

# Halton Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS): a Summary

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July 15, 2019

## Growth Management in Oakville

It is important to have a plan to ensure growth is accommodated appropriately. Oakville needs to have a robust growth management strategy that makes sense from an environmental (including natural heritage and climate change), social and financial standpoint in order to face these challenges head-on.

The Livable Oakville Official plan represents the growth management strategy for Oakville. Recent approval of Official Plan Amendment #15 to Livable Oakville solidifies a town-wide urban structure as the underlying foundation for how growth is managed in Oakville.

Oakville's urban structure directs future growth to a system of nodes and corridors in order to protect the most valued components of Oakville – our natural heritage, our public open spaces, and our cultural heritage resources. It then works to maintain the character of our established neighbourhoods that make Oakville communities unique and desirable. Our urban structure provides a sound strategy to best address the challenges we face from new population growth in the future and will form the foundation of the Oakville component of the IGMS.

Oakville planning staff are currently feeding into Halton Region's IGMS process to ensure that the work already completed for our urban structure is directly integrated into the IGMS work. This is vital to ensuring that the interests of Oakville are protected and that Oakville Council's decisions to-date become part of the IGMS scenarios and ultimately inform the Halton Region Official Plan update.

This is a "bottom-up" approach to updating the regional official plan. The provincial growth plan has identified challenges and directs regional municipalities to accommodate a set amount of growth in a manner that is viable for the GGH. Local municipalities that have already established a local approach to growth management, like Oakville, can then feed upward to inform how the regional official plan is structured in order to accommodate mandated growth – essentially providing a "local lens priority" to regional growth management.

## Halton Region IGMS Process

The 2019 Growth Plan requires Halton Region to plan to accommodate 1,000,000 people and 470,000 jobs by 2041. The Halton Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) is a process currently being undertaken and coordinated by Halton Region to

figure out where the people and jobs coming to the region should go – including Oakville.

Any growth management strategy should be based on sound planning principles, such as:

- designing cities, towns, neighbourhoods and buildings compactly
- mixing land uses together to create complete communities that enable residents to live, work and play within their neighbourhood
- developing communities that are oriented around transit to enable viable transportation alternatives (such as non-motorized transportation and public mass transit)
- preserving and protecting agricultural areas
- strengthening and directing new development towards existing communities to maximize existing infrastructure

#### Regional Council Workshop (April 10, 2019)

A Regional Council workshop was held on April 10, 2019 to introduce the IGMS and eight preliminary growth scenarios with varying amounts of new greenfield designation and intensification:

- Scenarios 1A-4A allocated growth based on the existing planned pattern (ROPA 38); and,
- Scenarios 1B-4B allocated growth based on local plans and priorities.

All of the scenarios accommodate 157,400 new housing units from 2016 to 2041 to reach the forecasted population of 1,000,000 people, and are consistent with the Province's Land Needs Assessment Methodology for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Regional Council provided feedback and requested additional information to be included in future reports. For more information, the April 10, 2019 Regional Council meeting materials, minutes and video may be accessed through the Region's website:

[https://www.halton.ca/The-Region/Regional-Council-and-Committees/Council-Committee-Documents-\(Agendas,-Minutes-and-Video\)](https://www.halton.ca/The-Region/Regional-Council-and-Committees/Council-Committee-Documents-(Agendas,-Minutes-and-Video)).

#### Regional Council Meeting (June 19, 2019)

On June 19, 2019, Regional Council was presented with an initial technical report again outlining potential growth scenarios for the region. The scenarios were accompanied by a technical paper from their consultant providing detailed information and preliminary analysis of the various scenarios.

The report to Council also contained a proposed evaluation matrix to be used to evaluate the merits of each of the growth scenarios. Regional staff were seeking confirmation that the evaluation matrix is acceptable to Regional Council and suitable to share with the public.

Regional staff were also seeking confirmation that the 'Local Plans and Priorities' scenarios (e.g., the 'B' scenarios) are to be used as the foundation for the four growth concepts to be evaluated by the evaluation matrix. The intent is to move forward with the evaluation of the scenarios including public/stakeholder consultation based on these four scenarios only.

Regional council unanimously voted to defer any recommendations on this report until the Local Municipal Councils can recommend to Regional Council for each local municipality, what evaluation criteria and weighting of the evaluation criteria best suit the planning needs of each Local Municipality. It is anticipated that this report will return to Regional council sometime in the fall of 2019.

### **How the Growth Scenarios Were Created**

The Province requires Halton Region to plan to accommodate 1,000,000 people and 470,000 jobs by 2041 according to Schedule 3 of the 2019 Growth Plan. The task of the IGMS is to figure out where in the region these people and jobs should go.

The starting point is the regional urban structure established by ROPA 38 in the current regional official plan. Through ROPA 38, Halton was essentially divided into areas that can accommodate growth (i.e. settlement areas) versus areas that will not accommodate growth (i.e. agricultural land, rural land and greenbelt areas).

The areas that can accommodate growth were further divided into the built-up area (areas where development has already occurred) versus designated greenfield areas (areas where no urban development has occurred). See Figure 1 (Map 5: Built Up Areas).

### Map 5: Built Up Areas

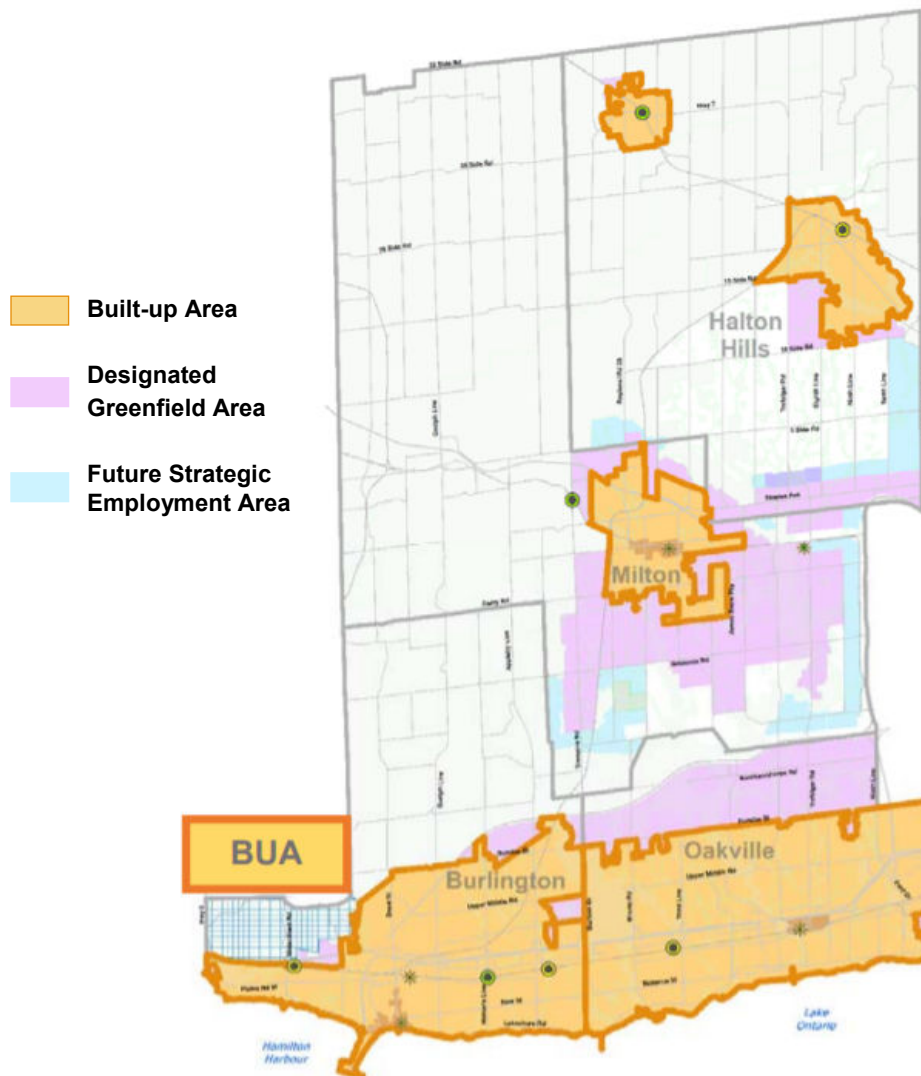


Figure 1. Map 5 from the IGMS Growth Scenarios draft report, dated March 4, 2019, showing Built-up Area, Designated Greenfield Area, and Future Strategic Employment Areas in Halton Region (legend added by Town of Oakville staff)

Using this structure, there are essentially four ways to accommodate growth in the region:

- **In the built-up area (intensification).**  
This is referred to as intensification. The 2017 Growth Plan required that 60% of growth be accommodated through intensification. The new 2019 Growth Plan reduces this requirement to 50%.

- **In existing designated greenfield areas.**  
This is growth within the currently defined settlement areas, in areas designated as greenfield area through ROPA 38 that have not yet been built out.
- **Through employment land conversion, which includes the creation of mixed-use nodes.**  
This would be residential growth that would occur on existing employment land that would require an employment land conversion to permit residential uses, including new Major Transit Station Areas in existing employment areas (such as Bronte GO MTSA) and other mixed-use nodes in existing employment areas (such as the Hospital District, formerly known as the Health Oriented Mixed Use Node, and Palermo North). These areas would still be planned for higher density employment uses with the addition of residential uses being permitted in conjunction with the employment.
- **By expanding the designated greenfield area by designating NEW greenfield areas.** Only Milton and Halton Hills have land available outside of existing settlement areas to accommodate an expansion to the designated greenfield area.

The draft IGMS Growth Scenarios technical report indicates that the forecast population for the region to 2031 can be accommodated within the existing settlement areas (the existing combination of built-up areas and designated greenfield areas). In fact, a significant share of the growth that will occur between 2031 and 2041 can also be built within the existing designated greenfield areas. Essentially, this simply confirms that the regional structure established through ROPA 38 to accommodate population to 2031 can still accommodate the anticipated population to 2031. As a result, the scenarios being created by the IGMS work effectively only deal with where the population growth from 2031 to 2041 will go.

Eight growth scenarios have been developed for the IGMS. It has been recommended by regional staff that four of the original scenarios be eliminated from consideration — the ‘A’ scenarios — because they do not incorporate policy work that has been undertaken by local municipalities since ROPA 38. As such, they do not provide realistic scenarios from a local municipality perspective.

The remaining four scenarios — the ‘B’ Scenarios — include all of the assumptions from the ‘A’ Scenarios except that they also consider possible employment land conversions to allow for development of major mixed-use developments that are being planned at the local municipal level.

In Oakville, as planned by our urban structure, the major mixed-use developments that would require an employment land conversion are:

- the **Bronte GO Major Transit Station Area** (as a mixed-use environment that includes residential use, in addition to employment uses, at transit-supportive densities as contemplated in the 2019 Growth Plan);

- the **Hospital District** around the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital at Dundas and Third Line which has always contemplated a mix of uses, supportive of health sciences, in the North Oakville West Secondary Plan; and
- **Palermo North** (which remains under appeal from ROPA 25 in 2004)

Accounting for these mixed-use developments are the only difference between the “A” scenarios and the “B” scenarios from an Oakville perspective but are vital to include in any growth scenario being considered. This is consistent with the town’s recently approved Urban Structure (under appeal).

Different ways of accommodating employment are not being tested in the scenarios. The total municipal employment associated with each scenario is looked at the same, varying only by the local municipality in which jobs related to the residential population are located. All scenarios accommodate the 470,000 jobs by 2041 that the Growth Plan requires Halton to accommodate. Employment is kept constant in all the scenarios in order to better evaluate the scenarios from a residential development and community land need perspective.

Realistically, the majority of Oakville’s job growth will continue to be in knowledge-based sectors, as outlined in the Town’s Economic Development Strategy 2019-2024.

### **The Four Refined Growth Scenarios Being Recommended**

The IGMS team originally identified eight growth scenarios for consideration. Regional staff, however, have recommended moving forward with the evaluation of only four of these eight growth scenarios. The recommended four scenarios were previously known as the “B” scenarios.

The four scenarios are primarily distinguished by different amounts of new designated greenfield area, ranging from a scenario with no new designated greenfield area to a scenario with 1000 hectares of new designed greenfield area, as shown in the following table:

Scenario		1B	2B	3B	4B
<b>Estimated NEW Designated Greenfield Area*</b>		Moderate Greenfield Expansion	Limited Greenfield Expansion	No Greenfield Expansion	Proposed Growth Plan Amended Targets (Most Greenfield Expansion)
		<b>500 ha</b>	<b>250 ha</b>	<b>0 ha</b>	<b>1000 ha</b>
<b>Total Population in 2041</b>	Oakville	327,800	334,500	342,800	319,200
	Burlington	254,800	256,900	258,100	247,700
	Milton	295,100	292,800	291,800	301,400
	Halton Hills	122,300	115,800	107,300	131,700
	<b>Halton Region</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>
<b>Density of Designated Greenfield Area</b>		80 people and jobs/ha	80 people and jobs/ha	80 people and jobs/ha	65 people and jobs/ha
<b>Minimum Intensification (in the Built-Up Area)</b>		60%	60%	60%	50%

Source: Integrated Growth Management Strategy Growth Scenarios: Halton Region to 2041 (Attachment #4 to LPS41-19)

Scenario 3B is the scenario that does not include any expansion to the designated greenfield area. This means that all future residential growth in the region would be accommodated within the existing greenfield (e.g. for Oakville, this would be North Oakville) and within the built-up areas (e.g. this is what is referred to as intensification). In this scenario, the amount of land available for urban development is fixed to what has already been designated today. This then means that the way that we house people must move to a more condensed and compact built form in order to accommodate one million people by 2041 region-wide.

The IGMS work indicates that accommodating future growth predominantly through intensification will require a significant shift in the housing mix from ground-related housing to apartment housing. Additionally, a good portion of these apartment units will need to be sized to accommodate families. This housing shift is considerable, with a much larger proportion of apartments in the mix than might otherwise occur without policies to guide it in this direction.

Scenarios 2B and 1B consider limited and moderate amounts of greenfield expansion, 250 ha and 500 ha respectively. These scenarios would continue to allow a lower density and spread out residential built form — predominantly ground-oriented housing in the form of single-detached, semi-detached and townhouse housing formats — as a

way to accommodate future growth. Scenario 1B allows this to a greater extent than scenario 2B.

The premise behind these scenarios is that the lower-density, status-quo development in our greenfield areas would continue until these areas are built out, likely shortly after 2031. Afterwards, we could continue to build predominantly ground-oriented housing by expanding the greenfield area by either 250 ha or 500 ha in scenarios 2B and 1B. While there would still be a need to shift towards apartment housing and a more condensed style of built form in our greenfield areas and through intensification in these scenarios as well, the need to make this shift would be less than scenario 3B.

Scenario 4B is a late addition to the scenarios. It was created in response to the new 2019 Growth Plan which came into effect on May 16, 2019. Based on changes included in the new Growth Plan, Scenario 4B has a reduced minimum density for greenfield areas (lowered from 80 ppj/ha to 65 ppj/ha) and a reduced minimum required amount of intensification (reduced from 60% to 50%). As a result, the proposed greenfield expansion in this scenario (1000 ha) is twice the amount of Scenario 1B, which was the scenario with the largest amount of greenfield expansion before Scenario 4B was added.

Oakville and Burlington do not have any more space for greenfield expansion (with the exception of North Aldershot in Burlington, which is a Special Study Area). Therefore, any greenfield expansion contemplated by the scenarios would occur in Milton and/or Halton Hills.