

# Planning for Burlington's Major Transit Station Areas: What you Need to Know

September 2021



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## Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b>	4
1.1 What is the Purpose of this Report?	4
1.2 Why is the City Planning in Major Transit Station Areas?	5
1.3 What is the Purpose of an Area-Specific Plan?	9
<b>2 Governing Policies and their Role in the Outcome</b>	10
2.1 What is the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe?	10
2.2 How does the Halton Region Official Plan Guide Planning in Major Transit Station Areas?	11
2.3 Halton Region’s Delineation of Burlington’s MTSA	13
2.4 What is the City’s Vision in the Official Plan, 2020?	17
2.5 Why the Change from Mobility Hub to MTSA?	18
<b>3 The Process: How Did We Get Here?</b>	19
3.1 The Official Plan Review / New Official Plan	19
3.2 Mobility Hubs Area-Specific Planning Study 2017-2019	19
3.3 What were the Objectives of the Mobility Hubs Study?	21
3.4 What Happened During the Mobility Hubs Study?	21
3.4.1 Visioning	22
3.4.2 Draft Land Use Concepts	23
3.4.3 Preferred Concepts	25
3.4.4 Draft Precinct Plans	25
3.5 What are the 2018 Draft Precinct Plans?	27
3.6 What did the City Hear During the Mobility Hubs Study	28
<b>4 The MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project</b>	31
4.1 What is Involved in the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project?	31
<b>5 Connections to Other Projects</b>	33
5.1 What is the Timing of the Region’s Official Plan Review?	33
5.2 Connections to the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project	33
<b>6 The Engagement Plan and What You Should Know</b>	35
6.1 What is an Engagement Plan?	35
6.2 What Does Meaningful Engagement Look Like?	35

6.3 What Does Meaningful Feedback/Input Look Like? .....	35
6.4 What You Should Know to Get Involved .....	36
<b>7 Next Steps</b> .....	<b>37</b>

# 1 Introduction

The City's new Official Plan contains policies to protect established neighbourhoods by planning to accommodate significant future population and employment growth in key areas, like Downtown and Uptown, along Plains Road and Fairview Street, existing retail areas, and around GO Stations – Burlington's 'Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)'. City staff are working with stakeholders, the public and a consultant team to develop area-specific plans (ASPs) for the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO MTSAs to continue the community's vision for Burlington and community responsive growth management.

This work is not new. The City started with the Mobility Hubs Study in 2017-2019 to inform area-specific planning work for the three GO Station areas.

Area-specific planning work has resumed and is now called the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project. The City will build upon and advance the work done in the Mobility Hubs Study. The scope of work is expected to be completed by December 2022. This includes:

- the completion of all required technical studies;
- hosting more public and stakeholder engagement opportunities;
- the completion of three area-specific plans;
- the preparation of implementing Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendments;
- and,
- other implementation strategies, as required.

## 1.1 What is the Purpose of this Report?

This report is to provide you with a background of the previous Mobility Hubs Study and the current MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project. This report will:

- provide background on how we got here;
- describe the objectives of the area-specific plans;
- describe the study process;
- describe the key Provincial, Regional and City policies inform and guide growth in MTSAs;
- summarize the public events during the Mobility Hubs Study and what we heard;

- explain connections to other ongoing projects;
- describe the purpose of the Engagement Plan; and
- set out the next steps.

A companion document to this background report is the Engagement Plan. It provides a roadmap of the engagement activities that will take place during the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project, highlighting when engagement will take place, who will be engaged and the level of engagement. The plan also outlines what the City, the public and stakeholders can influence.

Along with this background report, there are additional resources to help orient you to the previous Mobility Hubs Study and the current MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project, including two recent steps in the project:

- **May 17, 2021 Council Workshop** – City staff provided an overview of area-specific planning work undertaken through the Mobility Hubs Study 2017-2019 and a preliminary overview of MTSA Area-Specific Planning workplan, timing and engagement. Please see the May 17 Council Workshop Meeting [Revised Agenda](#) for a copy of the staff presentation and video of the meeting.
- **June 8, 2021 Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility (CPRM) Committee Meeting** – City staff delivered a draft project workplan for approval and presented a draft public engagement plan. Please see the June 8 [CPRM Meeting Addendum](#) for a copy of staff report PL-27-21, report appendices, staff presentation and video of the meeting.

## 1.2 Why is the City Planning in Major Transit Station Areas?

Burlington is in a new phase of city-building, with future growth occurring mainly through intensification targeted to specific areas of the city within the existing urban area.

To manage this growth efficiently, the City is developing area-specific plans (ASPs) for the areas around Burlington's three GO Stations. This includes Aldershot GO MTSA, Appleby GO MTSA and the adjusted Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre/Burlington GO MTSA as adopted through Regional Official Plan Amendment 48 (ROPA 48) (subject to Minister approval). See Figures 1, 2 and 3 for maps of the MTSA boundaries.

An MTSA is the area within 500 to 800-metres of a higher order transit station (Burlington's GO Stations), representing about a 10-minute walk.

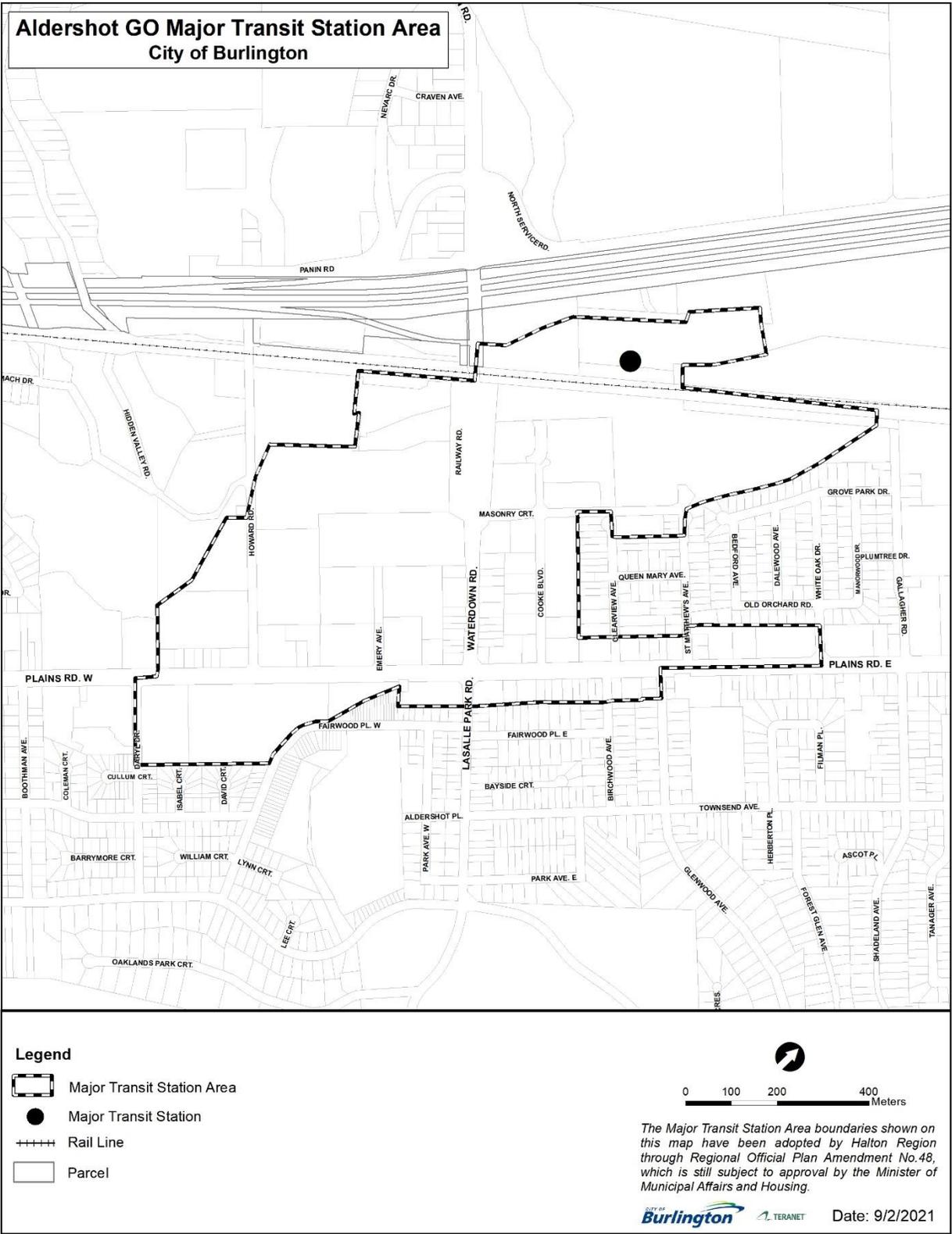


Figure 1: Map of the Aldershot GO Major Transit Station Area

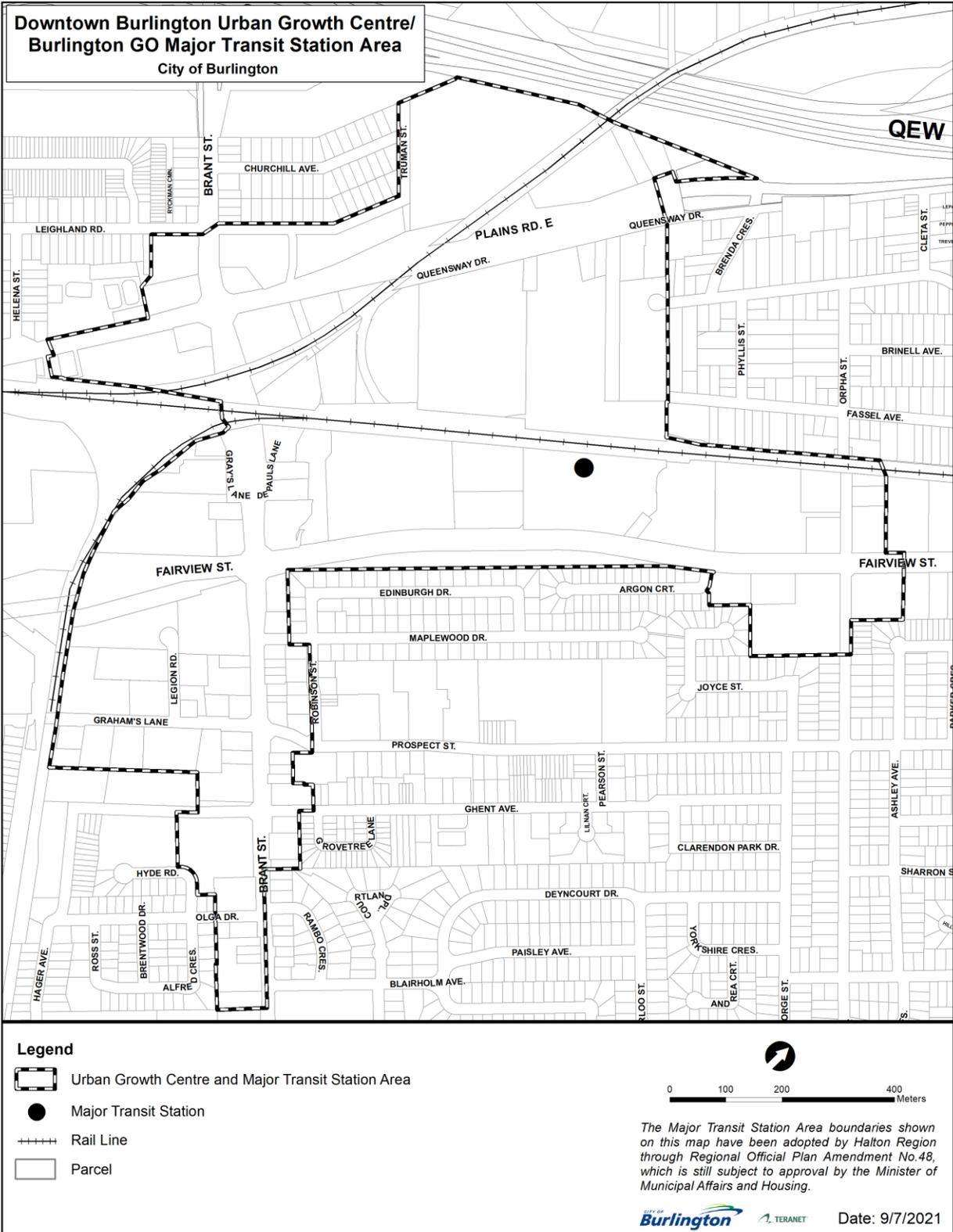


Figure 2: Map of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre/Burlington GO Major Transit Station Area

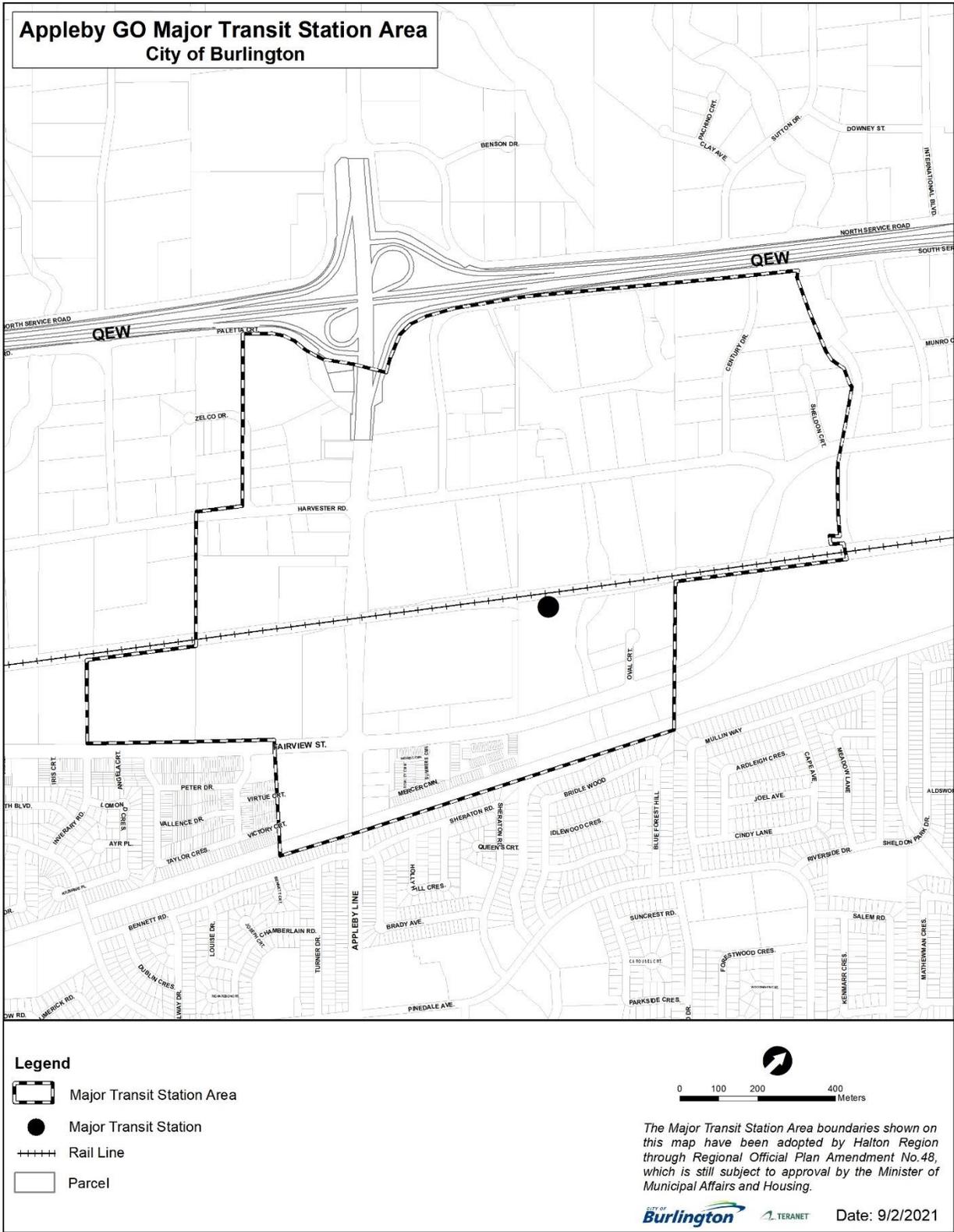


Figure 3: Map of the Appleby GO Major Transit Station Area

The MTSA ASPs will direct the highest levels of future growth to strategic areas close to transit, services and amenities and will outline a plan to accommodate new jobs, services and community amenities, like parks, to support new and existing residents and businesses in Burlington. This will allow more people to live, connect, work and play within the existing urban area, in keeping with the directions of Burlington's 2015-2040 Strategic Plan, the Halton Region Official Plan and applicable Provincial Plans. The project will guide future development and investment in Burlington's MTSA's to create complete communities over the long-term.

### 1.3 What is the Purpose of an Area-Specific Plan?

An Area-Specific Plan (ASP), sometimes called a Secondary Plan, contains policies to guide future development and investment within a specific geographic area to plan for items such as:

- the location and form of new housing, offices, industry and shops;
- the anticipated needs for services such as parks, streets, watermains, sewers, school and community amenities;
- opportunities for community improvement initiatives; and
- community identity, place-making and urban design.

ASPs are informed by:

- Public input;
- Council decisions;
- Recommendations from City staff and partner agencies;
- Provincial laws, policies and guidelines;
- Physical geography and environmental constraints; and,
- Technical studies regarding servicing, land use compatibility, transportation, market analysis etc.

ASPs are typically implemented through an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA).

## 2 Governing Policies and their Role in the Outcome

Land use planning helps each community to set development goals while keeping social, economic and environmental factors in mind. It also balances the interests of individual property owners with the wider interests of the whole community. In Burlington the development goals of the municipality are found within the Official Plan.

Land use planning in Ontario is guided by strong top-down direction from the Province of Ontario. There are a few documents that provide the City, and all municipalities, direction in preparing land use plans. All the way from legislation like the Planning Act to Provincial Plans and Regional and Local Official Plans there is a focus on integrating land use planning and transportation planning to support public transit using existing or planned infrastructure. This direction will inform the preparation of the area-specific plans for Burlington's MTSAs.

### 2.1 What is the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe?

The [Planning Act](#) is where the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario are set out. The Planning Act describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them. The Planning Act sets out the land use planning matters that are of Provincial interest that must be considered when decision makers, like City of Burlington Council are making planning decisions. These interests are very diverse and include providing a full range of housing, including affordable housing; providing employment opportunities; promoting development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians, and to promote built form (that is, the physical look of the private buildings) that are well-designed, encourages the development of a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.

The [Provincial Policy Statement](#) (PPS) applies throughout the Province and supports a comprehensive, integrated and long term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages between land use and how we get around, where we live, work and play. The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development.

The PPS requires that municipalities plan for efficient development patterns make best use of land and public investment in infrastructure and public service facilities. These land use patterns promote a mix of housing, including affordable housing, employment, recreation, parks and open spaces, and transportation choices that increase the use of

active transportation and transit before other modes of travel. A key part of supporting the increased use of active transportation and transit is to optimize existing investments in transit, such as the investments made by the Province in GO Rail service and in the existing GO stations in the City. All land use decisions must be consistent with the PPS.

[A Place to Grow: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) is the Province's plan for Growth and development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Plan sets out a vision for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and establishes the long-term framework for where, and how, the region will grow. The Growth Plan supports the achievement of complete communities with access to transit networks, protected employment zones and an increase in the amount and variety of housing available. The Growth Plan vision includes building complete communities in a way that transit and active transportation will be practical elements of our urban transportation system.

The Growth Plan directs growth to the urban area and prioritizes intensification in strategic growth areas including Urban Growth Centres and MTSAs. For both Urban Growth Centres (UGCs) and MTSAs on the Growth Plan Schedule 5 priority transit corridor (Lakeshore West GO rail line to Burlington GO) minimum density targets are established in the Growth Plan. These targets serve as a guide for municipalities to establish more detailed land use plans. These plans must consider a wide range of issues in order to prepare policies that set out permitted uses, heights and other development standards including how new development will be guided to transition to existing adjacent developed areas. All planning decisions must conform to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

## 2.2 How does the Halton Region Official Plan Guide Planning in Major Transit Station Areas?

The Region of Halton's Official Plan sets out a long-term vision for the Region that guides how development throughout Halton will happen to meet the current and future needs of businesses and residents. In addition to the vision, a set of goals and objectives are identified in the plan that establishes a Regional land use structure including broad categories such as settlement areas, an agricultural system and a natural heritage system. Settlement areas consist of the urban area where existing and

### **What is a Complete Community?**

A complete community offers and supports opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access the necessities for daily living, providing convenient access to a mix of jobs, shopping and personal services, housing, transportation options and public service facilities such as recreation and open space.

The area-specific plans will guide future development and investment in Burlington's MTSAs to create complete communities over the long-term.

future development is accommodated. The Regional land use structure ensures that growth is accommodated in a compact manner that supports the development of compact complete communities that are transit supportive and provide a range of choice in mobility options, while ensuring protection of agricultural areas and the natural heritage system.

The Regional structure accommodates growth in the urban area directing residential and employment densities to intensification areas such as UGCs and MTSAs that ensure the viability of existing and planned transit infrastructure and service, while promoting multi-modal connectivity to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The Regional Official Plan requires local municipalities to prepare detailed Official Plan Policies or Area Specific Plans for intensification areas.

Halton Region is currently completing its [Regional Official Plan Review](#) through theme areas including Integrated Growth Management, Climate Change, Natural Heritage, North Aldershot and Rural and Agricultural System. In July 2021, the first amendment was considered and adopted by Regional Council as part of the Integrated Growth Management Strategy called [Regional Official Plan Amendment \(ROPA\) 48](#). ROPA 48 defines and provides policy direction on elements of a Regional Urban Structure in conformity with the Growth Plan including strategic growth areas such as UGCs, MTSAs, Regional Nodes and Employment Areas.

ROPA 48 sets the boundaries for the MTSAs as well as provides minimum intensification targets that the City's MTSA area-specific plans must plan to achieve. ROPA 48 also provides direction to the local municipalities to complete area-specific plans for UGCs and MTSAs that not only identifies a minimum density target, but also identifies land uses to support complete communities while leveraging infrastructure investment and achieving transit supportive densities.

ROPA 48 set the following minimum density targets for Burlington's MTSAs:

- Downtown Burlington UGC / Burlington GO MTSA: 200 people and jobs combined per hectare planned to be achieved by 2031
- Aldershot GO MTSA: 150 people and jobs combined per hectare planned to be achieved beyond the 2051 planning horizon
- Appleby GO MTSA: 120 people and jobs combined per hectare planned to be achieved beyond the 2051 planning horizon (this alternative target is subject to Provincial approval)

Once approved by the Province, the MTSA boundaries and targets cannot be appealed. These minimum density targets must be planned for and implemented through the MTSA ASP Project to conform with Provincial and Regional policy.

ROPA 48 also identifies Burlington's three MTSA as Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) in alignment with Provincial and Regional plans and policies. PMTSA is a municipal tool to support higher order transit infrastructure around Major Transit Station Areas. The tool restricts appeals of certain required official plan policies and zoning such as transit-supportive densities and uses. Inclusionary Zoning is another tool restricted to PMTSAs which can allow a municipality to require a developer to include affordable housing units within a new development, when the necessary background is completed, and the tool is incorporated into an official plan. Burlington's MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project will develop a policy and zoning framework to address the legislative requirements of the Planning Act for PMTSAs.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is the approval authority of the Region's municipal comprehensive review. ROPA 48 was adopted by Regional Council in July 2021 and then forwarded to MMAH for approval.

### 2.3 Halton Region's Delineation of Burlington's Major Transit Station Areas

ROPA 48 adopted delineated boundaries for the Appleby GO, Downtown Burlington UGC/Burlington GO and Aldershot GO MTSA that differ from the City's 2017-2019 Mobility Hub study area boundaries. The MTSA boundaries delineated through ROPA 48 identify lands that must plan to accommodate minimum density targets for population and employment growth, as mandated by the Provincial Growth Plan. The Region's methodology for the delineation of the MTSA through ROPA 48 excluded areas such as natural heritage, parks, open space and mature residential neighbourhoods that were not anticipated to accommodate growth and intensification over time. Figures 4, 5 and 6 present comparisons between the MTSA boundaries and the 2017-2019 Mobility Hubs study area boundaries.

The MTSA Area-Specific Planning work will continue to consider the areas adjacent to the MTSA to identify and strengthen transportation connections to existing neighbourhoods, understand technical matters such as noise and air quality and identify adjacent land uses that would support complete communities such as parks and open spaces.

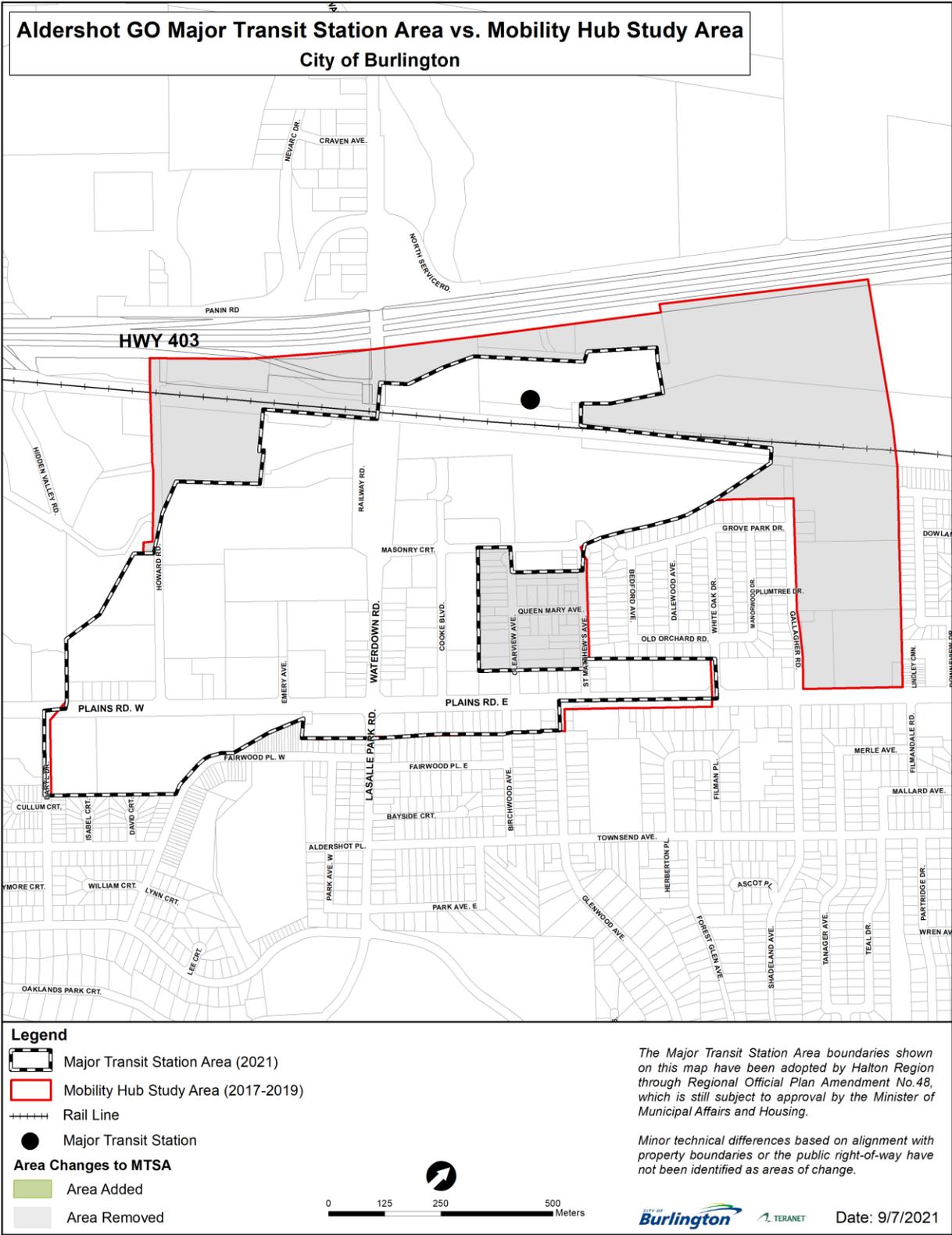


Figure 4: Comparison between the Aldershot GO MTSA boundaries and the 2017-2019 Mobility Hubs study area boundaries.

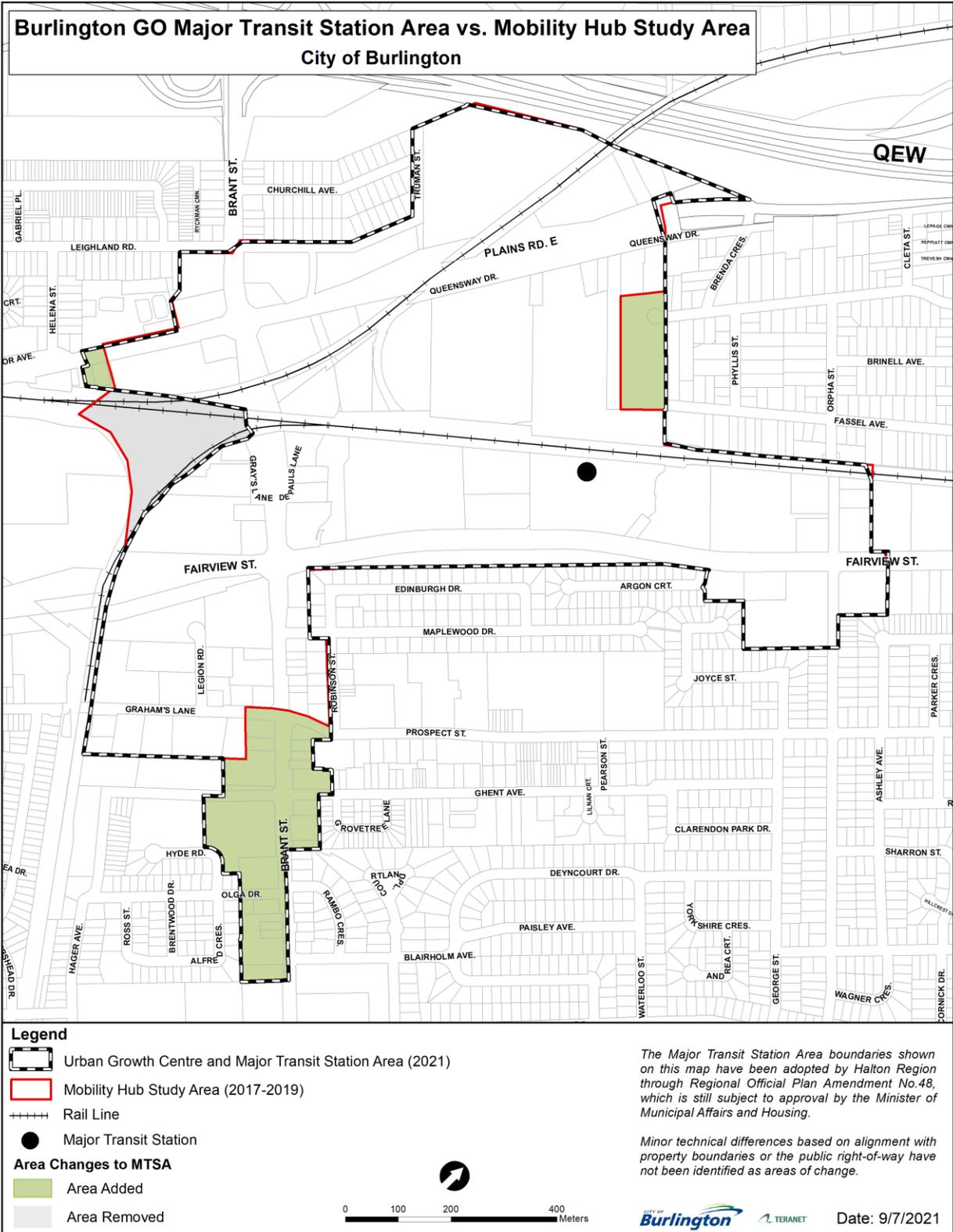


Figure 5: Comparison between the Downtown Burlington UGC/Burlington GO MTSA boundaries and the 2017-2019 Mobility Hubs study area boundaries.

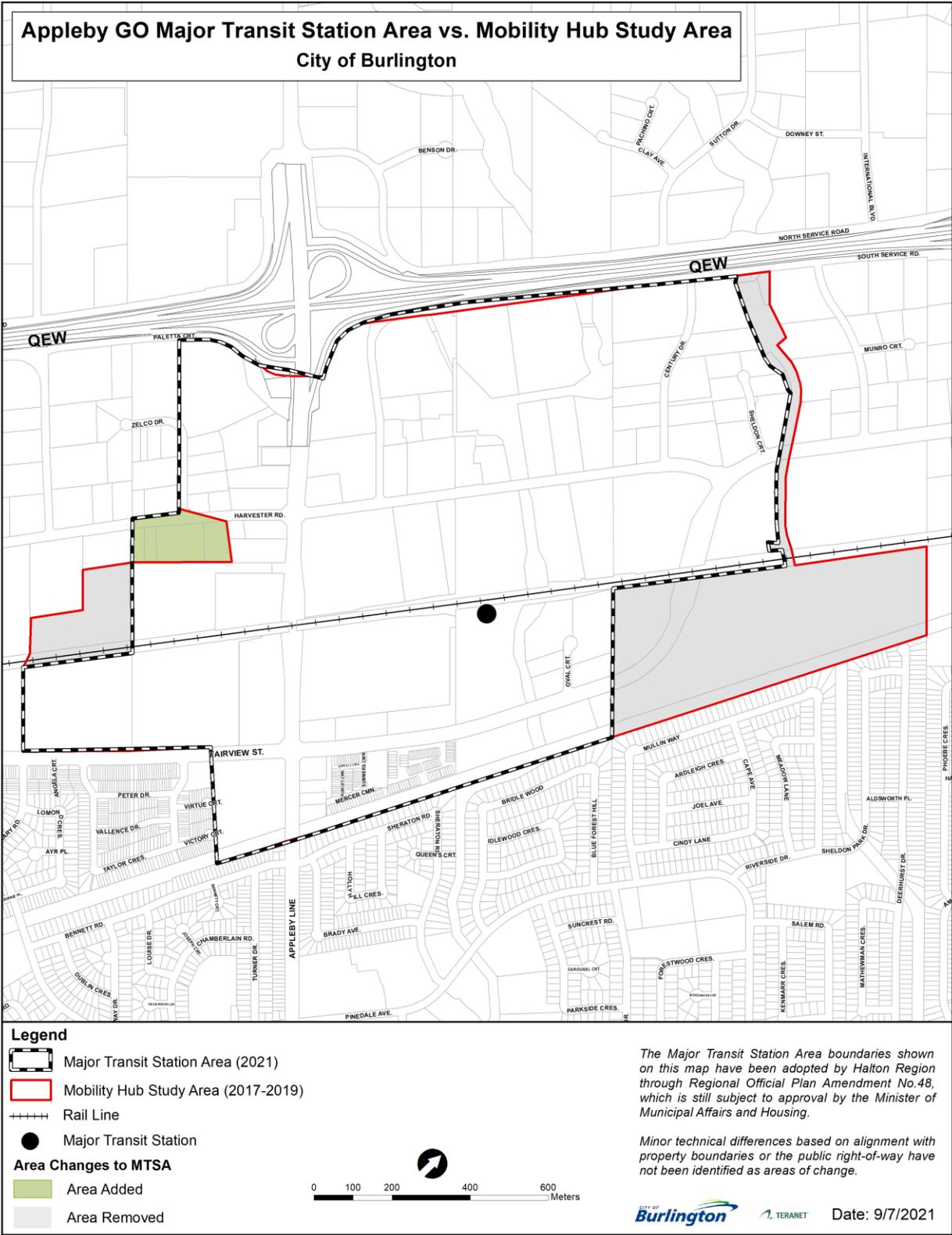


Figure 6: Comparison between the Appleby GO MTSA boundaries and the 2017-2019 Mobility Hubs study area boundaries.

## 2.4 What is the City's Vision in the Official Plan, 2020?

Burlington is shifting from building new greenfield communities to accommodating new residents and jobs within existing urban areas through intensification targeted within specific areas of the city. This targeted approach co-ordinates growth with infrastructure (either existing or planned) and ensures that the existing residential neighbourhoods are protected from significant change. The City, in the new Official Plan updated its previous vision for growth and intensification by establishing an Urban Structure and a Growth Framework and by refining existing land use policies.

The Urban Structure sets out the community vision for the Urban area by identifying distinct areas (including, for example, Mixed Use Intensification Areas, Residential Neighbourhood Areas, Natural Heritage System, Major Parks and Open Space). Each part of the Urban Structure has a role to play. Some elements ensure long term protection, while others support growth, intensification and appropriate transition over time.

The Growth Framework relies on both the Urban Structure and the more detailed land use policies of the Official Plan. The Growth Framework introduces a growth management strategy that set out where the City will and will not be planning to direct growth and intensification.

The Downtown, Uptown and areas around the Major Transit Stations are identified as Primary Growth Areas and together will experience the greatest degree of change.

The Primary Growth Areas:

- Are identified as priority locations for City-initiated area-specific planning and for investments in transit as well as other types of infrastructure and public service facilities, including parks to support population and employment growth.
- Are the most appropriate and predominant location for new tall buildings in accordance with the underlying land use designations, or the land use policies of an area-specific plan.
- Will support the frequent transit corridors and accommodate development that is compact, mixed use, and pedestrian-oriented in nature.

The MTSA ASP Project will provide that next level of detail to set out development standards like height and built form, and to build complete communities to guide development over the long term within the Major Transit Station Areas.

## 2.5 Why the Change from Mobility Hub to Major Transit Station Area?

The term Mobility Hub has changed significantly in its meaning over time. The term was found in Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan called *The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area* (2008). The Big Move acknowledged and reinforced the primacy of the Provincial Growth Plan. In defining the term Mobility Hub, The Big Move referenced the term Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA), which is a defined term in the Provincial Growth Plan.

Subsequently, Metrolinx prepared the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (2018) which replaced The Big Move and re-oriented the discussion around Mobility Hubs to focus on identifying Mobility Hubs on Priority Transit Corridors. The 2041 RTP defined Mobility Hubs as:

Mobility Hubs are Major Transit Station Areas at the intersection of two or more Frequent Rapid Transit Network routes, designed to support a high number of transit boardings and alightings, and facilitate seamless, efficient transfers between modes. They have and/or are planned to have a high density mix of jobs, residences, public services, and other land uses that encourage and support transit use and active transportation, or the potential to develop into areas with a high-density mix of land uses.

Mobility Hubs are a general planning concept focused on encouraging transit connectivity and mixed-use development, whereas through Growth Plan Policy, the Province sets land use planning guidance and mandatory targets for the number of people and jobs that must be planned for within MTSA's.

To avoid confusion between the two terms and to clarify the focus on meeting mandated Provincial requirements, the City is continuing this work as the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project, which will build upon and advance the work completed through the former Mobility Hubs Study.

## 3 The Process: How Did We Get Here?

### 3.1 The Official Plan Review / New Official Plan

The City commenced an Official Plan Review in 2011. The review included many studies, analysis and public engagement over an 8-year period including the preparation of a Mobility Hubs Opportunities and Constraints Study, Employment Land Study and Commercial Strategy Study.

Relevant to this process, the City worked with consultants from Brook McIlroy to complete the Mobility Hubs Opportunities and Constraints Study in 2014, which provided a high-level analysis of each of the City's Mobility Hubs and recommended the development of future area-specific planning work.

In 2016 it was determined that, due to the expanding scope of the City's Official Plan Review, the development of a New Official Plan was appropriate.

Burlington's new Official Plan was adopted by City Council on April 26, 2018 and approved, with modifications, by Halton Region on Nov. 30, 2020. The Official Plan included the approved modifications establish a comprehensive policy framework to a planning horizon of the year 2031. Burlington's new Official Plan provides clear direction on the City's long-term vision for sustainable growth, and communicates the City's priorities with respect to intensification, the wise use of resources and responding to the impacts of a changing climate. The new Official Plan is subject to a number of appeals.

You can learn more about the new Official Plan by going to:  
<http://www.burlington.ca/newop>.

### 3.2 Mobility Hubs Area-Specific Planning Study 2017-2019

The creation of area-specific plans (ASPs) for each of Burlington's four Mobility Hubs was identified as a key priority for City Council through the development of Burlington's 2015-2040 Strategic Plan. At that time, Mobility Hubs in Burlington were located around the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO Stations, as well as the Downtown.

The City's Strategic Plan contains specific guidance to direct growth and intensification to these areas, to undertake ASPs for each area, and enable walkable neighbourhoods in these areas. Further, the plan indicates that the City prioritizes the planning for each "mobility hub" which will consider and include design, jobs, housing servicing, public transportation, parks and green space.

In July 2016, Burlington City Council approved [staff report PB-48-16](#), which outlined a workplan, allocation of staff resources and required funding to simultaneously develop area-specific plans for the four Mobility Hubs, with the goal of supporting the future redevelopment and intensification of these areas.

In early 2017, work was initiated on the development of ASPs for the Aldershot, Burlington and Appleby GO Station areas and the Downtown which included visioning, public engagement and technical studies. The Mobility Hubs work was informed by the ongoing new Official Plan process such as the Employment lands review which made recommendations to re-designate city-designated employment lands in Mobility Hub areas as well as recommendations to the Region regarding conversion of some Regional employment lands.

The purpose of the Mobility Hub Study was to:

- Develop four area-specific plans supported by technical studies and Urban design to guide future growth and investment in the City's Mobility Hubs;
- Develop a vision for complete communities that are environmentally-friendly, infrastructure-efficient, walkable, bikeable, and supports local and regional transit with a mix of uses such as employment, housing, recreation and shopping;
- Conduct a comprehensive engagement process to gather feedback from the public, stakeholders and agencies; and,
- Inform a future implementation phase focused on the establishment of tools and strategies to implement each of the area-specific plans.

City staff worked on technical studies and engaged extensively with the public, stakeholders and agencies throughout visioning, development of the draft land use concepts and draft precinct plans. Through the course of the work staff were directed to prioritize the completion of the plan for the Downtown Mobility Hub to feed into the process for the adoption of the New Official Plan in early 2018.

In July 2018, staff brought forward draft precinct plans for the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO areas, to Council for feedback. The work was preliminary and subject to change because of on-going technical studies and community and stakeholder feedback.

In early 2019, the Mobility Hubs Study was placed on pause to enable the City to address other planning priorities, such as the City's Re-examination of the adopted Official Plan project, the Interim Control By-law Land Use Study and the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (Regional Official Plan Review).

As discussed above, in July 2021, Halton Regional Council adopted Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48, which set the boundaries, targets and policies for each Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) in the Region.

Now in 2021, the City has resumed this work as the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project. The project will build upon and advance the work undertaken through the Mobility Hubs Study.

### 3.3 What were the Objectives of the Mobility Hubs Study?

The Mobility Hubs Study was focused on planning for creating complete communities that are environmentally-friendly, infrastructure-efficient, walkable, bikeable, and support local and regional transit with a mix of uses such as employment, housing, recreation and shopping.

At the outset of the study, several City objectives were identified to guide the process including:

- Complete, compact and sustainable communities, with a mix of uses in walking distance of transit;
- Population and employment densities to support local and regional transit;
- Built form to achieve walkability, high-quality public spaces and design excellence;
- A balanced multi-modal transportation network;
- Land uses and building forms which are compatible with the surrounding area and achieve sensitive integration with existing areas;
- Mix of housing types to support affordability and attract a broad range of demographics, including families;
- New parks, trails, public realm and open spaces;
- Protection of natural heritage; and,
- Conservation of significant designated heritage resources.

These objectives will continue to guide the MTSA ASP Project and development of area-specific plans.

## 3.4 What Happened During the Mobility Hubs Study?

Throughout the Mobility Hubs Study there were four stages of work undertaken in each Mobility Hub, three of which were focused on engagement with the community and stakeholders:

- Visioning
- Draft Land Use Concepts
- Preferred Concepts
- Draft Precinct Plans

The purpose of engagement during the Mobility Hubs Study was to work with residents and stakeholders to build a community vision for what these GO Station areas could look like in the future.

A variety of communication and engagement tactics were used throughout the study to engage with the public.

### 3.4.1 Visioning

In May 2017, staff hosted workshop sessions in each Mobility Hub to hear from the community about their vision for the future of the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO Mobility Hubs. Public meetings were held for each Mobility Hub, which started with a presentation to set the context and study objectives as well as a voting exercise. At each event the room was divided into four stations to gather input on four main themes: Public Places, Private Spaces, Getting Around (Mobility), Community Features and a general “What Else?” station where participants were able to write down additional comments at any point throughout the evening. Participants would spend 10-15 minutes with a facilitator at each station and then circulated around the room. See Figures 7 and 8 for images of visioning workshops.

Along with the formal consultation session, ‘coffee shop consultations’ were held at local coffee establishments, where members of the public could meet with staff and discuss their vision for each study area. Additionally, the City hosted open houses which were open to the public, land owners and other interested parties to discuss their specific properties, interests or concerns with staff one on one.

The community input on the future for the Mobility Hub areas informed the development of draft land use concepts and overall vision.

Summaries of what the City heard from the visioning stage of consultation for [Aldershot GO](#), [Burlington GO](#) and [Appleby GO](#) Mobility Hubs are available at [www.burlington.ca/mobilityhubs](http://www.burlington.ca/mobilityhubs).

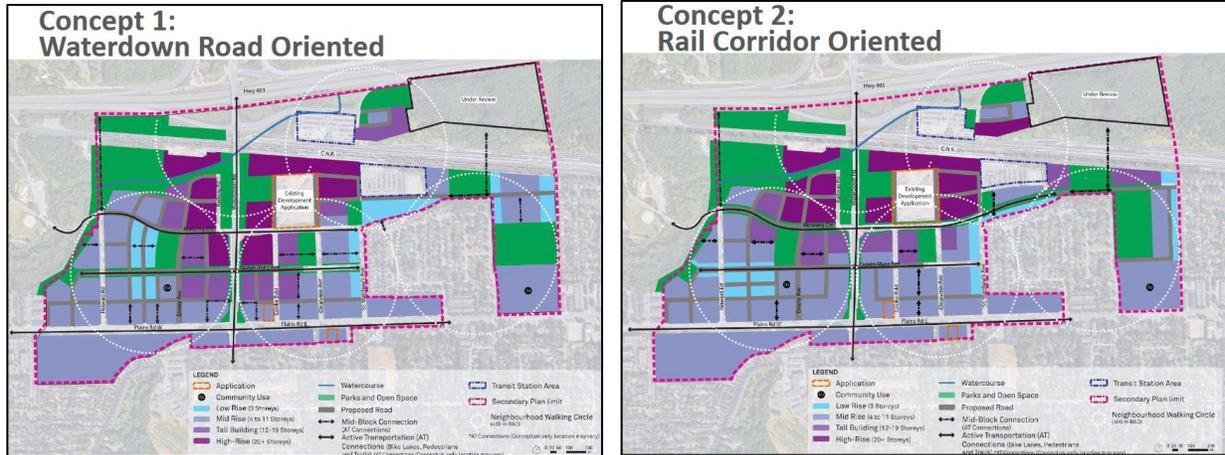


Figures 7 and 8: Participants providing feedback during Mobility Hub Visioning Workshops.

### 3.4.2 Draft Land Use Concepts

During the second stage of engagement in September 2017, members of the public were invited to attend events and provide feedback on two draft land use concepts for each of the GO Station areas. The development of draft land use concepts was informed by input from the visioning stage of engagement as well as on-going technical work.

The draft concepts were intended to prompt a conversation about where and how each area could grow over the long term. Each concept distributed height and density in different ways. The draft concepts were intended to help spark discussion and were highly conceptual. They were not intended to present options to choose, but to discuss elements of each that participants preferred. See Figures 9 and 10 for examples of draft land use concepts for the Aldershot GO Mobility Hub study area.



Figures 9 and 10: Example of draft land use concepts for the Aldershot GO Mobility Hub study area.

Workshop events were structured as a presentation and breakout groups. The presentation included an overview of what the City heard to date through visioning and a description of each draft concept. Following the presentation, a workshop was held where participants gathered in smaller groups of 8-10 people and were taken through a series of worksheets by a facilitator to discuss the concepts. See Figure 11 for an image of a draft land use concept workshop.

Along with the consultation workshops, drop in open houses were held at various locations in each Mobility Hub that were open to the public landowners and other interested parties to discuss specific properties, interests or concerns one on one with staff.

Consultation summaries from the draft land use concepts stage of the study are available as appendices A2, B2 and C2 of [PB-76-17](#) for the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO Mobility Hubs, respectively.

Feedback from engagement sessions on the draft land use concepts and what participants liked or didn't like informed the development of preferred concepts for each GO Station area.



Figure 11: Draft Land Use Concepts Workshop

### 3.4.3 Preferred Concepts

Building on the feedback received from the community, a high-level preferred concept for each GO Station Hub was presented to the Planning and Development Committee of Council for consideration on Dec. 4, 2017 through staff report [PB-76-17](#).

Informed by public and stakeholder engagement the preferred concepts presented were primarily intended to outline staff's recommendation, at a high level, for the location and distribution of building heights as well as preliminary streets, active transportation connections, parks and open space networks and the general location of community uses (or public service facilities) within the study boundaries.

A set of guiding principles informed by public and stakeholder feedback received throughout the Mobility Hubs public consultation process were also developed. The purpose of developing the guiding principles was to inform the development of the preferred concepts and to ensure that all preferred concepts addressed matters that are important to the public. Feedback on the guiding principles was foundational to the development of the draft precinct plans and would form the basis for the GO Station Objectives.

### 3.4.4 Draft Precinct Plans

In May 2018, a third stage of public consultation was undertaken where members of the public and stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on draft precinct plans for the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO, and Appleby GO Mobility Hubs. The draft precinct plans

were informed by public feedback gathered during the Mobility Hubs Study process in 2017 as well as on-going technical studies. Throughout the process, a number of objectives were developed in consultation with the public, property owners, and key stakeholders, which were foundational to the development of the draft precinct plans. Objectives included:

- Directing the highest intensity to areas in close proximity to GO Stations and frequent transit corridors;
- Minimizing shadowing impacts on public parks, open spaces and low density established neighbourhoods;
- Providing height transitions to established low density residential neighbourhoods;
- Providing increased permeability for active transportation options to and from GO stations;
- Recognition of existing cultural heritage resources;
- Creating feasible opportunities for new parks and open spaces to serve current and future residents and employees in each area;
- Identifying new and existing streets to improve connectivity;
- Creating new parks and open spaces that integrate with and enhance the existing city-wide parks and open space system;
- Providing a level of intensity to attract new retail and commercial functions to serve current and future residents and employees;
- Recognizing existing employment functions and providing for a variety of new and expanded employment and commercial opportunities;
- Planning for a variety of housing forms to attract a broad range of demographics; and,
- Identifying opportunities for a broad range of public service facilities.

These objectives will be the starting point for the MTSA ASP Project and development of area-specific plans.

Throughout May 2018, city staff held open houses in each Mobility Hub study area to obtain feedback on the draft precinct plans. An online workbook was also available to collect public comments on the draft plans. Along with the formal open house opportunities, additional drop-in open houses were held at various locations and were open to the public, landowners and other interested parties to discuss their specific properties, interests or concerns with city staff one-on-one.

A full overview of the draft precinct plans and summaries from consultation on the draft precinct plans are available as the appendices of staff report [PB-65-18](#) for the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO Mobility Hubs.

### 3.5 What are the 2018 Draft Precinct Plans?

With feedback from the visioning and draft concept stages of engagement, along with information from ongoing technical studies, draft precinct plans for the Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO Mobility Hubs were produced. A precinct planning system was proposed that set out distinct and similar areas for the three Mobility Hubs. This precinct system allows for the recognition, and focused long-term planning of, discrete but inter-related areas, each with their own specific characteristics and/or planned role/function within a concentrated geographic area of the City. Precincts provide the opportunity to establish highly detailed and customized policies and regulations to address a variety of matters.

The draft precinct plans defined a vision for each of the unique sub-areas within each Mobility Hub which would guide future development based on land uses (e.g. residential, commercial, parks and open space), height, urban design considerations and more. Each draft precinct plan included an intention statement, key policy directions, mapping and building typologies.

The Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO Mobility Hubs are planned to be unique areas within the city intended to achieve a broad set of objectives.

In July 2018, staff brought the draft precinct plans to Council for feedback through staff report [PB-65-18](#). This work was preliminary and subject to change due to on-going technical studies, as well as community and stakeholder feedback.

The MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project (2021-2022) will build upon and advance the 2018 draft precinct plans to develop preliminary preferred precinct plans. There are several considerations to advance the 2018 draft precinct plans including, but not limited to, the following:

- Major Transition Station Area (MTSA) boundaries, density targets and policies set out through Regional Official Plan Amendment 48;
- Public and stakeholder feedback;
- On-going technical work; and,
- Changes to Provincial, Regional and City policy.

Public and stakeholder engagement on the preliminary preferred precinct plans will take place starting October 2021. These preferred precinct plans will be key inputs into the

creation of the Area Specific Plans (ASPs) for the three MTSA areas.

### 3.6 What did the City Hear During the Mobility Hubs Study?

Through the extensive engagement activities undertaken during the previous Mobility Hubs Study, staff identified several recurring feedback themes across all three GO Station areas. These key areas of interest have been categorized based on the elements the public would like to see, as follows:

- Increase, improve and support;
- Address; or
- Protect.

#### **Increase, Improve and Support**

**Public spaces** by supporting existing and new open spaces, parks and other community spaces that are safe, usable, inclusive and interactive, and incorporate public art, landscape features etc. to enhance placemaking.

**Community amenities** by encouraging an increased scale and mix of commercial/retail uses at grade, including grocery stores, coffee shops, community and recreational space etc.

**Mobility** by designing a well-connected, safe and accessible public realm with active animated streets and robust cycling and pedestrian networks, focused on direct connections to and from GO Stations.

**Housing options** by planning for a diverse range of different and affordable housing choices to cater to all ages and abilities.

**Private Spaces** by encouraging sustainable design and variety of architectural styles to create distinct buildings and enhance neighbourhood character, and by reinforcing mid-rise corridors.

**Public engagement** by providing residents with enough time to engage and increase resident engagement and clearly explaining the required growth targets for Burlington.

## **Address**

**Parkland** by planning for park and public spaces that consider the needs of the entire area including developing fair approaches to meet that objective.

**Traffic congestion** by supporting the public transportation network and investing in additional facilities for walking and cycling.

**Building height and transition concerns** by clearly explaining planning rationale for where height is being located, ensuring and explaining how height will be regulated, and by reducing losses of sunlight and privacy through appropriate building height transitions.

## **Protect**

**Established residential neighbourhoods** by ensuring built form, height and transition support and respect existing character, and providing clear policies for heritage protection.

## **Feedback Specific to Each GO Station Area**

Staff also identified key areas of interest that were specific to the unique context of each individual GO Station area, as follows.

Within the **Aldershot GO Station** area, the public requested the consideration of:

- opportunities for new bike paths, including through Aldershot Park;
- opportunities for amenities to support residents and employees;
- opportunities for complete streets, including Cooke Boulevard;
- ways to manage the impacts of increased traffic along Plains Road;
- opportunities to incorporate mid-rise development along Plains Road and Waterdown Road; and
- excluding the low-density residential properties located on Clearview Avenue and a portion of St. Matthew's Avenue.

Within the **Burlington GO Station** area, the public requested the consideration of:

- additional public parks and open space, and places for community gatherings;
- additional community amenities to create vibrancy, including day cares, entertainment, a community centre, and gateway features;
- a safe way to cross the Queen Elizabeth Way by bike or on foot; and

- additional pedestrian and/or cycling connections from the Glenwood Park neighbourhood to the GO station.

Within the **Appleby GO Station** area, the public requested the consideration of:

- additional landscaping, parkettes and open spaces throughout the area, particularly around employment uses;
- ways to achieve land use compatibility between existing employment uses north of the rail corridor and potential future residents south of the rail corridor;
- ways to manage the impacts of increased traffic, particularly in relation to traffic flowing in and out of the GO Station; and
- opportunities to extend Centennial multi-use path connections to the GO Station, while ensuring compatibility with residential uses adjacent to the trail.

## 4 The MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project

### 4.1 What is Involved in the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project?

The MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project will build upon and advance the work undertaken through the Mobility Hubs Study. There are several key differences that resulted in changes to the scope of the work. This work includes:

- the completion of all required technical studies,
- further public and stakeholder engagement,
- the completion of three (3) area-specific plans, as well as the associated implementing Official Plan and Zoning By-Law amendments and other implementation strategies which may be required.

To complete the work Dillon Consulting is assisting the City of Burlington.

An Engagement Plan has been developed to share project milestones and their relationship to engagement and communication. The Engagement Plan identifies a number of policies and factors that cannot be influenced or changed because they are beyond the City's control (for example, things that are required by regional or provincial policy or law), or because they are outside the scope of the project as set out in the Council endorsed terms of reference.

The breakdown below references the project milestones presented in the Engagement Plan and the related tasks within each:

- Milestones 1-2 (May to September 2021):
  - Develop Engagement Plan;
  - Review Background Material;
  - Prepare this Background report;
  - Release Engagement Plan and this report;
- Milestone 3 (September to December 2021)
  - Work on technical studies;
  - Develop preliminary preferred precinct plans and policy/zoning directions;
  - Conduct public, agency and stakeholder engagement on the preliminary preferred precinct plans;
  - Present recommended preferred precinct plans and policy/zoning directions to Council for endorsement at a public meeting in December 2021;

- Milestone 4 (December 2021 to June 2022)
  - Finalize technical work based on endorsed precinct plans;
  - Develop area-specific plans and proposed Official Plan Amendments;
  - Conduct engagement opportunities on the proposed Official Plan Amendments;
  - Hold a Statutory Public Meeting to present key Area-Specific Plan and final project report findings, including proposed Official Plan Amendments, to Council;
  - Present Area-Specific Plans and final project report for Council approval, and present proposed Official Plan Amendments for Council for adoption, in June 2022.

After Council adoption of the implementing Official Plan Amendments, they will be forwarded to Halton Region for final approval.

The development of zoning and urban design guidelines, as required, will follow the approval of the Area-Specific Plans and the adoption of the implementing Official Plan Amendments. This work will be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements. Details will be determined at the outset of this stage of the work.

A detailed explanation of the project can be found in Appendix A of staff report [PL-27-21](#).

## 5 Connections to Other Projects

### 5.1 What is the Timing of the Region's Official Plan Review?

In 2014, the Region of Halton commenced the statutory review of the Regional Official Plan. The review was divided into three phases: Directions Report, Background and Technical Analysis and Policy Development. The Region is currently within Phase 2 of the review that will consider how best to accommodate growth to the year 2051 in conformity to the Provincial Growth Plan.

The Province has identified a deadline for the Region to achieve conformity to the Provincial Growth Plan by July 1, 2022. The Region has refined the Regional Official Plan review work plan to complete its municipal comprehensive review in two phases:

1. An amendment to implement the Region's overall Integrated growth Management Strategy allocating population and employment growth to the Local municipalities to 2051 and achieving conformity with relevant policies of the Growth Plan for the urban area is anticipated to be complete by Q1 2022.
2. An amendment to implement updates to the Rural/Agricultural System, Natural Heritage, Climate Change and other outstanding matters is anticipated to be complete in Q1 2023.

After the Region amends its Official Plan, the City will have one year to update its Official Plan to bring it into conformity with the Region's Plan.

### 5.2 Other Connections to the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project

There are many other City, Regional and Provincial initiatives and which may influence, complement or inform each other including the City's Integrated Mobility Plan, Housing Strategy and Climate Adaptation Plans. See Figure 12 for an overview of various City, Regional, Provincial and Joint Agency projects which have connections to the Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Area-Specific Planning Project.

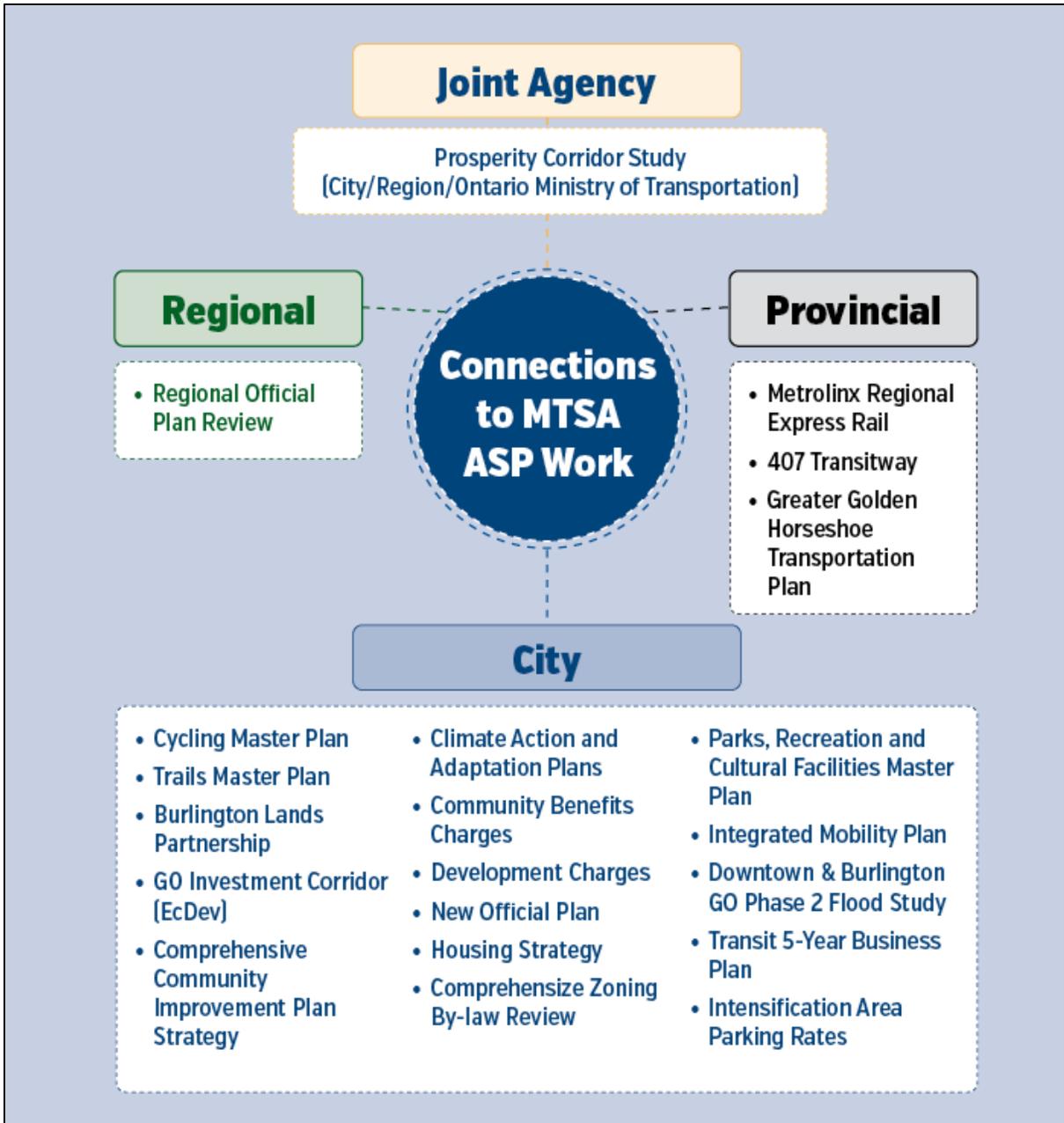


Figure 12: Connections to MTSA Area-Specific Planning Work

## 6 The Engagement Plan and What You Should Know

### 6.1 What is an Engagement Plan?

An Engagement Plan sets out the process for public participation in a project. City staff will use this document throughout the life of the project, making sure the public participation goals are carried out. For the Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Area-Specific Planning Project, an Engagement Plan has been prepared that includes:

- Decisions to be made by the study and informed by public input;
- Stages of the Study and opportunities for public input at each stage;
- Project “givens”: givens are those factors that the project cannot influence or change;
- Public participation tactics that can be used for successful participation;
- Communication strategies and tactics to maximize public awareness and participation; and
- Engagement Plan evaluation.

### 6.2 What Does Meaningful Engagement Look Like?

Meaningful engagement clearly outlines the decisions that can be made during the study. It provides as many people as possible the chance to participate in these decisions. Engagement is meaningful when participants feel that their voices have been heard, even if not all of their comments could be used in the final outcome of the project. While not everyone will agree on every aspect of the results, everyone should feel the process produced valid results and that feedback received influenced the decisions made.

Burlington’s commitment to public engagement is reflected in its Community Engagement Charter, adopted by City Council. The Charter establishes the public engagement commitments, responsibilities and concepts of the relationship between the City of Burlington and the citizens of Burlington. The goal of community engagement is to lead to more informed and, therefore, better decision-making.

### 6.3 What Does Meaningful Feedback/Input Look Like?

Meaningful engagement includes meaningful feedback. Meaningful feedback and input is a mutual understanding and exchange of ideas between the public and City staff and

its consultants. In order to provide meaningful feedback, you should be informed and understand the project givens, the decisions to be made and the process of reaching a conclusion for the study.

## 6.4 What You Should Know to Get Involved

You can get informed by reading this report and following the project's "[Get Involved Burlington](#)" page on the City's engagement website. Here you will find key information and updates as well as contact information for City staff project team. You can also review the Engagement Plan to understand when and how you can give feedback.

## 7 Next Steps

For the Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Area-Specific Planning Project, next steps include:

- Finalize background technical studies that were initiated during the previous Mobility Hub Study including, but not limited to, studies on air quality, scoped environmental impacts studies and functional servicing. Once completed, technical studies will be released and posted to the Document Library on MTSA ASP Project Get Involved Burlington webpage.
- Release preliminary preferred precinct plans in October 2021 for each MTSA with draft policy and zoning directions for feedback. The preliminary preferred precinct plans will advance the 2018 draft precinct plans developed through the previous Mobility Hubs Study. Based on public and technical inputs, recommended preferred precinct plans will be developed and presented to City Council for endorsement at a public meeting in December 2021.
- The preferred precinct plans endorsed by City Council will be used to develop area-specific plans and implementing Official Plan policies for the Aldershot GO MTSA, the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre/Burlington GO MTSA and the Appleby GO MTSA. By June 2022, area-specific plans and policies will be presented to Council for adoption. Once policies, implemented by Official Plan Amendments, are adopted by City Council they will be sent to Halton Region for approval. Work on implementing zoning regulations and urban design guidelines will follow, as needed.
- The opportunities for public input and discussion during these steps are set out in detail in the MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project Engagement Plan.

**To learn how to get involved, subscribe to project updates, review background material, or connect with City staff, please visit:**

[getinvolvedburlington.ca/mtsa](https://getinvolvedburlington.ca/mtsa)

or

email [mtsa@burlington.ca](mailto:mtsa@burlington.ca)