



**SUBJECT: Submission related to the Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017**

**TO: Planning and Development Committee**

**FROM: Department of City Building - Planning Building and Culture**

Report Number:PB-18-19

Wards Affected:all

File Numbers:552-08

Date to Committee:February 27, 2019

Date toCouncil:March 25, 2019

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### **Recommendation:**

Receive and file department of city building report PB-18-19 and its appendices regarding the City of Burlington Submission on the Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017; and

Direct the Director of City Building to submit the appendices to department of city building report PB-18-19 as the City of Burlington Submission on the Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 by the comment submission deadline of February 28, 2019; and

Direct the Director of City Building to provide any additional comments to the Province, if any, upon Council approval on March 25, 2019.

### **Purpose:**

To provide Council with an overview of proposed amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 and other associated modifications to Ontario Regulations. The report and its attachments are recommended to be forwarded to the Province by the deadline of February 28<sup>th</sup> and are to be considered the City's submission.

## **Background and Discussion:**

On February 27, 2015, the Government of Ontario initiated a co-ordinated review of the province's four land use plans: the Greenbelt Plan; the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe; the Niagara Escarpment Plan; and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Together these plans manage growth and align land use planning and infrastructure; protect agricultural lands and the natural environment; address climate change and build resilient communities; foster healthy, livable inclusive communities and support economic development. All of these plans directly affect the City of Burlington with the exception of Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

In September 2016, in response to the release of the draft provincial plans the Halton Area Planning Partnership prepared a submission. For more details on the submission and the issues specific to Burlington reference can be made to staff report [PB-71-16 Halton Area Planning Partnership \(HAPP\) Joint Submission related to the Provincial Land Use Plans Coordinated Review](#).

In May 2017, as the result of the coordinated Provincial Plan Review, a revised Growth Plan was released. The Growth Plan, 2017 reinforced the principles of the Growth Plan, 2006 and clarified policies. The modifications also gave direction for the preparation of a wide variety of guidance material to support municipalities in implementing the Plan.

After the Provincial election concerns were raised by various stakeholders prompting a scoped review of the Growth Plan, 2017.

## **Municipal, Development, and Other Stakeholder Engagement**

In the late summer and fall of 2018 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) convened a series of focus groups to discuss a range of issues. The sessions were convened after a number of delegations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing identified challenges within the Planning system, including the following:

- Employment Land Planning
- Natural Heritage and Agricultural Systems
- Intensification and Designated Greenfield Targets
- Major Transit Station Areas
- Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

These sessions brought various stakeholders together to discuss challenges, or perceived challenges with the policies of the Growth Plan with the intent of developing concrete solutions. The range of solutions provided by stakeholders ranged from changes to legislation, regulations, and modifications to Provincial Plans. It would be reasonable to expect that further changes may be brought forward to support the

directions proposed in amendment 1 or to address other issues flagged through the consultation.

### **Amendment 1 and Modifications to Regulations**

On January 15, 2019 the Ontario Growth Secretariat released four separate postings on the Environmental Registry. All four proposals work together to present proposed amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. The Province identified that the purpose of the proposed changes is to streamline growth management planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to achieve the following outcomes:

- **More Streamlined Process:** Provide greater flexibility so that municipalities will be able to move forward faster on the implementation of the Plan and meet the deadline to update their official plan to conform with the Plan by July 1, 2022.
- **More Land for Housing:** Respect the ability of local governments to make decisions about when and where to add new land for housing, to ensure that there is enough housing supply to meet demand.
- **More Housing and Jobs near Transit:** A more flexible framework for focusing investments around transit infrastructure will enable municipalities to plan to increase the supply of housing and jobs near transit faster and more effectively.
- **Greater Local Autonomy and Flexibility for Municipalities:** Ensuring that municipalities will have the ability to implement the Plan in a manner that better reflects their local context while protecting the Greenbelt.

The four postings relate to the following separate, but connected issues:

- Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 ([ERO-013-4504](#))
- Proposed Modifications to O.Reg 311/06 (Transitional Matters- Growth Plan) ([ERO-013-4505](#))
- Proposed Framework for Provincially Significant Employment Zones ([ERO-013-4506](#))
- Proposed Modifications to O.Reg 525/97 (Exemption from Approval – Official Plan Amendments) ([ERO-013-4507](#))

A list of key proposed changes by theme is provided below:

- Employment Planning:
  - Identifies and maps Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ) within which lands can only be converted through a municipal comprehensive review (MCR) process;

- Allows for one-time conversion of employment areas outside of the proposed PSEZ;
- Allows for addition of employment areas prior to the next municipal comprehensive review;
- Removes the concept of prime employment areas; and,
- Removes the requirement for municipalities to complete an employment strategy as part of the MCR, it is replaced with requirements to establish multiple employment density targets.
- Settlement Area Boundaries
  - Allows for the adjustment or expansion of settlement areas outside of an MCR process, subject to certain criteria;
  - Allows adjustments where it would result in no net increase to the size of the settlement areas; and,
  - Allows expansions where the expansion is no larger than 40 hectares.
- Major Transit Station Areas
  - Allows upper- and single-tier municipalities to delineate major transit station areas (from a previous radius of 500m to a new range of 500 – 800 m) in advance of an MCR through the Protected Major Transit Station Areas tool under the *Planning Act*; and,
  - Simplifies the process and criteria for establishing alternative density targets.
- Intensification and Designated Greenfield Area Density Targets
  - Lowers the minimum density target for designated greenfield area, which in Halton Region would lower the number of residents and jobs per hectare from 60 to 50;
  - Lowers the minimum intensification target, which in Halton Region would lower the percentage of residential units occurring within the built boundary from 60% to 50%; and,
  - Simplifies the criteria for requesting alternative targets.
- Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System
  - Clarifies that provincial mapping of the agricultural land base and the natural heritage system for the Growth Plan would not apply until implemented in upper- and single-tier official plans;
  - Clarifies that Growth Plan policies for the Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System would apply to municipal mapping; and,
  - Allows municipalities to refine and implement mapping in advance of the next MCR.
- Rural Settlements
  - Establishes a new term “rural settlements”; and,

- Allows minor adjustments to the boundaries of rural settlement outside of an MCR subject to criteria, however, as this policy applies only to settlements outside of the Greenbelt Area it is not applicable in Halton.

## **Submission**

Please find attached Appendix A, Submission to the Province on Amendment #1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017, including proposed modifications to regulations.

## **Proposed Timeframe for Implementation**

When the Growth Plan, 2017 was released the Minister established July 1, 2022 as the alternative date for upper and single-tier official plans to be brought into conformity. Amendment 1 proposes that the same timeline be maintained. For lower tier municipalities, the conformity date would be within one year of the applicable upper-tier official plan taking effect.

## **Strategy/process**

Typically, a submission to the Province on a matter of Provincial planning would be considered as part of a Halton Area Planning Partnership (HAPP) joint submission. Given the very limited time frame for consultation there was no opportunity to coordinate a joint submission.

The covering letter will identify that given the very tight timeframes set for consultation that the City of Burlington will reserve the opportunity to forward additional comments after Council approval of the report on March 25, 2019.

## **Options considered**

None.

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## **Financial Matters:**

Not applicable.

## **Total Financial Impact**

Not applicable.

## **Source of Funding**

Not applicable.

## **Other Resource Impacts**

Not applicable.

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## **Connections:**

### **Consultation**

Given the short time frame for comments only limited consultation was possible. An interdepartmental group met to discuss the high-level themes, key issues and to gather opinions on the submission. Comments were incorporated into the submission.

In addition, staff discussed issues with staff representatives from the Halton Area Planning Partnership to identify mutual concerns and discuss approaches for responses to the Province.

### **Burlington Economic Development Corporation**

BEDC supports the comments made with regard to the lack of clarity related to the intent and methodology applied in developing the proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zone (PSEZ) mapping.

Protecting employment lands in traditional employment areas is critical to ensuring that Burlington has sufficient employment lands to support economic growth. However, the proposed PSEZ mapping within the City's identified Mobility Hub study areas has raised significant concerns related to the impact on the ability to achieve the employment growth vision for these areas. The Mobility Hubs are being planned as mixed-use areas that will have significant new employment opportunities and residential development.

The existing process for considering employment conversions takes a significant amount of time, and includes uncertainty related to achieving employment outcomes. This additional constraint in the form of the PSEZ mapping could limit growth of the economy even further.

BEDC supports the comments attached and suggests further that a separate policy be instituted for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) being planned within the PSEZ. The MTSAs could have policies that allow lower-tier municipalities to undertake employment conversion needed to achieve the increased employment and residential development required to remain competitive in attracting employment in mixed use, amenity rich, transit connected environments.

### **Amendment 1 Information Session**

A limited number of staff were invited to attend an information session on Amendment 1 on February 20, 2019.

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### **Public Engagement Matters:**

Council is being engaged on the matters that should form part of the City's submission related to Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017.

Members of the public can submit comments to the Province through the Environmental Registry of Ontario. The ERO numbers are listed above.

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### **Conclusion:**

The modifications proposed within Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 cross a variety of subjects. The City applauds the Province for identifying these key areas for change. A number of significant concerns with the proposed policy amendments and the Provincially Significant Employment Zones mapping along with proposed solutions have been detailed in a series of attachments that together with this report form the submission to the Province.

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Respectfully submitted,

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### **Appendices:**

- A. Submission to Province on Amendment #1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017

Appendix A-1: Detailed Comments

Appendix A-2: Map: Comparison of Halton Region Employment Area overlay with Draft Provincially Significant Employment Zones mapping.

Appendix A-3: Provincially Significant Employment Zones Mapping Issues

**Notifications:**

Region of Halton

Town of Oakville

Town of Milton

Town of Halton Hills

**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, Director of Finance and Director of Legal. Final approval is by the City Manager.