



**SUBJECT: Official Plan Project: Employment Land Conversion
Preliminary Recommendations and Policy Directions**

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Planning and Building Department

Report Number: PB-30-16

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 505-08-02

Date to Committee: October 6, 2016

Date to Council: October 31, 2016

Recommendation:

Receive the report titled *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis*, September 2016, prepared by Dillon Consulting (Appendix B, under separate cover);

Endorse the directions, as detailed in PB-30-16, which relate to the City's Employment Lands and Mobility Hub areas;

Refer the report titled *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis*, September 2016, prepared by Dillon Consulting and the policy directions as detailed in PB-30-16 and the Council endorsed policy directions as detailed in PB-02-15 to be considered within the New Official Plan process;

Direct the Director of Planning and Building to communicate and engage with the public and stakeholders on the draft policy and the preliminarily recommended conversions at the time of the release of the draft of the New Official Plan; and

Direct the Director of Planning and Building and the Executive Director of the Burlington Economic Development Corporation to initiate a post-secondary institution strategy.

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to transmit the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis*, September 2016, prepared by Dillon Consulting, to Council. This report also seeks Council endorsement of the staff



recommendations that build on the previously endorsed policy directions related to employment land. These revisions to existing policy directions are the result of a number of new sources of information including the Strategic Plan and the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis*. All endorsed policy and policy directions related to employment lands will be considered within the New Official Plan.

In association with PB-84-16 this work is a component of the analysis of the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). A Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) is defined by *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006* as: "An official plan review, or an official plan amendment, initiated by the municipality that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan." The MCR is the process through which a municipality can consider fundamental changes to its urban structure, such as employment land conversions or urban boundary expansions.

City Council has, historically and currently, taken a firm position on a fixed urban boundary. This MCR has looked within the urban area to redefine the urban structure to accommodate population and employment growth. In July 2016, Council endorsed the *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report* (PB-29-16) which served as a component of the comprehensive review. That report introduced a new Urban Structure and Intensification Framework to establish the City's future growth. This report builds on the recommendations of the *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report* (PB-29-16). For more details on the approach to finalizing the Official Plan please see *Grow Bold: Changing the City's Official Plan Review to Burlington's New Official Plan Project* (PB-84-16).

PB-84-16, through its recommendation that a New Official Plan be prepared, is also a step in implementing the 2015-2040 Strategic Plan approved by Council in 2016. The Strategic Plan identified that the City is undergoing an important transition which will see the end of developing new "Greenfield" communities. Rather, future growth will shift to targeted areas within the urban boundary facilitating their redevelopment with increased height and density.

Key to that transition is for Burlington to take a new approach to city building. To city build means to creatively use all of the tools available to City Council, to work with community partners to define how we grow, and to actively shape the physical, social, economic and cultural fabric of the city as we grow.

The discussion and recommendations of this report primarily address the key strategic direction: "A City that Grows".

1.1 Promoting Economic Growth



- 1.1 a) *The city, region, province, educational institutions and industry work in partnership to support our continued prosperity by developing an environment that is attractive to high-growth knowledge-based companies.*
- 1.1 b) *More people who live in Burlington also work in Burlington*
- 1.1. c) *The city's vision for employment lands has been developed with aggressive targets. The community, developers and industry together are achieving our economic potential. The city along with its partners supports the development of employment lands through timely planning, infrastructure investments and other incentives.*
- 1.1. d) *Employment lands are connected to the community and region through active transportation and public transit. Employment lands include transportation links that are easy to access and contribute to a sustainable walkable and bikeable community.*

1.2 Intensification

- 1.2.a. *Growth is being achieved in mixed use areas and along main roads with transit service, including mobility hubs, downtown and uptown.*
- 1.2.b. *Mobility hubs are developed near each GO Station and in the downtown.*

Notes on the findings and recommendations

1. The analysis and recommendations presented in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Assessment Report* were developed with the assumptions found in Section 3 of that report. It should be noted that should any of the assumptions change through the development of the New Official Plan, an update to the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Assessment Report* will be required.
2. As noted throughout this report the preliminary recommendations presented for Council endorsement relate only to the principle of the land use. The preliminary recommendations for conversion in no way suggest that a given parcel is not suitable to accommodate employment uses. In all cases properties will be given further land use guidance to support their transition.



For those considering land acquisitions related to the lands in the city affected by these and other discussions within the Official Plan, caution should be applied. The final outcome presented in the New Official Plan will be an approach mandating the mix of uses. That is, to establish that certain levels of employment must be met in order to unlock additional permissions. The current approach is based on the assumption that the market, given a choice, will provide a mix of uses. In practice this has not been demonstrated. Current market conditions distort the ability of employment or other uses to compete with uses like ground oriented residential which are more desirable to the market. New Official Plan policy and in particular the new mobility hub area specific plans will further develop the tools demonstrating the city's ability and interest in protect the role for employment in a mixed use context.

Lands within the mobility hub areas will be considered in an entirely new framework established in the New Official Plan and through the development of area specific plans. That new framework will demand both more from the city and more from developers and builders than has been demanded in the past.

Decisions on ultimate land uses will be made carefully through subsequent processes in order to support the long term vision for the city. New Official Plan policy and in particular the new mobility hub area specific plans will further develop the tools demonstrating the city's ability and interest in supporting these areas in attracting and accommodating employment in mixed use areas.



Background and Discussion:

BACKGROUND

Prior to discussing staff's rationale for the recommended policy directions including the findings of this stage of the employment land conversion assessment, it is important to summarize what key decisions have been made to date, and to provide highlights of key documents that frame the decision making process including provincial policy and the City's Strategic Plan.

1.0 Where we are in the process

The employment lands work for this Official Plan Project and MCR has been ongoing since 2010. Council has reviewed, endorsed and discussed a wide range of issues related to employment. For ease of reference a chronology of core decisions made to date are provided in *Appendix A - Employment Lands Work Chronology* and discussed briefly below.

a) Council receipt of Employment Land Studies 1 (MKI & MMM, 2011) and 2 (Dillon & Watson, 2014)

Key findings and recommendations of these studies include:

- Burlington has sufficient employment lands to 2031; however, the vacant employment land supply is expected to be exhausted sometime between 2031 and 2044 depending upon the rate of absorption.
- As the City approaches maturity there will be few, if any, opportunities to add employment land to the supply.
- Employment land studies use a detailed methodology to assess vacant land supply and project demand to determine long term needs. It is difficult to determine employment land redevelopment and growth potential for existing occupied employment areas using this approach. This potential for growth through redevelopment will be an important consideration in understanding future land needs in the City. The Phase 2 Employment Lands Study (Phase 2 ELS) identified the following challenges in estimating employment land intensification:



- Employment levels decline on older sites in established industries over time as new technologies or changes in production are implemented; and,
- Traditional employment uses are space expansive, and while many sites may exhibit the physical potential for intensification, it is difficult to predict which structures or parcels are likely to be intensified. This is contrasted with residential lands where the physical conditions are actually a good predictor of where intensification will occur.

It is clear that employment land intensification must play an increasing role in the discussion of employment land supply in the future. There is no established or newly defined method to determine the quantity (area) available for employment land intensification. Comments submitted through the Coordinated Provincial Plan Review highlight this concern as it relates to the future proposed standard land needs assessment methodology.

The Phase 2 ELS determined that the City should not redesignate the existing vacant employment lands supply for other non-employment uses. This direction was qualified to “recognize that from time to time, there may be a compelling reason to entertain conversion- particularly when a conversion can achieve another of the City’s strategic objectives”(pg v, Phase 2 ELS).

b) Council endorsement of draft employment conversion policies

In January 2013, draft employment conversion policies were endorsed by Council as the lens for decision making related to employment land conversion. This lens, the draft Official Plan policy, builds upon the existing employment conversion policies that have been in place in the Official Plan since the last OP Review. Feedback was collected from employment lands stakeholders and presented to Council.

A number of stakeholders provided input, however no changes to the endorsed policies were required to address the concerns raised. All requests for conversion were assessed against these Council-endorsed policies developing a consistent, transparent and replicable decision making process.



c) Council endorsement of employment land conversion assessment process

Scope of Process

In May, 2014 Council endorsed in report PB-18-14 an employment conversion assessment process which outlined how staff would consider employment conversions including:

- outlining the process for notifications;
- working with proponents;
- collaborating with the Burlington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC);
- determining the details of the request; and
- confirming how the potential for conversion would be evaluated.

Information Requirements

The process clarified the kinds of information that would be requested to support conversion requests. The employment conversion policies refer to a wide range of studies that could be requested as part of a planning application. The employment conversion request process proposed that only a planning justification report be requested, not required, to support any conversion request.

Discussion of Need

Further, the report discussed the employment conversion policies, and specifically focused on one of the policies that states:

“There is a demonstrated need for the conversion, as determined by the City”
[Emphasis added].

The report discussed three components of the term “need”:

- 1) site characteristics;
- 2) land supply; and
- 3) existing and emerging urban structure.

The concept of need has been considered in conjunction with other important policy criteria as part of the conversion assessment process. The range of considerations are discussed in more detail as part of the employment conversion assessment in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis*, specifically in *Appendix A* to that report which discusses the criteria and methodology.



Goal of Process

The outcome section of the report explained the goal of the process, which was to determine whether a given parcel or lands within the employment areas should be converted from employment to non-employment uses. The process was not intended to determine the ultimate land use designation but rather the principle of the land use.

The analysis focused on determining whether the lands should remain within the City's employment land supply, affording the lands protection from employment land conversion, or whether the land should no longer form part of the city's employment land supply. This change in the principle of use allows for the consideration of the land's potential to accommodate a range of uses which may or may not include employment, residential and/or commercial uses.

The Burlington *Employment Lands Policy Recommendation and Conversion Analysis* also clarified that new potential policies may propose a new mandated mix of uses for lands that are endorsed for conversion.

d) Council endorsement of employment land directions, including OP policies and other strategic initiatives

In January, 2015 Council endorsed a set of employment land policy directions. Those directions included:

1. Outlining corporate priorities related to employment lands;
2. Outlining BEDC opportunities to support employment land development;
and
3. Identifying specific land use policy directions directly relevant to the Official Plan.

The employment vision for the Official Plan was described as having three dimensions that informed the policy directions:

1. Retain existing vacant employment lands to provide for a wide range of parcel sizes, locations and characteristics over the long term.
2. Build on the existing employment lands policy framework to nurture existing employment lands. The policy should continue to provide a level of predictability and should examine new opportunities to support the continued use and redevelopment of employment lands for employment purposes.
3. Focus on encouraging employment growth in mixed use intensification areas, including the City's mobility hubs. These areas respond to the location and



infrastructure requirements that suit the general needs of the potential growth sectors presented in the Phase 2 ELS report, particularly – Financial Services, Business and Professional / Scientific services and advanced manufacturing (e.g. industrial/commercial machinery). In the future, these areas will be planned to accommodate employment uses which are compatible with other sensitive uses and to have the potential to contribute to the development of vibrant, mixed use, transit supportive areas.

Together the employment vision and these directions should set the foundation for new Official Plan policy, while also establishing a long term employment lands strategy. The policy directions from PB-02-15 are generally described in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Policy Directions from PB-02-15

Direction	Nature of Direction
A	Strengthen the policy framework to fully utilize the employment generation potential of employment land
B	Build a strategy to promote office development in the mobility hubs and the Urban Growth Centre
C	Leverage existing assets and work closely with BEDC to build a proactive approach to economic development
D	Implement brownfield redevelopment program; and consider preparing community improvement plans for some employment areas
E	Work with the Region of Halton to track alignment of growth with the Best Planning Estimates (BPEs)
F	Develop a phasing strategy for the City's unserved lands; consider developing secondary plans, and continue dialog with local utilities
G	Investigate opportunities for limiting the amount or type of institutional uses on serviced employment lands
H	Prepare a comprehensive strategy for employment land intensification
I	Clarify the intent and definition of Employment Lands and area of employment in the policies and schedules of the Official Plan
J	Retain, and where applicable refine existing Employment Land Use Designations

e) Council endorsement of the scope of the Municipal Comprehensive Review



The January 2015, report also defined the scope of the MCR, the subject of this report. There were three ways that an area, parcel or designation was proposed to be reviewed in greater detail through the MCR (for more details please refer to PB-02-15).

1. Strategic Vacant Land Assessment. Council directed Staff to review all of the vacant employment parcels identified in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 ELS. Staff were asked to consider if any of those identified parcels, which had not already been submitted as a private conversion request, should be considered through the MCR.
2. Designations or areas of the City that, by virtue of other studies conducted as part of the OP project or other work plans, were deemed by staff to warrant consideration through this MCR including:
 - a. Mobility hub areas (Burlington GO and Aldershot GO)
 - b. Mixed Use Employment designation and the Uptown Mixed Use Employment Designation
 - c. Uptown Employment Designations
3. Requests for employment land conversions submitted by a property owner or agent.

While the scope of the review, as described in 2015, limited the discussion related to mobility hubs to the Aldershot and Burlington GO areas, the scope of the MCR presented in this report was broadened to consider all mobility hubs with designated employment lands including Appleby GO. This decision was made given the City's Strategic Plan and given that Council has since approved staff and budget in support of moving forward with four area specific plans including the Downtown mobility hub (PB-48-16).



2.0 Key documents providing context to the decision making process for employment conversions and policy directions

a) Existing Planning Legislation and Policy

The *Planning Act* identifies planning for employment as a matter of provincial interest. The *Planning Act*, the *Provincial Policy Statement*, the *Growth Plan*, the Halton Region Official Plan and the City of Burlington Official Plan all provide direction on employment lands planning.

For a previous discussion of the planning policy context please refer to report titled "Official Plan Review: Proposed Employment Land Conversion Request Assessment Process and Strategic Vacant Land Assessment" (PB-18-14), "Policy Context" (pg 4 -10).

Recent changes to the *Planning Act* have established that new official plans adopted on or after July 1 are now required to review the document no less frequently than 10 years after its approval, instead of every 5 years. This new review cycle timeline will align with Provincial Plan Reviews and Regional Official Plan reviews. The consequence of the change is that the timeframe for considering future employment lands for conversion could be extended to 10 years.

This longer timeframe is supportive of the long-term protection of employment lands. However, in the case of mobility hubs, a wait of 10 years would undermine Council's Strategic Plan. This change in legislation made considering the employment lands around Mobility Hubs a priority in this MCR.

b) Emerging Provincial Policy

Since the time of the previous employment report, the province released proposed *Places to Grow* policies for consultation in the spring of 2016. The Province will be accepting comments on the draft policies until October 31, 2016.

The proposed *Places to Grow Plan* is generally supportive of the directions presented in the Strategic Plan. The approach proposed in the *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report* (PB-29-16) specifically supports the concept of "strategic growth areas". These are a hierarchy of areas within the urban area identified to be the primary focus for accommodating growth. One of the identified strategic growth areas is termed "priority transit corridors" in the proposed *Places to Grow Plan*. These are shown on Schedule 2 of the proposed



Places to Grow Plan and can be generally described in the context of the City of Burlington as following the GO rail network.

There are several changes presented in the proposed provincial policies related to employment land policies that are relevant to this discussion. There are three draft policy themes that have emerged that influenced the approach to this MCR.

1. Definition of municipal comprehensive review

The proposed *Places to Grow* plan modified the definition of municipal comprehensive review to include processes undertaken by upper tier or single tier municipalities only. Comments in the HAPP Joint Submission (PB-71-16) highlight the importance of lower tier municipalities in undertaking MCRs. Evidenced by the recommendations of this report and the analysis in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report, there remains a clear role for lower tier municipalities in the MCR.

The ability to review and refine the City's employment areas in light of the existing and emerging policy frameworks to which they are subject is critical to ensure that the outcome of this and future reviews move the City forward in support of an active role in city building. The potential change in the definition of the term "Municipal Comprehensive Review" is not clear today; however, there is still a fundamental and important role for Burlington in employment lands planning and implementation.

For these reasons, careful consideration of all employment lands that had the potential to have a role in balancing multiple policy objectives and to support the City's emerging policy framework were considered in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report. This also drove the consideration of the "Mobility Hub Employment Lands Under Review" study area as presented in the attached *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report (Appendix B).

In addition, the Province intends to release a standard methodology for land needs assessment at a future (undefined) time. A standard methodology may introduce challenges for municipalities that are predominantly built out or not.



2. Removal of the concept of “Regeneration Areas”

The City is planning for growth. The city anticipates that the mobility hubs will experience significant transition and become mixed use areas. Regeneration areas, an undefined term in the *Places to Grow Plan*, acknowledged that areas expecting to undergo significant transformation need more flexible frameworks. The term has been removed from the proposed *Places to Grow Plan*. Its removal means that some potential flexibility may be lost in supporting the consideration of employment lands conversion in association with areas of transition.

Without the tool of a Regeneration Area policy, the MCR remains the only opportunity for considering an employment land conversion. As a result, this MCR took on an urgency in considering how to deal with employment lands within mobility hubs since, as previously stated above, a 10 year period or until the next MCR. This policy consideration was a factor in framing the approach to employment conversion process.

3. Focus on Employment Areas

The PPS, 2014 organized the employment policies into two sections: 1) policies related to employment throughout the entire municipality; and, 2) policies that related to employment in geographically defined “areas of employment”. This distinction was useful however has not been continued in the draft policy for Places to Grow.

Ideally, mobility hubs will start to look like a hybrid in that we expect some employment land employment (e.g. advanced manufacturing) in a mixed use context. Employment and economic development happens everywhere in the city and there are some areas that, while not being areas of employment, will still have a significant role in shaping the future of employment in the city.

Often innovation happens outside of employment lands in the case of a wide variety of businesses. While Provincial policies still maintain that, major office and institutional uses be directed to Urban Growth Centres, and Major Transit Station Areas there are still opportunities to highlight the critical function that mixed use areas will play in the future of accommodating employment growth. Those provincially identified areas are consistent with the City’s identified mobility hubs.



Areas of Employment remain a key area of focus in Places to Grow. Employment uses, specifically high quality employment will remain a fundamental growth objective and will be critical to the success of mobility hubs and the city as a whole. Considering the mobility hubs at this time has afforded the city the opportunity to undertake area specific planning in these complex areas characterized by multiple property owners, existing built context, challenging land use compatibility issues. Mobility hub planning will redefine and shape new neighbourhoods in the city that will assist in meeting employment targets in a new way.

c) City's Strategic Plan

On April 11, 2016 City Council unanimously approved Burlington's Strategic Plan 2015-2040. A City that Grows is the first pillar of the City's Strategic Plan and the pillar most related to employment lands. The plan states the following:

The City of Burlington attracts talent, good jobs and economic opportunity while having achieved intensification and balanced, targeted population growth for youth, families, newcomers and seniors.

This pillar relates to three general areas:

1. Promoting Economic Growth
2. Intensification
3. Focused Population Growth

The first two areas are instructive to this report and its recommendations:

1. Promoting Economic Growth

The Strategic Plan speaks to developing an environment that is attractive to knowledge-based companies. The existing vacant employment lands are well positioned to attract these types of uses. As noted in the Phase 2 ELS many knowledge based industries have a different business culture and place greater emphasis on high quality design, vibrant and higher order transit accessible workplaces.

The Phase 2 ELS is also clear that to attract those businesses the City will enter into an extremely competitive environment. The Phase 2 ELS and the *Mobility Hubs Opportunities and Constraints Report, 2014*, both suggest that given the complex and competitive nature of attracting high-rise office development to



mobility hubs the city will require a strategy examining market opportunities, infrastructure requirements, design considerations and implementation measures such as Community Improvement Plans and incentives. The Mobility Hubs Area Specific Plans work plan anticipates this discussion and will provide direction.

For Burlington, a “City that Grows” (Strategic Plan) requires a new way of thinking about how we accommodate employment uses on employment lands as well as throughout the City particularly in those areas of the City best situated to support employment uses with transit infrastructure, supportive amenities and active transportation. All of the action items have a role in supporting the vision of the Official Plan and for employment lands.

2. Intensification

The Strategic Plan speaks to the role of intensification in the future of the City. Growth, both population and employment, will primarily be directed to mixed use areas along main roads with access to transit. The role of intensification within the area of employment is also identified as a means of supporting the long term sustainability of the city. New and creative ideas for supporting intensification within employment lands must be identified and pursued.

The existing mixed use areas of the city, including the Downtown, Uptown and the mixed use corridors, as well as the future mixed use areas such as mobility hubs, will have a role in accommodating job growth and population growth. These existing and emerging mixed use areas are prominent considerations in the employment land conversion assessment process.

d) Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report

In July, 2016 Council was presented with the *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report*. Council’s endorsement of this report and the concepts within it represent an important decision in the development of a new Official Plan. This report considered the work done across numerous studies undertaken as part of the Official Plan project and staff work that together have informed the emerging urban structure for Burlington. This endorsement was critical to the analysis of the employment land conversion requests. This framework allowed the analysis to consider how each conversion request aligned with the emerging urban structure and the directions of the Strategic Plan.

As part of setting the stage for the discussion of the *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report*, staff brought forward the communication



tagline of “Grow Bold”. The Strategic Plan identified a series of plans and initiatives to be part of the implementation program to strive toward the 25 year vision for the future. Grow Bold has taken the four pillars of the Strategic Plan and developed an accessible and approachable brand and strategy to encourage engagement and build excitement about the future of the City. As part of Burlington’s new approach to city building, this tagline assists in framing the conversation with the community about how the city will accommodate future growth and will “Build Up. Built Smart. Build Beautiful.”

“Build Up” means the city will embrace density with a variety of low, medium and high rise buildings in appropriate locations. “Build Smart” means the city will make it easy for people to get around, focus on building jobs and housing, make good use of existing infrastructure, and target growth to the right areas of the city. “Build Beautiful” means the city will focus on high-quality architecture, increasing green space in both the public and private spaces, and high-quality urban design.



DISCUSSION

3.0 Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis, 2016

In 2016, the City retained Dillon Consulting to assist staff in completing an employment land conversion assessment and in developing a series of policy recommendations on specific employment land matters.

The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report is an appendix to this staff report, and has been distributed under separate cover (Appendix B). As part of preparing the report recommendations, Dillon Consulting used its knowledge of the city's employment lands from its experience with the Phase 2 ELS, considered various documents including provincial and regional policy, previous employment land studies, staff reports related to the Official Plan Review, the Strategic Plan and the details of privately initiated conversion requests.

The report includes:

i) Policy Directions:

- Innovation Districts (see Section 5.0 Direction J1)
- Employment Lands Intensification (see Section 5.0 Direction H)
- Employment Commercial designation (see Section 5.0 Direction J2)
- Retail and Service Commercial Uses (see Section 5.0 Direction J3)
- Recreational Uses (see Section 5.0 Direction J5)
- Institutional Uses (Particularly Day Cares and Places of Worship) (see Section 5.0 Direction G)
- Motor Vehicle Dealerships (see Section 5.0 Direction J6)

ii) Employment Lands Conversion Assessment:

- Employment Lands Review within provincially and City identified mobility hub areas

This section of the report includes a detailed analysis of the designated employment lands around the Burlington GO, Aldershot GO and Appleby GO mobility hub areas. These areas are identified as the "Mobility Hub Employment Lands Under Review". Although derived in part based on the Mobility Hub Opportunities and Constraints Study (2014) the area of study differs between the two studies. For more details on the analysis please refer



to Section 3.4 and Appendix B of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* (Appendix B to this report).

- Employment Land Conversion Requests Outside of mobility hubs

This section of the report provides a brief summary of the conversion requests submitted outside of mobility hubs and directs the reader to Appendix C of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report (Appendix B to this report) for details on each respective conversion requests.

iii) Summary of Findings and Recommendations:

The preliminary employment conversion recommendations of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* indicate that 152.8 net hectares of employment lands (approximately 10% of the total employment lands supply) are being recommended for conversion. Of that total, 9.5 net hectares of vacant employment lands (approximately 3% of the total vacant employment lands supply) are being recommended for conversion.

It is highlighted in Section 4.0 of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* that although these lands are being recommended for conversion, the expectation is that a portion of these lands will continue to generate, employment through office, commercial and institutional activities located in Mixed Use Areas.

The Phase 2 ELS identified the City's long term employment lands supply and demand. The findings of this analysis demonstrate that there remains a sufficient supply of employment land to meet long term demand.

It is staff's view that the analysis and recommendations contained within the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* will be reviewed and updated as the MCR continues to proceed through the preparation of a new Official Plan for the City, as recommended in PB-84-16.

iv) Appendices:

- *Appendix A: Conversion Criteria and Methodology*
- *Appendix B: Conversion Analysis for Employment Lands Within Mobility Hubs*



- *Appendix C: Privately-Initiated Conversion Requests, City-Initiated Conversion Proposals and Analysis for Employment Lands Outside of Mobility Hubs*

Scope of the Employment Conversion Assessment

The conversion assessment combines technical analysis, land use regulation and policy to arrive at a recommendation for each property or area.

It should be noted that the conversion process set out by the City is different than an Official Plan amendment redesignating land from one land use to another as part of a development application. The decisions today differ in two key ways. First, the recommendation relates only to whether the principle function of the land should remain for employment, **or** whether the land should be considered to accommodate other uses through appropriate planning applications or processes.

Second, the conversion assessment recommendation does not detail the specifics of the land use policy that will apply to those lands recommended for conversion. In the case of lands found within mobility hubs, the city-led area specific plans that are underway will detail the specific distribution of lands uses including employment and a full range of other mixed uses and critical neighbourhood features like parks, paths, and other community infrastructure. In the case of other properties, the policy development stage of the new Official Plan will describe the revised land use designation and may identify future planning applications required.

The employment land conversion analysis and recommendations look at a parcel which today has a planned function of employment and considers whether there are sufficient grounds to recommend a conversion.

The analysis:

- presents a systematic evaluation of all conversion requests comprehensively;
- considers the findings of the other major studies which formed part of the Official Plan Project, specifically the emerging Urban Structure;
- incorporates input from BEDC;
- treats all conversion requests, whether city-initiated or privately-initiated, or considered as part of the mobility hubs employment land analysis in the same manner;
- considers the information provided by proponents for those privately-initiated conversion requests, but the recommendation does not rely solely on that information to come to a final recommendation.



No decisions are being made on the ultimate development of any given parcel. All parcels recommended for conversion, if endorsed by Council and approved by Regional Council (for those requiring Regional approval) will be addressed in the draft New Official Plan and will be subject to appropriate planning processes. Regional Council is the approval authority for the City's Official Plan. There will be two paths to approval. For more information see the Strategy/process section.

4.0 Staff Recommendations

This staff report builds upon the framework established through the employment lands studies, staff reports prepared as part of the OP project, and the employment lands policy directions (PB-02-15). It has the effect of enhancing a number of the existing endorsed policy directions (2015) by considering issues which emerged as a result of:

- the *Strategic Plan*,
- the *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report* (PB-29-16),
- the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report*, and
- other emerging considerations including proposed revisions to provincial policy.

The importance of staff report PB-29-16 (*Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions Report*) should be highlighted. The proposed Urban Structure and approach to intensification underpins the rationale as to why some lands and designations from the preliminary analysis are recommended for conversion while others are recommended to remain. The report describes why in some areas such as mobility hubs, flexibility is required to facilitate the intensification and redevelopment, and therefore, the lands are being recommended for conversion.

It is critical to note that a recommendation for conversion does not imply that the lands are no longer intended to serve an employment function. Rather, a preliminary recommendation to convert should be understood to mean that the city wants to achieve a mix of uses including employment, commercial and residential. Equally important is to reinforce that a potential mix of uses does not necessarily include residential uses but could include a broader range of commercial uses.

As highlighted earlier, the recommendation does not detail the specifics of the land use policy that will apply. Subsequent planning process will detail the range and mix of uses permitted on a site. Examples of those processes include area specific plans for mobility hubs, the policies of the New Official Plan or through the consideration of site



specific development applications. The policies of the draft New Official Plan will detail, where possible, the land use designation and any site specific policies.

The city will be pursuing policies that mandate a mix of uses. That is, to establish that certain threshold levels of employment be met in order to unlock additional permissions. To provide contrast, the current approach in policy provides a range or choice of uses, suggesting that all permitted uses are equally acceptable. Presumably this is based on the assumption that the market will produce a mix of uses however, in practice this has not been effective. Current market conditions distort the ability to compete with uses, like ground oriented residential, which are more desirable to the market. New Official Plan policy, and in particular the new mobility hub area specific plans, will further develop the tools demonstrating the city's ability and need to protect these areas for employment roles in a mixed use context.

Policy Directions

Below is a table that summarizes the existing policy directions, and notes what changes to the directions are proposed as a result of further analysis and review. Only directions with changes are discussed in this report.

Table 2: Existing Policy Directions and New Staff Recommendations

Direction	Nature of Direction	Status of Staff Recommendation from previous staff report (PB-02-15)
A	Strengthen the policy framework to fully utilize the employment generation potential of employment land	No Change.
B	Build a strategy to promote office development in the mobility hubs and the Urban Growth Centre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modify to add details to support employment and enhance the transitional policies for mobility hubs. 2. Add Walker's Line and Cumberland as a future GO Station.
C	Leverage existing assets and work closely with BEDC to build a proactive approach to economic development	No Change.



D	Implement brownfield redevelopment program; and consider preparing community improvement plans for some employment areas	No Change.
E	Work with the Region of Halton to track alignment of growth with the Best Planning Estimates (BPEs)	No Change.
F	Develop a phasing strategy for the City's unserved lands; consider developing secondary plans, and continue dialog with local utilities	Add a policy that prioritizes area specific planning for Bronte Creek Meadows.
G	Investigate opportunities for limiting the amount or type of institutional uses on serviced employment lands	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add develop a strategy to attract another post-secondary institution to the city. 2. Modify policy recommendations for institutional uses. <p>Add proposed directions related to tools for managing land use compatibility and risk.</p>
H	Prepare a comprehensive strategy for employment land intensification	Add direction to develop and implement innovative practices for employment land intensification.
I	Clarify the intent and definition of Employment Lands and area of employment in the policies and schedules of the Official Plan	Add that the findings and recommendations of the employment conversion assessment presented in Appendix B depicted in Appendix C be referred to the development of the New Official Plan.



<p>J</p>	<p>Retain, and where applicable refine existing Employment Land Use Designations</p>	<p>Add refinements to the following designations, land uses or policy issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovation Districts; 2. Employment Commercial; 3. Retail and Service Commercial Uses; 4. Uptown Mixed Use Centre – Employment Designations; 5. Recreational Uses; 6. Motor Vehicle Dealerships; 7. Mixed Use Corridor – Employment
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Direction B1: Supporting employment and enhancing the transitional policies for mobility hubs

Issue:

Previous work in the *Mobility Hub Opportunities and Constraints Study (2014)* provided some general guidance to support the transition of mobility hubs. In order to support the city’s OP objectives and the city’s ability to meet its Growth Plan population and employment distributions further guidance related specifically to supporting employment in mixed use areas is required to support the development of the mobility hub area specific plans.

Background:

The mobility hub recommendations presented in PB-29-16 recommended, consistent with the *Mobility Hubs Opportunities and Constraints Study (2014)*, the need to update the Official Plan to reflect mobility hubs and to development a broad policy framework to guide development in the hubs. Two key elements of that framework were the identification and discussion of policies to guide area specific planning and policies to guide development prior to the completion of area specific planning.



The assessment of the “Mobility Hub Employment Lands under Review” study area in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* produced a series of policy recommendations to support area specific planning and to support the period of transition where area specific planning will be underway.

Among the recommendations was reinforcement of the role of employment. The recommendations highlight the importance of retaining existing employment and the promotion of new employment uses in proximity to higher order transit. Tools such as a “population to employment” ratio could be used as one means of measuring and achieving a balance between employment and other uses in the mobility hubs.

The recommendations also reiterate the importance of interim policies, particularly for lands recommended for conversion. Where lands are recommended for conversion and are not captured within the Regional Employment Area overlay the recommendations restate that the recommendation relates only to the principle of the land use. It states further “that not all land recommended for removal from the Employment Inventory are intended to accommodate a full range of uses.” The recommendations further suggest that policies developed for the New Official Plan outline permissions which may be afforded to the lands in advance of the completion of the area specific plans. The role of the area specific plans is again highlighted as the means of confirming the vision and land uses for a given mobility hub.

Proposed Direction:

It is the opinion of staff that the directions provided in section 3.4.4 of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* should be considered at the time of developing policies in the draft New Official Plan.

The importance of a full mix of uses including a critical role for employment in the mobility hubs cannot be overstated.

Direction B2: Building a strategy for a future GO Station in the vicinity of Walker’s Line.

Issue:

The city has the opportunity to work with Metrolinx and the Region of Halton to identify a future GO Station in the vicinity of Walker’s Line.



Background:

In August of 2016 staff from Metrolinx met with Eleanor McMahon, MPP and Mayor Goldring and staff representatives to discuss Metrolinx infrastructure investments and the potential Walker's Line – Cumberland GO Station. Metrolinx shared the recently completed new station analysis which identified 12 new stations in the Kitchener, Barrie and Stouffville and Lakeshore East areas.

While no new Stations were announced in the Lakeshore West Corridor the Walker's Line, Cumberland GO Station was identified as one of four additional stations is moving forward for a business case. It was one of only two additional stations identified on the Lakeshore West Corridor.

The city will work with Metrolinx to develop a business case for the station.

Proposed Direction:

It is the opinion of staff that the opportunity for the future GO Station must be pursued. Although no specific location for the future station has been identified, the city will recognize the general area at the intersection of Walker's Line and the Lakeshore West Corridor as a future GO Station in the Official Plan. The future GO Station will be described as a Phase 2 Mobility Hub Planning Study Area. Work planning will identify this among other areas as priority areas for city-led area specific planning.

The Official Plan will include policies that identify that a future area specific plan will be required to support the planning of this future GO Station. The policy will recognize the opportunity for the creation of an employment intensification node within the existing employment lands north of the rail. The policy will also highlight the role of the mixed use corridor along Fairview Street as a means to support the employment area to the north of the rail with amenities and a wide range of uses and transit oriented development to support the station.

Staff are of the opinion that recognizing the future GO Station and establishing appropriate policies to support the development of the area will be important to the station feasibility analysis and business case development. The identification of the future GO Station in the city's New Official Plan also demonstrates commitment to the process.



Direction F: Prioritizing Area Specific Planning for Bronte Creek Meadows

Issue:

Bronte Creek Meadows should be provided an Area Specific Plan in the near term to support the development of those lands. The Phase 2 ELS recognized that there were “a number of strategic locations within the inventory which require municipal services and more detailed land use planning” including Bronte Creek Meadows. The study also noted that these large parcels of land should be the focus of future land use and infrastructure planning. This direction is expected to provide the best opportunity for development/absorption of these lands.

The site has the potential to be a candidate site for a major employer or large educational institution. A city-wide strategy should be initiated to attract a major employer and/or another post-secondary institution to the city, consistent with the Strategic Plan.

Background:

Paletta International Corporation (PIC) applied to amend the lands generally described as Bronte Creek Meadows from “Office/Business Park” to “Land Use to be Determined” (File No. 505-01/05), which application was refused by the City and which decision PIC appealed to the OMB to be determined at the same time as PIC’s outstanding appeals of Official Plan Amendment 55. This application was referred to the OMB. PIC appealed OPA 55 and Zoning By-law 2020.205 as it relates to these sites.

Through Minutes of Settlement (2009) the City and PIC agreed to identify a portion of the total lands (approximately 88 acres or 35 ha) called Burloak Employment Estates. This portion of the land can be described generally as the land abutting Burloak Drive (generally north of Mainway, west of Burloak, south of Upper Middle and bounded to the west by the proposed realignment of Sheldon Creek). The Minutes of Settlement detailed that PIC would withdraw its appeals related to OPA 55 and Zoning By-law 2020.205 and not appeal that portion of the site through OPA 73. The Minutes of Settlement further described that PIC would actively market the lands for a period of at least 5 years. The Minutes of Settlement set out requirements for a sign on the site, disclosure to, and discussions with BEDC. The five year time period has elapsed.

The remainder of the lands retained the existing appeals to both OPA 55 and Zoning By-law 2020.205.



Through this MCR a privately initiated conversion request was submitted for the lands generally known as Bronte Creek Meadows (5164 Upper Middle Road; 5366 Upper Middle Road; 5470 Upper Middle Road; 5900 Upper Middle Road; 5201 Mainway – refer to Conversion Request No. 14 in *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report*). The employment land conversion assessment (*Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report*) analysis recommended that Bronte Creek Meadows be retained as employment land. Staff support this recommendation.

Staff and consultants have recognized the unique nature of lands like Bronte Creek Meadows through the Phase 2 ELS and in the policy directions established in the January, 2015 report. The Bronte Creek Meadows constitutes about 40% of the vacant employment land supply (125 ha/308 ha) and 51% of the effective net supply in the entire City (125 ha/248.3 ha) based on the Phase 2 ELS.

This large, contiguous and unserviced area of vacant employment lands represents a significant and irreplaceable opportunity in the city and its citizens. As such, the 2015 policy directions report included the following:

Work with BEDC to establish and commit to funding employment land Secondary Planning and servicing priorities by Strategic Employment Area.

Since the writing of the 2015 report the Region of Halton commissioned a servicing study based on servicing for employment uses, for Bronte Creek Meadows. The study is currently in draft form. The preliminary findings suggest that there are no major barriers to servicing this area.

Proposed Direction:

The city should initiate an area specific plan in the near term. Partnership with the owner of the property to develop the land for employment uses will be an important element related to moving forward. Efforts will be made to understand the potential of these lands to support the Strategic Plan of the city.



Direction G1: A Strategy to attract another Post-Secondary Institution

Issue:

As noted throughout the report, there are a number of employment directions embedded in the *Strategic Plan* which have a bearing on this discussion and others related to employment lands.

The strategic plan directs the development and implementation of a strategy with the aim of attracting an additional post-secondary institution to the city.

Background:

Currently, a post-secondary institution would be permitted throughout the city. From a city-wide perspective other institutional and community infrastructure uses are located on lands which have an underlying residential land use designation (in most cases). In the current real estate climate, it is likely that residential development will outbid almost any other land use. In addition to the consideration of the issue of land economics is the issue of the availability of lands.

The city must develop a strategy to attract another post-secondary institution to the city. If the findings of the institutional strategy identify a candidate location for a post-secondary institution, the city could initiate an MCR and area-specific planning process to assess any required complementary non-employment uses to support the post-secondary institution.

Proposed Direction:

The institutional strategy was identified in the Strategic Plan. Currently the work is planned to be funded by BEDC. The work has not been initiated, nor is it funded. BEDC is currently undertaking preliminary research related to the work required. The Executive Director of BEDC and the Director of Planning and Building will initiate discussions regarding scope, timing and costs of such an initiative.

To generalize two areas of the city may have the potential to accommodate a major institutional use: the strategic growth areas (Urban Growth Centre, Mobility Hubs); or Bronte Creek Meadows. The former would attract a user requiring an urban, transit supportive, mixed use area and the latter would attract a user desiring a more traditional campus setting.



Direction G2: Institutional Uses

Issue:

The previous policy directions report identified the opportunity to limit the amount or type of institutional uses on serviced employment land (PB-02-15). The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* offers discussion on two items:

1. Are the existing tools appropriate tools or are there other tools the municipality should consider (i.e., is the approach to risk assessment and land use compatibility assessment appropriate)?
2. What policies should guide the permission of Institutional Uses in employment areas?

Background:

Risk Assessment

Currently, the policies of the OP state that certain sensitive institutional use may be permitted in employment designations through a zoning by-law amendment subject to the findings of the completion of a risk assessment based on the *Risk-Based Land Use Planning Guideline* developed by the Major Industrial Accidents Council of Canada (MIACC) as well as a land use compatibility study using the provincial D6 Guidelines.

A risk assessment prepared as part of a development application represents a snapshot in time with no trigger for reassessment in the future. As employment uses surrounding the subject site change over time, so do the risk factors. In relation to the MIACC risk assessment, staff have recognized that there are few, if any, qualified consultants who are able to complete the risk assessment and few, if any, municipalities that apply the MIACC guidelines.

The PPS directs that development be directed away from risks to public health and safety, whether those hazards are natural or human-made. The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* recommends that the city continue to apply the risk assessment until it has had an opportunity to undertake a more detailed review of the studies and the value they bring to decision making as well as considering other potential tools to assess risk.



Policies related to the permission of Institutional Uses in Employment Areas

Currently, sensitive institutional uses are subject to a zoning by-law amendment and a risk assessment report. The policy directions suggested refinements to be in line with Regional policies.

The Region of Halton Official Plan states that institutional uses may be permitted in areas of employment subject to meeting a series of requirements. They generally include:

- The use is small scale, and collectively not change the character of the employment area
- The location and the design of the use meet the Region's land use compatibility guidelines
- The use is located at the periphery of the employment area
- Such uses do not collectively displace employment to result in a shortfall in Employment areas to meet the targets in the Official Plan.

Proposed Direction:

Staff have reviewed the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report and offers the following policy directions.

Institutional Uses

The recommendations in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report offer a general position related to institutional uses within employment areas. Community Infrastructure uses will be considered employment uses. Community infrastructure uses are generally defined as uses providing public services. These uses often include a significant office employment component and many uses may be considered ancillary to employment uses. An example could include a college or a post-secondary institution which may include research or other employment related functions that support the area.

Institutional uses are uses ancillary to employment areas. Institutional uses are generally defined as uses operated privately and they include a wide range of services. An example of an institutional use which may be ancillary to employment uses is a trade school.

The city proposes to establish a set of location criteria and minimum distance separation that must be met in order to permit a small scale institutional use in the



employment area. Only institutional uses that are deemed ancillary to employment areas may be considered to locate within employment areas. That is, institutional uses that primarily serve business and employees within the surrounding employment area. Ancillary institutional uses may include: private trade schools or emergency service facilities. Sensitive uses like daycare centres that may be considered ancillary will be subject to further assessment as the New Official Plan is prepared.

Places of worship may rarely be considered ancillary to an employment area. In the case of this specific institutional use policies related to the size, location and minimum separation distance from other institutional uses will be developed in the draft Official Plan. As these uses are sensitive they will also be considered through a zoning by-law amendment and land use compatibility assessment (see below).

As recommended by the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report the application of a size limit, location criteria and minimum distance separation should together ensure that institutional uses do not impact the function of employment areas. In the case of an identified or potential innovation district policies will consider flexibility to allow schools, post-secondary facilities and research facilities which are directly associated with the function of the employment area.

The specific details of the policies will be presented in the draft New Official Plan. The final criteria will be developed and refined through policy development with appropriate internal input.

Risk Assessment

The recommendations of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report suggest that the city continue to use the risk based land use planning guidelines.

However, in staff's opinion, the use of the risk assessment tool should not be continued. Rather, the most appropriate planning approach for assessing and mitigating risks to public health and safety is to not permit sensitive uses in employment areas. Where a sensitive use is proposed in proximity to an employment area the most appropriate tool is the application of the province's D-6 Compatibility between Industrial Facilities. The guide is provided to support land use planning authorities in decisions related to what types of uses are appropriate near industrial areas. The Region's Land Use Compatibility Guidelines are a tool that also supports this same aim. Existing policies within the Official Plan also assist in implementing the D-6 guidelines.

Staff recognizes that there are other non-planning tools in practice to address various risk factors such as regulated processes including, for example, Certificates of Approval



for Air Emissions through the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. Consistent with the recommendation staff will discuss opportunities to work with the Region of Halton Emergency Planning department to discuss alternative approaches to managing the risks inherent throughout the urban area.

As it relates to employment areas staff propose that for sensitive institutional uses the city require a zoning by-law amendment application. The zoning by-law amendment application will include a land use compatibility assessment and will demonstrate how a request for a new institutional use meets a series of criteria referred to above but which could generally include the following:

- The site has access to at least one major arterial or collector road;
- The proposed development is intended to serve the employees working within the broader area;
- The proposed development has access to transit and active transportation networks;
- The proposed development does not have the potential to negatively impact the viability of existing or future employment uses; and
- Land use compatibility issues, where applicable, have been addressed.

Staff propose that, consistent with the direction from the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report*, that the existing land use compatibility policies be reviewed and refined in light of the Region of Halton's Land Use Compatibility Guidelines. At a minimum the policies should be modified to be clear that a land use compatibility assessment must consider existing and designated employment uses to balance competing interests. Further, as mixed use areas redevelop, many of which will include employment uses, they will require the support of innovative approaches in mitigating impacts of employment uses on sensitive uses. As a note, staff have provided comments on the Provincial Plan Review that the province should consider updates to compatibility guidelines to acknowledge a built up context.



Direction H: Employment Intensification

Issue:

Burlington has traditionally focused intensification policies on promoting various forms of residential and mixed use development.

Background:

As demonstrated by the recommendations of this report there are areas which represent an obvious focus for intensification of employment. These areas include locations around transit stations in mixed use nodes where active transportation and areas that provide, or are planned to provide, improved transit. This approach will work in a few areas including Mobility Hubs, Intensification Corridors, and Urban Centres. Outside of those areas are wide swaths of employment land, much of which is occupied and active that have the potential to accommodate more jobs, either through expansion of existing uses or the location of new businesses.

The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report presents three approaches which could be applied in the Burlington context (not mutually exclusive):

- Making infrastructure, transportation and public realm improvements in existing employment areas
- Provide incentives to the private sector for certain types of employment lands development
- Modify planning permissions

Some areas of the city will be more appropriate for intensification and redevelopment such as areas where employment growth can be supported by transit, transportation and other infrastructure. The Proposed Employment Lands Policy Directions report (PB-02-15) recommended several specific land use changes:

- o Remove Floor Area Ratio limits from all employment designations
- o Enhance the flexibility of land division policies
- o Refine transit supportive policies to ensure employment areas are well served by transit and that improvements are made over time



Proposed Direction:

Staff have reviewed the recommendations presented in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report. The approach offers a fresh perspective on the levers at the city's disposal to influence the intensification of employment lands. The city desires to approach employment land intensification aggressively and will employ all appropriate tools to meet this objective.

Making infrastructure, transportation and public realm improvements in existing employment areas

Employment land policies will reiterate the importance of making investments in strategic employment areas to provide infrastructure, transportation and public realm improvements. Reference to the Strategic Investment Area policies presented in the *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions* report (PB-29-16) will be made identifying the potential of this tool to re-shape targeted employment areas to support businesses to expand operations or to locate in these areas.

Provide incentives to the private sector for certain types of employment lands development

Policy Directions related to the role of Community Improvement Plans in supporting employment land intensification presented in PB-02-15 remain unchanged.

Modify planning permissions

The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report recommended that the QEW Corridor be recognized as a "primary intensification area" in the Intensification Strategy. Staff are of the opinion that there are other approaches beyond the intensification framework which can highlight the importance of the city's strategic employment areas, with a particular focus on the QEW/403 Corridor.

Transit supportive policies in line with the Transportation new directions, emerging from the Transportation Plan work, will be embedded in the employment lands policies with a focus on developing new employment communities.

Intensification in employment areas

As noted in previous reports many challenges related to intensification are beyond the city's direct sphere of influence. Actions continue at the staff and political levels to support new approaches to meeting the objectives of the city as well as the Province. Great strides have been made, for example with the Ministry of Transportation to consider a pilot project to support multiple provincial policy objectives. Intensification



and redevelopment within employment areas, similar to intensification in mixed use areas, comes with many external challenges to be managed and mitigated. The city is tasked with considering and balancing multiple policy objectives – and in that process accepting tradeoffs that have the result of prioritizing what is most important.

Direction I: Preliminary Employment Land Conversion Assessments

Issue:

The city recognized early in the employment land study work that the Official Plan needed to consider employment land conversions. City staff identified employment land policies, areas and parcels that were proposed to be considered through the MCR. At the same time individual proponents and land owners identified their employment land parcels which they deemed should be considered through the same. This is a process that can only be undertaken at the time of a MCR.

The recommendations related to the employment land conversion analysis have a direct impact on properties within the City. The findings of the preliminary analysis and recommendations from the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* are being recommended by staff to be considered when preparing the New Official Plan. The preliminary employment land conversion recommendations are provided for information and discussion only at this time. The decision on the final “areas of employment” for the City of Burlington will be deferred to the development of the New Official Plan.

Background:

As noted above the city developed a process for considering both privately and city initiated employment land conversion requests and generally described how each conversion request would be considered. The existing employment conversion policies were modified to incorporate findings from the Phase 2 ELS and input from BEDC. Council endorsed these policies to be used in the assessment of employment land conversions.

From a high level perspective it is possible to organize the preliminary recommendations into two categories:

1. Recommendations for conversions to support sites with unique constraints
2. Recommendations for conversions to support the emerging urban structure



The former relates to sites that had site specific issues. Those types of issues could be related to sites with potential contamination, where sites are isolated from other employment areas, or where sites are surrounded by other sensitive uses. Conversions recommended in these cases were also typically small sites at the margins of employment areas. These instances were rare.

The latter represents preliminary recommendations that, if endorsed by Council would represent the most significant change. The conversions that are recommended on a preliminary basis in support of the urban structure rely on Council's endorsement of the Urban Structure and Intensification Framework. The *Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions* report (PB-29-16) reinforced and clarified the role of the mixed use areas of the city. Specifically, the recommendations impact existing mixed use areas like the Uptown Mixed Use Centre (Uptown Urban Centre) and the mixed use corridors (Urban Corridor lands) as well as the new mixed use areas (i.e. mobility hubs). The most significant shift is the identification of mobility hubs as the areas of future mixed use development.

1. New Mixed Use Areas: Mobility Hubs

The 2015 – 2040 Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of mobility hub areas. It contains specific guidance to direct growth and intensification to each GO station and the downtown, to undertake Area Specific Plans for each hub, and to enable walkable neighbourhoods in these areas.

From the initial employment conversion request submissions, a trend in the conversion requests submitted was noted in proximity to the mobility hubs. This trend was significant in the Aldershot GO area. There were also a significant number and area of requests in and around Burlington GO.

Each mobility hub area is subject to different pressures and each will play a unique role in the city's Urban Structure. As the Mobility Hubs Area Specific Plan work plan report noted, any decisions as part of the MCR will enable the mobility hub planning analysis required in order to shape the transformation of the lands into mixed use intensification areas, and to do so in a comprehensive manner within each mobility hub.

These areas will be given the latitude through area specific planning to allow for a complete discussion about the creation of a new neighbourhood and community with the right features, land uses, parks, and infrastructure. The recommendations in this report prepare these lands to be redefined, potentially significantly, to develop into mixed use areas with a wide range of compatible



employment, commercial, residential and public service facilities to support a new kind of neighbourhood in the city.

There will be tremendous pressures exerted by property owners and other stakeholders for residential uses through this MCR process and through the subsequent Mobility Hubs Area Specific Plans. In order to deliver areas of true mixes of uses staff will need to provide Council the appropriate information and tools to support the Area Specific Plans and their successful implementation. Tools and policies such as mandating a mix of uses or a ratio of people to jobs will be evaluated and assessed in order to deliver expected outcomes. As described in previous reports related to employment lands and the Intensification and Urban Structure, Council must be prepared to guide these areas of the city through significant challenges.

1.1. Site Specific Applications in mobility hubs

One challenge that staff have already identified is the potential for a number of site specific privately-initiated applications to be submitted in advance of the completion of the Mobility Hubs Area Specific Plans. The potential for those applications to prejudice the overall area specific plan will be closely monitored. Should the occasion arise that staff are of the opinion that the quality or volume of individual, or multiple applications has the potential to impact the development and implementation of the area specific plan staff will bring forward an Interim Control By-Law. The role of such a by-law would be to recognize that the area specific plans are in progress and require protection to support the outcome of the area specific plans.

1.2. Incentivizing Employment in mobility hubs

Another challenge that has been highlighted through work undertaken by BEDC, Dillon Consulting and Brook McIlroy is the role for incentives to deliver desirable employment to the Mobility Hub areas. Planning frameworks and land use permissions alone will likely not be enough to create a competitive advantage for these unique areas. Incentives supporting employment uses in mobility hubs will have a critical role in not only supporting these new neighbourhoods and the city with places to work in locations supported by transit and active transportation infrastructure, but will also serve to draw reverse commuters to the benefit of the entire city. The right types of employment will have the potential to play the most dramatic role in shaping these new neighbourhoods.



2. Vacant Employment Land

The focus of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 ELS reports was first to identify the vacant employment land supply and its characteristics and then understand the demand for employment land to 2031. The findings of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 recognized that the city had sufficient vacant employment land supply to 2031 and that virtually no new employment lands will be added to the city's supply. As noted above the land needs assessment as undertaken in Phase 1 and Phase 2 was oriented to understanding the vacant employment lands supply. Vacant land is critical to accommodating employment to 2031 and beyond. However, the city recognizes that beyond 2031; the vacant employment lands supply will have increasingly less to do with achieving the employment distribution that will be established in the Regional Official Plan to 2041 as the vacant supply becomes built. Careful investigation of the trends related to employment land intensification will be required in the coming years. Without understanding these trends, a prudent approach is to limit the conversion of the vacant employment lands supply. Of the net supply of vacant employment lands identified in 2014 approximately 3% of those lands are preliminarily recommended to be converted.

3. Protecting Stable Employment Areas

A significant component of this report addresses where changes are expected and the need to manage change. However, the preliminary recommendations of this report have the effect of protecting and maintaining the vast majority of the city's employment lands.

The employment lands studies highlighted the generally stable condition of the employment lands. This characteristic is an important foundation to the discussion. Efforts must be made to ensure that insofar as land use planning has the potential to impact these lands, any barriers to redevelopment of employment uses are removed. The target sectors identified by BEDC and by the Phase 2 ELS will be attracted to various opportunities in the stable area of employment and given the right conditions there is potential for growth.

The job of protecting the areas of employment in the city's context is easier than in many other municipalities. There are very few areas with challenges to land use compatibility issues. The areas are also relatively contiguous. That contiguous nature is important and supports the protection of the areas of employment.



The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* also proposes several policy modifications to allow some flexibility to consider uses that support employment areas be permitted in the employment areas without undercutting their principle role.

4. Employment Trends

The Region's employment survey determined that in 2015 manufacturing employed 12,275 people in 444 businesses in the city. This category is second only to the retail trade sector at 12,561 jobs in 913 businesses. Manufacturing jobs and businesses are critical to the economy and will require support to continue to operate in the city.

Although the focus of discussion in this report is on the shift of some employment lands into new policy frameworks the protection of employment lands is a first principle in this discussion. The protection of the areas of employment is reflected both in the recommendations of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* and the Staff recommendations. Maintaining and growing employment uses in areas of employment should be a high priority of the City.

Employment land planning is constantly evolving. The long term financial sustainability of the city relies on the areas of employment. The areas of employment are critical to sustaining a prosperous and complete city as envisioned in the Strategic Plan and require support from the city in order to facilitate redevelopment to accommodate more employment.

The approach to policy modifications and preliminary employment conversion recommendations presented in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* and in this report is cautious. The city has entered a new era related to accommodating employment. Maintaining and growing the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional tax base of a municipality is critical to the City's long term success. The approach presented in this report and in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* is an approach based on the three pillars of the employment vision for the city: (i) maintain vacant employment lands; (ii), nurture and invest in existing employment lands; and, (iii) direct new employment growth to mixed use areas. The approach requires vigilance to understand how each of these pillars operates over the coming years.



Monitoring will be critical to understanding the challenges related to accommodating employment within the city.

When is an employment land conversion not an employment land conversion?

Throughout the analysis a number of requests have been deemed not to be a conversion. This relates to the goal and outcome of the process which was to determine the principle of the land use. A request was deemed not a conversion when:

- Additional uses that are already permitted in other “area of employment” designations were being requested;
- Redesignations from one “area of employment” designation to another “area of employment” designation were being requested; or
- Properties were submitted which were not designated for employment (either within the urban boundary or outside of the urban boundary).

In the first two circumstances, the proposed uses may be considered as part of a standard development application. In the last circumstance, other planning policies apply.

Proposed Direction:

Staff have considered the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* and support the approach, findings and the preliminary analysis and recommendations on employment conversions. Figure 4-1 (Employment Land Conversion Preliminary Recommendations) represents the draft proposed area of employment for the City of Burlington.

The details of how to implement the endorsed recommendations for conversion will be presented to Council and the Public in the draft New Official Plan in the form of schedules and text as part of the Omnibus Report in Q1 2017.

Those sites not recommended for conversion may benefit from potential modifications to the approach to employment lands designations. Property owners are encouraged to examine the policy directions and subsequently the modified policy and schedule to understand the impact of any changes on a given parcel. Staff will be happy to meet and discuss the implications of the recommendations.



The schedules of the New Official Plan which will include the new Urban Structure and the comprehensive land use schedule will be presented as part of the Omnibus Report in the draft New Official Plan.

Direction J: Refine existing policy designations

A series of questions related to existing employment land designations including permitted uses, emerging issues and opportunities to improve policy are highlighted below. The policy directions informed by the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report are presented for each. Technical modifications as a result of internal consultation will be proposed at the time of the Omnibus Report to align the broad directions established in this report and in the previous directions report. One key technical modification will be that the terms *ancillary* and *accessory* uses will be considered and defined in the context of the employment policies of the New Official Plan.

Innovation District

Issue:

BEDC highlighted the need to understand innovation districts from a land use perspective.

Background:

The city's Official Plan does not recognize the concept of an Innovation District. The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* describes the general features of an Innovation District and provides a series of case studies and research. In general, the research affirms that innovation districts are composed first of an economic development marketing strategy, and that land use policy interventions are used to:

- Implement the vision
- Address land use compatibility
- Provide incentives

There is a role for land use planning policy to support the initiative by enabling area specific planning and working closely with any given anchor institution.



The success of innovation districts requires a mix of attributes and features. The right institutional anchor in place, the unique features of the area (old waterfront, older industrial area, natural heritage/open space), and transit and active transportation options are all critical to the success of an innovation district.

Proposed Direction:

Staff have considered the recommendations offered in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report and have determined that there is an opportunity to identify one or more potential innovation districts in the city.

The first step in any innovation district process is the development of the economic development strategy and brand designed to leverage the economic, networking and physical assets of the area. Where a strategy is developed an area specific plan should be initiated in support of the strategy that considers critical elements in support of the district including connectivity and access to the District.

The Official Plan should identify a general framework for identifying an area with potential to function as an innovation district and the approach for supporting these areas through land use planning.

In the near term the identification of a special study area around the existing DeGroot School of Business should be included as a potential innovation district. Through the work on the Mobility Hub Area Specific Plans some consideration of connectivity to the potential innovation district should be included. This special study area is located within an area of employment. As such no sensitive uses like residential should be permitted in this innovation district. There is potential for accommodating sensitive uses like residential in proximity to the potential innovation district such as along the Fairview Corridor or in association with the Appleby GO mobility hub.

A plan for the area such as a Mobility Hubs Area Specific Plan or considered through an area specific plan for the innovation district would assist in identifying opportunities to cross significant barriers in the area (rail line, creek) and to link the innovation district to the intensification area identified along Fairview Street.



Employment Commercial

Issue:

Planning staff had identified that Employment Commercial should not be considered part of the city's employment area for a number of reasons. Dillon Consulting was asked to consider that opinion and offer alternatives, if appropriate.

Background:

The Employment Commercial designation is located within the Major Retail Areas section of the Official Plan. The designation allows "for a wide range of employment uses and also a limited range of retail commercial uses which have employment characteristics".

The lands are not designated for employment in Schedule B nor is it specifically considered in the "Area of Employment" definition.

There is only one vacant parcel designated Employment Commercial this parcel forms part of the 1200 King Road property. The Employment Commercial parcels located in three nodes (Guelph Line and QEW/403; Industrial Drive and North Service Road, and a portion of 1200 King Road) around the city are mostly developed and continue to evolve. Where development has occurred these areas have developed into unique commercial areas with employment related and supportive uses.

Proposed Direction:

Staff are of the opinion, consistent with both the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report*, and the existing and emerging urban structure, that the Employment Commercial designation should form part of the mixed use area of the new urban structure.

These lands perform a limited commercial function that has little potential to impact the commercial function of the remainder of the mixed use areas. These areas, although limited in size and limited to just three nodes within the city, will continue to provide a location for uses that may benefit from a location in close proximity to employment areas to presumably take some pressure off of the city's employment lands. Staff are satisfied that this approach will enable the continuation of this unique designation to meet a specific need in the city. Staff are of the opinion that the designation limits the commercial uses appropriately



and will commit to developing clear policies to ensure that the intent of supporting the surrounding employment areas will be clear and enforceable. These directions include the following:

- Maintain the limited retail permissions
- Maintain that no additional lands be added to this designation

Staff also recommends that these lands be removed from the Region of Halton's Employment Overlay as they are not considered as part of the city's area of employment.

Retail and Service Commercial Uses

Issue:

A range of appropriate retail and service commercial uses within or in proximity to employment areas is critical to supporting existing and potential employers. This desire must be balanced with ensuring that these uses, either on their own or in aggregate do not displace existing or potential employment uses within the employment area.

Background:

The city has an existing framework for considering the broadest range of service commercial uses and a limited range of retail uses in employment areas.

The General Employment and the Business Corridor policies permit retail and service commercial uses subject to being:

- ancillary to, and primarily serving, uses, businesses and employees within the surrounding employment area;
- only permitted where one or more buildings have a total GFA greater than 3000 m²;
- no more than 15% of the total floor area of any one building.

The research in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* confirmed that it is common practice to limit retail and service commercial uses in Employment Areas. While all of the comparator municipalities limit the retail and service commercial uses – each take a different approach. It was noted that the approach of establishing a minimum GFA requirement was unique to Burlington.



Proposed Direction:

Staff have considered the recommendations in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report. Staff agree that both the General Employment and the Business Corridor designation should continue to permit retail and service commercial uses that are ancillary to the broader employment area. The policies should highlight that the intent is to improve employee access to amenities which support the broader function of the employment area.

In general, city staff also support maintaining as a base permission, the limit of no more than 15% of total site GFA for an ancillary retail or service commercial use. Staff are also comfortable with removing the minimum GFA requirement of 3000m² except in the case of policies permitting stand alone restaurants.

Staff propose the following:

- Retail and Service Commercial uses that are considered ancillary to the employment area may be permitted on a site as long as the total floor area of the use does not exceed 15% of the total site GFA.
- Restaurants will still be permitted in a stand-alone building on a lot with at least 3000m² GFA. The restaurant may take up 100% of the total floor area of any one building on a lot and the total floor area of the restaurant does not exceed 15% of the total site GFA.
- Applicants may seek relief to the 15% as it relates to restaurants on a site (that meet the 3000m² GFA) or retail and service commercial uses (for both restaurants and retail and service commercial uses these may either be proposed in a stand alone building or within the same building) through a rezoning. The city although removing the minimum 3000m² GFA the proposed use will be assessed against a site performance criteria. That is the proposed use must be accessory to the existing occupied employment use on the site and will be further assessed against the following criteria:
 - The proposed use is intended to serve the employees working in the surrounding employment area;
 - The proposed use is subordinate to the uses in the broader employment area and is of a size and scale such that it will not undermine the function of the employment area;
 - The site has access to transit;



- The site is designed to be pedestrian supportive and is accessible by active transportation links.

Staff are of the opinion that this approach may provide some additional flexibility in appropriate areas to consider the type of retail (limited range of uses) and service commercial (broad range of uses) that will support employment areas with appropriate amenities accessible by active transportation and transit.

The final criteria will be considered and refined through the development of the New Official Plan with appropriate internal input.

Uptown Mixed Use Centre - Employment Designations

Issue:

The policy brief prepared for Uptown proposed to modify the land use structure to move from the intersection-focused approach (centred on Upper Middle and Appleby Line) to introduce a node and corridor land use in order to promote intensification and provide opportunities to support Uptown's long-term growth. The Uptown Policy Brief identified the opportunity to realign and streamline the land use designations with the Uptown Mixed Use Center to shift to the new Uptown Urban Centre.

Background:

In 2014, a policy brief was written related to the Uptown Mixed Use Centre (Uptown). The development of Uptown began approximately 20 years ago with the goal of creating a secondary urban centre to the downtown that would serve as a key destination for the residents of north-east Burlington. As Uptown approaches its greenfield build-out, it was recognized that a comprehensive review of the existing policies should be undertaken through the current Official Plan Review to ensure Uptown achieves its long-term vision. Four objectives were established for the review of the Uptown policies:

1. Ensure current principles and objectives reflect Uptown's current build-out and future reliance on redevelopment to achieve the centre's long-term vision;
2. Establish an updated land use structure with a focus towards accommodating future redevelopment and intensification in an urban setting;



3. Review the findings of the city-wide Commercial Strategy Study as they relate to Uptown's commercial/mixed use areas and incorporate new policies where appropriate; and
4. Encourage new developments and redevelopments which achieve a higher standard of design and adopt compact, mixed-use forms to support pedestrian, transit and public realm objectives.

The establishment of an updated urban structure is an essential consideration in updating the city's vision for Uptown. Uptown's existing development context is that of an urban area with a limited supply of remaining undeveloped lands. This context requires a fundamental shift in many policy areas, including transportation, parks and land use, among others to recognize the growing role and importance of future intensification and redevelopment to achieve the long term vision for Uptown.

The new structure places a greater emphasis on the development of corridors and strategic sites which are capable of accommodating increased density including Appleby Line and Upper Middle Road corridors and the north-west quadrant (commercial lands).

The policy brief also proposed the modification and consolidation of the existing Official Plan designations within Uptown to reinforce the node and corridor structure. The existing employment designations were highlighted as subject to the MCR and no specific directions were given at that time other than to flag these designations for review. The existing Uptown 'employment' designations and their respective general land use permissions are detailed below in Table 3.

**Table 3: Existing Uptown Employment Designations General Permissions**

Designation	General land use permissions
Uptown General Employment	The policies related to General Employment apply to these lands.
Uptown Employment	Industrial and office uses. Subject to meeting criteria, limited, at or below-grade retail and service commercial uses. Hospitality and recreation and entertainment uses.
Uptown Office Business Park	A wide range of employment uses compatible with abutting residential; cultural, leisure and recreation uses. Limited retail sales of products related to the use
Uptown Mixed Use Corridor Employment	A wide range of employment uses compatible with abutting residential; cultural, leisure and recreation uses; cultural, leisure and recreation uses. Subject to meeting criteria, limited (range of uses and unit size), at or below-grade retail and service commercial uses.

Proposed Direction:

Findings of the Official Plan Review saw changes to the Uptown Employment and Uptown Mixed Use Employment. While not constituting employment conversion some modifications to the employment designations are proposed to be considered through the development of the New Official Plan in order to respond to their location within an Urban Centre.

The Uptown General Employment designation and geographic extent is proposed to be maintained, with one exception (1830 Ironstone Dr) and included in a new Uptown Business designation to be developed in the New Official Plan. In general the permissions would be largely unchanged, however the policies may place a greater emphasis on industrial uses undertaken within an enclosed building to mitigate noise, vibration, odours and dust given proximity of existing sensitive uses in the Uptown Urban Centre. The new designation does not



contemplate permitting retail and service commercial uses, however, may still allow for limited retail sales of products manufactured, processed, fabricated, assembled or warehoused on the premises. In addition the designation may provide increased density permissions for office uses in the form of an increased Floor Area Ratio.

The former Uptown Mixed Use Corridor Employment and the Uptown Office Business Park designations have been proposed to be amalgamated into a new Uptown Business Corridor designation (same geographic extent) to be considered through the development of the New Official Plan. In addition, the existing RONA site (1830 Ironstone Drive) will be recommended to shift into this proposed new employment designation. A portion of the site at 1309 Appleby Line will be maintained in this designation. The purpose of the new designation will be to accommodate mixed use, compact developments along major corridors where the primary function of the development is employment. If a certain amount of employment uses are located within the building, limited, small-scale, ancillary retail and service commercial uses may be permitted at grade.

The former Uptown Employment designation has been considered through the employment land conversion assessment in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report. This designation is proposed to apply to four parcels. These lands are recommended for conversion. Lands closest to the intersection of Appleby Line and Upper Middle and Appleby Line and Ironstone Drive are proposed to be considered as part of the new Uptown Centre designation. The remainder of the lands are proposed to shift into the new Uptown Corridor designation. Lands designated Uptown Corridor and located on the west side of Appleby Line will continue to prohibit sensitive uses, like residential, given the close proximity of these sites to the adjacent employment designation (existing Uptown General Employment designation / proposed Uptown Business designation).

The details of the extents of the designations will be under consideration in the development of the draft New Official Plan. The draft policy will be developed and refined with appropriate internal input.

Staff are satisfied that the review, the employment land conversion recommendations and the forthcoming policy details in the draft New Official Plan represent the next phase in the development of the Uptown Urban Centre.



Recreational Uses

Issue:

Recreational uses are permitted without limitation in the city's General Employment designation and are permitted, with limitations in the Business Corridor designation.

Background:

Recreational uses are permitted throughout the city within a variety of land use designations. Many types of recreational uses are more appropriate in locations in close proximity to mixed use or residential areas.

The existing policy framework within the employment area permits recreational uses without limitation in the General Employment designation. This approach means a wide range of recreational uses have located in the General Employment designation. These uses have little relationship to the Employment areas within which they are located.

The Business Corridor designation permits recreational uses subject to considerations related to retail and service commercial uses highlighted above. There is a role for ancillary recreational uses in employment areas.

Proposed Direction:

Staff have considered the recommendations in the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report. The directions provided appear appropriate. Staff suggest a number of new directions.

Proposed policy will refocus on the role of recreational uses ancillary to employment areas (i.e. limited range of uses ancillary to the employment area) for both General Employment and Business Corridor.

For both General Employment and Business Corridor policies will describe that through a Zoning By-law amendment a recreational use may be permitted as a stand alone use (with no applicable site GFA minimums) subject to meeting a series of criteria which may look generally like the following:

- The proposed use is intended to support the daily routine of employees working in the general area;



- The site has access to at least one major arterial or multi-purpose arterial road;
- The site is designed to be pedestrian/cycling supportive and has access to active transportation networks;
- The site is located on the periphery of an employment area; and
- The proposed recreational activity is compatible with surrounding uses
- Where the lands are designated Business Corridor (given the prestige nature of these lands) additional landscaping and urban design requirements are met.

Staff are of the opinion that a consistent approach for permitting recreational uses in the area of employment that focuses on the role of the use in supporting the employment area is appropriate. It is not expected that the limited range of permitted uses ancillary to the area of employment (e.g. fitness centres, gyms, other daily and weekly activities) will collectively displace other employment uses or result in a cluster of non-employment uses. The final criteria will be considered and refined through the development of the New Official Plan with appropriate internal input.

Motor Vehicle Dealerships

Issue:

Motor vehicle dealerships are permitted as of right on lands designated General Employment and are not permitted in the Business Corridor designation.

Background:

The city has taken an approach that protects prestige employment lands along the 400 series highways for uses like offices or other employment uses that require visibility on major corridors. The approach taken by the municipality to consider the addition of motor vehicle dealerships in the Business Corridor designation through an Official Plan amendment provided an opportunity to examine and demonstrate how a potential use could meet the intent of the designation.

Other municipalities take different approaches to the permission of motor vehicle dealerships. The city's approach is appropriate given the objective of the Business Corridor lands are intended to provide locations for prestige type uses.



The *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report notes that while motor vehicle dealerships have a combined employment and specialty retail/service commercial function the findings of the Commercial Strategy Study said there is no need to designate new lands. It is also noted that while motor vehicle dealerships may be considered an employment use it may not represent the best use of employment lands.

Proposed Direction:

It is the opinion of staff that motor vehicle dealerships perform an employment function and may still be permitted in the General Employment designation.

In light of the fact that motor vehicle dealerships have an employment function (albeit combined with a specialty retail/service commercial function) the city should develop Official Plan policy directing that new motor vehicle dealerships may be considered in lands designated Business Corridor through a zoning by-law amendment where a series of criteria can be met, including, among other issues:

- Minimum employment generation targets,
- Location requirements,
- Built form requirements,
- Urban design requirements,
- site plan considerations such as outside storage (including the parking of vehicles), stormwater management and drainage issues as well as landscaping details.

This approach acknowledges motor vehicle dealerships as having a combined employment and specialty retail/service commercial role.



Mixed Use Corridor – Employment and Uptown Mixed Use Corridor - Employment

Issue:

The Mixed Use Corridor –Employment and the Uptown Mixed Use Corridor Employment designations may not have the effect of including a meaningful employment function.

Background:

At the outset of the Official Plan Review a key consideration was to examine the existing mixed use corridor designations, with specific attention to the mixed use corridor employment lands (MXE) and the mixed use corridor employment designation in the Uptown area (Uptown MXE). Findings from the Phase 2 ELS have suggested that the MXE and Uptown MXE policies, as written today, may not have the effect of including a meaningful employment function. Stakeholder feedback identified the need to at a minimum clarify the intent of the MXE policies. As discussed in PB-02-15 all of the Mixed Use Corridor Employment and Uptown Mixed Use Corridor Employment lands have been included in the scope of the MCR.

Proposed Direction:

Staff analyzed all of the Mixed Use Corridor Employment and Uptown Mixed Use Corridor Employment lands throughout the City. That analysis identified the shift deemed appropriate for a given site. In general, the lands were given one of three directions:

- retain as “area of employment”, and redesignate to a new Urban Corridor –Employment designation;
- retain as area of employment, and redesignate to another of the “area of employment” designations;
- preliminarily recommend conversion, determine ultimate land use designation through the development of the New Official Plan, the mobility hub area specific plan or through other appropriate development applications.



The staff analysis is captured in the MXE and Uptown MXE conversion requests found in Appendix C to the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report.

Staff are of the opinion that a single approach to considering all of the MXE and Uptown MXE parcels would not have been appropriate. The MXE and Uptown MXE parcels have unique site characteristics and context. Where a conversion is considered the preliminary findings will be considered within the New Official Plan.

Strategy/process

This section provides a discussion with respect to the strategy/process related to the MCR as part of the Official Plan project, and next steps.

Municipal Comprehensive Review and the New Official Plan

The conversion of employment land can only occur in the context of an MCR. The MCR will remain ongoing as the new Official Plan is prepared.

The staff recommendations of this report and previous recommendations related to employment land policies will be considered in the development of the New Official Plan.

Please refer to PB-84-16 for more details on the New Official Plan process.

City and Regional Approval Processes

There are two paths triggered for lands that are on, and off the lands identified within the Region of Halton's Official Plan "Employment Area" overlay.

The first path applies to lands that are designated for employment in the Region of Halton OP and the city OP (note: staff commonly refer to these lands as "Within the Employment Area Overlay"). These lands, as highlighted elsewhere in the report, will be addressed through the development of the policies of the New Official Plan (which may include site specific text and may require additional planning applications), or through area specific planning to establish mix of uses, height, density, etc. Prior to the finalization of any of that work these lands must be considered in the context of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (RMCR) being conducted as part of the Region's Official Plan Review. Site specific policy text that relates to each site will be proposed indicating that the site is subject to the RMCR and the appropriate planning application or process (i.e. if the parcel will be considered through the area specific plan



or if the city would require another planning application) will also be included. These will be presented in a way to allow this series of policy modifications to be deferred by the Region as they work through their RMCR. Those parcels within the Mobility Hubs will be considered through the area specific plans to further refine the direction and that refinement will be supplied to the Region prior to the finalization of the RMCR.

Final approval of the Region's MCR is expected to be in the longer term being approximately three to five years. Planning policies developed by the city through the New Official Plan or Area Specific Planning conducted on these lands now and in the coming years represent an important step in providing a local vision to the Region. It is understood that Regional approval would be required prior to enabling development within a new planning framework. The city encourages the Region to move forward expeditiously with the Regional MCR.

The second path applies to lands that are not designated for employment in the Region of Halton Official Plan but are identified as employment land in the city's Official Plan. These lands, as highlighted elsewhere in the report, will be addressed through the development of the policies of the new Official Plan (which may include site specific text and may require additional planning applications), or through area specific planning to establish mix of uses, height, density, etc.. The important distinction being that they will not be subject to the RMCR process. Lands in this path will be subject to City Council's endorsement of the New Official Plan and Regional Council or OMB approval of the New Official Plan.

Details of policy will be provided in the draft New Official Plan.

Options considered

Options were considered in the context of the employment decision making framework of the employment conversion assessment process. All requests for conversion were assessed against the Council endorsed employment land conversion policies developing a consistent, transparent and replicable decision making process.



Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

The total cost for consulting services for the development of the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* is approximately \$95,000 (not including tax).

Source of Funding

This work is funded.

Other Resource Impacts

Not applicable

Connections:

BEDC

From the outset of the employment lands work BEDC has been a critical partner. Specifically, as it relates to developing the *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis report* BEDC played a pivotal role. In line with the process endorsed by Council for the consideration of employment land conversion, BEDC input has been integrated into the process.

BEDC provided positions to be considered in the review through the development of a detailed assessment framework unique to the BEDC lens. Through team discussions and analysis, consensus was reached on those lands preliminarily recommended for conversion and those lands preliminarily recommended to be retained for employment. BEDC and Planning Staff are generally satisfied with the process and its outcome.

In addition to the specific input provided to this process BEDC has committed to being a key partner in the delivery of the Official Plan. This support and input has been and will be invaluable to the process.



New Official Plan project

For more details on the approach for finalizing the Official Plan project please refer to PB-84-16 which details the approach to developing a New Official Plan as discussed throughout this report.

Public Engagement Matters:

For engagement at the different stages of the work please consult previous reports.

Privately-initiated conversion requests

At the time of report PB-18-14 a total of 12 conversion requests were logged in table 2. All of these requests were considered through the assessment. By the August 1, 2014 deadline established in PB-18-14 a total of 27 privately initiated conversion requests were logged. Several requests were withdrawn. In early 2016 the window for accepting privately initiated conversion requests was opened again and four new privately initiated conversion requests were submitted.

Some requests were consolidated or cross referenced. In the final document a total of 25 privately-initiated conversion requests were assessed.

Notification of this Report

Notification of the release of this report was completed by letter mail (copy by email) to the individual proponents and owners. The notice was also provided to the entire Official Plan e-mail list (via elite email).

Notice was also placed in the Burlington Post indicating the opportunity to delegate at the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Next steps

Staff will be available to discuss this report and its recommendations. As is the case with the other elements of the Official Plan consultation will initiate upon the delivery of the draft Official Plan. Meetings, open houses and other opportunities will exist for staff to meet with various stakeholders.

Engagement with the release of the omnibus report will highlight the integral role for employment in areas like Mobility Hubs. Engagement and discussions with stakeholders, residents and property owners will reiterate that the ultimate land use will be developed through the area specific plans. It is quite possible that the lands will be



directed to continue to have a primary role for employment. This message is important as these areas must be supported in developing a range of uses. The recommendation for conversion simply affords the opportunity to consider the mobility hubs as a whole.

Conclusion:

The proposed employment land directions have been developed in the context of provincial, regional and local planning policy, the findings of the studies undertaken as part of the Official Plan Review, and professional consultant and staff review and analysis.

These staff recommendations, together with directions previously approved by Council as outlined in Section 2.0 will be considered in the development of the New Official Plan Omnibus Report which will consider all the Council-approved policy directions to date and propose draft policy. The recommendations in this report advance the city's planning for future employment growth and are a contributing factor to implementing Burlington's Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Enns, MCIP, RPP

Senior Planner

(905) 335-7600 ext 7787

Appendices:

Appendix A (Employment Lands Work Chronology)

Appendix B (*Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis* report, Dillon Consulting, dated September 21, 2016) **is available online at** www.burlington.ca/calendar

Appendix C (*Figure 4-1 Employment Land Conversion Recommendations*) **is available online at** www.burlington.ca/calendar



Notifications:

Ron Glenn, Chief Planner, Region of Halton

Frank McKeown, Executive Director of BEDC

Employment Lands Conversion Request Proponent List

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.



Appendix A - Employment Lands Work Chronology

<p>June 20, 2011 (CDC)</p> <p>July 7, 2011 (Council)</p> <p>CONSULTANT STUDY</p>	<p>Council received Phase 1 Employment Land Study, MKI/MMM, May 7, 2011. Burlington Employment Lands Study, 2011(PB-37-11).</p> <p>This study reported on the following key components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of the trends in employment uses in southern Ontario and the implications for demand for employment land, • updating of the supply of vacant, developable employment land, • calculation of the demand for employment land to the planning horizon of 2031 and having regard for the targets established under the Provincial Growth Plan, • strategies and options for the City to meet growth objectives.
<p>December 3, 2012 (CDC)</p> <p>December 10, 2012 (Council)</p> <p>CONSULTANT STUDY</p>	<p>Council received Phase 2 Draft Employment Lands Study, Dillon Consulting, dated November 26, 2012. Draft Employment Lands Study, Phase 2 (PB-101-12).</p> <p>This draft study builds on the findings of the Phase 1 ELS, developed a more detailed understanding of the vacant employment lands and their characteristics, identified opportunities and issues for Employment Lands throughout the City and provides a series of strategic directions to inform policy development.</p>
<p>January 14, 2013 (D&I)</p> <p>January 28, 2013 (Council)</p> <p>DIRECTIONS REPORT</p>	<p>Council endorsed Employment Land Conversion OP Policy Directions. Official Plan Review: Directions Report on the Draft Employment Land Conversion Policies; and, Proposed Strategic Assessment of Vacant Employment Land Inventory (PB-17-13).</p> <p>This report referenced existing approved Official Plan employment land conversion policies and proposed minor refinements to existing employment land conversion policy.</p> <p>Staff were directed to conduct a Strategic Vacant Land Assessment.</p>



<p>March 19, 2013</p> <p>STAKEHOLDER SESSION</p>	<p>Employment Lands Stakeholder Session</p>
<p>March 24, 2014 (D&I)</p> <p>April 7, 2014 (Council)</p> <p>CONSULTANT STUDY</p>	<p>Council received Phase 2 Final Employment Lands Study, Dillon Consulting, February 28, 2014. Report providing information on the Official Plan Review: Transmittal of Final Phase 2 Employment Lands Study (PB-17-14).</p> <p>This draft study builds on the findings of the Phase 1 ELS, developed a more detailed understanding of the vacant employment lands and their characteristics, identified opportunities and issues for Employment Lands throughout the City and provides a series of strategic directions to inform policy development. The Draft Report was modified to capture further discussion on methodology, <i>Planning Act</i> protection for employment land conversions, and intensification.</p>
<p>May 6, 2014 (Council Workshop as part of C&CS)</p> <p>May 20, 2014 (Council)</p> <p>BRIEFING NOTE</p>	<p>Council received documentation in support a Council Workshop on Employment Lands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briefing Note: Council Workshop on Employment Lands - Presentation: Prepared by Dillon Consulting & Watson & Associates
<p>May 26, 2014 (D&I)</p> <p>June 9, 2014 (Council)</p> <p>STAFF REPORT</p>	<p>Council approved an Employment Land Conversion Request Assessment Process. Official Plan Review: Proposed Employment Land Conversion Request Assessment Process and Strategic Vacant Land Assessment (PB-18-14).</p> <p>This report presented for endorsement a proposed Employment Land Conversion Request Assessment Process along with a discussion of the strategic vacant land assessment.</p>



<p>January 19, 2015 (D&I)</p> <p>January 26, 2016 (Council)</p> <p>STAFF REPORT</p>	<p>Council endorsed proposed employment lands policy directions. Report recommending endorsement of Official Plan Review: Proposed Employment Lands Policy Directions. (PB-02-15).</p> <p>This report presented for endorsement a number of policies related to the findings of the Employment Land Studies and other major studies undertaken through the Official Plan Review. These directions included corporate/BEDC focused directions as well as land use planning policy directions.</p> <p>This report also provided the list of parcels, areas and designations that are being considered for conversion as part of the current MCR.</p>
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