A Guide to a City Initiated Proposed Official Plan Amendment for Employment Area

November 2025



burlington.ca/OPA7

CITY OF Burlington

What is an Employment Area?

An employment Area is a protected space for manufacturing, innovation and business growth and are geographically defined in Official Plans. This area is often located along major highways and transportation corridors because of the easy access.

In Burlington, over half of all jobs are in the City's Employment Area. This area plays a key role in supporting Burlington's economy through helping to supply jobs and maintain economic activity within the community. As the city's population grows, this area helps create jobs that can support Burlington residents and businesses and support the economy.

1,800
Hectares of Employment Area

1,982
Business within the Employment Area

42,500
Jobs within the Employment Area

"A clear and focused economic development vision helps sustain a prosperous and complete city"

A City that Grows-Vision 2040



The need for change

The Province of Ontario introduced a new definition for Employment Area under the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. The new definition came into effect on Oct. 20, 2024. Updating Burlington's policies keeps Burlington's Official Plan current, clear and consistent with provincial policies.

What is changing?

The new Provincial definition narrows what qualifies as an Employment Area. Under the updated definition, only industrial and related uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, and research are now permitted. All residential, commercial, institutional, and public service facility uses are no longer permitted in the Employment Area. While stand-alone retail and office uses are no longer permitted within the Employment Area unless they directly support industrial activities. However, the provincial changes also included a provision allowing the continuation of any use that was lawfully established before October 20, 2024.

Permitted Employment Area Uses

The new provincial definition narrows to focus on manufacturing and goods movement within the Employment Area.

The following is a summary of the changes to the permitted uses under the new Employment Area definition.

Planning Policies Responsibilities



Province
Sets Planning Framework

City
Implements Provincial direction

Area of Employment Definition

	Old	New
Manufacturing	✓	✓
Warehousing	✓	✓
Office	✓	!
Retail/Commercial	✓	!
Institutional	✓	✗
Public Service	✓	✗

! Permitted as a use associated with warehousing or manufacturing.

How Burlington is addressing this change

The City of Burlington is proposing an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to the Burlington Official Plan, 2020 and the Regional Official Plan, 1995. The proposed OPA will:

- Update the Official Plan policies to align with the recent changes to Provincial and Regional policy related to the City's Employment Area,
- Explore opportunities to simplify and streamline the Employment Area policy framework, and;
- Seek to minimize the impact on local businesses and set the stage for looking for opportunities to streamline regulation and create certainty.

Employment Area plays a key role in supporting Burlington's economy by providing space for manufacturing, innovation, and business growth.

It also contributes to complete communities by offering local job opportunities and connecting residents to convenient transit and active transportation options. Updating these policies ensures Burlington's Official Plan stays current, clear, and consistent with provincial policies.





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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Official Plan Amendment No. 7 (OPA 7) ?

The Official Plan Amendment No. 7 (OPA 7) is an update to Burlington's Official Plan. It will update the City's Employment Area policies to align with recent provincial changes.

2. Why are these updates happening now?

The province introduced a new definition of Employment Area in its Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. Municipalities must update their Official Plans to reflect this change.

3. What happens to businesses already operating in Employment Area?

Existing businesses that were lawfully established before Oct. 20, 2024 are permitted to continue operating under the provincial transition provisions

4. How can I give feedback?

To share your feedback with the City:

- participate in
- public meetings,
- open houses and
- surveys,
- Email comments to newop@burlington.ca

5. Where can I sign up for notifications?

Sign up to receive emails about project updates, meetings and opportunities to share your feedback at getinvolvedburlington.ca/officialplan



Timeline and Next Steps

Draft Official Plan Amendment No. 7
A draft OPA will be prepared and released on Friday Dec. 19, 2025 for feedback

Meet with a Planner
Nov. 24 2025 to Jan. 13, 2026

Public Open House
Dec. 2, 2025

Public Open House
Jan. 5, 2026

Public Meeting
Jan. 13, 2026

Final Draft Official Plan
Feedback received will be used to revise and finalize the draft OPA

Council Approval
Q1, 2026

Glossary

Employment Area

Area designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, associated retail and office, and ancillary facilities. Uses that are excluded from employment area are residential, institutional and commercial, including retail and office not associated with the primary employment use.

Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024)

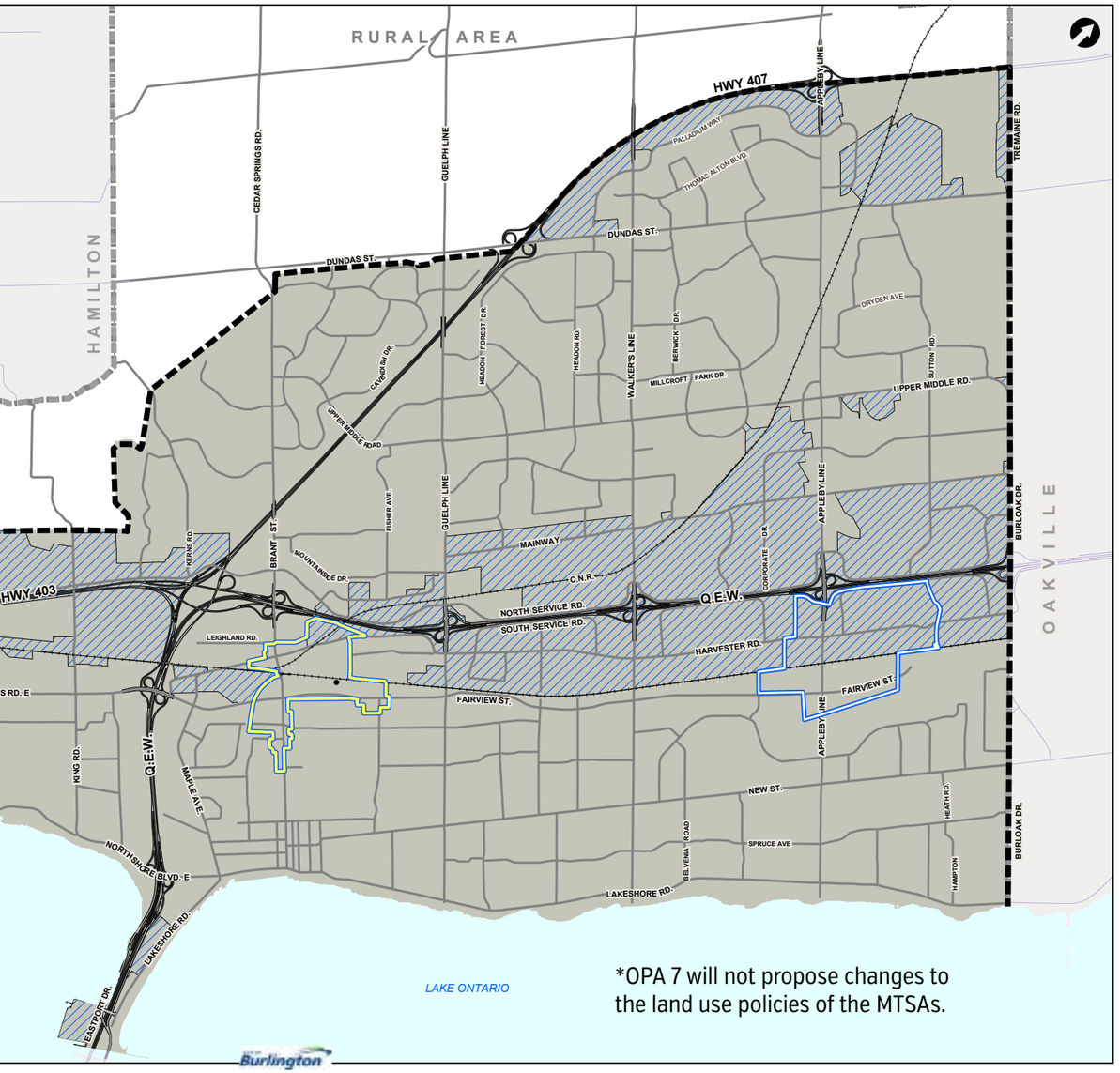
A Province-wide policy document that guides how land is planned and developed in Ontario.

Official Plan (OP)

The long-term planning document that guides how land is used in Burlington, including where housing, jobs, roads, and parks will be located and is created with community input. The OP must be consistent with the PPS and conform or not conflict with any applicable provincial plans. Learn more at burlington.ca/newop.

Zoning By-law (ZBL)

The ZBL regulates how land and buildings can be used in the community. It sets rules for what types of buildings are allowed, where they can be located, their size and height, and how much parking or open space is required. The ZBL implements the Official Plan policies by applying these rules to specific properties.



*OPA 7 will not propose changes to the land use policies of the MTSAs.



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