



Legislative & Planning Services Department  
**MEMORANDUM**  
Office of the Commissioner

**TO:** Chair and Members of Regional Council

**FROM:** Mark Meneray, Commissioner of Legislative and Planning Services

**DATE:** June 22, 2009

**RE:** **Achieving Alternative Places To Grow Densities in Halton Region**

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The Planning and Public Works Committee at its meeting on June 17, 2009 requested that staff provide all previous information forwarded to the IMLC on the issue of density alternatives on Greenfield lands. The Places to Grow Plan requires upper-tier municipalities to achieve higher development densities in order to realise the Province's vision for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. There are two primary requirements that Halton Region has to satisfy:

- The intensification rule means that by 2015 and for each subsequent year, Halton Region has to achieve a minimum 40% of all new residential units within the built-up area.
- The Designated Greenfield Areas rule means that Halton has to achieve a minimum density of 50 persons and jobs combined per hectare in said areas.

During Sustainable Halton Phase 3, Hemson Consulting was requested to analyze growth scenarios going beyond the minimum 50 persons and jobs per hectare target for designated greenfield areas.

At the February 11<sup>th</sup> Inter-Municipal Liaison Committee (IMLC) meeting, Hemson Consulting (Russell Mathew) presented Alternative Intensification and Density Targets. Mr. Mathew noted that moving from 50 people and jobs per hectare to 75 people and jobs per hectare would require a change in residential densities to include smaller lot sizes where possible, more apartment dwellings, and no new urban land requirements. Mr. Mathew added that just meeting the Places to Grow targets in Halton Region would be a big challenge and that going beyond the minimum is not likely achievable given the available municipal tools. The IMLC recommended that discussion on Alternative Intensification and Density Targets be deferred until further

information is provided to members. The agenda, presentation, and minutes of the February 11<sup>th</sup> meeting are included as Attachment “1” to this memorandum.

At the March 4<sup>th</sup> IMLC meeting, staff tabled a Report on Urban Land Need by Hemson Consulting (IMLC03-09) which analysed pursuing higher greenfield densities than those mandated by Places to Grow Plan including 55, 60, and 65 persons and jobs per hectare. The 65 persons and jobs scenario would mean no single-family or semi-detached dwellings, a requirement for 70% rows and 30% apartments. The Hemson Briefing Report notes that achieving the Places to Grow target of 50 persons and jobs per hectare already requires a significant shift in housing demand and that increased densities would be even more challenging for the Region in a short time period. The agenda, staff and consultant’s reports, presentation and minutes of the March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting are included as Attachment “2” to this memorandum.

Subsequent meetings of the IMLC did not deliberate on the designated greenfield targets.

In addition to the foregoing, the Phase 3 Hemson Report No. 3.07 *Accommodating Growth to 2031* contained the same conclusions and recommended against going beyond the Places to Grow targets given the existing and significant challenges to achieving the Growth Plan requirements. Alternative densities for greenfield areas did not test the re-planning of existing greenfield areas such as North Oakville and Phase 3 Milton, which would be required should the density be increased beyond 50 people and jobs per hectare.

In summary, the issue of alternative intensification and density targets has been the subject of discussion at two meetings of the IMLC during 2009 and has been reviewed during Phase 3 of the Sustainable Halton process, through technical report No. 3.07 entitled *Accommodating Growth to 2031*, prepared by Hemson Consulting.



Mark G. Meneray  
Commissioner of Legislative & Planning Services  
and Corporate Counsel