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Downtown Burlington
Urban Growth Centre and MTSA
Supplemental Discussion Paper
October 2020
Regional Official Plan Review



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Executive Summary

Introduction

Halton Region has commenced the review of its Regional Official Plan (ROP) in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Planning Act. The last comprehensive review of the ROP resulted in Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPA) 37, 38, 39, which implemented the policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 and the Greenbelt Plan, 2005 among other key policy initiatives.

The Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) is being undertaken in three phases, with Phase 2 consisting of the preparation of five discussion papers related to the ROPR key theme areas of Integrated Growth Management, Natural Heritage, Rural Agricultural System, Climate Change and a review of the North Aldershot Planning Area. The work in Phase 2 will inform the development of ROP policies during the policy drafting phase of the ROPR (Phase 3).

In July 2020, a series of discussion papers on the five theme areas were released for public consultation. The Integrated Growth Management Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper reviewed the policy and technical requirements for a proposed Regional Urban Structure that the Region must consider for conformity to the Growth Plan (2019). A component of the Regional Urban Structure included identification of Strategic Growth Areas, including Urban Growth Centres (UGCs) and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), where population and employment intensification will be directed.

In August 2020, City of Burlington Council requested that the Region, through its Municipal Comprehensive Review adjust the boundary of the Downtown Burlington UGC to generally align with the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station and remove the MTSA designation from the Downtown.

Building on the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, this Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and MTSA Supplemental Discussion Paper will further the discussion on proposed changes to the Burlington UGC. The discussion paper will propose the removal of the Downtown Burlington MTSA designation and will present a proposed adjusted UGC boundary, to generally align with the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station. This discussion paper and the associated public engagement findings will be used as input in the development of the Region's Integrated Growth Management Strategy and incorporated into the Regional Official Plan to manage

growth to 2051, either through the overall update to the Regional Official Plan or through a phased Regional Official Plan Amendment.

Proposed Removal of the Major Transit Station Area Designation in Downtown

The Growth Plan defines Major Transit Station Areas as the area within a 500 to 800 metre radius including and around any existing or planned Higher Order Transit Station within a Settlement Area; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. The term “major bus depot” is not defined in the Growth Plan (2019).

On March 5, 2019, Burlington City Council passed an Interim Control Bylaw (ICBL) to temporarily restrict the development of lands in the Downtown UGC and the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station and sought to clarify the role and function of the John Street Bus Terminal as a Major Transit Station. The Interim Control By-law Study was to assess the role and function of the downtown bus terminal and the Burlington GO station on Fairview Street as MTSA's and to examine the planning structure, land use mix and intensity for the lands within the ICBL study area.

The ICBL Land Use Study concluded that the downtown Bus Terminal does not currently function as a major bus depot and investments are not anticipated to elevate the bus terminal's status beyond its current function as an intercity bus transfer bus point. The terminal is not located on a Priority Transit Corridor and is not supported by higher order transit nor by frequent transit within a dedicated right of way.

On April 27, 2020, the Region of Halton and the City of Burlington received a letter from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Transportation. The letter confirmed that there is no provincial requirement for Mobility Hubs to be identified in municipal official plans, including Downtown Burlington. Both Ministries agreed that the downtown John Street Bus terminal does not constitute a Mobility Hub as it is not located at the intersection of multiple frequent rapid transit network routes. Further, Metrolinx has been directed to remove legacy documents that refer to the 2008 Mobility Hubs including the Mobility Hub Guidelines.

The Ministry letter further acknowledged that the Metrolinx RTP refined the concept of Mobility Hubs to focus on MTSA's along subway lines and priority transit corridors as identified on Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan (2019) and recognized that the Province does not require Mobility Hubs to be identified in Official Plans. **The Ministry letter stated that the Region has the ability to remove the identification of a mobility**

hub and an MTSA in Downtown Burlington centred on the John Street bus terminal, from the Regional Official Plan.

Proposed Burlington Urban Growth Centre Boundary Adjustment Options

The original Growth Plan (2006) identified twenty-five existing or emerging Downtowns as UGCs to promote downtown revitalization, create complete communities to allow options to live, work and play, create a greater choice in housing types, protect farmland and reducing gridlock by ensuring access to a range of transportation choices.

The detailed boundary delineation of the Downtown Burlington UGC was developed by the Province in 2008 as part of the implementation of the Growth Plan (2006) and identified in the Regional Official Plan Amendment 38 (in conformity to the Growth Plan (2006)). Guiding principles for the delineation of UGCs were established by the Province through the “Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Technical Paper (Spring 2008)” as follows:

- A contiguous, coherent area able to accommodate growth and intensification with potential to form complete communities.
- An area capable of accommodating a density threshold consistent with market projections, and ensuring intensification in areas of change can occur at a form and scale complementary to existing built form that is multi-use in character
- An area that includes at least one higher order transit hub and have good access to major transportation routes.

The Growth Plan (2019) continues to recognize the twenty-five UGCs and provides different density targets for each UGC recognizing the scale and intensity of UGCs across the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, identified by way of symbol on Schedule 2 of the Growth Plan.

In August, 2020, through staff report PB-33-20 to City of Burlington Council, City staff recommended, among other things to:

Request the Region of Halton, through its Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan, to adjust the boundary of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre to generally align with the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station.

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In order to address this direction, City and Regional staff considered two options:

1. Retain the existing Downtown Burlington UGC boundary with minor modifications presented at the time of the adoption of the Official Plan (2018);
2. Propose an adjusted Downtown Burlington UGC boundary that incorporates the Region's proposed Burlington GO Major Transit Station Area boundary and a portion of the lands within the existing Urban Growth Centre boundary closest to the Burlington GO Station.

The Supplemental Discussion paper assess the proposed options against the Growth Plan (2019) guiding principles and policies for Urban Growth Centres.

Discussion Paper Questions

Throughout the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area Supplemental Discussion Paper, discussion questions are presented for each section and a summary of these questions can be found in Appendix A. The Region is requesting that the reader responds to these questions in their comments on the Discussion Paper.

The Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area Supplemental Discussion Paper to the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper is being made available to support public input for the Regional Official Plan Review.

How to get Involved:

Please visit [Halton.ca](https://www.halton.ca) to learn more and provide feedback. The [Regional Official Plan Review](#) page contains more information to support participation as well as a questionnaire on the policy themes being considered by Regional Council.

Comments can also be submitted to ROPR@Halton.ca

1.0 Background

1.1 Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR)

Halton Region is undertaking a Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR) in accordance with Provincial requirements established in Section 26 of the Planning Act.

The current ROPR will ensure consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020, as well as conformity to A Place to Growth: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019), the Greenbelt Plan (2017) and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) (2017). On August 28, 2020 Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan (2019) came into force and effect. Amendment 1 updated the Schedule 3 population and employment forecasts and extended the planning horizon of the Growth Plan from 2041 to 2051.

In July 2020, the Region released the Integrated Growth Management Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper. The discussion paper provided information on the policy context and requirements in the Growth Plan (2019) to inform the update and the development of a proposed Regional Urban Structure which includes Strategic Growth Areas including Urban Growth Centres (UGCs) and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). Draft delineated boundaries of MTSAs and a proposed MTSA hierarchy to leverage investment in infrastructure to support growth and development was presented.

The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper did not propose to delineate the Downtown Burlington MTSA on the basis of the work completed by the City as part of the Interim Control By-law Land Use study discussed further in Section 3.1.2.

The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper highlighted the importance of UGCs and the policy direction of the Growth Plan (2019) to ensure these areas are planned as vibrant, transit-supportive, mixed-use urban communities. The UGC in the City of Burlington is the only one in the Region that is not located on a GO Transit rail line. Regional and Burlington Council have directed staff to consider adjustments to the Burlington UGC boundary focusing on the area around the Burlington GO station to align with the intent of the Growth Plan, and the Province's investment in transit infrastructure.

This Downtown Burlington UGC and MTSA Supplemental Discussion Paper will further the discussion on proposed changes to the Burlington UGC. The discussion paper will propose the removal of the Downtown Burlington MTSA designation and will present a proposed adjusted UGC boundary, to generally align with the lands in proximity to the

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Burlington GO Station. This discussion paper and the associated public engagement findings will be used as input in the development of the Region's intensification growth strategy as part of the Integrated Growth Management exercise and incorporated into the Regional Official Plan to manage growth to 2051 and could result in a phased Regional Official Plan Amendment.

2.0 Planning Strategic Growth Areas

2.1 Components of the Regional Structure Background

In accordance with Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan which came into effect on August 28, 2020, the Region is forecasted to grow to 1.1 million people and 500,000 jobs by 2051. To manage and guide this growth, the Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS) is a critical component of the ROPR. The IGMS provides an emphasis on accommodating growth in existing urban areas, consistent with current Provincial, Regional and local land use planning principles and policies.

The Regional Urban Structure Paper, and this supplemental Downtown Burlington UGC and MTSA Discussion paper are part of a series of IGMS reports which include:

- 1) Growth Scenarios: Halton Region to 2041 (June 2019);
- 2) Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper (June 2020);
- 3) Supplemental Burlington UGC and MTSA Discussion Paper (October 2020);
- 4) Growth Concepts (pending);
- 5) Preferred Growth Concept (pending).

This Downtown Burlington UGC and MTSA Supplemental Discussion Paper builds upon the objectives of the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, which is a foundational element to the development of Growth Concepts as part of the IGMS.

The overall objectives of the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, that has been released for public input are to:

- Provide a general understanding of the applicable policy context and the specific requirements in the Growth Plan (2019) that the ROPR and IGMS must address;
- Provide an overview of the current Regional Structure identified in the Regional Official Plan, and build on this Regional Structure, through the development of a proposed Regional Urban Structure, consisting of a network of strategic growth nodes and connecting corridors; and,
- Facilitate a discussion and obtain feedback on the elements of a proposed Regional Urban Structure, as a critical input to the development of more detailed Growth Concepts, based upon the set of preliminary Growth Scenarios generated by the IGMS to date, which in turn will lead to the development of a Preferred Growth Concept.

Building upon the above objectives of the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper to focus on addressing key Strategic Growth Areas in Burlington, this Supplemental Discussion Paper seeks to:

- Expand on the applicable policy context and specific requirements of the Growth Plan (2019) related to UGCs and MTSA within the context of the City of Burlington;
- Provide an overview of the role and function of the Downtown Burlington MTSA currently identified in the Regional Official Plan and present a discussion on the removal of Downtown Burlington as an MTSA from the Regional Official Plan; and
- Present information about a proposed adjustment to the UGC boundary, with supporting information and analysis, in accordance with City of Burlington staff report PL-33-20, endorsed by City Council in August 2020.
- Obtain feedback on the proposed adjusted UGC boundary and the proposed removal of the Downtown Burlington MTSA.

While the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper identifies the foundational components of a proposed structure for the Region, further discussion and public consultation is necessary on an adjusted boundary of the Downtown Burlington UGC and the proposed removal of the Downtown Burlington MTSA.

2.2 Planning Framework – Roles and Requirements

Planning for growth in Halton is done within the context of the Provincial Policy framework for growth management. The Growth Plan (2019) provides policy direction for where and how to accommodate urban growth and development. Halton Region and its Local Municipalities are required to conform to the Growth Plan when planning for residential and employment growth. This supplemental Discussion paper furthers the discussion on a component of the Regional Urban Structure, the Downtown Burlington UGC and Major Transit Station Area, in conformity with the provincial policy framework.

2.2.1 The Requirements of the Growth Plan

Per the policy direction of the Growth Plan (2019) the majority of growth must be directed to Settlement Areas within the built boundary, that have existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems and can support complete community principles. Strategic Growth Areas, including UGC and MTSA are a key focus for development each with a set of relevant policies and include minimum density targets established in accordance with the Growth Plan (2019).

The Growth Plan (2019) requires that UGCs will be planned as focal areas for investment, able to accommodate and support the transit network at the regional scale and provide connection points for inter- and intra-regional transit. UGCs are also

planned to serve as high-density major employment centres that will attract significant employment uses and are able to accommodate significant population and employment growth. The Growth Plan (2019) directs that the Downtown Burlington UGC will be planned to achieve a minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare by 2031.

Other Strategic Growth Areas established in the Growth Plan (2019) are MTSA's. MTSA's include the area around any existing or planned higher order transit station or stop within a Settlement Area.

A foundational element of the Growth Plan (2019) vision is the need for an integrated transportation network that will provide travel choices within and between urban centres throughout the region. Policies within the Growth Plan (2019) prioritize the planning of Major Transit Station Areas located on the Priority Transit Corridors identified on Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan (2019). In Halton, the Priority Transit Corridor is the Lakeshore West GO line from the Region of Peel/City of Mississauga border to Burlington GO.

2.2.2 The Role of Halton Region

The Growth Plan directs Halton Region through their Official Plan Review to establish a hierarchy of settlement areas and areas within which to direct growth. This includes working with the local municipalities to identify Strategic Growth Areas through the development of a Regional Urban Structure. This work includes confirming, modifying or establishing boundaries for those Strategic Growth Areas for which a boundary and a target is required, or proposed. Final approval of the proposed Regional Urban Structure and the respective strategic growth area boundaries rest with the Province.

2.2.3 The Role of the City of Burlington

The City of Burlington has an integral role in supporting and implementing the results of the IGMS and in particular for the UGC and MTSA's, through the adoption of a local official plan, area-specific plans (i.e. secondary plans) and zoning by-laws once the Regional Official Plan Review is complete.

As discussed in the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, the Region has carried forward the 'Local Plans and Priorities' Growth Scenarios for analysis in the IGMS. These Growth Scenarios are supported by a number of foundational local municipal studies examining intensification opportunities. The City has completed a number of studies that have informed the IGMS to ensure that the proposed Regional Structure

and vision for growth reflects the ‘Local Plans and Priorities’ lens and is compatible with and supported by the City’s plans and priorities.

The City’s Adopted Official Plan (2018), although not approved, has advanced the City’s vision for a Local Urban Structure and Growth Framework that identifies the priority, degree, type and location of growth throughout the City.

Work has been initiated on the preparation of area-specific plans at Major Transit Stations to develop a policy framework that further integrates transit and land use and will focus intensification growth to MTSA along priority transit corridors to make efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure, including transportation and transit. Although not complete at this time, technical work and concept plans have been advanced. This work has been used to inform the IGMS exercise.

Downtown Burlington, currently identified as a Major Transit Station Area and the location of the City’s UGC has also been given additional consideration. While initially considered through the adoption of the Official Plan (2018), at the request of City Council, City staff were directed to re-examine the Downtown policies in early 2019. The scoped re-examination of the adopted Official Plan with respect to the Downtown policies included the consideration of matters of height and intensity and conformity with provincial density targets. The results of the re-examination have identified a recommended detailed precinct plan and a set of policies to guide growth in the downtown to 2031. The re-examination of the Downtown policies considers compatibility between land use designations identified in each precinct, policy direction on transition of height and density and a variation of scale of development based on the existing context and planned function as well as conformity.

Also in 2019, Burlington City Council passed an Interim Control Bylaw (ICBL) and retained Dillon Consulting to undertake an “Interim Control By-Law Land Use Study”. The lands in the study area included the Downtown UGC and lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station. The purpose of the land use study was to assess the role and function of the downtown bus terminal and Burlington GO station as Major Transit Station Areas. The study is discussed further in Section 3.1.2.

Based on the culmination of work completed through the adopted Official Plan, scoped re-examination of the adopted Official Plan, and the ICBL Land Use study, City staff prepared a recommendation report. In report PB-33-20 the City requested that the Region, through its Municipal Comprehensive Review adjust the boundary of the Downtown Burlington UGC to generally align with the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station and remove the MTSA designation from the Downtown. In

addition, the City requested that the Region move expeditiously to delineate the boundaries of all other MTSAs in Burlington.

2.3 Current Regional Structure – Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area

The Region's current Official Plan identifies a Regional Structure which implements Halton's planning vision to consist of the following principle categories of land uses:

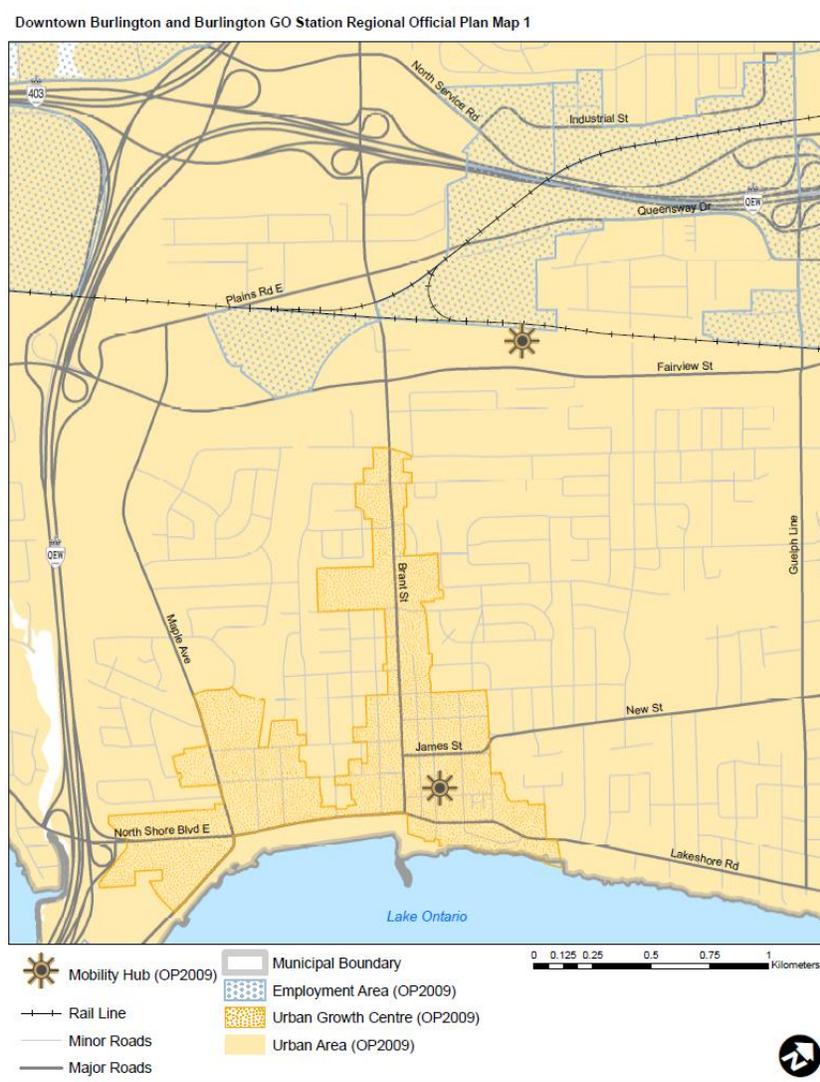
- Settlement Areas, consisting of the Urban Area, Hamlets and Rural Clusters;
- Agricultural System, consisting of the Agricultural Area, and parts of the Natural Heritage System outside key features; and,
- Natural Heritage System, consisting of the Regional Natural Heritage System and the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System.

Forming part of the Urban Area designation in the Regional Official Plan are Intensification Areas that consist of UGCs, MTSAs, Intensification Corridors and Mixed Use Nodes. The boundaries of Employment Areas and UGCs are identified as overlays on top of the Urban Area designation on Map 1 of the Regional Official Plan (see Figure 1).

Major Transit Station Areas are GO Train stations on the Lakeshore West, Milton and Kitchener GO lines, and are shown by way of a symbol on Map 1 of the Regional Official Plan. MTSAs that are also identified as Mobility Hubs in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (the Big Move), are identified as a symbol on Map 1.

Downtown Burlington is identified on Map 1 as a Mobility Hub with an UGC boundary overlay. The Burlington GO is also identified as a Mobility Hub and lands within the vicinity of the Burlington GO are within the Employment Area overlay.

Figure 1: Reproduced Regional Official Plan Map 1 – Downtown Burlington and Burlington GO MTSA



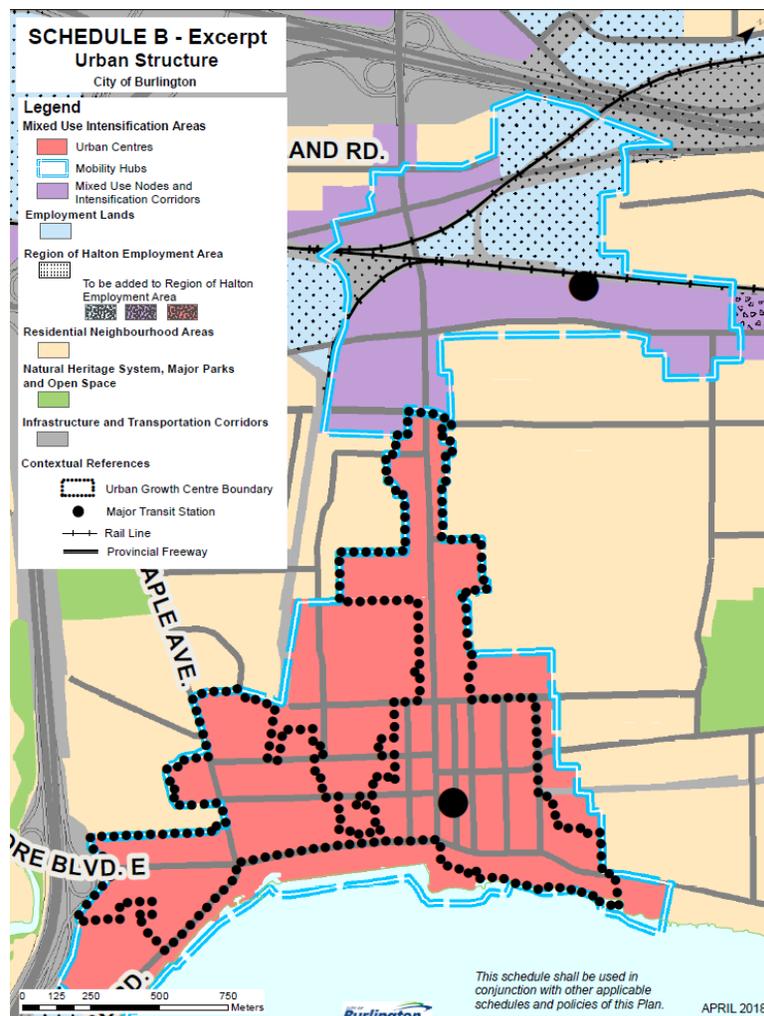
2.4 Current Local Structure – Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and MTSA

The City's In-Force Official Plan establishes a planning vision and growth strategy to the 2021 horizon year. The current official plan addresses the need to promote intensification within appropriate areas of the City, including the Downtown Urban Centre and the Uptown Urban Centre. The Downtown UGC is found within the Downtown Urban Centre and is delineated on Schedule B and D of the Official Plan and was planned to accommodate residential and employment intensification. The

boundary was established in conformity to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in 2006 with an established minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare, in conformity with the Growth Plan (2006).

In April, 2018, the City adopted a new Official Plan which updated the community vision and guiding principles and introduced a new Urban Structure and Growth Framework to direct growth to intensification areas in the city and to prioritize growth around Major Transit Station Areas, in particular lands within the three GO Stations (Figure 2 below). The adopted Official Plan also improved the integration of land use and transportation planning through introducing Frequent Transit Corridors to service the identified growth areas in the City. An updated policy framework and land use designations were included to better support mixed use development in intensification areas and include new policies for the Downtown Urban Centre.

**Figure 2: Excerpt Schedule B Urban Structure
City of Burlington Adopted Official Plan**



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In June 2020 the recommendations from the scoped re-examination of the Downtown policies were released. The findings of this work include a set of recommended policy modifications to guide change to 2031, a series of background technical reports as well as a set of draft Placemaking and Urban Design Guidelines. Supported by extensive public engagement, the recommended policy modifications support change and development which is responsive to the wide range of unique contexts all found within the Downtown Urban Centre and is consistent with and in conformity with senior-level policy documents.

The recommended policy modifications reinforce that the Downtown Urban Centre has transit-supportive densities throughout and is made up of a series of distinct precincts. This approach ensures that a wide range of housing types are permitted in appropriate locations to support a more diverse housing stock through redevelopment in balance with consideration of compatibility with existing neighbourhoods. This approach also supports the development of transit supportive densities in proximity to the Burlington GO Station.

3.0 Urban Growth Centre and MTSA

3.1 Proposed Removal of the MTSA Designation in the Downtown

3.1.1 Provincial Policy Context

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

As noted in the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, the Growth Plan defines Major Transit Station Areas as the area including and around any existing or planned Higher Order Transit Station within a Settlement Area; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. MTSA's are generally defined as the area within a 500 to an 800 metre radius of a transit station, generally representing a 10-minute walk. The term "major bus depot" is not defined in the Growth Plan (2019).

Higher Order Transit is defined as transit that generally operates in partially or completed dedicated rights-of-way, outside of mixed traffic, and therefore can achieve levels of speed and reliability greater than mixed-traffic transit. Higher order transit can include heavy rail (such as subways and inter-city rail), light rail, and buses in dedicated rights of ways. The Lakeshore West GO rail line is considered higher order transit based on the definition in the Growth Plan (2019). The downtown John Street bus terminal in has been interpreted as a major bus depot in an urban core, but is not located on a Priority Transit Corridor and is not supported by higher order transit nor by frequent transit within a dedicated right of way.

Metrolinx's Big Move, Regional Transportation Plan 2041 and related documents

In November 2008, the Metrolinx Board unanimously adopted the Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The Big Move provided a vision, goals and objectives and investment strategy for a transportation system within the GTHA that was seamless, efficient and user-centred. A number of strategies, priority actions and supporting policies were also included to achieve the vision and an investment strategy to finance the transportation system.

Metrolinx established two types of Mobility Hubs: Gateway and Anchor Hubs. Anchor Hubs were identified as primary major transit station areas in an UGC with strategic importance due to their relationship to the UGCs. Anchor hubs were identified to have the potential to transform the regional urban structure and act as anchors of the regional transportation system. Gateway Hubs are major transit station areas at the interchange of two or more current or planned regional rapid transit lines identified in the Big Move and have 4,500 or more forecasted combined boardings and alightings in 2031 (in the

morning peak period). Downtown Burlington was identified in the Big Move as an Anchor Hub, while the Burlington GO was identified as a Gateway Hub.

In 2018, Metrolinx released the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to 2041 which built upon the vision and goals of the Big Move (2008). The Metrolinx 2041 RTP defines Mobility Hubs as “Major Transit Station Areas at the intersection of two or more Frequent Rapid Transit routes, designed to support a high number of boardings and alightings, and facilitate seamless, efficient transfers between modes. They have and/or are planned to have a high density mix of jobs, residences, public services, and other land uses and active transportation, or the potential to develop into areas with high-density mix of land uses.”

Metrolinx, in alignment with the Growth Plan (2019) is moving away from the Mobility Hub terminology. The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper identified the opportunity through the ROPR to review the definitions and terminology of ROPA 38 and identify those areas in policy and mapping as MTSA (if appropriate). This includes the review of Downtown Burlington as an MTSA.

Mobility Hub Guidelines

In 2011, to support the Big Move, Metrolinx completed the Mobility Hub Guidelines to guide the planning and development at Mobility Hubs. The guidelines established the mobility hub concept, objectives and guidance on developing mobility hub plans. The guidelines established a Mobility Hub as a neighbourhood within a 10-minute walk of a major transit station to support transit and active transportation opportunities. Downtown Burlington and Burlington GO were both identified as Mobility Hubs in the Mobility Hubs Guidelines.

Since the completion of the Mobility Hub Guidelines in 2011, a number of changes have been made to the Growth Plan (in 2017 and 2019) in addition to a new 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) program at Metrolinx and updates to the Metrolinx Act (2018) that has necessitated Metrolinx to review the Mobility Hub Guidelines.

GO Rail Station Access Plan

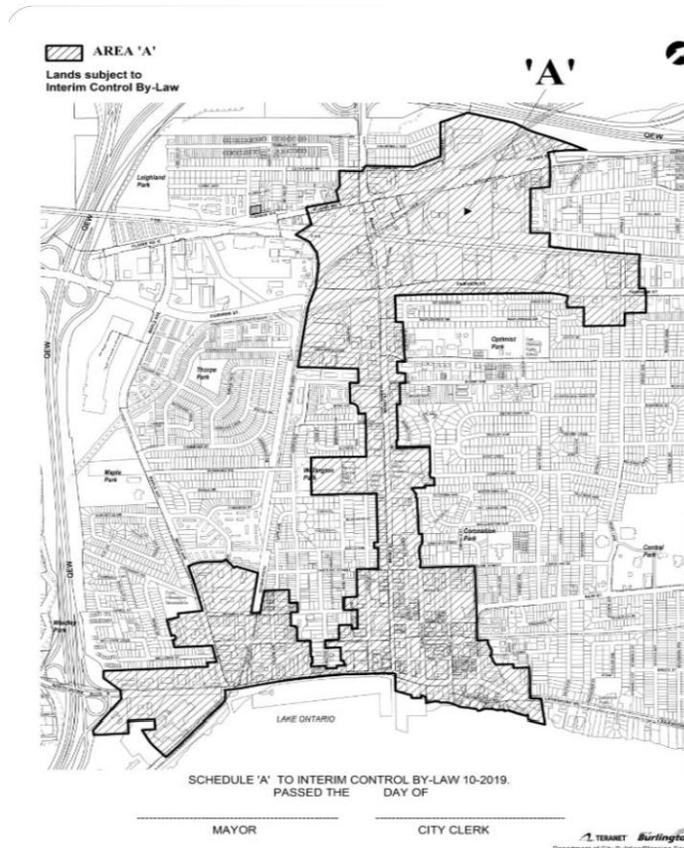
In 2016, Metrolinx completed the GO Rail Station Access Plan to 2031 in response to the Province’s commitment to implement Regional Express Rail (RER) to increase GO service and support the development of new stations along the rail network. The plan is intended to inform decision making on capital investments at GO rail stations, ensure

the coordination of local and regional transit service, and provide and support strategies for multi-modal station access options. Overall the plan aims to reduce the dependency on single-occupant vehicles and recommended a number of access improvements at the Burlington GO Station including pedestrian facilities, increased local transit service to the station, micro-transit including alternative service delivery/on demand transit options, and re-design of some station elements. In particular, the Lakeshore West GO Expansion is planned to deliver 15-minute service all day between Toronto and Burlington, providing Halton Region and the City of Burlington an opportunity to direct transit supportive growth to existing GO stations on the Lakeshore West GO rail corridor.

3.1.2 City of Burlington Interim Control By-Law Land Use Study

On March 5, 2019, Burlington City Council passed an Interim Control Bylaw (ICBL) to temporarily restrict the development of lands in the Downtown UGC and the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station (Figure 3). Section 38 of the Planning Act allows municipalities to implement an Interim Control Bylaw that would temporarily pause development to allow for further study.

Figure 3: Lands Subject to Interim Control By-Law



In addition to responding to development applications with intensities significantly higher than those anticipated in the current Official Plan, the City sought to clarify the role and function of the John Street Bus Terminal as a Major Transit Station. The purpose of the Interim Control By-law Study was threefold:

1. Assess the role and function of the downtown bus terminal and the Burlington GO station on Fairview Street as MTSA's;
2. Examine the planning structure, land use mix and intensity for the lands identified in the Study Area; and,
3. As required, provide recommendations to the City on updates to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law regulations for the lands identified in the Study Area.

The Interim Control By-law Land Use study was completed in January 2020 and reviewed the applicable provincial, regional and local policy context for both the Downtown and Burlington GO MTSA. To assess the role and function of both the GO station and the downtown Bus Terminal, the study identified comparable MTSA's in the GTHA to summarize key characteristics from a land-use, demography, socio-economic and transportation perspective. The general characteristics included density, mobility hub typology, travel demand performance, transit performance, active transportation access and multi-modal access.

The downtown bus terminal on John Street was assessed against these characteristics and it was observed that due to its historic street network pattern, the area had relatively shorter street blocks which facilitated active transportation. Travel behaviour for the station was assessed and it was concluded that the lack of express service, indirect connections to adjacent municipalities and a lower number of major trip generators such as employment or education destinations within Downtown Burlington are likely the primary reason for lower transit ridership.

The ICBL Land Use study also explored the notion that the Growth Plan included the downtown bus terminal as an MTSA due to its role as a major bus depot. However, the term "major bus depot" is not a provincially defined term. The ICBL Land Use study explored common characteristics of a major bus depot including the strategic location, which is typically a central point on a local transit network with a mix of land uses that can support transit. Major bus depots are also typically linked to a larger transit network and regional transit system with different types of service connecting many destinations. Bus terminals also consist of physical infrastructure and facilities serving multiple functions to provide local and regional transit services and experience a high amount of transfers between transit vehicles and other modes of transportation. Major bus depots are also generally located at the convergence of transit routes at the same point for easy transfers.

While located in an area with high densities, there are limited major trip generators to attract high ridership during peak hours, contributing to a lower utilization rate, unlike other key nodes and corridors in the City such as the Burlington GO MTSA.

The ICBL Land Use Study concluded that the downtown bus terminal does not currently function as a major bus depot and investments are not anticipated to elevate the bus terminal's status beyond its current function as an intercity bus transfer point. The terminal is not located on a Priority Transit Corridor and is not supported by higher order transit nor by frequent transit within a dedicated right of way.

As a result of the ICBL study, City Council approved Official Plan Amendment 119 (OPA 119), an amendment to the existing in-force Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment 2020.418. OPA 119 and Zoning By-law Amendment 2020.418 implemented a policy framework that strengthened the integration between land use and transit by introducing transit-supportive development polices, introduced the concept of Major Transit Station Areas, established development criteria for development applications within the study area, and introduced additional permitted uses, height requirements and other policies on lands near the Burlington GO station

3.1.3 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Transportation Letter

On April 27, 2020, both the Region of Halton and the City of Burlington received a joint letter from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Transportation. The letter confirmed that there is no provincial requirement for Mobility Hubs to be identified in municipal official plans, including Downtown Burlington. Both Ministries agreed that the downtown John Street bus terminal does not constitute a Mobility Hub as it is not located at the intersection of multiple frequent rapid transit network routes. Further, Metrolinx has been directed to remove legacy documents that refer to the 2008 Mobility Hubs including the Mobility Hub Guidelines.

The Ministry letter further acknowledges that the Metrolinx RTP refined the concept of Mobility Hubs to focus on MTSAs along subway lines and priority transit corridors as identified on Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan (2019) and recognized that the Province does not require Mobility Hubs to be identified in Official Plans. **The Ministry letter stated that the Region has the ability to remove the identification of a mobility hub and an MTSA in Downtown Burlington centred on the John Street bus terminal, from the Regional Official Plan.**

3.1.4 Regional Urban Structure Proposed MTSA Hierarchy

The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper identified the opportunity to establish a policy framework to support a Strategic Growth Area/Major Transit Station Area hierarchy that would assist in leveraging investment for infrastructure to support growth and development and direct transit supportive growth to these areas. The proposed MTSA hierarchy directs regional intensification growth to MTSA's that are also UGCs located on the Schedule 5 Priority Transit Corridor, followed by MTSA's that are on the Schedule 5 Priority Transit Corridor or a UGC, then MTSA's not on the Schedule 5 corridor but on a rail line, followed by other potential MTSA's.

3.1.5 MTSA Removal Summary

The MTSA Hierarchy proposed in the Regional Urban Structure considers the Downtown Burlington MTSA for removal. On the basis of the analysis and recommendations of the City of Burlington ICBL Land Use Study and the direction from the Province in the Ministry letter, the Region is exploring the removal of the MTSA identification in areas not on the GO Rail line from the Regional Official Plan in Downtown Burlington.

Discussion Question 1:

A key consideration brought up in the Discussion Paper was that the John Street Bus Terminal does not (and is not anticipated to) function as a Major Transit Station, as currently defined in the Growth Plan. What factors do you think should be considered if the Major Transit Station Area designation is removed from Downtown Burlington?

3.2 Proposed Burlington Urban Growth Centre Boundary

Adjustment Options

3.2.1 Existing UGCs

As previously discussed in the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, UGCs are identified in the Growth Plan (2019) as areas to be planned to accommodate and support the transit network at the regional scale and to serve as high-density major employment centres that will attract significant employment uses and accommodate significant population and employment growth. The Downtown Burlington UGC is to be planned to achieve by 2031 a minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare.

The original Growth Plan (2006) identified twenty-five existing or emerging downtowns as UGCs to promote downtown revitalization, create complete communities to allow options to live, work and play, create a greater choice in housing types, protect farmland and reducing gridlock by ensuring access to a range of transportation choices.

The detailed boundary delineation of the Downtown Burlington UGC was developed by the Province in 2008 as part of the implementation of the Growth Plan (2006). Guiding principles for the delineation of UGCs were established by the Province through the “Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Technical Paper (Spring 2008)” as follows:

- A contiguous, coherent area able to accommodate growth and intensification with potential to form complete communities.
- An area capable of accommodating a density threshold consistent with market projections, and ensuring intensification in areas of change can occur at a form and scale complementary to existing built form that is multi-use in character
- An area that includes at least one higher order transit hub and have good access to major transportation routes.

The Growth Plan (2019) continues to recognize the twenty-five UGCs and provides different density targets recognizing the scale and intensity of UGCs across the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, identified by way of symbol on Schedule 2 of the Growth Plan.

Discussion Question 2:

The Province’s guiding principles for identifying and setting out the boundaries of Urban Growth Centres- areas planned to accommodate growth and intensification that include a transit hub at the regional scale- are highlighted above. What other factors do you think are important to be considered when adjusting the boundary of the Burlington’s current Urban Growth Centre?

3.2.2 Downtown Burlington UGC

The City has been monitoring development within the Downtown UGC and periodically reporting on how its tracking to its growth target, through a density analysis which was initially undertaken in 2017 and more recently updated in 2020. Using a base year of 2016, the UGC Density Analysis captures developments in various stages of process from recently completed to newly proposed, to estimate new growth based on a series of assumptions applicable at the time and as outlined within each report.

Figure 4: Downtown Burlington



Given the development pressures in downtown Burlington the most recent analysis completed in August 2020 identifies a density of approximately 189 people and jobs per hectare (rounded) based on developments recently completed or under construction and approved developments. When development applications currently before LPAT or under consideration by the City are factored in, the analysis identifies a potential UGC density of approximately 217 people and jobs per hectare. Although the UGC Density Analysis continues to evolve as new information becomes available, it does demonstrate that the City is on course to achieve its growth target of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2031.

The UGC in its existing configuration has been a benefit to the City as it generated investments in amenities, culture, parks, and infrastructure to support intensification. The UGC is forecast to meet its growth target by 2031 and has served its original intended purpose which was to:

- Revitalize downtowns to become vibrant centres;
- Create complete communities throughout the Greater Toronto Area that offer more options for living, working, shopping, and playing;
- Provide greater choice in housing types to meet the needs of people at all stages of life; Curb sprawl and protect farmland and green spaces; and
- Reduce traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation choices.

3.2.3 Considering an Adjusted UGC Boundary

Through staff report PB-33-20, City staff recommended, among other things to:

Request the Region of Halton, through its Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Regional Official Plan, to adjust the boundary of the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre to generally align with the lands in proximity to the Burlington GO Station.

At the time of the report no mapping was proposed. In order to present a proposed adjusted UGC boundary, City and Regional staff considered two options:

1. Retain the existing Downtown UGC Boundary with minor modifications presented at the time of the adoption of the Official Plan (2018);
2. Propose an adjusted Downtown UGC boundary that incorporates the Region's proposed Burlington GO MTSA boundary and a portion of the lands within the existing UGC boundary closest to the Burlington GO Station.

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

Option 1, was analyzed through Staff Report PL-33-20, suggesting a 'status quo' approach (Figure 5). The size of the boundary is approximately 104.6 ha. This option is not recommended for the following reasons:

- The existing UGC boundary is not located in an area supported by higher order transit, and is not located on a Priority Transit Corridor.
- There have been no Metrolinx projects identified in the RTP's 25-year Capital Plan within the existing UGC boundary.
- When the UGC boundary was established it was determined that, given probable levels of development in accordance with the existing permissions within the Official Plan at that time, the UGC boundary would achieve a density of 201 residents and jobs per hectare. The experience of the past 10 years has seen more developments, and taller development proposals well beyond the permissions established in the Official Plan policies. As discussed above it is expected that the current UGC boundary will achieve the minimum 200 residents and jobs target, likely in advance of the 2031 timeframe.
- Increased growth and change continue to be expected in this area, and that growth is expected to be compact, mixed use and transit supportive and in accordance with the recommended policies as a result of the scoped re-examination of the adopted Official Plan supporting complete community principles.
- The need for transition and compatibility between existing and new development is a critical element to be balanced with achieving the target. The scoped re-

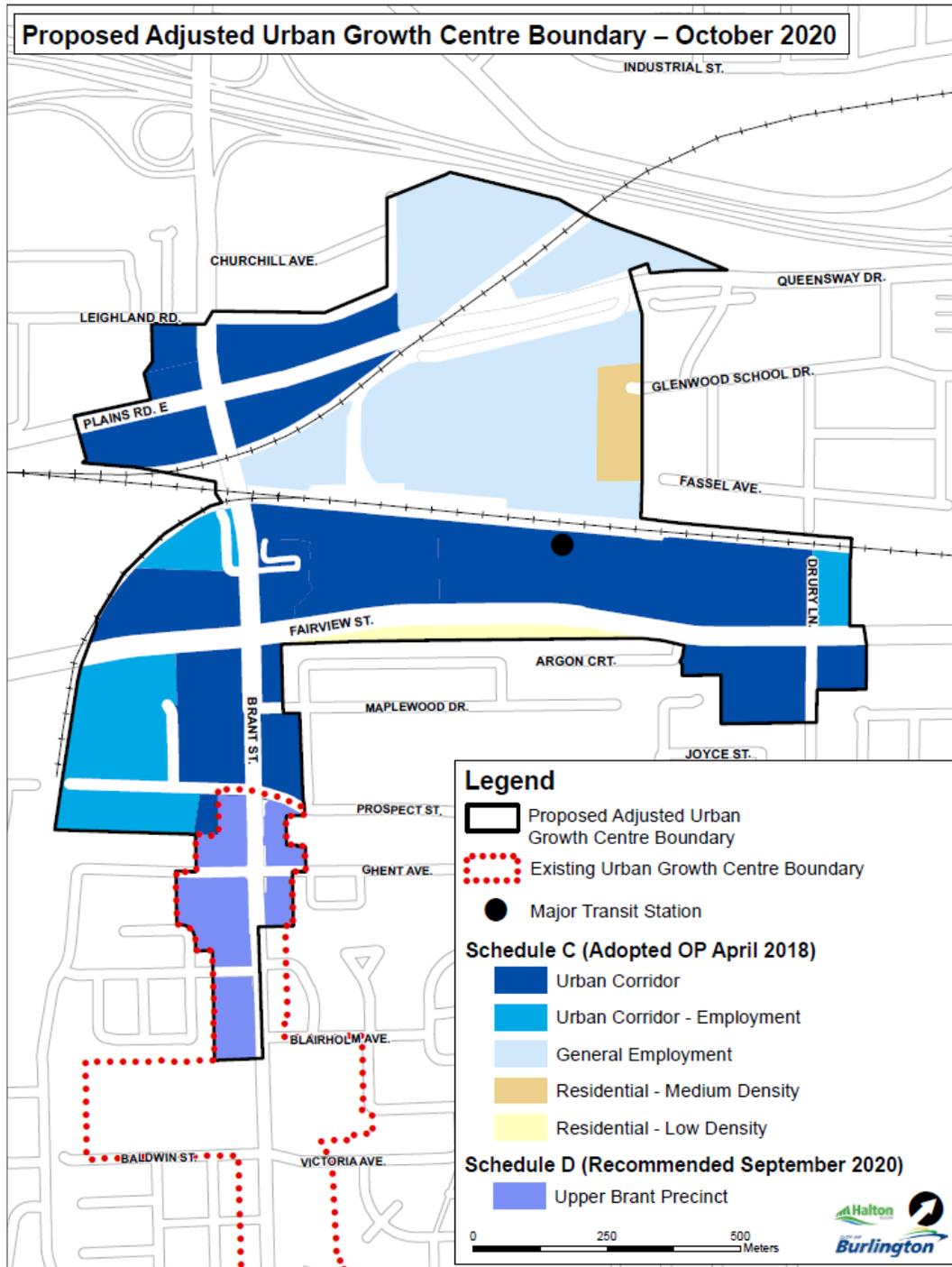
Regional Official Plan Review

examination of the adopted Official Plan policies in the Downtown project added, in many cases, significant new permissions that were established on a precinct by precinct and in some cases block by block basis with this balance in mind.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Option 2 suggests including the entirety of the Region's proposed MTSA boundary along with a portion of the existing UGC that could be evaluated against the UGC policies of the Growth Plan (2019). The size of Option 2 is approximately 102 ha. Option 2 is shown on Figure 6 and includes the entire Upper Brant Precinct as recommended through the scoped re-examination of the adopted Official Plan. This precinct is intended to achieve a height and density that reflects the precincts walking distance to higher order transit at the Burlington GO Station while also achieving compatibility with adjacent residential low-density areas. The precinct also identified the need for a future public park in the precinct to support intensification. Option 2 would direct intensification growth to an MTSA located on the Growth Plan (2019) Schedule 5 Priority Transit Corridor and enable improved access to transportation options and leverage existing public investments in an area served by higher order frequent rapid transit. Option 2 would further support the Regional Urban Structure proposed hierarchy for strategic growth areas and focus growth and investment to MTSAs located on Priority Transit Corridors.

Figure 6: Proposed Adjusted Urban Growth Centre Boundary (October 2020)



3.2.4 Growth Plan (2019) Guiding Principles Assessment

The options for considerations have been assessed against relevant Guiding Principles in Section 1.2.1 of the Growth Plan (2019).

Growth Plan (2019) Section 1.2.1:

- **Support the achievement of *complete communities* that are designed to support healthy and active living and meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime.**

Option 1: ‘Status Quo’

Option 1 has largely achieved this Growth Plan (2019) Guiding Principle and will continue to be a complete community within Burlington.

Option 2: ‘Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC’

Option 2 presents the opportunity to create and achieve a complete community with access to higher order transit on a Priority Transit Corridor, while also in proximity to a downtown area. Option 2 is an area in Burlington with capacity and opportunity to achieve complete community planning objectives for the long term and create neighbourhoods for future generations. Given its proximity and connection, Option 2 will benefit from the existing complete community and will support daily needs of the residents of the downtown area¹ and those residents as the adjusted UGC emerges over time.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 1.2.1:

- **Prioritize *intensification* and higher densities in *strategic growth areas* to make efficient use of land and *infrastructure* and support transit viability.**

Option 1: ‘Status Quo’

While Option 1 is currently an area in the city with higher densities, it is not supported by higher order transit, nor is it located on a Priority Transit Corridor.

¹ The term “downtown area” is used to refer to the broader area of the Downtown and is not necessarily coincident with any of the other boundaries discussed in this paper.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Option 2 is an emerging Strategic Growth Area that has the capacity for intensification and higher densities. The inclusion of the Burlington GO Station in Option 2 will ensure the efficient use of land and infrastructure, while supporting transit viability at a local and regional scale. This area, centred on the Burlington GO Station will be supported by higher order transit and is located along the Provincial Priority Transit Corridor. As discussed in Section 3.1.4 and established through the Regional Urban Structure paper, an MTSA hierarchy is proposed. MTSA's that are on the Growth Plan Schedule 5 Priority Transit Corridor and also a UGC are at the top of the proposed hierarchy to assist in leveraging investment for infrastructure to support growth and development from both a Regional and City perspective.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 1.2.1:

- **Provide flexibility to capitalize on new economic and employment opportunities as they emerge, while providing certainty for traditional industries, including resource-based sectors.**

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

While Option 1 has experienced development pressure for residential units, there has been less focus on the development of employment uses. For various reasons, including but not limited to parking, transportation and market demand for residential units, significant office development has not occurred.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Option 2 is an area with potential and capacity for future employment growth that can provide the flexibility to capitalize on new economic and employment opportunities as they emerge, and are supported by higher order transit. This will support the attraction of various employers that will rely on proximity to the inter-regional GO rail system to draw employees from broader areas.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 1.2.1:

- **Support a range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and *affordable* housing, to serve all sizes, incomes, and ages of households.**

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

The current UGC does achieve this Growth Plan Guiding Principle and will continue to provide for a range and mix of housing options.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

This area will provide further opportunities and capacity for a range and mix of housing options in the future that are located in walking distance of higher order transit. As discussed in the Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper, the Planning Act enables municipalities to utilize tools such as Inclusionary Zoning to achieve affordable housing targets. Implementing Inclusionary Zoning must be done through the use of the Protected Major Transit Station Area tool which shelters the assigned densities from appeal to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT). The Region is exploring opportunities for policies within the Regional Official Plan to identify Protected MTSA's. Opportunity exists to explore the Burlington GO area as a PMTSA to assist toward establishing an appropriate range and mix of housing around higher order transit stations.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 1.2.1:

- **Improve the integration of land use planning with planning and investment in *infrastructure and public service facilities*, including integrated service delivery through community hubs, by all levels of government.**

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

The current UGC provides a variety of public service facilities, and is the location of the City's only hospital, performing art centre, City Hall and art gallery among others. These are city-wide public service facilities. There is sufficient infrastructure to support the current UGC.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Option 2 will provide for the seamless integration between land use planning with planning and investment in infrastructure and public service facilities. This area presents the opportunity for a future community hub with capacity for new public services facilities and will take advantage of local, regional and provincial investments in transit such as Regional Express Rail (RER) and increased local transit investment along

Frequent Transit Corridors. The proximity to the existing infrastructure and public service facilities would support Option 2 as it evolves over time.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 1.2.1:

- **Integrate climate change considerations into planning and managing growth such as planning for more resilient communities and *infrastructure* – that are adaptive to the *impacts of a changing climate* – and moving towards environmentally sustainable communities by incorporating approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

Option 1 is currently a walkable, compact, and transit supportive community, however, it is not supported by higher order transit.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Through the Regional Official Plan Review, a climate change lens is being applied to the review of Strategic Growth Areas through the IGMS. This lens will address priorities including focusing higher density in Strategic Growth Areas that are planned to be transit supportive, walkable, and well-serviced to reduce the need to drive private automobiles and decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. In addition to reducing auto-dependency, a healthy variety of housing, including higher density forms, can also reduce the Region's GHG emissions. An adjustment to the Downtown Burlington UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC, will ensure that a climate change lens is applied to growth management.

Option 2 will focus future growth and create a more compact, complete community that will encourage active and sustainable forms of transportation supported by a well connected local and regional transportation network.

3.2.5 Growth Plan (2019) Where and How to Grow Assessment

The options for consideration have been assessed against the relevant segments of Section 2.1 of the Growth Plan (2019).

Growth Plan (2019) Section 2.1:

- To support the achievement of *complete communities* that are healthier, safer, and more equitable, choices about where and how growth occurs in the *GGH* need to be made carefully. Better use of land and *infrastructure* can be made by directing growth to *settlement areas* and prioritizing *intensification*, with a focus on *strategic growth areas*, including *urban growth centres* and *major transit station areas*, as well as *brownfield sites* and *greyfields*. Concentrating new development in these areas provides a focus for investments in transit as well as other types of *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* to support forecasted growth, while also supporting a more diverse range and mix of housing options.

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

Option 1 is currently a complete community that continues to experience intensification growth, is supported by existing infrastructure and provide a diverse range and mix of housing options.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Option 2 presents the opportunity and capacity to make better use of land and infrastructure by directing growth to this strategic growth area which is supported by higher order transit. Option 2 provides an opportunity to concentrate future development in these areas and will provide a focus for investments in local and regional transit as well as other types of infrastructure and public service facilities.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 2.1:

- This Plan recognizes transit as a first priority for major transportation investments. It sets out a regional vision for transit, and seeks to align transit with growth by directing growth to *major transit station areas* and other *strategic growth areas*, including *urban growth centres*, and promoting transit investments in these areas. To optimize provincial investments in *higher order transit*, this Plan also identifies *priority transit corridors* and the Province expects municipalities to complete detailed planning for *major transit station areas* on these corridors to support planned service levels.

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

Option 1, the existing UGC boundary, is not located on a Priority Transit Corridor nor is it supported by higher order transit, nor frequent transit within a dedicated right-of-way.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Option 2 is located on a Priority Transit Corridor and is supported by higher order transit. Option 2 presents the opportunity to align regional and local transit with growth, and optimize provincial investments in higher order transit.

3.2.6 Growth Plan (2019) Urban Growth Centre Policy Analysis

The options for consideration have been assessed against the Urban Growth Centre policies of the Growth Plan (2019). For each policy, the features of the proposed boundary options, and where appropriate, relevant contextual details are discussed below.

**Growth Plan (2019) Section 2.2.3 1:
Urban growth centres will be planned:
a) as focal areas for investment in regional public service facilities, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural, and entertainment uses;**

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

Option 1 currently includes the existing UGC which has been the focal point for a wide range of investments including Joseph Brant Hospital. There is a historic fine grain grid street network, established over 100 years ago, that supports the existing transit supportive built form which contributes to a vibrant, walkable, cycling friendly complete community. This area continues to experience growth pressures that have increased over time. While further growth is anticipated there is a critical need to ensure that future development is compatible with existing development and established neighbourhoods. This area has transit supportive densities throughout and is a complete community in a compact form.

Option 1 achieves the intent of Section 2.2.3.1 a) of the Growth Plan (2019).

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

The Official Plan permissions in the areas identified in Option 2 are very broad and permit a wide range of uses. Institutional uses are broadly defined and are permitted within all land use designations (with some exceptions) in the city. As a result, there are many opportunities for new uses in an adjusted UGC boundary which is well-served by regional transit as well as a local and regional transportation network.

In the Adopted Official Plan, proposed policies reference the need for area-specific planning in this area to support the development of a complete community. The policies of the adopted Official Plan state:

Section 3.2.2 (h): Area-specific plans shall identify and plan for future public service facility needs, including community hubs as identified in Subsection 12.1.3 of this Plan, and shall have regard for potential future institutional uses which may be required to serve residents.

In addition to general guidance for area specific planning, the Adopted Official Plan provides specific guidance for the development of area specific plans around the GO Stations.

The City's Growth Framework policies identify this area as part of two Primary Growth Areas. The Official Plan anticipates and is planning for employment growth, and higher intensity mixed uses. The Growth Framework further identifies Primary Growth Areas as priority areas for transit investment and are identified as areas which can make efficient use of existing infrastructure and investments to support achieving a wide range of city building objectives. The Primary Growth Areas are supported by the frequent transit corridors. These frequent transit corridors represent, from the City's perspective, areas where investments in transit will be directed over the horizon of the plan and beyond.

The areas identified within the boundary proposed in Option 2 contain a wide range of commercial uses, and a limited range of other uses. The existing policies have the capacity to accommodate a wider range of uses. Over time this emerging area through the development of an area specific planning process will have the potential to evolve over time to be a complete community that will be planned to accommodate a full range of uses including the opportunity for investment in regional public service facilities, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural, and entertainment uses. It is adjacent to existing schools, parks and churches and reinforces the connection to the existing established complete community in the downtown area and includes appropriate lands along Brant Street.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 2.2.3 1

b) to accommodate and support the transit network at the regional scale and provide connection points for inter-and intra-regional transit;

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

Option 1, the existing UGC boundary, is not located on a Priority Transit Corridor nor is it supported by higher order transit, nor frequent transit within a dedicated right-of-way. Given the historic fine grain grid street pattern and narrower right-of-ways, this area does not have and will not have the same level of combined local and regional transit network as Option 2 provides.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

The area identified in Option 2, has an existing local and regional transit network served by several local bus routes as well as higher order transit. The Burlington GO station, not only serves as a connection point for local transit service, but also acts as a connection point for various regional transit routes, moving people throughout Burlington, the GTA and into Niagara Region.

As shown on Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan (2019), the Burlington GO Station is situated immediately along a Priority Transit Corridor. The Burlington GO Station is on the Lakeshore West GO line with service to Hamilton and Toronto on and off-peak hours. Metrolinx's Regional Express Rail (RER) plan will bring 15-minute headways to this corridor by 2025. Metrolinx also currently provides GO bus routes from the Burlington GO Station into the Niagara Region.

Recently, investments have been made to the Burlington GO Station including station upgrades, and the integration of Burlington Transit bus operations at the GO Station site.

The area is currently served by several local bus routes and the Route 101 express bus route that travels along Plains Road East and Fairview Street. Transit service to Hamilton is also available from the Burlington GO Station by way of Burlington Transit Route 101 express. Peak hour headways are generally 20 minutes and the combined headway of Route 1 and Route 101 (both run on Plains Road) is 8.5 minutes. This route travels along Plains Road East and Fairview Street connecting with Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) Route 18 into Downtown Hamilton.

In addition to Metrolinx’s long-term investments in RER and increased frequency in regional transit, long term local vision sets out prioritization of transit corridors through this area. Burlington’s adopted Official Plan, as shown on Schedule B-2, identifies Fairview St. and Brant Street as Frequent Transit Corridors. This will prioritize these corridors in the city-wide transit network to implement transit service with 15-minute frequency in both directions, 7 days a week. The Frequent Transit Corridors, which connect to the Burlington GO Station, will support community connectivity, facilitate intensification and contribute to a convenient and reliable transit system.

Option 2 reinforces the focus on first mile, last mile interventions and Growth Plan (2019) directives to delineate the boundaries of major transit station areas in a transit-supportive manner that maximizes the size of the area and the number of potential transit users that are within walking distance of the station. Option 2 will contribute to these initiatives and policy direction.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 2.2.3 1

c) to serve as high-density major employment centres that will attract provincially, nationally, or internationally significant employment uses; and

Option 1: ‘Status Quo’

Option 1 currently has a good balance of residents and jobs; however, it is not the most appropriate area to serve as a high-density major employment centre that will attract provincially, nationally, or internationally significant employment uses. Although employment uses are permitted throughout the downtown, the scoped re-examination of the adopted Official Plan identifies the “Downtown East Precinct” as the pre-eminent destination for office and major office uses. When the existing UGC boundary was established in 2006, it was noted that there were sites for employment growth, however the City has not seen significant office development due to pressure for residential development and limited access to major highways and higher order transit.

Option 2: ‘Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC’

The broad permissions for the areas included within the Option 2 area in both the existing Official Plan and the adopted Official Plan provide ample opportunity to drive change and investment in this area. There are a number of sites in the proposed adjusted UGC boundary that could be re-developed to accommodate a variety of employment uses.

A number of those sites that could be re-developed are the subject of employment conversion requests that have been submitted by the City of Burlington for consideration as part of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process. The Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper identifies the conversion requests received to date as well as the considerations that will be applied to the assessment of the requests. This will include consideration of the future potential of the lands to accommodate employment growth and contribute to advancing strategic growth management objectives. The employment conversions that are recommended through the ROPR should contribute to the potential to drive change and investment in the area. The area-specific plan is expected to set out the detailed land use designations and in particular to establish employment targets and standards to ensure a diverse range of uses and a balance of residents and jobs.

The City of Burlington, Region of Halton and the Ministry of Transportation are undertaking the QEW Prosperity Corridor Study to determine investment required in infrastructure to support future development including lands in the MTSA's.

The Burlington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) recognizes the area around Burlington's GO stations, including the Burlington GO Station as a key focus for employment growth and investment in the city. BEDC is in the process of developing an employment vision and recommendations on an implementation strategy for these areas. To date, BEDC has engaged over 40 stakeholders in the three GO Station areas and have developed guiding principles to help develop a GO Station Employment Vision that will focus employment growth in areas close to higher order transit.

The area located around the Burlington GO presents opportunity and key sites to attract future significant employment uses in proximity to higher order transit.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 2.2.3.1

d) to accommodate significant population and employment growth.

Opportunity to support growth to 2031 and subsequently to 2051.

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

For the 'Status Quo' option, the accommodation of 'significant population and employment growth' is a challenge, as this area is established and built up. There remain significant opportunities for growth, but there are also many other opportunities for growth through intensification in the City.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Work completed to date through the Mobility Hubs Study, the scoped re-examination of the adopted OP and the ICBL Land Use Study highlight the opportunities that exist within the proposed UGC boundary to accommodate population and employment growth through intensification/re-development. Future area-specific planning around the Burlington GO, in conformity with the updated Regional Official Plan to the 2051 planning horizon, will provide the foundation for long-term growth through the development of vibrant complete communities.

Consistent with Provincial policy direction the City is identifying the three MTSA as emerging urban centres as the most appropriate areas for growth. In particular, the role of the Burlington GO MTSA in accommodating residents and jobs will be prioritized in part due to its proximity to the downtown area and its position on a Priority Transit Corridor.

A land supply analysis undertaken as part of the City's Growth Analysis Study (2019). The study highlighted the growth potential, intended to be achieved over time, around the Burlington GO which was based on considering target densities (150 and 300 residents and jobs per hectare) and estimated percentages of population and employment.

Over time, Option 2 will have the potential to accommodate significant population and employment growth to 2031 and beyond.

Growth Plan (2019) Section 2.2.3.2

Urban Growth Centres will be planned to achieve, by 2031 or earlier, a minimum density target of:

b) 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare for...Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre.

Option 1: 'Status Quo'

Option 1 is expected to result in the achievement of the current 200 residents and jobs per hectare minimum density target. Based on completed, under construction or approved developments as of August 2020, the existing Downtown Burlington UGC has a density of approximately 189 people and jobs per hectare. When factoring in developments that are currently before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal or under consideration by the City, a potential UGC density target of approximately 217 people

and jobs per hectare is determined. The current UGC has been planned to achieve the Growth Plan (2019) target of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2031.

Option 2: 'Adjust the UGC boundary to incorporate the proposed Burlington GO MTSA Boundary, as well as a portion of the current UGC'

Official Plan policies and Zoning Permissions

The ICBL Land Use Study established that the density of the Burlington GO Station portion of the study area was 21.8 residents and jobs per hectare as of 2016. It considered the existing Official Plan framework around the Burlington GO and presented a full buildout scenario based on the maximum building footprint permitted and a number of density assumptions. The analysis determined that the area could yield a density of 129 residents and jobs per hectare. This was not intended to be a forecast but rather an assessment of the capacity for development based on the existing OP policies. It is important to note that development applications that have since been built (including the Paradigm Development) were not included.

In terms of capacity it is important to note that there is a significant disconnect between the Official Plan and the existing Zoning within portions of the proposed UGC boundary. In fact, approximately 14% of the area included in the evaluated option currently has zoning permissions that do not establish maximum height or maximum density. This provides an opportunity for significant development on these lands as illustrated by a site plan application, which is currently under review by the City; the details of which are provided below. This development and development application may be considered generally as the type of redevelopment potential that at least a portion of the area may experience.

Current Development Applications and Pre-Applications

There are several developments, at various stages of the planning and development process, which are located within the proposed boundary of Option 2 which could contribute to the achievement of the UGC growth target.

Developed:

Paradigm Development: located at 2089-2095 Fairview Street, this development has approval for ±929 High Density Units, 2,991 square metres of office space and 1,597 square metres of retail space. This could result in approximately 1,608 people and jobs, with applied assumptions.

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Phase 1 of the development (3 buildings) has been built and a site plan application is currently under review for Phase 2 of the development,

Site Plan Approved:

Cherish Homes: Draft site plan approval has been granted for 146 High Density Units and 685 square metres of commercial space at 730-760 Brant Street. This could result in approximately 248 people and jobs, with applied assumptions.

Site Plan Application:

As noted above the City has received a site plan application for the subject site at 2243 & 2269 Fairview St. & 864 Drury Lane, located within the area discussed above that currently has no height or density maximums within the Zoning.

The development application is proposing 2,456 High Density Units and 3,689 square metres of commercial space. The site plan application is currently under review and subject to change. However, as proposed, this development could result in approximately 3,972 people and jobs, with applied assumptions.

With a single development application proposing almost 4000 residents and jobs proposed on approximately 24% of the land not subject to maximum height and density provisions it would be reasonable to suggest that this area of the adjusted boundary would have capacity to accommodate a significant number of residents and jobs.

Pre-Application

The lands added that currently form part of the Upper Brant precinct have capacity to contribute to achieving the target. As a whole, the entire Upper Brant precinct was modelled to have the potential capacity to add 2,120 new units and 520 new jobs identified through the scoped re-examination of the adopted Official Plan.

There is also a development proposal in the pre-application stage for a phased development located at the north-west, north-east and south-east corners of Brant St. & Ghent Ave. The overall development proposes 850 High Density Units, 7 Townhouse Units, and 1,822 square meters of retail space. As a formal development application has not been received by the City, the development details are subject to change. However, as proposed, this development could result in approximately 1,405 people and jobs, with applied assumptions.

Outcome of the Regional Official Plan Review and future Area Specific Planning

Several properties within Option 2 are concurrently being considered for employment conversion through the Regional Official Plan. The decision on employment conversions may also contribute to increased potential to add new residents and jobs within the adjusted boundary.

After the Region has delineated the MTSA and made any recommended adjustments to the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre boundary, the City will re-initiate the work to complete the Area Specific Plan that was initiated in 2017. The development of the area-specific plan will be guided by Regional and Local policies and will include the development of policies to plan to higher order transit supportive densities and will focus on creating complete communities that are environmentally friendly, infrastructure-efficient, walkable, bikeable, and support local and regional transit with a mix of uses such as employment, public service facilities, housing, recreation, entertainment and shopping.

Given the discussion above detailing existing permissions, current development applications and the role for future processes, Option 2 has significant capacity and potential and is planned to achieve 200 residents and jobs per hectare.

Summary

Burlington was one of the first communities to formally establish its UGC boundary. The existing Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre has demonstrated the achievement of the Urban Growth Centre policies of the Growth Plan and is tracking well to achieve its UGC target by 2031.

The proposed Option 2 adjusted Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre boundary presents an “emerging” UGC in the context of Growth Plan terminology. This area has capacity and potential to accommodate development currently. In addition, there is significant potential to shape long term growth within the boundary by preparing an area specific plan, in conformity with the updated Regional Official Plan to the 2051 planning horizon. That plan will guide growth over the long term to support the achievement of a complete community.

The proposed adjusted boundary identifies an area centred over an MTSA along the Provincial Priority Transit Corridor which will improve access to transportation options and make efficient use of existing public investments that are served by higher order frequent rapid transit. This emerging UGC aligns with the Region’s hierarchy for MTSA’s by focusing additional growth and investment in one of the MTSA’s located on the Priority Transit Corridor in Halton Region. The proposed adjusted boundary in

Regional Official Plan Review

Option 2, given its close connection to the downtown area, will mean that as this emerging UGC evolves over time it will be supported by the existing investments made in infrastructure and public service uses like the Hospital, City Hall, and the main street retail areas of the downtown area.

The proposed adjusted boundary signals the evolution of the local priority focus for growth through intensification and is supported by the direction to undertake area-specific planning in order to build a new complete community in an existing built up area.

Option 2 represents a reasonable proposed adjusted Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre boundary.

Discussion Question 3:

Through land-use planning, Urban Growth Centres are planned to accommodate growth and intensification and support higher-order transit. How can the Region and City support the development of the emerging Urban Growth Centre in the City of Burlington through land-use planning?

Discussion Question 4:

Do you have any additional comments about the proposed adjusted Urban Growth Centre boundary in the City of Burlington?

4.0 Next Steps

The purpose of the Downtown Burlington UGC and MTSA Supplemental Discussion Paper was to provide an overview of the applicable policy context and specific requirements of the Growth Plan (2019) to delineate UGCs and MTSAs and plan to achieve required density targets for these key Strategic Growth Areas in Burlington. An overview of the role and function of the Downtown Burlington MTSA was presented with a discussion on the proposed removal of the Downtown as an MTSA in the Regional Official Plan. This paper also presented a preferred option for the consideration of an adjusted boundary for the Downtown Burlington UGC.

This discussion paper will form the basis for public consultation with the community, residents and stakeholders as part of the ROPR.

Acronyms

BEDC	Burlington Economic Development Corporation
HSR	Hamilton Street Railway
ICBL	Interim Control By-Law
IGMS	Integrated Growth Management Strategy
LPAT	Local Planning Appeal Tribunal
MTSA	Major Transit Station Area
NEP	Niagara Escarpment Plan
NHS	Natural Heritage System
PPS	Provincial Policy Statement
RER	Regional Express Rail
ROP	Regional Official Plan
ROPR	Regional Official Plan Review
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
SGA	Strategic Growth Area
UGC	Urban Growth Centre

Glossary of Terms

Area-Specific Plans

A local official plan amendment applying to a specific geographic area, such as a secondary plan or a Regional Official Plan Amendment applying to a specific geographic area (Regional Official Plan).

Community Area

Means areas where the vast majority of housing required to accommodate the forecasted population will be located, as well as the majority of population-related jobs, most office jobs and some existing employment land employment jobs. Community areas include delineated built-up areas and the designated greenfield area (excluding employment areas) (As derived from the Land Needs Assessment of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2018).

Complete Communities

Places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and Settlement Areas that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities. Complete communities are age-friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts (Growth Plan 2019).

Greater Golden Horseshoe

The geographic area identified as the Greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan area in Ontario Regulation 416/05 under the Places to Grow Act, 2005 (Growth Plan 2019).

Growth Scenarios Report

The first report (dated June 2019), in a series of four IGMS reports, which provides background information and analysis on the management of growth to 2041, and presents a set of 8 preliminary population and population-related employment Growth Scenarios, as well as an employment growth scenario, with a recommendation to carry forward four Growth Scenarios into the development of four detailed Growth Concepts, leading to a Preferred Growth Concept.

Higher-Order Transit

Transit that generally operates in partially or completely dedicated rights-of-way, outside of mixed traffic, and therefore can achieve levels of speed and reliability greater than mixed-traffic transit. Higher-order transit can include heavy rail (such as subways and inter-city rail), light rail, and buses in a dedicated right-of-way (Growth Plan 2019).

Inclusionary Zoning

A planning tool available to municipalities for developments within Major Transit Station Areas, which can require that a certain percentage of units within a new residential

development be set aside as affordable housing units, and maintained as affordable for a set period of time.

Integrated Growth Management Strategy (IGMS)

A strategy in preparation by Halton Region during its current Municipal Comprehensive Review to establish a vision and implementation plan to guide growth and development in Halton and its Local Municipalities to 2041.

Intensification

Means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- a) Redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
- b) The development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- c) Infill development; and
- d) The expansion or conversion of existing buildings (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Local Urban Structure

An urban structure defined by a Local Municipality in the Halton Region, which furthers the growth management and community building objectives of the Local Municipality, and is intended to complement the Regional Urban Structure, in conformity to the Regional Official Plan. The Local Urban Structure consists of: Strategic Growth Areas, Employment Areas, stable residential areas, other locally-identified areas, and the transportation and growth corridors that connect these areas.

Major Transit Station Area (MTSA)

The area including and around any existing or planned Higher Order Transit Station or stop within a Settlement Area; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. Major transit station areas generally are defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800-metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk (Growth Plan 2019).

Mobility Hubs

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA's) that are designated by Metrolinx as regionally significant given the level of transit service that is planned for them and the development potential around them. They are places of connectivity between rapid transit services, and also places where different modes of transportation, from walking to high-speed rail, come together. They have or are planned to have a concentration of mixed-use development around a major transit station. Given the high level of transit service at or forecasted for Mobility Hubs relative to other MTSA's, it is recommended that the Mobility Hub areas receive a commensurately higher level of development intensity and design consideration that supports transit and multi-modal travel than what may be applied in other MTSA's.

Municipal Comprehensive Review

Regional Official Plan Review

A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality (i.e. Halton Region) under Section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of the Growth Plan (Growth Plan 2019).

Natural Heritage System (NHS)

Means system made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. The system can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, associated areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue (Growth Plan 2019).

Population-Related Employment

Jobs that primarily serve a resident population, including retail, education, health care, local government and work-at-home employment, generally located in Community Areas.

Priority Transit Corridor

Transit corridors are shown in Schedule 5 of the Growth Plan, or as further identified by the Province to implement the Growth Plan (Growth Plan 2019).

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

A policy statement issued under the authority of Section 3 of the Planning Act, which provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario's policy-led planning system, the Provincial Policy Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land.

Public Service Facilities

Lands, buildings and structures for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other bodies, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health and educational programs, long term care services, and cultural services. Public service facilities do not include infrastructure (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020).

Regional Official Plan (ROP)

An official plan prepared under the authority of the Planning Act, approved as amended and consolidated on September 28, 2015, and that outlines a long term planning vision for Halton Region to the 2031 planning horizon.

Regional Urban Structure

A Region-wide urban structure that builds upon key components of the Regional Structure contained in the approved Regional Official Plan and complements the Local Urban Structures of each Local Municipality. The Regional Urban Structure must

address conformity with the Growth Plan (2019), and will be developed through the IGMS and incorporated into the Regional Official Plan.

Settlement Areas

Urban areas and Rural Settlements within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are:

- a) Built-Up Areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and
- b) Lands which have been designated in an official plan for development in accordance with the policies of the Growth Plan.

Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated (Growth Plan 2019).

Strategic Growth Area (SGA)

Within Settlement Areas, nodes, corridors, and other areas that have been identified by municipalities or the Province to be the focus for accommodating Intensification and higher-density mixed uses in a more Compact Built Form. Strategic growth areas include Urban Growth Centres, Major Transit Station Areas, and other major opportunities that may include infill, redevelopment, brownfield sites, the expansion or conversion of existing buildings, or greyfields. Lands along major roads, arterials, or other areas with existing or planned frequent transit service or Higher-Order Transit corridors may also be identified as Strategic Growth Areas (Growth Plan 2019).

Transit Priority Corridor

Region-wide connections that link existing and anticipated regional destinations and attractions that are Regional Transit Nodes including Urban Growth Centres, intensification areas, employment nodes, and Regional Transit Nodes such as GO stations (Major Transit Stations). Regional Transit Nodes include significant nodes in the Region that do not have a rail station, but nonetheless play a key role in inter- and intra-regional connectivity. (DMTR; Halton Region, 2019)

Urban Growth Centre (UGC)

Existing or emerging downtown areas shown in Schedule 4 of the Growth Plan (2019) and as further identified by the Minister on April 2, 2008 (Growth Plan 2019). UGCs in Halton Region are Downtown Burlington, Midtown Oakville, and Downtown Milton.

References

[A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#)

[City of Burlington Adopted Official Plan](#)

[City of Burlington Current Official Plan](#)

[City of Burlington Growth Analysis Study \(2019\)](#)

[City of Burlington ICBL Land Use Study](#)

[City of Burlington Staff report PL-33-20](#)

[Halton Regional Official Plan](#)

[IGMS Growth Scenarios Report](#)

[IGMS Regional Urban Structure Discussion Paper](#)

[Metrolinx Mobility Hub Guidelines](#)

[Metrolinx The Big Move](#)

[Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan](#)

[MTO Transit-Supportive Guidelines](#)

Ontario Growth Secretariat and Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. 2008.
Proposed Size and Location of Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe
Technical Paper

[Planning Act](#)

Appendix

Appendix A: Discussion Section

We welcome your feedback on this and other areas important to the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area and Integrated Growth Management Strategy. Below is a summary of the questions posed throughout the Supplemental Discussion Paper. Please take a moment to answer these questions and provide your valuable insight into these issues:

1. A key consideration brought up in the Discussion Paper was that the John Street Bus Terminal does not (and is not anticipated to) function as a Major Transit Station, as currently defined in the Growth Plan. What factors do you think should be considered if the Major Transit Station Area designation is removed from Downtown Burlington?

2. The Province's guiding principles for identifying and setting out the boundaries of Urban Growth Centres—areas planned to accommodate growth and intensification that include a transit hub at the regional scale—are highlighted on page 24 of the Supplemental Discussion Paper. What other factors do you think are important to be considered when adjusting the boundary of the Burlington's current Urban Growth Centre?

3. Through land-use planning, Urban Growth Centres are planned to accommodate growth and intensification and support higher-order transit. How can the Region and City support the development of the emerging Urban Growth Centre in the City of Burlington through land-use planning?

4. Do you have any additional comments about the proposed adjusted Urban Growth Centre Boundary in the City of Burlington?

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