

Planning for Burlington's Bronte Creek Meadows: Background and Draft Visioning

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DRAFT

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1 Introduction

The future use for Bronte Creek Meadows (BCM) will be changing. BCM is presently an undeveloped area approximately 133 hectares (328 acres) in size. The BCM property is municipally known as 5164, 5366, 5470 and 5900 Upper Middle Road and 5201 Mainway, in the area southwest of Upper Middle Road and Burloak Drive, north of Mainway and east of Creek Way.

BCM is currently zoned and designated for General Employment uses; however, recent provincial legislative amendments described later, have removed this area from the Region's Employment Area overlay. The Employment Area overlay acted as a protection for the long term use of these lands for employment. Now that these lands are no longer exclusively Employment Area and the City of Burlington's Official Plan must be modified to establish a revised vision for these areas. Although BCM will no longer have a solely employment use function, it is the objective of the City that an appropriate mix of jobs will be part of any future mixed-use development.

To address the future of BCM, Area-Specific Planning work is required to set the overall vision for the area. The scope of work is expected to be completed in 2025, dependent upon a wide range of inputs. This includes:

- the completion of all required technical studies prepared by owner, and peer reviewed as required;
- hosting public and stakeholder engagement opportunities;
- the completion of an area-specific plan (ASP);
- the preparation of implementing Official Plan; and,
- other implementation strategies, as required.

City staff will work with stakeholders, the public and the BCM landowners team including their Land Use Planning consultant, to develop an area-specific plan (ASP) for BCM that aligns with the city's strategic and official plan policy directions and reflects community responsive growth management.

1.1 What is the Purpose of this Report?

This report is to provide you with a background of the Bronte Creek Meadows property and an overview of the ASP objectives and process. This report will:

- provide background on how we got here;
- describe the objectives of the area-specific plan;
- describe the study process;
- describe the key Provincial, Regional and City policies that inform and guide growth in BCM;
- explain connections to other ongoing projects;
- describe the purpose of the Engagement Plan; and
- set out the next steps.

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

Along with this background report, there are additional resources that pertain to the BCM property, providing both historical and recent context as well as current directives, including:

- **October 2, 2016, Report to Committee of the Whole: [Official Plan Project: Employment Land Conversion Preliminary Recommendations and Policy Directions \(PB-30-16\)](#)** – This report outlines recommended policy directions for employment land, with updates based on a consultant report titled *Burlington Employment Lands Policy Recommendations and Conversion Analysis, September 2016*. The employment land conversion assessment analysis recommended that Bronte Creek Meadows be retained as employment land. In the staff report, Direction F: Prioritizing Area Specific Planning for Bronte Creek Meadows, outlines the significance of BCM, constituting about 40% of the city's vacant employment land supply.
- **April 13, 2022, Halton Region Report to Regional Council, Statutory Public Meeting: [Regional Official Plan Amendment \(ROPA\) 49 – An Amendment to Implement the Integrated Growth Management Strategy \(LPS32-22\)](#)** - The draft amendment implements the results of Halton Region's Integrated Growth Management Strategy, which considered how to accommodate growth in Halton

Region to the 2051 planning horizon as part of a municipal comprehensive review process. The draft amendment also proposes changes that support Halton's growth strategy, including updates related to Settlement Area boundaries, the Regional Urban Structure, Strategic Growth Areas, and Employment Areas, as well as forecasts and targets for population and employment growth, intensification, density, and development phasing.

- **May 10, 2022, Report to Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee:** [Regional Official Plan Review ROPA 49 staff comments \(PL-37-22\)](#) – Section G, Mapping Updates, of this report show Halton Region's Employment Area assessment did not support conversion of Bronte Creek Meadows. Therefore, initial ROPA 49 Employment Area land needs assumptions did not reflect the conversion of BCM lands.
- **September 28, 2022, Modification Request to ROPA 49 RE: Bronte Creek Meadows** (ERO Number 019-5684) – Letter request sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing by representatives of the property owner, for the Bronte Creek Meadows lands to be converted from employment area designation, to permit a mixed use development. Submission documents provide conversion justification and the property owner's proposed vision to create a mixed-use community.
- **June 27, 2023, Report to Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee:** [Burlington Official Plan, 2020 Targeted Realignment Exercise – Initial Work Plan \(PL-45-23\)](#) – This report outlines the changes in planning legislation, regulations and policy since the Regional approval of Burlington Official Plan, 2020 and the Targeted Realignment work program to address the changes. Given that ROPA 49 implemented Burlington's planning horizon to 2051 and changed key elements impacting the local Urban Structure, a Local Growth Management Update is required, including a detailed [Population and Employment Growth analysis](#). The development of Policy Directions to inform future changes to the Official Plan will be guided by several principles, including one that notes the City will exhaust its Employment Land supply between 2031 and 2044. With the removal of approximately 126 hectares (gross) of land from the Regional Employment Area, the City's ability to meet the employment forecasts assigned through ROPA 49 (distributed as directed by the Growth Plan) is likely to be compromised.
- **March 24, 2024, Report to Committee of the Whole:** [Bill 162, Get It Done Act, 2024 Update \(PL-27-24\)](#) – This report explains that Bill 162 reinstates modifications made by the Minister to the Region's Official Plan through the [Minister's decision on ROPA 49](#). This includes modifications to remove the Employment Area overlay from BCM, among other changes. The report includes

a link to the [draft letter from the Mayor](#) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding support for ROPA 49 changes. Bill 162 received Royal Assent on May 16, 2024.

The letter highlights the following:

The City of Burlington will continue to work collaboratively with the respective ROPA 49 landowners and the public in advancing the City's interests on these lands. Priority will be given to achieving the City's community responsive growth management objectives and long-term community development goals related to achieving vibrant mixed-use neighbourhoods inclusive of the following elements as outlined in our May 25, 2023 letter:

- economic benefits including future employment targets that increase future property assessment growth.
 - social benefits including affordable and attainable housing, public parks and greenspace and community facilities and amenities.
 - environmental benefits including climate mitigation and adaption, natural heritage preservation and enhanced integrated mobility
- **April 8, 2024, Report to Committee of the Whole: [Targeted realignment future growth areas – 1200 King Road, Bronte Creek Meadows and Bridgeview \(PL-29-24\)](#)** – This report addresses issues to be considered with newly converted employment areas and new urban areas resulting from Bill 162 and presents a targeted timeline to develop an Area Specific Plan for Bronte Creek Meadows.

1.2 Why is the City Planning in Bronte Creek Meadows?

Bronte Creek Meadows (BCM) is now considered an undeveloped Designed Greenfield Area within the City's Urban Boundary. Until recently, it has been planned for employment uses, identified in the [City's 1997 and 2020 Official Plans](#) for General Employment uses with a policy framework focused on the employment function.

The city, consistent with its submission to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, is now moving forward to establish a vision and policy framework for a new community area with a mix of uses and allocated population and employment growth.

BCM's future role in the City's Urban Structure and Growth Framework established in Burlington Official Plan, 2020 (BOP, 2020) will need to be determined and a new policy framework for BCM will need to be developed. The City's Urban Structure in BOP, 2020 currently identifies BCM as lands designated for employment uses and will also need to be amended to reflect the urban structure elements for this new community area. From High density residential, employment, key nodes and Natural Heritage the elements of the Urban Structure will need to be developed. Currently, BCM is an undeveloped area and is located outside of the Delineated Built Boundary. It is therefore not currently part of the City's Growth Framework. The work ahead will need to determine the relative priority of growth in all or part of the ASP.

Several land use assumptions of the BOP 2020 and the work prepared to support the ROPR have changed as a result of ROPA 49, as approved. Neither process anticipated the new areas community areas, by employment conversion or by adding new urban areas that were introduced through the ROPA 49 modifications. ROPA 49 modifications also require the update of the planning horizon to 2051, in conformity with the Growth Plan. Currently, while the BOP, 2020 establishes a planning horizon of 2031 it also sets a long term vision for the urban area of a built out municipality that will grow primarily through intensification.

Work being undertaken through the city's recently commenced [Population and Growth Analysis Study](#) as part of the [Burlington Official Plan, 2020 Targeted Realignment Exercise](#), will consider population and employment growth forecasts for the new community areas, in lockstep with the Urban Structure and Growth Framework assessments. Given that BCM has historically been an employment area, population allocation has never been considered for this area. Although BCM will no longer have a solely employment use function, an appropriate mix of jobs will be part of any future mixed-use development and therefore will be reflected in the employment forecasts for BCM.

The BOP, 2020, Urban Structure areas surrounding the BCM property provide local context and will help inform planning for compatible uses and densities on the property as well as transit and active transportation linkages. BCM abuts the Uptown Urban Centre, a Mixed Use Intensification Area anchored at the intersection of Appleby Line and Upper Middle Road. A Residential Neighbourhood area (the Orchard community) is located to the north, and Employment uses are located to the south. The Town of Oakville and Bronte Creek Provincial Park are located on the eastern edge.

An [April 8, 2024 report](#) to Committee of the Whole outlined an approach for future growth areas, including Bronte Creek Meadows. This approach requires the City to complete an area-specific plan to define the Urban Structure role, the Growth Framework prioritization and the land use policies for Bronte Creek Meadows. The area-specific plan will be informed by City objectives, inputs from the landowner/applicant information and City-led public engagement.

To be developed

Figure 1: Map of the Bronte Creek Meadows Area

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

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

- the location and form of new housing, shops and services, offices and industry;

- the anticipated needs for services such as parks, streets, watermains, sewers, school and community amenities;
- opportunities for community improvement initiatives; and
- community identity, place-making and urban design.

ASPs are informed by:

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

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

2 Governing Policies and their Role in the Outcome

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

Land use planning in Ontario is guided by strong top-down direction from the Province of Ontario. There are several documents that provide the City, and all municipalities, direction in preparing land use plans. The Planning Act, Provincial Plans and Regional and Local Official Plans all focus on creating complete communities that are equitable, healthy and safe. This direction will inform the preparation of an area-specific plan for Bronte Creek Meadows.

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

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

The [Provincial Policy Statement, 2020](#) (PPS, 2020) applies throughout the Province and supports a comprehensive, integrated and long term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages between land use and how we get around, where we live, work and play. The PPS, 2020 provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development.

The PPS, 2020 requires that municipalities plan for efficient development patterns that make best use of land and public investment in infrastructure and public service facilities. These land use patterns promote a mix of housing, including affordable

housing, employment, recreation, parks and open spaces, and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit before other modes of travel. All land use decisions must be consistent with the PPS, 2020.

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

The Growth Plan directs growth to the urban area and prioritizes intensification in strategic growth areas including Urban Growth Centres and Major Transit Station Areas. All planning decisions must conform to the Growth Plan.

The Growth Plan would consider the BCM property as a Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) since it is within the settlement area but outside of the delineated built-up area. Designated Greenfield Areas are areas expected to redevelop and are subject to a Community Area Density Target requiring that DGA within the City of Burlington will be planned to target 76 people and jobs per hectare.

The province has developed an updated [proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024](#), (PPS, 2024) was released in early 2024 which is intended to replace both the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 and the Growth Plan. The PPS, 2024 supports the achievement of complete communities that prioritize compact and transit-supportive design, where appropriate, and optimize investments in infrastructure and public service facilities, including schools, hospitals and community recreation facilities.

The proposed PPS, 2024 encourages large and fast-growing municipalities, including Burlington, to plan for a target of 50 residents and jobs per gross hectare in designated growth areas. The BCM property would be considered a designated growth area. New and updated policies support increasing the housing supply with a range and mix of housing options and densities, including through transit-supportive intensification and

mixed-use development in strategic growth areas (SGAs), and redevelopment of underutilized shopping malls and plazas. The proposed PPS, 2024 policies scope protections for employment areas and encourage employment uses in SGAs and other mixed-use areas, where compatible. While the proposed PPS,2024 is not in effect there is potential for it to become part of the overarching Provincial policy framework during the life of this project.

What is a Complete Community?

A complete community offers and supports opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, transportation options, public service facilities, and local store and services. Complete communities are inclusive and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their populations. (PPS, 2024)

The area-specific plan for Bronte Creek Meadows will guide future development and investment to create a complete community over the long-term.

2.2 How does the Halton Region Official Plan Guide Planning in Bronte Creek Meadows?

Halton Region Official Plan Status

On July 1, 2024, Halton Region will no longer have certain responsibilities for planning under the Planning Act, as outlined in [Halton Region report LPS34-23](#). As a result, the Regional Official Plan (ROP) will be deemed to constitute an official plan of the local municipality and the local municipality will be responsible for all aspects of implementation of the ROP until such a time that it is revoked and/or amended. Halton Region will be defined as “upper-tier without planning responsibility”, notwithstanding the Region’s interests as it relates to provisions of infrastructure, housing services, coordination and management of growth, protections of natural heritage systems and resources among others.

While growth management will soon be undertaken by the individual local municipalities, Halton Region will continue to undertake the master planning and delivery of infrastructure to facilitate growth and development across the Region. As the responsible authority for growth management within its jurisdiction, the City of Burlington must proactively manage growth, encompassing both population and employment expansion, by establishing suitable forecasting and monitoring capabilities.

To this end, the city has commenced a [Population and Employment Growth Analysis Study](#).

Targeted Growth and Intensification

The [Halton Region Official Plan](#) (ROP) sets out a long-term vision for the Region that guides how development throughout Halton will meet the current and future needs of businesses and residents. In addition to the vision, a set of goals and objectives are identified in the plan that establishes a Regional Structure including broad categories such as settlement areas, an agricultural system and a natural heritage system. Settlement areas consist of the urban area where existing and future development is accommodated. The Regional land use structure ensures that growth is accommodated in a compact manner that supports the development of compact complete communities that are transit supportive and improve housing affordability, sustainability and economic prosperity, while ensuring protection of agricultural areas and the natural heritage system.

Within the Urban Area a Regional Urban Structure is defined to accommodate growth in the urban area directing residential and employment densities to Strategic Growth Areas such as Urban Growth Centres (UGCs), MTSAs and Primary and Secondary Regional Nodes, to ensure the viability of existing and planned transit infrastructure and service and leverage public service facility investment, while creating a pedestrian-oriented urban environment with multi-modal connectivity to the surrounding neighbourhoods. The Regional Urban Structure identifies the Burlington Uptown Urban Centre located at the intersection of Appleby Line and Upper Middle Road, as a Secondary Regional Node. The Node is intended for growth through mixed use intensification at a scale appropriate to the context. The BCM property is located just east of the Secondary Regional Node but is not part of the node.

The ROP requires the Local Municipalities to prepare Area-Specific Plans or policies for major growth areas, including the development or redevelopment of communities. Policy 77(5) would apply to a Strategic Growth Area, requiring, among other things:

- a) a general statement of the intended character of the area or community,
- b) boundaries of the area or community,
- c) policies for the protection of the Regional Natural Heritage System and for the protection of public health and safety within hazard lands,
- d) capacity targets of population, housing units and employment, including targets for Affordable Housing,

- e) land use patterns that promote mixed-use, compact, transit-supportive, walkable communities, including the locations of local facilities for social, cultural, recreational, educational and religious purposes,
- f) location, types and density of residential and employment lands that contribute to creating healthy communities through:
 - [i] urban design,
 - [ii] diversity of land uses,
 - [iii] appropriate mix and densities of housing,
 - [iv] provision of local parks and open space,
 - [v] strengthening live-work relationship through a proper balance of residential and employment land uses, and
 - [vi] promoting active transportation and public transit use.
- f.1) consideration for land use compatibility in accordance with Regional and Ministry of the Environment guidelines,
- g) overall development density for the area or community and, if it is located within the Designated Greenfield Area, how this density will contribute towards achieving the minimum overall development density for Designated Greenfield Areas in the Local Municipality as set out in Table 2 and the Regional phasing as set out in Table 2a,
- h) a transportation network that promotes public transit and active transportation, including a strategy for early introduction of transit services,
- i) development phasing,
- j) storm water management or, if the scale of development justifies, a Subwatershed Study,
- k) Environmental Impact Assessments, if any part of the Regional Natural Heritage System is affected in an area not covered by a Sub-watershed Study,
- l) an Air Quality Impact Assessment,
- m) water and wastewater servicing plans,
- n) provision of utilities,
- o) a fiscal impact analysis,
- p) a community infrastructure plan, based on Regional guidelines, describing where, how and when public services for health, education, recreation, sociocultural activities, safety and security and Affordable Housing will be provided to serve the community.

Related to the Region's continued role in the provision of infrastructure to support growth, this work is necessary to demonstrate conformity to the Regional Official Plan including but not limited to policy 77(17). This policy requires that a number of conditions must be met prior to approving development, including but not limited to:

- a) approval by Regional Council of a financial and implementation plan, including financial commitment by the private development sector to absorb its share of the cost of the provision of the necessary infrastructure and human services as

permitted by applicable legislation. The financial and implementation plan shall be based on:

- [i] Area-Specific Plans or a generalized land use map in the Local Official Plan that meets the requirements of Section 77(5) showing land use designations and community structure approved by the Local Municipality, and
 - [ii] the municipal portion of the Joint Infrastructure Staging Plan as described in Section 77(12);
- b) approval of applicable development charge by-laws;
 - c) determination by Regional Council that the intensification targets in Table 2, and the Regional phasing in Table 2a as monitored through Sections 77(2.2) and 77(2.3), can be reasonably achieved;
 - d) Regional phasing, as outlined in Table 2a, shall be used as a guiding principle for the movement between phases of development and shall apply to Sections 77(5), 77(12) and 77(15);
 - e) unused Regional phasing from Table 2a will be carried forward to following years to achieve the Regional phasing outlined in Table 2a.

The preparation of this area specific plans (or an equivalent approach that meets the policy intent of the Regional Official Plan) in partnership with land owners will support meeting these requirements and others, while ensuring that Burlington's priorities for these new Community Areas, or potentially new Strategic Growth Areas, are clearly communicated and highlighted in Regional infrastructure planning, financing and phasing plans.

Designated Greenfield Area

As a Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) in the Growth Plan, the ROP reflects the BCM property as an Urban Area outside of the Built Boundary. The ROP has updated [Map 1H, Regional Urban Structure](#), to remove the Employment Area from BCM; therefore, the ROP targets for Employment Areas in Table 2, Intensification and Density Targets, are no longer applicable for BCM. Instead, the Community Area Density Targets for people and jobs (ppjs) per hectare in the DGA would apply, at 76 ppjs for the City of Burlington.

Regional policy requires development occurring in DGAs to:

- a) contribute towards achieving the development density target of Table 2 and the Regional phasing of Table 2a;
- b) contribute to creating healthy communities;
- c) create street configurations, densities, and an urban form that support walking, cycling and the early integration and sustained viability of transit services;

- d) provide a diverse mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses to support vibrant neighbourhoods; and
- e) create high quality parks and open spaces with site design standards and urban design guidelines that support opportunities for transit and active transportation.

Housing

The ROP supports the provision of a full range of housing with an adequate mix, variety, and supply at appropriate densities, including Assisted Housing, Affordable Housing and Special Needs Housing. Annual housing targets in the ROP for new housing at the local municipal level require that at least 65 per cent of new housing be townhouses or multi-story buildings to 2031 and at least 75 per cent each year thereafter; and that at least 30 per cent of new housing units produced annually in Halton be Affordable or Assisted Housing.

Natural Heritage System

A significant portion of the BCM property is within the Regional Natural Heritage System (NHS), which is a system of connected natural areas and open space to preserve and enhance the biological diversity and ecological functions within Halton. The Region identifies the area as having Key Features, which are key natural heritage and hydrological features described in ROP Section 115.3(1), including significant woodlands and significant wildlife habitat. Development and alterations within the Regional NHS are not permitted unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features and areas or their ecological functions.

Development and site alteration of the Regional NHS is prohibited within significant wetlands, significant coastal wetlands, significant habitat of endangered and threatened species and fish habitat except in accordance with Provincial and Federal legislation or regulations.

The boundaries of the Regional NHS may be refined, with additions, deletions and/or boundary adjustments, through, a) a Sub-watershed Study accepted by the Region and undertaken in the context of an Area-Specific Plan; b) an individual Environmental Impact Assessment accepted by the Region, as required by this Plan; or c) similar studies based on terms of reference accepted by the Region.

The determination of buildable area for BCM will need to assess any impacts to the Regional NHS and exclude any undevelopable lands as well as minimize the number of disturbances to the Regional NHS affected by the provision of urban services.

2.2 How does the Burlington Official Plan, 2020, Guide Planning in Bronte Creek Meadows?

Burlington Official Plan Status

The Burlington Official Plan, 2020 (BOP, 2020) sets out the community's vision, guides growth to 2031 and beyond, and advances the objectives of the City's Strategic Plan. The BOP, 2020 was approved by Halton Region on November 30, 2020, and all parts of the Plan that were not appealed came into effect the day after the end of the appeal period, Dec. 22, 2020. While most of the BOP, 2020 was initially subject to broad appeal and therefore not in effect, the OLT has since issued several Decisions granting Partial Approval of the Plan. As of the writing of this report, policy areas currently in full or partial effect include Planning Horizon, Additional Residential Units, Garden Suites, Residential Neighbourhood Areas, and Uptown Urban Centre, among others.

Where new policies of BOP, 2020 remain appealed, the policies of the Burlington Official Plan, 1997 (BOP, 1997) continue to apply, along with the current Zoning By-law.

BOP, 2020 is being reviewed for further amendments. The City is currently undertaking the [Burlington Official Plan, 2020, Targeted Realignment Exercise](#) as part of an overall strategy to align the policies of Burlington's Official Plan, 2020 (BOP, 2020) with the recent and ongoing changes to the Provincial and Regional policy frameworks that have taken place since the Regional approval of the BOP, 2020 in November 2020. This includes changes resulting from provincial approval of ROPA 49 modifications, including updating the planning horizon year to 2051 and adding new Urban Area and converting additional employment areas in Burlington.

Targeted Growth and Intensification

Due to Burlington's firm Urban-Rural boundary growth has and will continue to shift from building new greenfield communities to predominantly accommodating new residents and jobs within existing urban areas through intensification targeted within specific areas of the city. This targeted approach co-ordinates growth with infrastructure (either existing or planned) and ensures that the existing residential neighbourhoods are protected from significant change. The City, in BOP, 2020 updated its previous vision for growth and intensification by establishing an Urban Structure and a Growth Framework and by refining existing land use policies.

The Urban Structure sets out the community vision for the Urban area by identifying distinct areas (including, for example, Mixed Use Intensification Areas, Residential

Neighbourhood Areas, Natural Heritage System, Major Parks and Open Space). Each part of the Urban Structure has a role to play. Some elements ensure long term protection, while others support growth, intensification and appropriate transition over time.

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

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

The Primary Growth Areas:

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

The Area-specific planning process will consider the direction of the BOP,2020 and set out the vision and framework to guide development in this newly introduced area.

Natural Heritage System

A significant portion of the BCM property is covered by the city's Natural Heritage System including the Sheldon Creek woodland. The BOP, 2020 NHS applicable policies align with the Regional Official Plan policies to maintain, restore and enhance the long-term ecological integrity and biodiversity of the Natural Heritage System and its ecological and hydrologic functions.

Employment

Existing BOP, 2020 policy specific to BCM (Policy 5.4.2) is focused on its function as a Strategic Economic Development Area. Though no longer exclusively planned to

accommodate employment components of the area-specific employment policy remain applicable to area specific planning in BCM including the following:

- innovative employment uses
- achieving the employment density target established for the Designated Greenfield Area
- infrastructure and public service facilities requirements
- the Natural Heritage System
- consistency with the policies contained in Chapter 7: Design Excellence, of BOP, 2020

An appropriate mix of employment uses will be part of any future mixed-use community for BCM.

As noted in the June 27, 2023, Report to Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee: [Burlington Official Plan, 2020 Targeted Realignment Exercise – Initial Work Plan \(PL-45-23\)](#), the loss of employment designated land impacts the ability for the city to meet employment forecasts. The previously applicable employment density target for the DGA was 33 jobs per hectare. It will be important to keep a high ratio of jobs in a future mixed-use community to both support the new population and be able to meet the employment forecast for the city.

Housing Options and Affordability

Increasing housing options that meet the needs of everyone at all income levels is a key policy matter considered for all new development in Burlington.

The City's [Housing Strategy](#) sets out 12 key actions that contribute towards the overall Vision for Housing in Burlington. It emphasizes the City's role and opportunity to address the "missing middle" from both the perspective of having housing options that are affordable/attainable for middle-income households and for the opportunity to diversify the spectrum of housing types and tenures.

The province has assigned the City of Burlington a 2031 Housing Target of 29,000 units. Council has signed the City's approved [Housing Pledge](#) to demonstrate its commitment to accelerating housing supply and taking the necessary actions to facilitate the achievement of the aspirational target of 29,000 units by 2031.

BOP, 2020 provides significant changes to the policy framework in support of increasing housing options with a mix of housing forms and tenure, and opportunities for housing through redevelopment and infill in the Urban Area. Policies also support affordable housing, assisted and special needs housing integrated with market housing; the construction of rental housing with a full mix and range of unit types and sizes; and housing initiatives that facilitate revitalization, compact built form, flexibility and

adaptability in the design and function of the housing stock, and an increased variety of housing alternatives.

Project work for an [Official Plan Amendment to Increase Housing Options](#) is underway through the BOP, 2020 Targeted Realignment Exercise with the support of the New Zoning By-law Project team to implement Housing Strategy initiatives such as permitting four dwelling units on every residential lot.

2.4 What is the City's Vision for Bronte Creek Meadows?

The planning of BCM for new community uses is informed by the City's community responsive growth management objectives and long-term community development goals reflected in the City's [Strategic Plan](#), [Vision to Focus Plan](#), and the [Burlington Official Plan \(BOP\), 2020](#).

BCM will be planned as a vibrant mixed-use, transit-supportive, complete community that achieves the following principles:

- Complete, compact and sustainable community, with a mix of uses in walking distance of transit;
- Range of services and facilities that will satisfy health, education, social, religious, culture and recreation needs;
- Mix of uses including employment, housing, public service facilities, parks, and commercial shops and services;
- Population and employment densities to support existing and planned local and regional transit;
- Range of housing types and tenure to support affordability and meet a broad range of demographics and income levels;
- Balanced community with a variety of local jobs and live/work opportunities for residents;
- Built form to achieve walkability, high-quality public spaces and design excellence;
- A balanced, connected multi-modal transportation network;
- Land uses and building forms which are compatible with the surrounding area and achieve sensitive integration with existing areas;
- New parks, trails, public realm and open spaces;

- Protection of natural heritage;
- Conservation of cultural heritage resources; and,
- Phased development that optimizes the use of existing and new infrastructure to support growth in a compact, efficient form.

Through the Area-Specific Plan process, the city will assess BCM for intensification opportunities to achieve densities to support a mixed-use, transit supportive community. This will include consideration of all or part of BCM to be designated as a Strategic Growth Area, potentially as a new Secondary Growth Area.

3 The Bronte Creek Meadows Area-Specific Planning Project

3.1 What is Involved in the Bronte Creek Meadows Area-Specific Planning Project?

The Bronte Creek Meadows Area-Specific Planning Project is being undertaken with a coordinated approach between the City and the BCM landowners team to develop an Area-Specific Plan (ASP) policy framework to inform and guide future development proposals for the property.

Provincial policy and legislative direction require the City to plan for growth on the BCM property. The ASP process provides an opportunity for public and stakeholder engagement to help shape the policies that will guide the development of Bronte Creek Meadows as a complete community.

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

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

- Project Kick off, Introduce Future Growth Area (April 2024):
 - Presented ASP approach for Committee endorsement - [Targeted realignment future growth areas – 1200 King Road, Bronte Creek Meadows and Bridgeview \(PL-29-24\)](#)
- Stage 1 - Technical Work (April to July 2024):
 - *Draft* Background and Visioning Report
 - *Draft* Engagement Plan
 - Submission of supporting technical studies and documents for BCM ASP by landowners' consultants.

Though initially intended to form part of Stage 1 this collaborative work continues in the background and is expected to extend into the Fall.

- City Staff review of studies and documents and determination of where peer review is required
- Peer review of submitted studies and documents
- Stage 2 – Engagement (July to September 2024)
 - Background and Draft Visioning Report (this document) and Engagement Plan
 - Engage with public and stakeholders on Visioning for BCM
- Stage 3 – Preferred Plan and Technical Studies (July to October 2024)
 - Develop preliminary preferred Precinct Plans and policy directions
 - Release technical and peer review documents
 - Conduct public engagement on the preliminary preferred precinct plans, and policy directions
 - Recommendation Report: Present recommended preferred precinct plans and policy directions to Council
- Finalization of ASP (December 2024 – March 2025)
 - ASP document finalized
 - Statutory Public Meeting to present ASP and final project report findings, including proposed Official Plan Amendment, to Council
 - Recommendation Report: Present ASP and final project report for Council approval, and present proposed Official Plan Amendments for Council adoption

After Council adoption/approval of the implementing Official Plan Amendments, if not exempt from approval, will be forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for final approval.

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

4 Connections to Other Projects

4.1 Other Connections to the Bronte Creek Meadows Area-Specific Planning Project

There are many other City, Regional and Provincial initiatives and which may influence, complement or inform each other including the City’s Targeted Realignment project, Integrated Mobility Plan, Housing Strategy and Climate Adaptation Plans. Connections to the BCM Area-Specific Planning Project will be considered in the development of ASP and its implementing Official Plan Amendment.

5 The Engagement Plan and What You Should Know

5.1 What is an Engagement Plan?

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

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

5.2 What Does Meaningful Engagement Look Like?

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

feel the process produced valid results and that feedback received influenced the decisions made.

Burlington's commitment to public engagement is reflected in its Community Engagement Charter, adopted by City Council. The Charter establishes the public engagement commitments, responsibilities and concepts of the relationship between the City of Burlington and the people who live here today and the people we want to welcome to the community tomorrow. The goal of community engagement is to lead to more informed and, therefore, better decision-making.

5.3 What Does Meaningful Feedback/Input Look Like?

Meaningful engagement includes meaningful feedback. Meaningful feedback and input is a mutual understanding and exchange of ideas between the public and City staff and its consultants. In order to provide meaningful feedback, you should be informed and understand the project givens, the decisions to be made and the process of reaching a conclusion for the study.

5.4 What You Should Know to Get Involved

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

6 Next Steps

For the Bronte Creek Meadows Area-Specific Planning Project, include collecting and reviewing key technical studies, preparing visuals and engagement materials and implementing the opportunities for public input and discussion during these steps are set out in detail in the Bronte Creek Area-Specific Planning Project Engagement Plan.

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

getinvolvedburlington.ca/officialplan

or

email newop@burlington.ca