

Appendix B

Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper Town Responses to Discussion Questions

The following Discussion Questions are from Halton Region's Technical Questionnaire posted at halton.ca/ropr.

There is a section farther below with Town Responses to additional questions from the General Questionnaire, also posted at halton.ca/ropr.

1. How can the Regional Official Plan further support the development of Urban Growth Centres?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 30-32 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: The Regional Official Plan (ROP) should identify Urban Growth Centres (UGC's) as focus and priority locations to accommodate significant and required population and employment growth in order to meet the density targets and timelines (2031, 2041) established in the 2019 Growth Plan.

The ROP should also recognize that future development in UGC's is intended to be transit-supportive locally and regionally, to create areas for investment in public service facilities, to attract the highest order of major employment centres as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses.

The 2019 Growth Plan also directs priority be given to Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) on priority transit corridors. In Oakville, these locations are:

- Midtown Oakville (UGC/MTSA containing Oakville GO Station)
- Bronte GO MTSA

New policies in the ROP should be provided:

- To identify clear priorities for allocating growth to UGC's and MTSA's
- That pair the prioritization of growth with prioritization of infrastructure/servicing spending and delivery
- That establish that infrastructure planning and infrastructure delivery to support UGC's is a priority of the Region (i.e. pre-service).

The order of priority for allocating could be as follows:

1. UGC's on Priority Transit Corridor (2031)
2. UGC's (2031)

3. MTSAs on Priority Transit Corridor (2041)
4. MTSAs (2041)
5. Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) on Regional Transit Priority Corridors
6. Other SGAs

The ROP could identify the Midtown Oakville UGC as the highest priority for growth and intensification. Midtown Oakville is unique in Region as it is:

- Designated provincially as the only UGC on the Lakeshore West Line.
- Oakville GO Station, found within Midtown Oakville, is the second busiest GO station, after Union Station
- Identified regionally as a Regional Transit Node at the junction of the at the junction of the GO Rail Corridor and a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor on Trafalgar Road
- The biggest growth node in Halton Region and currently planned to accommodate 18% of required regional growth to 2031
- Planned to accommodate 38% of Oakville's required intensification to 2031

UGC's, MTSAs and other strategic growth nodes and corridors should be the primary focus for new growth. This is most important because it makes the best use of existing infrastructure and infrastructure investment, facilitates development of a regional transit network, particularly within higher-order corridors, and generally enhances transit viability over the entire region. These are important factors in reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion

2. Should the Region consider the use of Inclusionary Zoning in Protected Major Transit Station Areas to facilitate the provision of affordable housing?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 33-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: The region should use Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) in Protected Major Transit Station Areas. However, flexibility for implementation should be provided given many existing unknowns with IZ programs.

3. Should the Region consider the use of the Protected Major Transit Station Areas tool under the Planning Act, to protect the Major Transit Station Areas policies in the Regional Official Plan and local official plans from appeal? If so, should all Major Transit Station Areas be considered or only those Major Transit Station Areas on Priority Transit Corridors?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 33-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper

Response: The Region should use the Protected Major Transit Station Areas tool under the *Planning Act*, to protect the Major Transit Station Areas policies in the Regional Official Plan and local official plans from appeal.

At a minimum, MTSAs along priority transit corridors should be protected. In Oakville this is Midtown Oakville (UGC and MTSA) and Bronte GO (MTSA).

4. From the draft boundaries identified in Appendix B and the Major Transit Station Area boundary delineation methodology outlined, do you have any comments on the proposed boundaries? Is there anything else that should be considered when delineating the Major Transit Station Areas?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 36-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: Town staff is satisfied with the Bronte GO MTSA boundary.

Town staff is also satisfied with the Midtown Oakville MTSA boundary. That said, is it not redundant to “propose” a boundary for this UGC/MTSA since this has already been established under O. Reg. 416/05: Growth Plan Areas, under the *Places to Grow Act*?

Town staff requests that future regional work clarify that that the Midtown Oakville UGC/MTSA boundary is not changing through the ROPR, to assist the public in their understanding and interpretation.

Town staff recommends that the Regional Official Plan identify Midtown Oakville as a UGC planned to accommodate the greatest levels of height and density in Oakville and all of Halton.

5. How important are Major Transit Station Areas as a component of Halton’s Regional Urban Structure? What is your vision for these important transportation nodes?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 33-37 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper

Response: MTSAs are critically important to the implementation of the region and town’s urban structure. If growth cannot be supported in these locations, it may destabilize the broader Regional Urban Structure through development pressure in un-planned locations such as in established residential areas.

The general vision for MTSAs is that they become vibrant places where people can live, work, and play with easy transportation and mobility options, and a range of housing choice that is transit-supportive.

6. Building on the 2041 Preliminary Recommended Network from the Determining Major Transit Requirement, should corridors be identified as Strategic Growth Areas in the Regional Official Plan? If so, should a specific minimum density target be assigned to them?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 37-42 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: Yes, corridors should be identified in the Regional Official Plan if these corridors are identified in the urban structure of the local official plans. However, any policies assigning specific minimum density targets should not be overly prescriptive. It should also require that the minimum target is at least be transit-supportive as informed by the Provincial Transit Supportive Guidelines.

Town staff notes that there will be ongoing information exchanges with the Region once minimum targets are assigned in order to assign specific amounts of population and employment to a corridor.

7. Should the Regional Official Plan identify additional multi-purpose and minor arterial roads in the Regional Urban Structure, not for the purposes of directing growth, but to support a higher order Regional transit network?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 37-42 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: No additional roads at the Regional Urban Structure level need to be identified on Map 1.

8. Are there any other nodes in Halton that should be identified within the Regional Official Plan from a growth or mobility perspective (i.e. on Map 1)? If so, what should the function of these nodes be and should a density target or unit yield be assigned in the Regional Official Plan?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 42-43 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: The Region should continue work with the local municipalities through the IGMS and RUS process to determine what SGAs should be identified on Map 1 of the ROP.

The Town of Oakville urban structure identifies other SGAs, including:

- Uptown Core (Dundas and Trafalgar)
- Palermo Village (Dundas and Bronte)

- Hospital District
- Bronte Village
- Kerr Village
- Downtown Oakville
- Neyagawa Urban Core Area

9. Are there any other factors that should be considered when assessing Employment Area conversion requests in Halton Region?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 53-59 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: There should be no additional criteria in the ROP other than that required by the 2019 Growth Plan.

10. Are there any areas within Halton Region that should be considered as a candidate for addition to an Employment Area in the Regional Official Plan?

For more information on this topic, please see page 63 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: There are no candidate areas on Oakville to be considered for addition to an Employment Area in the Regional Official Plan.

The Region should plan for the changing nature of present and future employment by means of a comprehensive study to ensure the existing employment supply is appropriate.

11. How can the Regional Official Plan support employment growth and economic activity in Halton Region?

For more information on this topic, please see page 64 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: The Region should pre-service greenfield employment areas to support employment growth and economic activity.

The region could undertake a deeper analysis on viability of development with respect to infrastructure connections. In Oakville, examples include land locked parcels in the area of Regional Road 25/Highway 407 and Upper Middle Road/Ninth Line.

The ROP should provide direction for employment uses outside of “employment areas” including mixed use nodes. As well, it should recognize local conditions and the locations of existing major office uses along highway corridors.

12. What type of direction should the Regional Official Plan provide regarding planning for uses that are ancillary to or supportive of the primary employment uses in employment areas? Is there a need to provide different policy direction or approaches in different Employment Areas, based on the existing or planned employment context?

For more information on this topic, please see page 65 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: The ROP should permit local municipalities to conduct studies on specific employment areas/corridors to identify and plan for specialized employment uses specific to those areas, including the consideration of ancillary and supportive uses. All this would have to be in consideration of conforming to the 2019 Growth Plan, including no large-scale retail uses.

An example of this is the town-initiated OPA No. 27 – Speers Road Corridor Study, now approved and in full effect.

13. How can the Regional Official Plan support planning for employment on lands outside Employment Areas, and in particular, within Strategic Growth Areas and on lands that have been converted? What policies tools or approaches can assist with ensuring employment growth and economic activity continues to occur and be planned for within these areas?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 66-67 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: Any ROP policy in this regard should encourage or enable the local municipalities to implement local planning for employment outside Employment Areas. The ROP policies could:

- Encourage the local municipalities to provide an office replacement policy which would, at the time of redevelopment, require any office GFA demolished as part of redevelopment, be replaced in the new development. This would ensure there is no “net loss” of office GFA
- Encourage local municipalities in their UGC and MTSAs to require a certain amount of development/GFA to be provided as major office

- Encourage local municipalities to provide a threshold that as part of a development over a certain scale of GFA that a % be provided as office, or that an office component be included
- Encourage local municipalities to consider a community benefits charge framework which would consider office uses as a community benefit within UGCs and MTSAs.

14. Are there other factors, besides those required by the Growth Plan, Regional Official Plan or Integrated Growth Management Strategy Evaluation Framework that Halton Region should consider when evaluating the appropriate location for potential settlement area expansions?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 70-74 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: Town staff is of the opinion that settlement area expansions should be considered critically, carefully and where there is a demonstrated need for the expansion. If a potential expansion is being considered, there are additional factors that Halton Region should use in their evaluation:

- To what extent could the existing settlement area and urban structure accommodate the growth contemplated for the potential expansion?
- To what extent does the potential expansion use or build upon existing and planned infrastructure?
- To what extent would the potential expansion contribute to mixed-use, complete communities along higher-order transit corridors and enhance overall transit viability?
- To what extent would the potential expansion minimize its effects on traffic congestion?
- What are the climate change implications of an expansion in terms of greenhouse gas emissions from building and transportation, habitat loss, impacts to agricultural lands, etc.?
- To what extent would the potential expansion affect the movement of goods and people to/from employment areas and other areas with a concentration of jobs?
- To what extent would the potential expansion affect the potential isolation of seniors and the ability of people to 'age in place'?

15. What factors are important for the Region to consider in setting a minimum Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) density target for Halton Region as whole, and for each of the Local Municipalities? Should the Region use a higher minimum Designated Greenfield Area density target than the 50 residents and jobs per hectare target in the Growth Plan?

For more information on this topic, please see pages 74-77 of the Regional Urban System Discussion Paper.

Response: The Region should consider at a minimum maintaining the current DGA targets that are being achieved in Halton. Town staff understands that existing development is generally in excess of 50 residents and jobs per hectare.

Raising the minimum DGA target higher than what is being achieved to accommodate additional required growth within the existing settlement area will continue to provide many benefits including reduced infrastructure spending, improved support for transit viability, protected agricultural and natural environments lands and reduced emissions from building and transport.

16. Are there any additional considerations or trends that Halton Region should review in terms of the Regional Urban Structure component of the Regional Official Plan Review?

Response: The Region should consider the following additional trends in the ROPR for the Regional Urban Structure Component:

- Adaptation, mitigation and resiliency in the context of climate change
- Changes in transportation modes, demand, and modal splits from COVID
- Changing nature of mixed-use employment
- Changing nature of office employment from COVID
- The urban structure's ability to address housing need and affordability and articulating a made in Halton version of market demand
- The extent to which intensification may be accommodated within secondary units.

The following Discussion Questions are from Halton Region's General Questionnaire posted at halton.ca/ropr.

16. Which areas of the community, such as Major Transit Station Areas, Urban Growth Centres, corridors and other potential strategic growth areas, should be the primary focus for new houses and apartments? Why?

Response: UGCs, MTSAs and other strategic growth nodes and corridors should be the primary focus for new growth. The order of priority could be as follows:

- UGCs on Priority Transit Corridor (2031)
- UGCs (2031)
- MTSAs on Priority Transit Corridor (2041)
- MTSAs (2041)
- Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) on Regional Transit Priority Corridors
- Other SGAs

Why:

- Makes the best use of existing infrastructure and infrastructure investment
- Facilitates development of a regional transit network, particularly higher-order corridors and generally enhance transit viability over the entire region – which is an important factor in reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion
- Facilitates increased active transportation in our communities (walking, biking, rolling, etc.) – which has health benefits as well as contributing to the reduction of traffic congestion and carbon emissions
- Minimizes or reduces our need to build over prime agricultural land and/or natural heritage areas through settlement area expansion.

17. As the Region plans to accommodate new growth, should it focus on intensification of existing built up areas or on expansion into agricultural and natural areas? What is an appropriate balance?

Response: The Region should focus on intensification of built-up areas so that there is no need to expand onto agricultural and natural areas (see answer to #16 above).

18. How can the Regional Official Plan support a variety of mobility options to ensure integration of transportation and land use planning in growth areas?

Response:

- Incorporate “complete streets” design into all regional roads, provide road cross-sections that provide adequate space for pedestrians, separated cycle paths,

transit-only corridors (i.e. bus-only lanes or right-of-ways with traffic-signal priority).

- Dedicate the majority of space within Regional road right-of-ways to transit and active transportation modes instead of private automobiles
- Direct the majority of growth in the Region to nodes and corridors to support a Region-wide system of higher-order transit
- Direct the majority of job growth to areas well-served by 400-series highways (i.e. to facilitate efficient goods movement) as well as MTSAs, which integrate jobs with residential living in mixed-use, complete communities as part of a higher-order transit network

19. Are there opportunities for the Regional Official Plan to strengthen policies for ensuring adequate parks and open spaces near growth areas?

Response: Municipalities should undertake planning to better understand parks and open space types and needs within and adjacent to strategic growth areas.

20. How can the Regional Official Plan support employment growth and economic activity in Halton Region?

Response: The Region should direct the majority of job growth to areas well-served by 400-series highways (i.e. to facilitate efficient goods movement) as well as MTSAs, which integrate jobs with residential living in mixed-use, complete communities as part of a higher-order transit network

21. Halton's Employment Areas are protected for employment uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and offices. How should the Region balance protecting these Employment Areas with potential conversions to allow residential uses or a broader mix of uses?

Response:

- Where potential conversions occur along existing or planned higher-order transit corridors, policies should facilitate the integration of appropriate jobs with residential living in mixed-use, complete communities as part of a higher-order transit network – such as MTSAs
- Policies could be incorporated for these areas that require a minimum amount of employment floor area to be built before residential uses will be permitted

- Areas along 400-series highways or other areas conducive to efficient goods movement that are NOT along existing or planned transit corridors should continue to be protected for employment jobs that are not generally compatible with residential uses.

22. The introduction of new sensitive land uses within or adjacent to Employment Areas could disrupt employment lands being used for a full range of business and/or industrial purposes. Are there other land use compatibility considerations that are important when considering where employment conversions should take place to protect existing and planned industry?

Response: The Region's **guidelines** for appropriate separation distances should align with, or simply defer to, the Provinces D6 guidelines. When the D6 guidelines are updated, a revision to Regional policies would not be necessary.

23. Having appropriate separation distances between employment uses and sensitive land uses (residential, etc.) is important for ensuring land use compatibility. What should be considered when determining an appropriate separation distance?

Response: The Region's guidelines for appropriate separation distances should align with, or simply defer to, the Provinces D6 guidelines. When the D6 guidelines are updated, a revision to Regional policies would not be necessary.

While separation distances are often the initial mitigation strategy to be proposed, in compact environments such as UGCs and MTSAs, there is a toolbox of other mitigation strategies that could be utilized where separation distances are not necessarily the ONLY (or even the most-desirable) mitigation strategy.

Regional policies should recognize that there are other mitigation strategies that can be used in any given situation, including new mitigation strategies yet to be developed.

Simply implementing a separation distance as the only strategy does not facilitate the ability to implement alternative and/or new strategies in the future.

Regional policies should allow for the use of alternative mitigation strategies based on additional site-specific investigation on a case-by-case basis through individual development applications and/or special area studies.