

Employment and Commercial Review

Analysis of Policy Directions

The following analysis is town staff's response to the policy directions provided by the consultants who prepared the Employment and Commercial Review – Technical Report received by the Livable Oakville Council Subcommittee in November of 2016. The proposed actions address where and how the policy directions will be addressed if appropriate.

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
1.	Maintain a strong town-wide supply of employment lands Preserve strategically important employment land that are vacant and occupied for future employment uses.	The town's existing employment areas designated in the Livable Oakville Official Plan and the North Oakville Secondary Plans were confirmed through the Urban Structure Review conducted as part of the towns Official Plan Review. The town's employment lands are strategically located along the QEW, 403, 407, and along the Lakeshore West Go Transit line. The Livable Oakville Plan also includes employment land conversion criteria in <i>Section 14.2 – Conversion of Employment Areas</i>.	• The town's employment land conversion policies will be updated to reflect the new Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 • Provide direction to the North Oakville Secondary Plans Review to update the employment area conversion policies in the North Oakville Secondary Plans, to conform to the conversion policies in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017.

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
2.	Resist large scale conversion of employment lands The town should protect strategic employment lands and resist conversions. Specifically, employment land development in North Oakville has not commenced and large scale conversions would be premature.	Town staff have considered this policy direction through the analysis and evaluation of the employment land conversion requests received. See Appendix 'C'.	• See Appendix 'C'
3.	Consider minor site specific conversions where appropriate Minor conversions may be appropriate where it can be demonstrated that there is a planning and economic rationale.	Town staff have considered this policy direction through the analysis and evaluation of the employment land conversion requests received. See Appendix 'C'.	• See Appendix 'C'

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
4.	Enhance the policy framework for Midtown to promote mixed use development To encourage development in Midtown the town should consider policy alternatives that provide the flexibility to consider non-employment uses on the existing employment lands, where appropriate.	Midtown Oakville is the town's Urban Growth Centre where a significant share of population and employment growth is to be directed. Midtown is currently planned to achieve 200 people and jobs per hectare by the year 2031 in accordance with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In addition, Midtown is identified as a Mobility Hub in the Metrolinx Big Move Plan. Mobility Hubs are critical junctions in the regional transportation system. Development in Midtown is currently lagging due to the need for servicing and transportation infrastructure to support the anticipated levels of growth. The ability to provide a flexible policy structure and alternative standards in Midtown may encourage development. However, said flexibility should not impact the ability of the town to meet their minimum density targets and the preferred distribution/mix of people and jobs.	• Provide direction to the Midtown Implementation Team to consider this policy direction through the Midtown Growth Area Review.

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
5.	Revitalize the lands around the Bronte GO Station To facilitate the transition of the lands around Bronte Go Station from an industrial area to a mixed use, transit supportive area that leverages the planned level of transit investment by Metrolinx, the town should complete a detailed Station Area Plan to identify the long term potential of the area.	The Bronte Go station is recognized as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) in the Growth Plan, Halton Region Official Plan, and the town's Official Plan. MTSA's are to be planned to achieve increased residential and employment densities that support and ensure the viability of existing and planned transit service levels. Metrolinx has commenced the required work to deliver Regional Express Rail (RER) and 15 minute service along the Lakeshore West Go Train line. The town's Urban Structure Review identifies the Bronte Go station area as an additional/expanded node through the towns Urban Structure Review. These areas are identified due to existing policy directions and planned/existing transit infrastructure investment to be key locations to accommodate future intensification. The Halton Region Mobility Management Strategy has also identified the Bronte Go Station as a Regional Transit Node and identified the corridor where Bronte Go is located as a priority transit corridor. The Bronte Go Station is strategically located on a high order transit line and has policy direction from several land use studies to support more intensive land uses. The area warrants further study to confirm the areas potential.	• Provide direction to the Bronte Go Major Transit Station Area Study to consider this policy direction as part of the study analysis.

Employment Policy Direction	Response	Proposed Action
6. Comprehensively plan for an innovation district surrounding the hospital in North Oakville The town should under-take a review of the lands surrounding the new Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital to consider non-employment uses that support the function of the Health Oriented Mixed Use Node.	Section 8.6.5.1 of the North Oakville West Secondary Plan identifies a Health Oriented Mixed Use Node (HOMUN) on the north side of Dundas Street at Third Line. The supporting policies note that the range and scale of uses in the area will be compatible with the HOMUN which is inclusive of the Oakville Hospital. Ontario's land use and compatibility guidelines identifies hospitals as a sensitive use. This classification could create compatibility issues with the surrounding employment land uses. In addition, Section 8.6.5.4 of the NOWSP outlines considerations for land use compatibility for the lands adjacent to the Hospital. The Urban Structure Review has identified the lands surrounding the Oakville Hospital as an additional/expanded node in the towns Urban Structure Review. This classification is due to the hospital being a catalyst for employment growth and the potential for frequent transit service along Dundas Street. The lands surrounding the hospital warrant further study to better understand the land use compatibility issues and determine the range and mix of uses that would be appropriate to support the hospital.	• Provide direction to the Health Oriented Mixed Use Node Study for consideration through the study analysis.

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
7.	Recognize the existing function of Speers Road The Speers Road Corridor study should consider its function as a transitional areas and identify suitable land use designations to accommodate an appropriate and compatible range of commercial uses.	Speers Road is identified in the Livable Oakville Plan as a corridor to be further studied to confirm long term land uses and opportunities for suitable intensification. The Speers Road Corridor Study is currently underway. A background research paper on the Speers Road Corridor was presented to the Livable Oakville Council Subcommittee in March of 2017. Recommendations for new or revised policies will be provided through the Speers Road Corridor Study in the Fall of 2017.	• Provide direction to the Speers Road Corridor Study to consider this policy direction as part of the study analysis.

Employment Policy Direction	Response	Proposed Action
8. Direct office development to priority areas Office development should be directed to priority areas such as gateway locations in proximity to interchanges in North Oakville, the QEW corridor, and the Go Stations.	Office uses may be permitted across several designation in the town's official plan documents; including employment areas, mixed use areas, and commercial areas. The town's existing Office Employment land use designation in the Livable Oakville Plan serves a dual function. The designation permits Major Office development as defined in the Growth Plan and also serves as a buffer to adjacent residential areas. The existing Office Employment designation in the Livable Oakville Plan should be modified to better reflect the planned function of the designation as areas within the town where the highest concentration and intensity of office development should be located. The modified Office Employment land use designation should be located at key gateways and areas with access to planned or existing higher order transit or frequent transit service. In the North Oakville Secondary Plans office uses are permitted in all designations with the exception of Palermo Urban Core, General Urban, and Sub-urban. Major Office uses are generally directed to the Trafalgar Urban Core sub-area 1 in North Oakville. A designation or supporting policies that reflect the definition of Major Office as defined by the Growth Plan, 2017 should be implemented in the North Oakville Secondary Plans.	• draft land use schedule and/or policy change to the Livable Oakville Plan • Amend Section 14.3 – <i>Office Employment</i> of the Livable Oakville Plan to clarify the function of the Office Employment Designation as priority areas for Major Office development. • Redesignate lands designated as 'Office Employment' that are currently functioning as a buffer to Residential Areas to 'Business Employment'. • Amend Section 14.4 – <i>Business Employment</i> of the Livable Oakville Plan to establish stronger land use compatibility policies for lands designated as Business Employment that are adjacent to Residential Areas. • Provide direction to the North Oakville Secondary Plans Review to identify appropriate areas to support Major Office development in accordance with the Growth Plan.

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
9.	Harmonize employment land use designations and policies (North Oakville) The lands within North Oakville should be brought into the Livable Oakville Plan to provide a consistent and harmonized employment land use policy framework town-wide	The town currently has two official plans. The Livable Oakville Plan and the North Oakville Secondary Plan. Each plan has its own land use designations and policies which are reviewed independently when making land use decision in the applicable planning area. The town's Urban Structure Review provides for a proposed town-wide urban structure that reflects the structural elements in both the Livable Oakville Plan and the North Oakville Secondary Plans. To reflect the uniform urban structure, the land use designations and policies should be harmonized to reflect one land use policy framework for the town.	• Provide direction to the North Oakville Secondary Plans Review to consider this policy direction through the study analysis.
10.	Allow for a broader range of amenities within employment areas Employment areas with amenities is becoming more desirable to businesses and investors due to growth in the knowledge-based sector, changing demographics, and related employee needs. Many of Oakville's existing employment areas would benefit from the introduction of additional amenities.	The Livable Oakville Plan provides for the consideration of 'Service Commercial' uses across all designations with the exception of the 'Industrial' designation. Consideration for convenience retail is provided for in the Business Commercial and Office Employment designations. The Business Employment designation provides for additional flexibility. New Service Commercial uses limited to financial institutions, restaurants, and drive through facilities may be permitted on the same lot as a Business Employment use. In addition, Community Uses as expressed in <i>Section 7 – Community Uses</i> of the Livable Oakville Plan may be considered in some employment zones. In the North Oakville Secondary Plans, a range of service establishments are permitted (i.e. print shops, restaurants, hotels, financial institutions...etc). Consideration is also provided for limited retail and service commercial uses to be clustered at intersections with Arterials and Avenues.	• No policy change required

Employment Policy Direction	Response	Proposed Action
11. Designate additional Business Commercial lands The town should designate additional Business Commercial sites, within the existing industrial and business employment designations at gateway locations and introduce the Business Commercial designation in North Oakville along major arterial roads.	See Policy Direction #10	Proposed additions to the Business Commercial designation outside of the Speers Road Corridor are described elsewhere in (Appendix B) and in the analysis of requests for conversion of Employment lands (Appendix C).

Employment Policy Direction	Response	Proposed Action
12. Update policies on land use compatibility A new policy should be added that addresses potential noise, odour, and air quality impacts of employment uses on adjacent lands in order to mitigate potential land use conflicts.	Section 14.1.3 and 14.1.4 in the Livable Oakville Plan address compatibility, buffering, and landscaping between employment uses and adjacent uses. Additional guidance on land use compatibility is regulated through the Ministry of Environments (MOE) Environmental land use planning guides (i.e. D series guidelines). The North Oakville Secondary Plans do not have any general policies that relate to land use compatibility issues between employment uses and adjacent non-employment uses. The employment land use designations aim to address land use compatibility by separating uses that may generate noise, odour or air quality impacts which are generally permitted in the Industrial designation in a use that has outdoor storage or processing. Existing policies in the Livable Oakville Plan limit outdoor storage adjacent to residential areas and require screening and buffering. There may be opportunities to expand this provision in cases where employment areas are adjacent to natural areas and residential areas. As the nature of employment evolves to more knowledge based forms and less noxious uses, there may be opportunities to better integrate employment and non-employment uses. The mitigation of land use conflicts will be more dependent on the configuration of sites and urban design guidelines.	• draft land use schedule and/or policy change to the Livable Oakville Plan: • Add a general provision to <i>Section 14.1 - General</i> to address screening and buffers from lands that abut residential areas related to potential noise, odour, and air quality impacts. • Provide direction the North Oakville Secondary Plans Review to consider this policy direction.

Employment Policy Direction	Response	Proposed Action
13. Update Employment design guidelines Policies to support higher quality urban design will assist in addressing land use compatibility issues. The livable by Design Urban Design Manual should be enhanced to specifically address the range of different employment typologies.	The Livable by Design Urban Design Manual provides design directions for low-rise and non-residential buildings including those which contain the following uses, either as single use or mix of uses - Retail, service and/or commercial - Office, employment, and/or industrial The direction was presented to Urban Design staff and it was determined that the existing framework is sufficient. It should be noted that no Urban Design commentary was provided about the North Oakville Secondary Plans.	• No action required.
14. Encourage employment land intensification and more efficient use of employment lands A policy framework to support intensification and the revitalization of strategic areas should be considered including minimum and maximum parking standards and the implementation of Transportation Demand Management.	As the town approaches build-out of its greenfield land. An increasing share of employment growth (south of Dundas) will be accommodated through the intensification of existing employment areas. It will be important for the towns to recognize that its land supply is finite and to have policies that will support an appropriate level on employment intensification in the right locations. The town's Urban Structure Review has identified the lands along Cornwall Road and Speers Road as an Employment Mixed Use Corridor. These lands may have the potential to intensify with a mix of employment and commercial uses. A corridor study will be required to assess the extent on the opportunity. To support employment related intensification in appropriate locations, consideration for the zoning regulations required to facilitate employment intensification should be considered.	• draft land use schedule and/or policy change to the Livable Oakville Plan: • Add a policy direction to <i>Section 14.4 Business Employment</i> that prohibits outdoor storage on lands that are adjacent to Residential Areas. • Provide direction to the town's five-year official plan to review minimum and maximum parking standards in employment areas.

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
15.	Work with Halton Region to track the alignment of growth to best planning estimates Work with Halton Region through their Official Plan Review to align growth targets and associated requirements for infrastructure and phasing.	On-going participation in the Halton Regional Official Plan Review	No policy changes are proposed.
16.	Develop a monitoring program for Employment Lands The town should establish a monitoring program that tracks planning approvals and building permits on an annual basis and compares them to growth projections and the available vacant employment land supply	Section 14.1.2 of the Livable Oakville Plan notes that the town will monitor the rate of employment growth and the utilization of employment lands to ensure that sufficient employment land is designated to meet these objectives. Planning Staff will work with Economic Development to re-establish the Vacant Employment Land Inventory and provide for continued reporting Annual Reporting.	No policy changes are proposed.
17.	Work with Halton Region and other levels of government to identify proactive approaches to providing infrastructure The town should work with the Region and other levels of government to proactively plan for municipal servicing to meet demand and explore creative methods for front end financing for infrastructure	On-going	No policy changes are proposed.

Employment Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
18.	Address inconsistencies between the Region's Employment Area overlay designation and the towns employment areas The town should continue to work with Halton Region to address inconsistencies between the Region's Employment Area overlay designation and the town's employment land use designations.	The town's conversion request analysis (Appendix 'C') has identified several properties where the Region's Employment Area Overlay conflicts with the town's existing land use designations. The town has recommended that where such conflicts exist, the Regional Employment Area overlay be removed through the Halton Official Plan Review.	Provide direction to the Halton Region Official Plan Review for the Regional Employment Area Overlay to be removed from the lands that are not designated for Employment uses in the town's official plan.

Commercial Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
1.	Strengthen design policies for mixed use and commercial development Consider using the urban design policies for the Urban Core Areas in North Oakville in Section 6 of the Livable Oakville Official Plan and the Livable by Design Manual – Urban Design Directions for	The policy direction was forwarded to Urban Design staff for consideration.	No policy changes are proposed.

Commercial Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
	Oakville.		
2.	Encourage the provision of commercial in the northwest zone The North west zone is under-represented in retail commercial space particularly with respect to supermarkets. The policies of the Palermo Village North Growth Area should be reviewed to encourage the accommodation of a supermarket and other retail uses to serve northwest Oakville.	The Palermo Village North lands in North Oakville are currently subject to appeals at the Ontario Municipal Board. Staff will review the opportunity to accommodate the commercial shortfall and retail deficiency on a portion of the appealed lands through the five-year official plan review.	• No policy changes are proposed.

Commercial Policy Direction		Response	Proposed Action
3.	Promote intensification and redevelopment of existing built-up commercial The town should design policies to ensure that buildings are planned and located on sites such that future phases of intensification are not inhibited. This includes a review of parking standards and promotion of structured parking to support intensification.	The towns Urban Structure Review directs intensification to the existing Growth Areas and Corridors. Consideration for the intensification of commercial sites in Growth Areas and Corridors and any associated design policies should be addressed through the applicable area specific Growth Area and Corridor Reviews	The policy direction should be considered through the applicable Growth Area and Corridor reviews that are being undertaken through the town's five-year Official Plan Review.
4.	Implement policy definition to ensure commercial uses are developed in North Oakville The Trafalgar Urban Core Area and Dundas Urban Core Area policies should be clarified to require commercial development be provided as part of the development reserve blocks	To ensure that complete communities are developed in North Oakville. Opportunities for commercial uses need to be preserved. The current policy framework in North Oakville provides for a range and mix of uses. A policy framework is required that provides more prescriptive direction to ensure commercial development will occur.	Provide direction to the North Oakville Secondary Plans Review to consider this policy direction through the study analysis.
5.	Develop a monitoring program for Commercial lands The town should develop a monitoring program for commercial development, existing retail commercial space and unbuilt/designated commercial lands.	Halton Region completes an annual Employment Survey of businesses in the Region. The survey provides pertinent information across numerous indicators including total employees, business type, and operational space (square feet). The survey along with other available data sets and resources could be utilized to create a monitoring program for commercial lands and existing retail space in Oakville.	Planning staff should engage internal departments (i.e. Economic Development and Strategic Business Support) and Halton Region to explore the development a monitoring program for retail commercial space and vacant commercial lands.