



The Regional Municipality of Halton

Report To:	Chairman and Members of the Planning and Public Works Committee
From:	Mark G. Meneray, Commissioner of Legislative and Planning Services and Corporate Counsel
Date:	June 5, 2009
Report No. - Re:	LPS69-09 - Sustainable Halton – Preferred Growth Option and Official Plan Review Directions Report

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Regional Council endorse the preferred growth option as shown on Attachment #1 to Report No. LPS69-09 (subject to confirmation by Milton Council with respect to their staff recommendations on June 22, 2009) and the allocation of population and employment targets by Local Municipality as shown on Attachment #2 as the basis for amending the Regional Official Plan to the planning period 2031.
2. THAT Regional Council endorse the Official Plan Review Directions Report, “Towards Sustainability”, dated April 14, 2009, as the basis for making revisions to the Regional Official Plan under Section 17 and 26 of *The Planning Act*.
3. THAT staff be directed to continue to consult with the Local Municipalities, agencies and other stakeholders as necessary in preparing Regional Official Plan Amendment (No. 38) in support of Recommendations 1 and 2 above.
4. THAT Regional Clerk forward a copy of Report No. LPS69-09 to the Local Municipalities and Conservation Authorities in Halton, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure for their information.

REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to seek Council endorsement of the preferred Growth Option and provide direction for the supporting policy framework that would implement the objectives and policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). Such directions would be the basis to prepare Regional Official Plan Amendment (No. 38), a comprehensive amendment that is part of the five-year statutory review of the Regional Official Plan under Section 17 and 26 of *The Planning Act*. This amendment will also bring the current Regional Official Plan into conformity with the Greenbelt Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement 2005 and incorporate Planning Act reform.

Background

Sustainable Halton is a multi-year project initiated by Council in early 2006 in response to the Provincial Growth Plan, which mandates planning for growth to the horizon year of 2031 under a set of policies to support the development of sustainable, complete communities. Regional Council recognized the need for collaboration between the Region and its Local Municipalities in this exercise and struck an Inter-Municipal Liaison Committee, chaired by Chair Carr and consisting of Regional Councillors and senior staff from all four Local Municipalities, to provide oversight and guidance to the Sustainable Halton process. Likewise, at the staff level, Regional (including various departmental representatives) and Local staff worked closely together and with other agencies and the consulting team during the technical stages of the project.

The review and update of the Regional Official Plan is to be accomplished through a two-phased approach. The first phase addressed the substantial requirements of the Growth Plan and was adopted by Regional Council on June 3, 2009, through ROPA 37 as shown on Attachment #3.

The second phase is subject to the directions recommended in this report.

Through Report LPS46-09, Council released a series of Sustainable Halton and related reports for public and agency consultation but also, under Recommendation 2 of that staff report, asked the Local Councils to advise Regional Council of the following:

- a) Their positions with respect to a preferred Land Use Concept among the three concepts described in Sustainable Halton Report 3.08, “Concepts for Addressing Halton Region’s Land Needs to 2031”, under separate cover;
- b) Their positions with respect to a preferred Land Use Option under the preferred Land Use Concept chosen under a) and hence the preferred boundaries for the additional urban areas needed to accommodate 2031 population and employment targets as prescribed under the Provincial Places to Grow Plan; and
- c) Confirmation of their previous positions taken with respect to the Sustainable Halton process and further comments in light of the possible introduction before 2031 of a new highway along the Halton-Peel boundary north of Highway 401, as generally depicted in Attachment #4 to Report LPS46-09.

Public and Agency Consultation

A series of four Open Houses, one in each Local Municipality, were held in April, 2009, with a collective total attendance of about 300 people. Various displays were set up for public viewing and discussion with staff and consulting team members were held. A presentation providing an overview of the process and study conclusions was made to the audience, followed by a questions and answers session.

In addition, two Workshops, one in Oakville and one in Milton, were organized in early May to provide stakeholders an opportunity to sit down with staff and consultants to discuss the issues

surrounding Sustainable Halton in more depth. The attendance averaged 25-30 people at each of the Workshops.

Attachment #4 provides a summary of the attendance, issues raised and notes taken by staff at both the Open Houses and Workshops.

Presentations on the Sustainable Halton process were also made to each of the four Local Municipal Councils or Committees, as well as the following organizations and groups:

- Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Halton Ecological and Environmental Committee
- Halton Housing Advisory Committee
- Development Liaison Committee

Finally, at the request of certain landowners and/or their consultants or agents, Regional staff also met with them to provide more information and answer questions.

Response Document

Over 90 written submissions were received on the Sustainable Halton reports and the Official Plan Review Directions Report. They are reproduced, with staff responses, in the Response Document, under separate cover as Attachment #5 to Report LPS69-09. A summary of the main issues identified in the submissions is provided as Attachment #6.

Local Municipal Processes

Given the request of Regional Council under Recommendation 2 of Report LPS46-09 listed above, the Towns of Milton and Halton Hills decided to undertake a separate public process to engage members of the public, on the selection of a preferred Growth Option. In addition, Regional staff and the consulting team met with the senior management teams of both Halton Hills and Milton to assist them in their deliberations of the technical merits of each of the Growth Options.

Prior to the Planning and Public Works Committee meeting on June 17, 2009, staff will provide members of Council a supplementary memorandum updating Council on the decision of Town of Halton Hills Council and Milton staff's position and recommendations to their Council. This memorandum will also present Attachment #1 to Report LPS69-09 and any additional recommendations to this staff report that may be necessary as a result of decisions by these two Local Councils.

Directions requested by Regional Council

Selection of a Preferred Growth Concept 2021 to 2031

Staff have recommended concept 2; this concept has been supported by the Councils for the City of Burlington and Towns of Oakville and Milton. The Town of Halton Hills Council in

September, 2008, supported a level of population growth for Georgetown for 2031 not exceeding 20,000 people.

Among the 90 plus submissions, only a handful commented on the selection of Concept 2 as the preferred Concept. Some expressed support and some were opposed to its selection. There is not any significant new technical evidence offered by those in opposition on why either Concept 1 or 3 should be the preferred Concept, nor any serious challenges to the technical process in arriving at the choice of Concept 2.

It is staff's recommendation to Council that Concept 2 be selected as the preferred Concept. This will be reflected by Attachment #2 to Report LPS69-09, thus completing the mandate under the Growth Plan that the Region allocate population and employment targets among the Local Municipalities.

Selection of a Preferred Growth Option

Staff Report LPS46-09 emphasized the importance of Local Municipal input in the selection of the preferred Growth Option because of the Local Municipalities' desire to shape the direction of growth within their municipality.

Phase 3 of the Sustainable Halton process has investigated the relative costs of Regional infrastructure needed to support each of the three Land Use Concepts and also has applied the evaluation framework in recommending Concept 2 as the preferred concept. Regional staff has worked closely with Milton and Halton Hills staff in their evaluation of the preferred concepts and options.

The Town of Oakville indicated their preference for Option 2b while the City of Burlington does not state its position on the Growth Options, although it does support the selection of Concept 2.

Regional staff is recommending that Council endorse the preferred growth option shown on Attachment #1. In addition, a financial impact analysis will now be completed to address Regional and local implication as a result of the endorsed the preferred growth option.

Endorsement of Official Plan Review Directions Report

The Directions Report, released in April 2009, was largely based on research undertaken as part of the Sustainable Halton Phase 3 technical studies in support of the preferred Growth Option.

Considerable public input has been received on the proposed Natural Heritage System (NHS). Staff is guided by Council's directions that the Natural Heritage System is to be shown in its entirety on the Regional Structure Map (Map 1) of the Official Plan and that agriculture uses should continue to be permitted within the Natural Heritage System in the rural area. The challenge is how to craft the appropriate policies in accordance with these directions of Council while complying with Provincial plans and policies. This will be the detailed policy framework to be created under ROPA 38.

Another matter for which concerns have been raised is in the area of aggregate policies. The City of Burlington and some quarry operators have raised issues with the principles and directions in the proposed strategy.

Overall, there are few comments from the written submissions opposing the Directions Report. Most of these comments are related to policy details, which will be rolled out with the release of proposed ROPA 38. Ongoing consultations concerning the development of NHS policies and aggregate policies with supporters, our Municipal partners and other stakeholder groups during the preparation of ROPA 38 will assist staff in finding the right balance for the policy framework.

It is staff's recommendation that Council endorse the directions report as the basis for the development of policies in the preparation of Regional Official Plan Amendment (No. 38).

Inter-Municipal Liaison Committee (IMLC)

The Inter-Municipal Liaison Committee has provided a collaborative forum for the Region and Local Municipalities to oversee and provide critical input in the progress of the Sustainable Halton process. After June, its role will shift to supporting Council's direction in the preparation of the ROPA 38, translating Council's direction into policy.

Conclusion

The endorsements and direction recommended in this report will give staff clear directions in preparing ROPA 38, adoption of which by December of this year would represent the third and last milestone in this comprehensive planning exercise, which began in 2006.

The Land Use Concepts and Options have been in the public forum for in excess of two months, with some former versions dating back to June 2008. Numerous opportunities have been provided to the public and landowners to present their viewpoints and positions to both Regional and Local staff and Councils—through submissions, open houses, workshops, presentations, individual meetings, public meetings and delegations to Councils/Committees.

The Region has committed to the Province that it will undertake a two-stage approach on Growth Plan conformity with the primary policies of the Growth Plan being completed by June 16, 2009, and the remainder by year-end. As well, staff is mindful of the ROPA 25 hearing Minutes of Settlement with the Georgetown landowner groups, which outlined the Region's obligation to have an adopted Official Plan showing the new urban boundaries by December 16, 2009, failing which the matter may be resumed by the Ontario Municipal Board, such that Council's decision on the future urban boundaries could potentially be before the OMB. Therefore, any delay in providing direction on the boundaries in June will jeopardize the timing needed for preparation and public consultation on ROPA 38 and the December deadline for consideration of its adoption.

It should also be pointed out that the Council direction provided under this staff report is not a statutory decision under *The Planning Act*. The direction to staff is to undertake the preparation of detailed policies to accompany the preferred Growth Options, as well as to reflect the current regime of Provincial planning policies. Opportunities continue to exist throughout the fall of 2009

for members of the public and landowners to provide input on ROPA 38, including the urban boundaries in the context of the policy framework advanced by ROPA 38. A Regional Plan Amendment (ROPA 38) will be presented to Council in December 2009 for adoption of the amendment. The ROPA 38 will require the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

The cost of undertaking the Sustainable Halton Growth Plan and the Official Plan Review is funded from the Sustainable Halton Capital Account (T8023A).

RELATIONSHIP TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

This report addresses Goal 1, Theme 1 of the 2009 Planning and Public Works Committee Plan - Develop and implement a “Made in Halton Plan” to control and manage growth by taking the first step in moving the Region’s Official Plan into conformity with the Provincial Growth Plan. This report also moves the Region toward meeting, Action 1b) of completing the Official Plan policy update including the Greenbelt Conformity, Provincial Policy Statement Conformity, Places to Grow Conformity, an updated aggregate policy, implementation of the ROPA 25 settlements and implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Respectfully submitted,



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Official



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Approved by



Pat Moyle
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If you have any questions on the content of this report, please contact:

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