Staff Report


Date Circulated:

Comment Deadline:
September 22, 2008

Summary Recommendation: No objection.

Background:

Shortly after the approval of the Regional Official Plan in 2006, the Region began work on developing its “Sustainable Plan”. The Sustainable Plan is intended to set out a longer vision and strategy to address the resource pressures facing Halton including protection of the environment, agriculture and population growth.

The Plan produced in 2006 was generally seen as a refinement of the existing Official Plan proposing an updating rather than a substantive change in direction. For example, the existing urban boundaries remained generally unchanged. As part of the settlement with landowners/the development industry, the Region agreed to start a review of the approved urban boundaries and resource policies (e.g., aggregate extraction) following approval of the 2006 Plan.

An additional driver is related to recent provincial initiatives relating to the 2006 Growth Plan, the 2005 Greenbelt Plan (of which the NEP is a part) and the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement.

A number of background papers were prepared over a period of time to set out options and issues for the Sustainable Plan. These were used for agency
discussion and public input at the initial stages of the process. The matters circulated to the NEC involve the Evaluation Framework and Concepts for identifying growth and intensification areas.

Comment:

The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) staff have been part of Committees dealing with various aspects of the evolving Sustainable Plan. Of note there is a special Committee on aggregate extraction, which is always of interest to the NEC program.

The NEC has been asked to comment on what can be viewed as “first principles” now that the Regional Council has approved the Evaluation Framework and Five Growth Concepts, for agency comment. A threshold issue does relate to the Five Growth Concepts, since it sets out the areas within the Region that will be subject to intensification and growth. Urban boundaries will be changing to accommodate future population which is mandated by the Growth Plan and Provincial policy.

From the NEC perspective the growth concepts, in and of themselves, are not an issue because all five cover lands outside the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP). Although the concept areas may not impact the NEP, broader issues related to urban intensification and growth for these lands will likely involve services, new roads, transit, infrastructure and parks/open space that have an affect on the NEP. For example roads may cross the NEP or be proposed for widening, or new reservoirs and water lines may be needed. Additionally, lands nearby or adjacent to the NEP may have to be assessed for visual impact and buffering (depending on what Concept Area is selected). The scale and design of the future Milton Education Village near the edge of the NEP is an example. However, these issues are matters that can be looked at more closely later in the Plan development process or as part of the eventual implementation of the Sustainable Plan.

The Themes within the Evaluation Framework are relatively broad in nature and these are intended to provide direction to the future Official Plan policy and land use. These have been used in helping develop the growth concepts. Staff are supportive of the Themes and the emphasis on protecting what is valuable, and developing healthy and complete communities.

One Theme that, from the NEC perspective, requires clarification is Theme 1.4 respecting mineral resource areas. The focus here seems to be on protection of surrounding uses from aggregate extraction including encroachments and new development. Agricultural lands are also to be prioritized for protection, and extraction supported as an interim use in such areas. Missing is reference to similar direction for lands which are environmentally sensitive or could form part of the enhanced Natural Heritage System. Rehabilitation of such lands is also
important where such lands are logical candidates for a return to a previous natural condition or can be used for parks and open space opportunity once mining is complete. The NEC's long-standing concern that mineral resource areas (e.g., shale) be utilized before they are built over would be covered under the general statement in the Theme that says, “minimize encroachment of development onto mineral resource areas”.

**Recommendation:**

That the Niagara Escarpment Commission endorse the Evaluation Framework and Five Growth Concepts circulated to the Commission, subject to the comments/suggestions set out in this Report.

The Commission will provide additional comments on other aspects of the proposed Halton Sustainable Plan as the planning process proceeds (e.g., mineral aggregate extraction).

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Ken Whitbread  
Manager
September 22, 2008

Ms Anita Fabac
Region of Halton
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, ON
L6M 3L1

Dear Ms Fabac:

Re: Sustainable Halton
Evaluation Framework and Five Growth Concepts
Working Paper #1
CH File: MPR 404

Staff of Conservation Halton have reviewed the Sustainable Halton Working Paper #1 (Locating New Urban Land) and the Growth Management Strategy Evaluation Framework, both prepared by the Region and Urban Strategies Inc., dated March 2008, and offer the following comments.

The purpose of Working Paper #1 is to establish principles on where new urban lands might be located. As stated in the paper, the concepts do not include assumptions around the form or density of development. These issues will be addressed in the next stage of work. With respect to the natural heritage system, staff understand that Regional Council has adopted Option 3 (Enhanced Ecological Integrity). Staff are very supportive of this option and commend the Region for having the foresight and vision to protect and hopefully enhance, the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of the natural heritage system as per the requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement. The paper notes that the Study Team is refining the limits of the NHS and that the mapping will be updated in the next phase of work. Staff look forward to reviewing the updated mapping as it becomes available and would be pleased to meet with the Region to discuss any of the refinements prior to finalization.

The Working Paper (page 10) also notes that it has been assumed that new urban areas will be served by lake-based water in Halton. This is important when reviewing the alternative growth scenarios as it has significant implications on servicing costs.

Figure 3 – Nodes and Corridors – staff question whether it is appropriate to show the existing alignment of Tremaine Road as a potential mixed-use corridor. Given that the realigned Tremaine Road will likely be more heavily utilized, it would seem appropriate to highlight that realigned road as a potential mixed-use corridor. By doing so, this would also remove Steeles Avenue from the mixed-use corridor designation. Given the proximity of Steeles Avenue to the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area it would seem appropriate not to designate it a potential mixed-use corridor.
Staff wish to note that, throughout the paper the main branch of Sixteen Mile Creek is mistakenly referred to as Bronte Creek while the east branch of Sixteen Mile Creek is mistakenly referred to as the main branch of Sixteen Mile Creek. This should be revised in any subsequent papers to ensure clarity in the descriptions of the land areas.

**Refined Concepts**

Following a review of nine alternative scenarios, the Study Team has narrowed the concepts down to five: (1) Milton Centred; (2a and b) Milton-Georgetown (Low); and, (3a and b) Milton-Georgetown (High). All scenarios include: the proposed post-secondary institutional use west of Tremaine Road and north of Britannia Road; and, additional employment lands in Milton and Halton Hills along the Highway 401 corridor.

Based on our review of the alternative scenarios, it would appear that Concepts 1 and 3b both have positive attributes associated with maintaining and enhancing the Natural Heritage System. Our comments and conclusions are based on the same assumptions that are made within the Working Paper. This includes the assumption that servicing will be provided with a lake based system. If groundwater would be used to service an expanded Georgetown urban boundary, staff would need to reconsider our preferred alternative selection process.

The benefits and drawbacks of these two concepts, in our opinion, are outlined below:

**Concept 1: Milton Centred Expansion**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Drawbacks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Headwaters of Sixteen Mile Creek remain relatively undeveloped. This will assist in maintaining the natural hydrologic regime.</td>
<td>Market gardens close to urban areas may be beneficial and could supply the urban areas with local produce. This concept would remove market gardens east of Trafalgar Road.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focusing development south of Highway 401 may lessen the need for additional major transportation routes north of Highway 401 (GTA West Corridor).</td>
<td>Urban development surrounding the NHS south of Highway 401 could result in pressure to reduce the size of the NHS to accommodate intense development along Trafalgar Road.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No need for additional water supply to Georgetown thereby decreasing the cost of servicing lands north of Highway 401.</td>
<td>This concept will likely result in the need to upgrade (widen/expand) north-south roads such as 5th Line, 6th Line and Trafalgar Road and east-west roads such as Lower Baseline Road. These mainly rural roads currently travel through or adjacent to significant valleys associated with Sixteen Mile Creek. This concept could have significant impacts to these valley systems should these roads need to be upgraded in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No services north of Highway 401 will mean less pressure in the future to expand urban boundaries along the service lines (i.e., along Trafalgar Road where the services would likely be located).</td>
<td>It is unknown, at this time, how many crossings of the NHS will be required to access the lands between Trafalgar Road and 8th Line. It is likely that Drumquin Woods ESA would be significantly impacted by a mid-block arterial road (based on the assumption that a road would not go through Piper’s Heath Golf Course).</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ultimate removal of the market gardens east of Trafalgar Road will likely have a positive impact on Sixteen Mile Creek by decreasing water taking for irrigation purposes.</td>
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Focusing development south of Highway 401 will likely make the proposed new GO Station in Milton more viable, as well as the transitway along Highway 407, thereby potentially getting more commuters out of their cars and into mass transit.

By surrounding the NHS with development south of Highway 401 there is a greater likelihood of getting these features into public ownership, and protected in perpetuity.

Focusing development south of Highway 401 will leave agricultural lands largely intact north of Highway 401.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>By eliminating proposed development to the east of the east branch of Sixteen Mile Creek in Milton; it is unlikely that new road crossings of the creek and NHS in this area will be required.</td>
<td>High cost associated with servicing lands north of Highway 401.</td>
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<td>It is possible that there will be less pressure on the Natural Heritage System associated with the east branch of Sixteen Mile Creek in Milton.</td>
<td>The servicing north of Highway 401 (likely to take place along the Trafalgar Road right of way) will put pressure on Town/Region to expand urban area further south along Trafalgar Road in the future.</td>
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<td>By maintaining the lands in agriculture to the east of the east branch of Sixteen Mile Creek, the landscape will be more permeable for wildlife movement in this area.</td>
<td>May not be sufficient population in Milton to support new GO station.</td>
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<td>This concept provides for an urban separator between Milton and Mississauga.</td>
<td>Development in headwaters of Sixteen Mile Creek will have impact on hydrologic regime of the watercourses. May have negative impact on water quality and water temperature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less of the NHS would be impacted by major transportation corridors than with the other options.</td>
<td>By having development only on the western limit of the NHS south of Highway 401, it is unlikely that these features will be able to be brought into public ownership. This is a major drawback and may limit the functionality and viability of the NHS in the long-term.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population south of Highway 401 would likely support transitway along Highway 407.</td>
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<td>Maintains market gardens east of Trafalgar Road. Urban area and farmers may benefit from having local produce.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintains fairly substantial connected agricultural lands north of Highway 401.</td>
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Staff recommend that Option 3b would benefit from some minor boundary adjustments, specifically associated with the urban boundary expansion in Georgetown. Please see the enclosed modified Concept plan for our recommendation. We also note that Option 3b contains new urban areas within the CVC’s watershed. Additional comments will be provided by the CVC based on their review.

Based on the above, staff recommend that there are certainly benefits and drawbacks with each of the five concepts. We have attempted to outline the benefits and drawbacks of the two
alternatives that we perceive to be the best from a natural heritage perspective as well as a land use planning perspective. We would like to request a meeting with the Region of Halton and the CVC to discuss the five options prior to the Region beginning the next phase of this project.

We trust the above is of assistance. If you require additional information please contact the undersigned at extension 266.

Yours truly,

Jennifer Lawrence
Manager, Environmental Planning

Encl.

cc:  Mr. Mel Iovio and Mr. Bill Mann, Town of Milton, Planning, fax
     Ms Jane Clohecy, Town of Oakville, Planning, fax
     Mr. Bruce MacLean, Town of Halton Hills, Planning, fax
     Mr. Bruce Krushelnicki, City of Burlington, Planning, fax
     Ms Kathryn Pounder, NEC, fax
     Mr. Gary Murphy, CVC, fax

jl/devl planning/op/halton/op review 2008/sustainable halton working paper #1.doc
From: Paul Kerry [Paul_Kerry@cpr.ca]  
Sent: Friday, September 26, 2008 2:38 PM  
To: Fulford, Alana  
Subject: Canadian Pacific Railway Comments to Sustainable Halton

To the Sustainable Halton Project Team,

I attended your September 16, 2008 open house on the Sustainable Halton Growth Management Strategy and would like to offer the following feedback to your September PIC Workbook from a Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) point of view.

First of all, I notice that all of the potential employment lands straddle the Highway 401 corridor and are impossible or very difficult to serve directly by rail. Crossing Highway 401 with rail would be uneconomical and accessing the potential employment lands immediately south of Highway 401 is complicated by the Hydro corridor and existing built up industries. It is CP’s view that the intent of Places to Grow is to have future flexibility for access to multimodal transportation options, especially for employment lands and related goods movement. Another alternative which could be considered to achieve this goal would be to relocate some of the potential employment lands from north of Steeles Ave to a location immediately south of the railway and east of Trafalgar Road. In this location, the potential employment lands would have similar access to the 400 series highways with interchanges at Derry Road and Highway 407 as well as Trafalgar Road and Highway 401. The added benefit would be the flexibility to have direct rail access if the future businesses required this.

Secondly, I notice that 3 of the 5 land use concepts being considered have mixed use residential in close proximity or on CP lands east of Trafalgar Road. Over the past five years, a joint committee comprised of members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Railway Association of Canada have worked together to improve municipal planning, develop new techniques for mitigating noise and vibrations, and further enhance public safety around railway operations. The partnership also published the first comprehensive Proximity Guidelines and Best Management Practices for new residential developments in proximity of rail operations. Copies of this report can be provided upon request. The committees website of www.proximityissues.ca can also be accessed for further information.

Lastly, I notice that a GO Transit rail station is proposed just east of Trafalgar Road. I would like to point out that there is a new GO Transit rail station less than 2 miles east of this location.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide this input to your study. If you wish to discuss this further, I would be happy to meet with you.

Regards,

Paul Kerry
Area Manager
Corporate Business Development
Canadian Pacific

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