consulting – Recommendations and Policy Directions

The Summary Report provided by Dillon consulting included 23 recommendations for employment and commercial lands within the town. The recommendations and policy directions can be consolidated into 6 general categories:

1. Protect Employment Lands
2. Identify priority areas for Office Uses
3. Encourage the intensification of employment and commercial uses in existing areas
4. Strengthen Design Policies and Compatibility policies
5. Develop a monitoring program
6. Harmonize the town’s employment and commercial land use policies (i.e. Livable Oakville & North Oakville Secondary Plans) and address inconsistencies with the Halton Region Employment Area Overlay

Appendix ‘A’ provides a detailed review of the individual recommendations and policy directions provided by Dillon Consulting.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017

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 and streamlined approach. The following section will provide an overview of the employment related policies in the Growth Plan, 2017.

Employment Strategy

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 strategy will 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 town will work with Halton Region to ensure the required employment strategy reflects the form, scale, density, and type of employment in existing and planned employment areas and is consistent with the town's employment land use policies and regulations. It will also be important that the town's Economic Development strategy be taken into consideration through this process.

New Employment Categories

The Growth Plan, 2017 introduces new concepts and modifies terms 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:

“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.”

The implementation of subcategories for employment areas will provide for a greater recognition of the range of employment uses that can be accommodated in

employment areas. Within the Oakville context, it is anticipated that the majority of new employment growth will be for office and goods producing sectors.

Municipal Comprehensive Reviews - Employment Conversions

The definition for Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) has been scoped to apply to upper- and single-tier municipalities. The evaluation/justification for conversion requests are to be completed within a Regional context to demonstrate need. 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 Regional Official Plan Amendment.

Staff propose that conversion requests still be reviewed by staff based on the local context and a town Council position be adopted to be forwarded to the Region for review and consideration through their MCR.

Major Retail uses in Employment Areas

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 establish maximum size and scale threshold limits for any *major retail* uses in an Employment Area. Within the Oakville context, *major retail* uses in an Employment Area designation will continue to be prohibited.

Comments about Land Use Designations and Policies

Appendix 'B' provides analyses of comments received from the LOCSC, staff, and the public about the town's existing Employment and Commercial land use designations and policies. Staff received approximately 34 comments and identified how the comments might be addressed by Council. The comments received specific to the existing land use designations and policies illuminated local issues beyond the broad policy directions provided through the consultants' work.

Comments pertaining to designations and use permissions on lands to be further studies through the town's five-year official plan review such as Speers Road, North Oakville, and Midtown Oakville were directed to the applicable studies. It is staff's opinion that those comments and their potential implications are more appropriately addressed in the context of the applicable area-specific projects.

Draft Policies and Directions for Related Projects

The draft policies and directions for related projects are intended to provide broader land use considerations within the context of positioning the town to accommodate employment and commercial growth to the year 2041. The planning rationale for the proposed policy changes and directions are based on the detailed analysis of the various inputs to the Employment and Commercial Review.

It is noted that any future official plan amendments that may be recommended must follow the process prescribed by the *Planning Act*, and conform to the Halton Region Official Plan (under review) and provincial policies, including the 2017 Growth Plan.

This section provides an overview of the town's draft policy and schedule changes and directions for related projects by theme. A track changes version of the proposed amendments is attached as Appendix 'D' for consideration and discussion purposes.

1. Protect Employment Lands

The town should protect and preserve strategically important employment lands for future employment purposes well beyond the next 20 years.

Policy Change (S.14.1.6) – Update policies to prohibit *Major Retail* uses in Employment Areas to reflect the Growth Plan, 2017.

Policy Change (S.14.2) – Update policies on employment land conversions to reflect the new policies in the Growth Plan, 2017.

Policy Direction (North Oakville Secondary Plan Review) – The Employment Area policies should be updated to conform to the employment land conversion policies in accordance with the Growth Plan, 2017.

Policy Direction (Speers Road Corridor Study) – Consider the function of Speers Road as a transitional area and identify suitable uses to accommodate an appropriate and compatible range of arterial commercial and service uses within an employment area designation.

Policy Direction (General) – Work with Halton Region to establish minimum density targets for employment areas to ensure the town's goals and objectives for employment areas are reflected.

Policy Direction (General) – Update policies and regulations for employment areas as part of the town’s conformity exercise with the Region’s Official Plan to be completed through the town’s five-year Official Plan Review.

2. Identify priority areas for Major Office Uses

To attract and retain office investment the town will need to ensure the office sector is accommodated in areas with locational qualities and attributes (i.e., proximity to transit, amenities, and services). The town should identify priority areas for office development that are supportive of locational qualities and attributes desired for office investment.

Policy Change (S.12.4 & S.12.5) – Permit Major Office Uses in the ‘Urban Core’ and ‘Urban Centre’ designation to support higher density employment uses in Growth Areas that are strategically located and have access to planned or existing frequent transit.

Policy Change (S.14.3) – Modify the ‘Office Employment’ land use designation to recognize the intent of the designation to accommodate *Major Office* uses and other uses with high employment densities that are supported by transit and have access to services and amenities to support the workforce.

Policy and Schedule Change (S.14.3.3, Schedule F, G, H, I, and J) – Recognize the ‘Office Employment’ designation as a priority area for ‘*Major Office*’ uses by re-designating lands where the ‘Office Employment’ designation functions as a transitional buffer to established residential areas. These lands should be re-designated to ‘Business Employment’ with additional policies that restrict outdoor storage and other incompatible land uses adjacent to residential areas.

Policy Change (S.14.4.5) – Establish stronger land use compatibility policies for lands designated ‘Business Employment’ that are adjacent to Residential Areas.

Policy Direction (Nodes and Corridors) – The area-specific studies to be completed through the town’s Official Plan Review should examine how *Major Office* uses can be secured in a mixed use context to encourage vibrant and pedestrian oriented areas that are transit-supportive.

Policy Direction (North Oakville Secondary Plan Review) – Identify and designate lands within North Oakville that would be appropriate to support ‘*Major Office*’ development in accordance with the policies of the Growth Plan, 2017.

3. Encourage the intensification of employment and commercial uses in existing areas

As the town approaches build-out of its greenfield lands. The majority of new employment and commercial growth (south of Dundas Street) will have to be accommodated through intensification. The town will have to direct these opportunities to appropriate areas that can support compact forms.

Policy Change (S.14.1.7) – Provide a general employment policy to direct employment intensification to areas supported by existing or planned transit and active transportation.

Policy Change (S.14.1.8) – Provide a general policy that encourages the intensification of existing areas with higher office densities (i.e. *Office Parks*) and complements them with services and amenities to support the workforce.

Policy Direction (Transportation Policy Discussion Paper) – The minimum and maximum parking standards in employment and commercial areas that have access to existing or planned transit, active transportation, and in areas that can accommodate higher density uses should be reviewed through the town's five-year official plan review.

4. Provide opportunities to secure commercial development to support the development of complete communities

The commercial land supply and demand analysis completed by Dillon Consulting identified an estimated shortfall of approximately 25 hectares of commercial lands to accommodate growth to 2041. In addition, the study identified that the Northwest area of Oakville is under-stored relative to the town.

The flexible nature of the land use designations in the North Oakville Secondary Plans allow for mixed use development in North Oakville and may not result in the provision of needed commercial/retail space. The revised Growth Plan places additional emphasis on the development of complete communities with a new fulsome definition that acknowledges complete community will support opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living (i.e. a mix of jobs, local stores, and services).

Policy Change (S.29.5) – Update the definition of *Complete Communities* in the Livable Oakville Plan to reflect the Growth Plan, 2017.

Policy Direction (North Oakville Secondary Plans Review) – The provision of commercial development in North Oakville should be secured to ensure the

development of complete communities and the definition of *complete communities* in accordance with the Growth Plan, 2017 should be added to the Plans.

Policy Direction (Bronte Road/Dundas Street Area) – The lands located at the northwest corner of Dundas Street and Bronte Road are currently under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and do not hold an employment area designation due to an outstanding appeal. There may be an opportunity to accommodate the commercial land shortfall and deficiency in retail stores on a portion of the appealed lands.

In addition, the subject lands have also been identified through the Urban Structure Review for further study as an ‘Additional/Expanded Nodes and Corridors’.

Staff will review the opportunity to accommodate the commercial shortfall and retail deficiency on a portion of the appealed lands.

5. Develop a monitoring program that recognizes the evolving nature of employment and commercial lands

The technical analysis completed by Dillon Consulting identified that the nature of employment and commercial development is evolving. The shift to knowledge based employment and the increased prominence of on-line retail may have an impact on how the town plans and develops land for employment and commercial uses. Trends in employment and commercial development should be monitored to allow for proactive and dynamic decision making and policy development.

In addition, key policy objectives and goals established in the town’s Official Plan require practical indicators to measure and maintain progress towards the defined objectives of the plan.

Policy Direction (Monitoring and Implementation Discussion Paper) – The town should develop a comprehensive monitoring program through the five-year official plan review that identifies and defines the key indicators to measure the performance of the town’s desired land use objectives. This includes using existing resources such as Halton Region’s Employment Survey, Building Permit data, and other available resources.

(Example: Section 14.1.2 of the Livable Oakville Plan identifies that the town will strive to have a balance of population and employment to achieve the goal of having a balanced and complete community. The policy would translate to an

indicator that measures the ratio of population to employment using sources such as Haltons Employment Survey and population estimates).

Policy Direction (General) – The province has committed to developing Performance Indicators to evaluate the Growth Plan, 2017 and an Updated Land Budget Methodology. The town should work collaboratively with the Region and Province on the development of these tools.

6. Harmonize Employment Area Planning Policies

The North Oakville Secondary Plans and Livable Oakville Official Plan are under separate land use policy frameworks. Inconsistencies between the plans make it difficult to plan comprehensively for a town-wide set of goals and objectives. The town's Official Plans should be harmonized to create one land use policy framework.

Policy Direction (North Oakville Secondary Plans Review) – The employment area planning policies from the Livable Oakville Official Plan should be harmonized with the North Oakville Secondary Plans.

Employment Land Conversion Requests

It is the policy of the province, region and town to protect and preserve employment areas for employment purposes to meet the long-term forecasted demand. Requests to convert lands designated for employment uses to non-employment uses may only be considered as part of a municipal comprehensive review. It should be noted that the Growth Plan, 2017 shifts the decision making for the evaluation and approval of conversion request to upper- and single –tier municipalities through an MCR.

Over the summer of 2015, owners of employment lands in the town were notified by mail that the Employment and Commercial Review was underway and that any employment land conversion requests should be submitted with appropriate documentation. The original deadline for submissions was September 4, 2015 but, given project's extended timeline, submissions continued to be accepted and a new deadline of September 9, 2016 was set. As the requests were received by the town prior to the new growth plan policies coming into force and effect. The town has provided an evaluation of the conversion requests based on the local context. Staff propose that conversion requests supported by Council will be directed to the Region for consideration.

Approximately 20 submissions were received by town staff. The conversion requests can be classified by 3 types:

Part 1 – Employment to Non Employment – These requests are true conversions that must be considered through a Municipal Comprehensive Review completed by Halton Region, in accordance with the Growth Plan, 2017.

Part 2 – Employment to Employment – These requests represent changes from one local employment area designation to another. Amendments to land use designations proposed in these requests can be approved by town council.

Part 3 – Removal from Regional Employment Overlay – These applicants have a local land use designation that is not part of an employment area. However, they are identified under the Halton Region employment overlay as a part of an employment area. These requests will have to be considered through a Municipal Comprehensive Review completed by Halton Region, in accordance with the Growth Plan, 2017.

Appendix 'C' provides detailed analysis of the requests received for Employment land conversions, a location map, and how staff propose the requests be addressed by Council.

The following table identifies the conversion requests received by the town which are supported by staff and recommended for consideration by Council.

#	Name	Address/ Location (map attached)	Existing Designation	Applicant Proposal	Type	Staff Position	Size (ha)
3	Grand Imports	Southeast corner of Dundas St. and Ninth Line	Business Employment	Core Commercial	Part 2	Recommend Business Commercial	5.60
5	RioCan Burloak	677 Burloak Drive (south side of Wyecroft Rd.)	Business Employment & Business Commercial	Core Commercial	Part 1	Supported	5.08
17	Hans Holdings	580 Burloak Dr.	Business Employment	Business Commercial	Part 2	Supported	0.45
19	RioCan Oakville Place	240 Leighland Ave.	Core Commercial	Removal from Regional Employment Overlay	Part 3	Removal from Overlay	11.76
20	Infrastructure Ontario (I.O.) Lands	North side of Upper Middle Rd., west of Ninth Line	Private Open Space	Removal from Regional Employment Overlay	Part 3	Removal from Overlay	8.25

NEXT STEPS

It is anticipated that this will be the final report to the Subcommittee with respect to the Employment and Commercial Review, as official plan amendments arising from this and related projects will be brought forward to Planning and Development Council through the statutory process.

Public open houses and stakeholder meetings will be scheduled in early October to solicit input on the draft policy changes to Livable Oakville (Appendix D) and the policy directions for related projects. It should be noted that the public open houses will run concurrently with the Speers Road Corridor Study.

A statutory public meeting (at Planning and Development Council) about the "Employment and Commercial official plan amendment" to Livable Oakville will be scheduled later this year. It is anticipated that impacts on the implementing zoning arising from the proposed official plan changes will be addressed through the Growth Plan and Regional Official Plan conformity exercise identified as part of the town's five-year Official Plan Review.

CONSIDERATIONS

(A) PUBLIC

Stakeholder meetings and public open houses were hosted on June 4, 2015 (at QEPCCC) and June 16, 2015 (at SMSC) to present the consulting team's initial findings. A total of approximately 50 people attended those sessions. Input received has been incorporated into the *Employment Report* (Appendix B).

Stakeholder meetings and public open houses will be scheduled in October to present the draft policy changes to the Livable Oakville Plan, and the directions for related studies.

To receive updates about Official Plan Review projects, members of the public are encouraged to visit the town's website to join the email list:
<http://www.oakville.ca/planoakville/official-plan-review.html>

(B) FINANCIAL

The costs associated with the Employment and Commercial Review have been considered as part of the town's capital budget. Planning for an appropriate long-term supply of designated employment and commercial lands will make the town a balanced and complete community, maximize opportunities for residents to work in Oakville, and maintain a healthy tax base.

From: Planning Services Department

Date: August 31, 2017

Subject: **Employment and Commercial Review - Draft Policy Changes and Directions for Related Projects**
Summary Report

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

Both the Planning Services and Economic Development departments are involved in this project. The receipt of this report will not impact other departments and users.

(D) CORPORATE AND/OR DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS

This report addresses the corporate strategic goal to:

- enhance our economic environment
- continuously improve our programs and services
- be fiscally sustainable
- be the most livable town in Canada

(E) COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

The Employment and Commercial Review will recommend changes to the existing land use designations and policies aimed at ensuring the town's long-term economic sustainability as a balanced community.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Analysis of Dillon Consulting Policy Directions
Appendix B	Analysis of Stakeholder Comments
Appendix C	Analysis of Requests for Employment Land Conversions
Appendix D	Draft Policy and Schedule Changes to Livable Oakville

Prepared by:

Lesley E. Gill Woods, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner, Policy Planning

Duran Wedderburn, MCIP, RPP
Planner, Policy Planning

Recommended by:

Diane Childs, MCIP, RPP
Manager, Policy Planning

Submitted by:

Mark H. Simeoni, MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning Services