

REPORT

LIVABLE OAKVILLE (OFFICIAL PLAN) SUB-COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE: MARCH 21, 2016

FROM: Planning Services Department

DATE: March 14, 2016

SUBJECT: Employment and Commercial Review: Preliminary Directions Report

LOCATION: Town wide

WARD: Town wide

Page 1

RECOMMENDATION

That the report entitled “Employment and Commercial Review: Preliminary Directions Report” dated March 14, 2016 be received.

KEY FACTS

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

- The Employment and Commercial Review is a major component of the town’s ongoing Official Plan Review.
- The preliminary directions and recommendations will assist the town in proactively planning for employment and commercial growth to the year 2041.
- The *Town of Oakville Employment and Commercial Review – Preliminary Directions Report: Executive Summary* (March 2016, prepared by Dillon Consulting) is attached as Appendix A.
- A final report will be presented to Planning and Development Council in the Fall of 2016. Amendments to the Livable Oakville Plan, North Oakville East and West Secondary Plans, Zoning By-law 2014-014 and North Oakville Zoning By-law 2009-189 will be proposed to implement the final recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The Employment and Commercial Review is being undertaken as part of the five year Official Plan Review. The intent of the study is to examine employment and commercial lands comprehensively, on a town-wide basis. The study objectives are:

- Confirm the town's employment and commercial land supply and ability to meet projected needs to 2041;
- Assess the current employment generating lands use designations and policies;
- Identify any lands that are appropriate for employment land conversions; and
- Provide policy directions to facilitate the town's goals and objectives for employment and commercial growth.

Figure 1 illustrates the lands within the town that are designated for employment and commercial land uses.

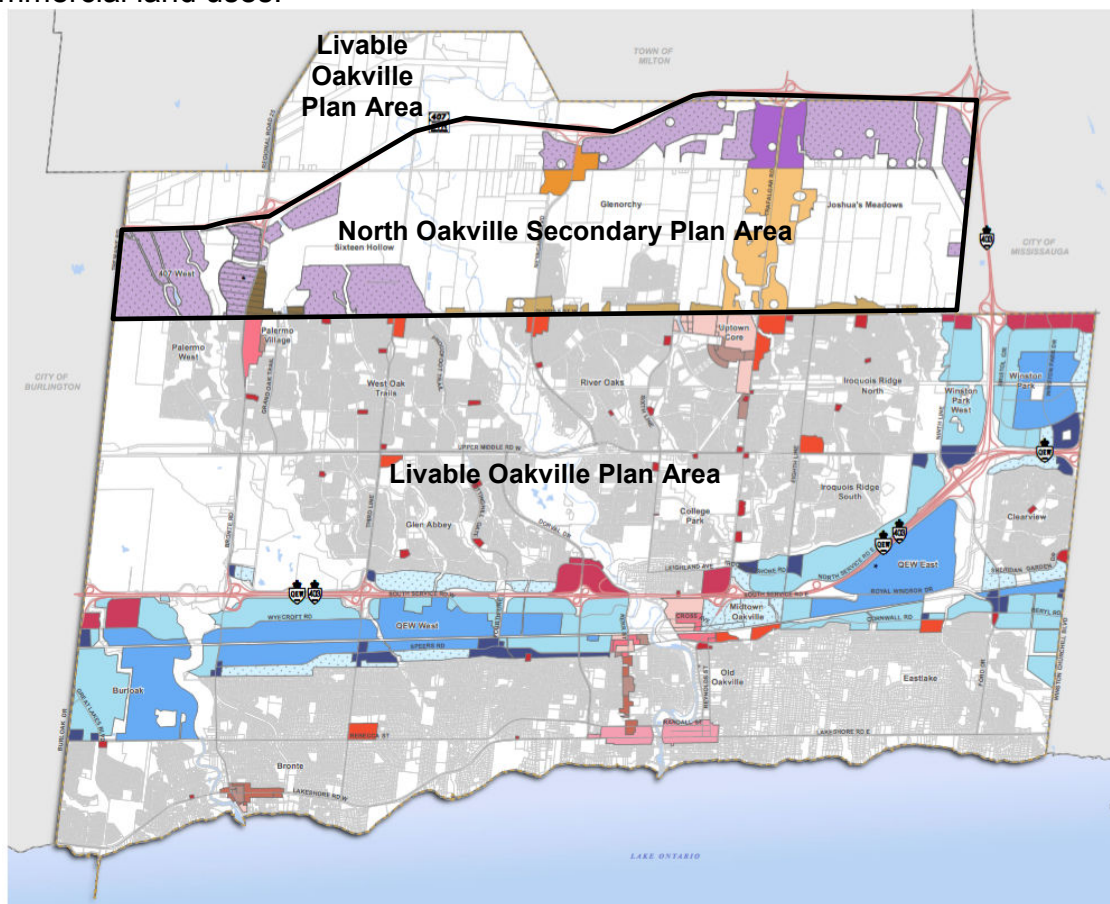


Figure 1 – Local Planning Context: Employment and Commercial Lands

A multi-disciplinary team led by Dillon Consulting Inc. has been retained to provide technical analysis and policy directions for the Employment and Commercial Review. Attached as Appendix 'A' is the executive summary for the Preliminary Directions Report provided by Dillon Consulting. Figure 2 provides an overview of the study process and timing.

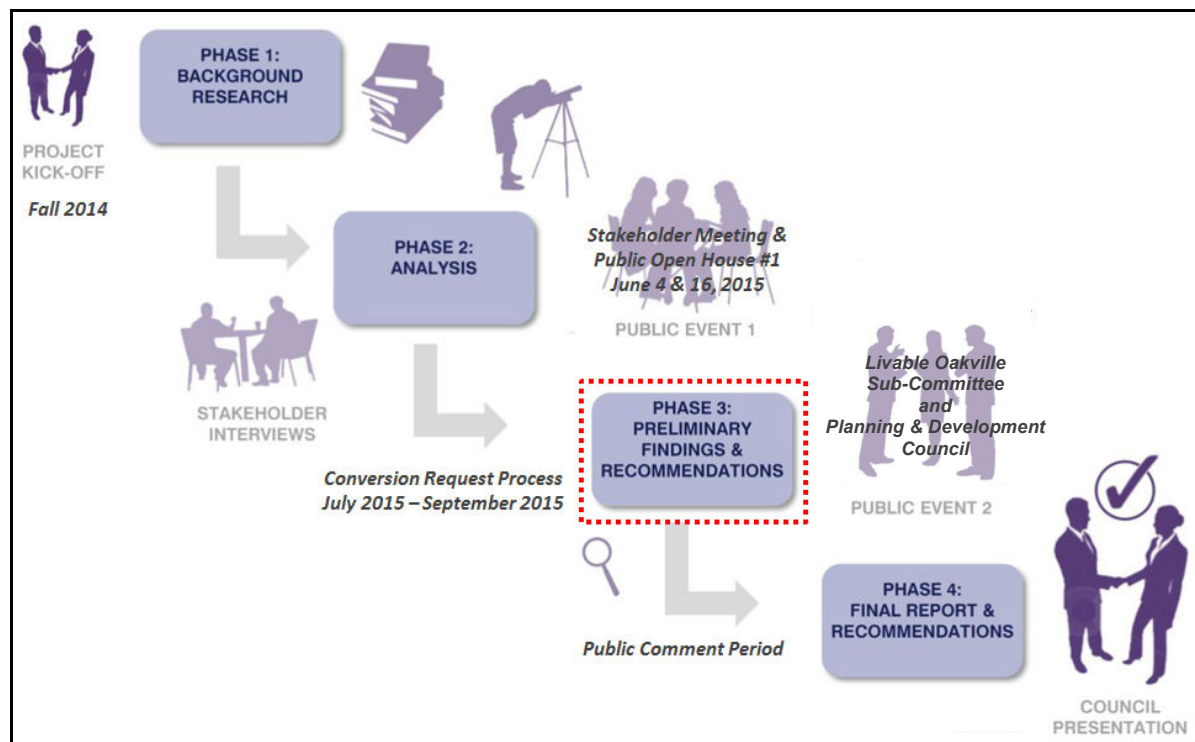


Figure 3 – Study Process – Employment & Commercial Review

Policy Context

Planning Act

The *Planning Act* currently requires a municipality to review its official plan no less than every five years. The Livable Oakville Plan was adopted in 2009 and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in 2011. The North Oakville East and West Secondary Plans were approved by the OMB in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

The town's current Official Plan Review was officially launched with a special public meeting at Planning and Development Council on May 11, 2015. The Employment and Commercial Review is a major project under the "umbrella" of the Official Plan Review program.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2014

All of the town's official plan documents were prepared prior to 2014 and are required by the *Planning Act* to be reviewed and updated to be consistent with the current Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

Section 1.3 – Employment of the PPS is applicable to the Employment and Commercial Review. It sets out a number of requirements for planning authorities, such as the town, to “*plan for, protect and preserve employment areas for current and future uses.*” It also allows the town to plan for the protection of employment lands beyond 20 years, to the year 2041, because of the planning horizon established by the Growth Plan.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Employment Lands policies in section 2.2.6 of the Growth Plan align with the PPS. They require the town to maintain an adequate supply of lands providing locations for an appropriate mix of employment uses including industrial, commercial and institutional uses, to accommodate the Plan's growth forecasts to 2041. As in the PPS, the Growth Plan allows for the conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses only through a municipal comprehensive review such as the Employment and Commercial Review being conducted as part of the town's Official Plan Review program. It should be noted that employment land conversions can only be considered through municipal comprehensive reviews which are completed every 5 years.

At the time of its approval in 2011, the Livable Oakville Plan conformed to the Growth Plan and the North Oakville East and West Secondary Plans have yet to undergo a review for conformity with the Growth Plan. In 2013 the Growth Plan was amended to provide new population and employment targets to 2041 for all Region's/municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In Halton Region, the impact is an additional 220,000 people and 80,000 jobs between 2031 and 2041 that will require allocation to the lower tier municipalities.

Region of Halton Official Plan

Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 38 was adopted by Halton Region in December of 2009. The amendment implemented the Sustainable Halton Plan and serves as the Region's conformity exercise with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In June of 2011, Regional Council adopted ROPA #39 which presented a development phasing plan for residential and employment growth to 2031.

ROPA 38 introduced an Employment Area overlay for all lands in Halton Region designated for employment uses (i.e. industrial, office). The purpose of the Employment Area overlay is to ensure sufficient employment land is available to accommodate forecasted growth and economic competitiveness. Conversion of employment lands within the Region's Employment Area overlay to non-employment uses cannot be considered without the completion of a Municipal Comprehensive Review.

It is anticipated that Halton Region will commence their 5-year Official Plan Review in 2016. Through the review, the Region will update/allocate the new population and employment forecasts to conform to the Growth Plan amendment and examine existing land use policies and designations. The town's Employment and Commercial Review will be used to inform the Region's Official Plan Review with local evidence based analysis and recommendations to ensure consistency among the plans.

Livable Oakville Plan

The existing employment and commercial land use designations and policies in Livable Oakville are based on the *Town of Oakville Retail and Service Commercial Policy Review* (June 2006, urbanMetrics Inc. and Meridian Planning Consultants Inc.) and the *Employment Land Review* (February 2009, Hemson Consulting). Employment land uses in the Livable Oakville Plan are primarily located on both sides of the QEW and Highway 403. The employment land use designations in the Livable Oakville Plan are Business Employment, Business Commercial, Industrial, and Office Employment.

North Oakville East and West Secondary Plans

The employment land uses in the North Oakville East and West Secondary Plans are currently located along the south side of Highway 407 and along the North side of Dundas Street, west of Sixteen Mile Creek. The primary employment designation in North Oakville is Employment District which permits a range of uses including offices, light/heavy manufacturing, warehousing and wholesaling, plus supporting

service commercial uses. In addition, the land use policies applicable to Trafalgar Urban Core 1 allow for employment based uses such as office centre and prestige Industrial.

The North Oakville East and West Secondary Plans establish employment and density targets for each respective area. The employment target for North Oakville based on both secondary plans is 35,200 jobs on 350 net hectares at a density of 55 employees per net hectare.

Speers Road Corridor Study

As part of the town's Official Plan Review, the town will be conducting a review of the Speers Road corridor. Speers Road provides an important east-west link within the town and serves as a connecting road between the Bronte Go Station and Oakville Go Station. The lands along the Speers Road corridor are currently designated for Industrial uses on the north side, Office Employment uses on the south side, and Business Commercial at key intersections. The study will examine the existing land use designations, identify intensification opportunities, and determine appropriate long-term land uses to improve the built form, public realm, streetscape, movement of people, parking, and compatibility with adjacent lands. The Employment and Commercial Review provides policy directions to guide the Speers Road Corridor Study.

COMMENT/OPTIONS

Preliminary Directions Report Summary

Macroeconomic and Demographic Trends

The Employment and Commercial Review includes a comprehensive background research and analysis components which identifies economic and demographic trends that may impact how the town plans for employment and commercial lands. The key macroeconomic and demographic trends are identified below:

- Halton Region will be the fastest growing municipality in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) over the next 30 years.
- Strong population growth across the GTHA has fueled steady growth in the retail and food services sectors
- The recession has accelerated the decline in the manufacturing sector and rise of the knowledge intensive and creative economic activity.
- Locational qualities that support office sector growth (transit, amenities, and services) play a significant role in the attraction/retention of office investment
- Retail space demand will be influenced by aging populations and ethnographic retailing.

Commercial Supply and Demand Forecast

The study identifies the commercial land needs of the town based on the existing vacant supply and the forecasted market demand to 2041.

Existing Vacant Supply	Forecasted Market Demand	Forecasted Shortfall
251,000 m² (2,701,742 ft ²)	325,000 m² (3,498,271 ft ²)	74,000 m² (796,529 ft ²)

Based on the forecasts provided, it is estimated that the town will require 25 hectares of additional commercial land to meet the forecasted commercial market demand to 2041. However, there are several factors that should be taken into consideration with respect to the town's commercial market demand and existing land supply:

- The vacant commercial land supply is unbalanced (24% south of Dundas Street/ 76% north of Dundas Street)

- Northwest Oakville is 'under-stored' relative to the town's overall supply
- The North Oakville policy framework is permissive, but no sites are specifically identified for commercial land uses
- Existing commercial sites will be under pressure to intensify
- The retail market is evolving with (e-Commerce, consumer pick-ups) but there will still be a demand for 'brick and mortar' stores
- Population growth in North Oakville will create demand for commercial space

The consulting team has provided the following policy directions to address the town's commercial land supply to 2041.

Preliminary Commercial Policy Directions	
1.	Strengthen design policies for mixed use and commercial development
2.	Encourage commercial development in the Northwest Zone
3.	Promote additional commercial uses through intensification and redevelopment of existing built up commercial areas
4.	Implement policy definitions to ensure commercial uses are developed in North Oakville
5.	Develop a monitoring program for commercial, retail, and demographic trends

Employment Supply and Demand Forecast

The study estimates the employment land needs of the Town based on the existing vacant land supply and the forecasted market demand to 2041.

Existing Vacant Supply	Forecasted Market Demand
638 ha (1,577 acres)	408 ha (1,008 acres)

The Town has a healthy supply of employment lands to meet its employment land demands to 2041. Highlights from the report include:

- The town needs to preserve strategically important employment lands for future purposes beyond the next 20 years.
- The vacant employment land supply is unbalanced (27% south of Dundas Street/ 73% north of Dundas Street)
- North Oakville has large parcels of land, but most are unserviced (84%) with limited transit access
- Knowledge based jobs are on the rise in Oakville
- Increased demand for amenities (e.g. retail and service commercial) in employment areas

The consultant has provided the following policy directions to address the towns employment land needs to 2041.

Preliminary Employment Policy Directions	
1.	Maintain a strong town wide supply of employment lands
2.	Resist large scale conversions of employment lands
3.	Minor site specific conversions may be appropriate
4.	Enhance policy framework for Midtown to promote mixed use development
5.	Revitalize the lands around Bronte GO Station Area
6.	Comprehensively plan for an Innovation District surrounding the North Oakville Hospital
7.	Recognize the existing function of Speers Road
8.	Direct office development to priority areas (Highway 403/407/QEW, Bronte Go Station, Midtown)
9.	Harmonize employment land use designations and policies in the Livable Oakville Plan and North Oakville Secondary Plans
10.	Allow for a broader range of amenities (i.e. personal and professional services) within employment areas
11.	Designate additional Business Commercial lands
12.	Update policies on land use compatibility
13.	Update employment design guidelines
14.	Encourage employment land intensification and more efficient use of employment lands

15.	Work with Region of Halton to track alignment of growth to best planning estimates
16.	Develop a monitoring program (employment growth projections and vacant employment land supply)
17.	Work with the Region of Halton and other levels of government to identify proactive approaches to providing infrastructure
18.	Address inconsistencies between Region's Employment Area overlay and the Town's employment areas

Employment Land Conversion Requests

Under section 2.2.6.5 of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, municipalities may consider the conversion of employment lands to non-employment uses through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). The Employment and Commercial Review included a MCR component and provides for the consideration and evaluation of employment land conversion requests. Each request was evaluated using a two-step process based on site specific criteria and conformity with Official Plan and Growth Plan conversion policies.

The study recommends 3 properties (16 ha) be approved for conversion to non-employment land uses.

Request	Name & Location	Area	Existing Designation	Recommended Designation
4(a) & 4(b)	Great Lakes Marketplace; Rebecca St. & Burloak Dr.	5.24 ha	Business Commercial and Business Employment	Community Commercial
6	RioCan Burloak; Burloak Dr. & Wyecroft Rd.	5.64 ha	Business Commercial and Business Employment	Core Commercial
12*	Star Oak; Sixth Line, north of Burnhamthorpe Rd.	5.13 ha	Employment	Medium/High Density Residential + Retail

*Please note that there is an active development application Plan 24T-13002/1215 on the Star Oak property that is before the Ontario Municipal Board. In addition, there may be development phasing issues that may need to be addressed.

In addition, the study also identified one property 'Hans Holding – 580 Burloak Drive' to be re-designated from 'Business Employment' to 'Business Commercial'.

Next Steps

It is anticipated that the Employment and Commercial Review: Preliminary Directions Report will be presented to Planning and Development Council at the April 18, 2016 meeting. Subsequently, staff will commence the public commenting period and conduct public engagement activities through an open house and stakeholder meetings.

A final report will be presented to Planning and Development Council in the Fall of 2016. It is anticipated that the final recommendations will be implemented through a series of official plan and zoning by-law amendments. Some official plan amendments will not be able to proceed until inconsistencies identified with the Employment Land overlay designation in the Region of Halton Official Plan have been addressed.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

Messages about the ongoing Employment and Commercial Review, and the related open houses and information available on the town's website, have been sent to the Official Plan Review email list (approximately 380 unique addresses at the time).

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 related to the existing supply and forecasted demand for employment and commercial lands to 2041. A total of approximately 50 people attended those sessions.

Over the summer of 2015, letters were mailed to all owners of properties subject to an employment land use designation to inform them of the Employment and Commercial Review and the opportunity to submit a request for a conversion to a non-employment land use designation.

Notice of the availability of this report and the attached *Town of Oakville Employment and Commercial Review – Preliminary Report* was sent to the Official Plan Review email list (approximately 430 unique addresses) as well as all parties who have provided email addresses to us through the consultation to date.

(B) FINANCIAL

The receipt of this report should not have any impact on the town's finances. 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.

(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

(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 Town of Oakville Employment and Commercial Review –
Preliminary Report: Executive Summary (March 2016, Dillon
Consulting)

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