



## DRAFT for Consent AGENDA

June 7, 2021

### Re: Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) – Growth Concepts Questionnaire

The members of the Burlington Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (SDC) are volunteer citizens who have been appointed by Council to advise on issues that relate to sustainable development. The SDC would like to offer the following response with comments to Halton Region's Growth Concepts Questionnaire.

<https://webaps2019.halton.ca/selectsurvey/TakeSurvey.aspx?PageNumber=1&SurveyID=72LI8o3K#>

#### Executive Summary

The ROPR outlines five concepts that accommodate growth in Halton Region through the year 2051. Included in these five concepts is a recent addition, "Concept 3B", which was added by Regional Council on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2021 and presents a concept that enables growth **without** expanding on Halton's existing settlement boundary area.

The Burlington SDC recommends Concept 3B as the plan takes the firmest stance against new greenfield expansion and aligns closest to the City of Burlington's own growth plans. However, our recommendation is conditional upon a well thought out strategy for implementation, which should be clearly outlined.

Burlington plays a lead role because it has firmed up the urban boundary first before the other municipalities in the region. We acknowledge that there may be less support for firm urban boundaries from the municipalities which will experience most of the Region's growth up to 2051 and therefore face the majority of the impacts (positive or negative) relating to growth.

We request the Region take this feedback into consideration when selecting which Growth Concept to implement and encourage them to select a concept which favours the least amount of greenfield expansion possible.

#### Growth Concepts Questionnaire Response

(Questions 1 through 6 cover collection of personal information.)

7. Many factors affect how individuals want to see the Region grow. Please help us understand what is most important to you by rating each of the following factors below.

Question	Response	Comments
Create communities with a full range of housing, jobs and services	Very Important	Critical that all communities in Halton have a variety of housing options available, in addition to necessary services / amenities and jobs.
Maximize use of land in existing urban areas to  Minimize expansion into agricultural or rural areas	Very Important	Continued expansion of urbanized areas is resource-intensive and requires additional urban services. There is considerable underutilized land in Halton already designated for housing and for employment. Much of the land in Halton Region's cities and towns is paved for parking of private automobiles. Single story, single-use retail dominates the landscape, these areas could facilitate considerable additional housing and/or jobs with a less automobile-dependent urban structure. Organic growth of cities prior to the automotive era enabled multiple uses to co-exist and thrive in close proximity to one another. We need to get back to that. This is the key driver for support of Concept 3B.
Preservation of farm land and other rural lands	Very Important	Minimize incursion onto farm and rural lands, particularly quality farmlands. Once it's gone, it is gone forever.
Protection of the natural environment	Very important	Protection of Halton's rich biodiversity is a core value in Burlington and across the Region.
Preservation of aggregate resource areas (for example areas with gravel resources) for potential extraction	Important	Aggregate is a key resource required to facilitate the growth of the region. Local sources for aggregate reduce emissions relating to their transport and are more fiscally sustainable than transporting aggregates long distances. Increasing the use of recycled and/or non-virgin sourced materials in the construction process is essential, as is the proper stewardship of lands designated for aggregate extraction is essential. The more spread-out growth we enable, the more aggregate resources will be required.

Flexibility and diversity of job/ career options	Important	Job and career options will ultimately be located in proximity to talent, who will choose to reside in a place which is affordable and has the amenities they require. Halton must focus on increasing accessibility to talent from beyond the region, particularly through improvements to transit.
Access to affordable housing	Very Important	A lack of affordable housing options in Halton will prevent the region from achieving its growth targets, encourage development further outside the Greenbelt, deter employers from locating in the Region and will strain demand for transportation networks due to inter-regional travel.
Having public transit to support growth	Very Important	Considerable upgrades to public transit are required to make Halton competitive with other regions for major employment centres including head offices, as well as connecting residents to employment both within and outside the Region.
Minimizing municipal infrastructure costs (for example, roads and water/waste water)	Important	Economic sustainability is a critical success factor for the Region. Urban infill growth is considerably more economically efficient than greenfield growth, and plans must recognize the full cost of growth at both the municipality and the region level. The greater the level of greenfield expansion permitted, the more resources will be required to provide services and roads to the new homes / jobs. These resources bear an increasing cost not only to construct, but to maintain over their useful life.
Adapting to climate change	Very important	While mitigation of climate change is of utmost priority to enable the continued survival of our species, considerable impacts from climate change are inevitable and the Region must adapt to this reality.
Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Very Important	In order to reduce the risk of potentially catastrophic warming (> 1.5 degrees Celsius), a global reduction of 50% of all GHG emissions by 2030, and 100% of all GHG emissions by 2050 is required, along with further carbon storage or sequestration after that. It is important to keep in mind that this is a global target. As one of the wealthiest and most profligate GHG

		emitters, Halton Region's duty must go well beyond the global minimum requirement.
The amount of growth directed to areas that can accommodate intensification (for example Major Transit Station Areas)	Important	Most urban areas within Halton can accommodate intensification. The challenge is the type and scale of intensification in each area. Older residential areas run the risk of demographic stagnation and loss of key services such as schools should they fail to experience renewal and accommodate modest intensification. This can take the form of 'missing middle' type housing, ADU's, or even small scale, walking oriented services (e.g. cafes, salons, daycares, pubs) located within mature neighbourhoods. While MTSA's will grow in a taller, denser fashion, care must be taken to ensure that needed local services are available and accessible without the need for a car, while also ensuring that the MTSA's density does not end up attracting core services away from existing urbanized areas (e.g. Downtown).
Location of urban expansion areas (for example, new urban lands if required)	Very Important	Recommendation would be to limit expansion of the urban boundary as tightly as is possible (Concept 3B). Given the substantial amount of underutilized land that exists in the Region, further boundary expansion at this time would hinder the Region and the local municipalities from addressing the climate emergency and exacerbate their fiscal challenges and social inequalities.

8. Would you like to explain or provide more information about your response? If not, please skip and move onto the next question.

The one element that ties all these requirements together is automobile dependency. For much of the post-war period, Halton has continued to expand under the assumption that everything we do must accommodate and facilitate automobiles. This type of growth has substantial costs in terms of its impact on land and water use, on the health and well-being of citizens, the increasing time spent commuting, the significant environmental challenges we face, the cost of housing, as well as impairing other modes of travel from being practical. Many of the Region's practices and policies still do not recognize or only pay lip-service to reducing car-dependence. This needs to be a top priority focus if the Region is to successfully accomplish its growth goals within the current urban boundaries, while also meeting the requirements posed by the Climate Emergency declared by the Region in September 2019.

9. Providing a full range of housing options throughout Halton is important when considering how best to plan for growth to 2051. This means a greater mix of housing unit types and densities (for example, more apartment buildings and fewer single detached houses) in newly developed areas compared to existing neighbourhoods in Halton. This will also mean capitalizing on opportunities for redevelopment of underutilized sites in existing built-up areas (for example, apartments built through redevelopment).

Do you support increased density development as outlined above:

(i) in newly developed areas?	With some conditions, see below.
(ii) in existing communities/neighbourhoods?	With some conditions, see below.

10. Would you like to explain or provide more information about your response? If not, please skip and move onto the next question.

Increasing density through redevelopment is an important strategy which will certainly draw mixed opinions. To be successful we need to ensure increased density development has the necessary infrastructure services and amenities required to support it. This may require upgrading infrastructure within existing communities in order to enable densification. We must recognize that business-as-usual developments of single-dwelling / low-density subdivisions are no longer feasible in Halton Region. Our current growth plans require a new way of thinking with tough decisions along the way to ensure 2051 is designed for the needs and goals of the future.

11, 12 and 13. Select your preferred concept (with comments):

The Burlington SDC recommends Concept 3B as the plan takes the firmest stance against new greenfield expansion and aligns closest to the City of Burlington's own growth plans. However, our recommendation is conditional upon a well thought out strategy for implementation, which should be clearly outlined.

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We request the Region take this feedback into consideration when selecting which Growth Concept to implement and encourage them to select a concept which favours the least amount of greenfield expansion possible.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Burlington Sustainable Development Committee (SDC)

Cc:

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