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# ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Burlington's location in proximity to Toronto and Hamilton, coupled with its access to major highway and rail *infrastructure* and an abundant supply of land, allowed the city to grow rapidly over the last 50 years. A number of conditions that supported this rapid growth are expected to change over the next 20 years. The manufacturing-based economy has entered a period of transition where issues of globalization, technology changes, including automation and labour force changes, all contribute to a new role in the economy for manufacturing. Congestion along major highway *infrastructure* is increasing, as are fuel costs.

The *City* identifies *employment areas*, as identified in the Region of Halton Employment Area shown in Schedule B- Urban Structure, of this Plan.

The *City* also identifies lands designated for employment uses on Schedule B: Urban Structure. These lands include all lands designated for employment uses under sections 8.1 and 8.2 and identified on Schedule C: Land Use – Urban Area and Schedule E: Land Use – Uptown Urban Centre. These designations are distinguished by the -employment suffix to the designation name. Most of these lands are found within the Region of Halton Employment Area, however, there are some instances where these lands are currently designated only by the *City* for employment uses.

The city has a fixed urban boundary and therefore a finite supply of lands designated for *employment* uses. The city has a sufficient supply of lands designated for *employment* uses to accommodate forecasted growth to 2031 and the supply of land will be needed for the long term, except for those lands identified for consideration for conversion through the *municipal comprehensive review* in policy 2.3.3 f) of this Plan.

The Strategic Plan's first strategic direction supports a City that Grows. Key to working toward that direction is the promotion of economic growth. The Strategic Plan acknowledges that there are many interrelated actions.

A healthy and *sustainable* city provides opportunities to accommodate a wide range of businesses and economic activities throughout the city. The city has *employment* concentrations in manufacturing, retail trade and health care and social assistance. In 2015 the Region of Halton Employment survey reported that the city had the highest proportion of full time jobs compared to other local municipalities in the Region of Halton. Similar to the Region of Halton, the economy and jobs are diverse and well balanced.

The city has a number of established growth clusters in information technology, financial services and distribution services. There are a number of emerging

growth sectors in transportation and logistics and business services. Given the diversity of opportunities within the various growth clusters, the historic and recent performance, geographic location and a variety of other market indicators, Burlington has the potential to capitalize on long term growth projections. In recent years, the growth in commercial space in the city has outpaced population growth. The current supply of commercial space is above average for suburban GTA municipalities. However, vacancy rates and sales performance levels in the city indicate that the retail market is healthy.

The city has an available supply of commercially designated land sufficient to meet future demand to 2031. However, there are underserved portions of the city, as well as *intensification areas* which will require additional commercial uses supporting local residential and employees needs.

*Institutional uses* and *public service facilities* are integral to the economy and the creation of a vibrant and complete community. Ranging from a post-secondary institution, to a hospital, to a fire station, this Plan provides opportunities to locate *public service facilities* throughout the city. This Plan also identifies opportunities to support innovation and research, as well as investment in existing and proposed *public service facilities* and *institutional uses*.

This Plan, through the development of the Mixed Use Intensification Areas, is promoting the *development* of traditional commercial areas into revitalized mixed use, pedestrian-friendly hubs of activity.

The economy of Rural Burlington is quite different from that of the Urban Area, being based on *agriculture* and *on-farm diversified* uses, other resource industries, *home occupations*, recreation and *agricultural-related tourism*. Rural Burlington's location in proximity to major urban areas presents its industries with major challenges but also with new opportunities.

The *City*'s long term land use strategy to accommodate *employment* has been developed to manage the challenges and opportunities that the city will face over the planning horizon of this Plan. The strategy:

a) retains existing vacant lands within the *Employment Area* to provide for a wide range of parcel sizes, locations and characteristics over the long term;

b) builds on the *employment* policy framework to nurture existing lands designated for *employment* uses, including a level of predictability for those already invested and to support the continued use and *development* of such lands for *employment* uses; and

c) focuses on encouraging *employment* growth in *mixed use intensification areas* including the city's *Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)* and the Downtown Urban Centre. These areas will be planned to accommodate

*employment* uses which are *compatible* with other *sensitive land uses* and to have the potential to contribute to vibrant, mixed use, transit-supportive uses.

Building on the city's strengths, over the planning horizon of this Plan, people will work throughout the city within lands designated for employment uses, urban centres including the Downtown Urban Growth Centre, *MTSAs*, other mixed use areas, in the Rural Area and even in existing residential neighbourhoods in the form of *home occupations* and small-scale neighbourhood commercial uses.

# 5.1 ACCOMMODATING EMPLOYMENT

## 5.1.1 OBJECTIVE

a) To promote economic development and competitiveness and the development of *complete communities.*

## 5.1.2 POLICIES

a) The City will contribute to the development of a Regional Employment Strategy with the Region of Halton, and the Towns of Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills.

b) The *City* will promote economic development and competitiveness and the development of *complete communities* by:

(i) providing for an appropriate mix of *employment* uses including industrial, commercial, *public service facilities* and *institutional uses* throughout the city to meet long-term needs;

(ii) focusing employment growth primarily in the *Employment Area* and in mixed use *intensification areas;*

(iii) providing for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for *employment* uses which support a wide range of economic activities and *ancillary uses,* and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;

(iv) planning for, protecting and preserving *the employment area* for current and future uses which will achieve a significant component of the *employment* forecasts for the city to the year 2031; and

(v) ensuring the necessary *infrastructure* is provided to support current and forecasted *employment* needs, including *infrastructure* and utility requirements of emerging *employment*.

c) The *Major Transit Station Areas shall* be planned to accommodate *employment* uses which are *compatible* with *sensitive land uses* and contribute to the development of vibrant, mixed use and transit supportive areas.

d) *Major office* and appropriate major *development* including major *public service facilities* and major *institutional uses shall* be located in the Urban Growth Centre or *major transit station areas*, with existing or planned higher order transit service.

e) *Home occupations* and small scale neighbourhood commercial uses will be *encouraged*, subject to the policies of this Plan.

## 5.2 PROTECTING THE EMPLOYMENT AREA

The Planning Act defines area of employment as an area of land designated in an Official Plan for clusters of business and economic uses. These areas are devoted to *employment* uses and are critical to the long term *sustainability* of the city. The *employment area* is the Region of Halton Employment Area and is identified as an overlay on Schedule B: Urban Structure, of this Plan. In the case of conflict, the Regional Official Plan *shall* be relied upon. Residential uses and other non-*employment* uses including *major retail* uses are prohibited in the *employment area,* unless otherwise permitted by the policies of this Plan and the Regional Official Plan.

The city has a finite supply of lands within the *employment area* and it is critical that the *City* adopt a policy framework which protects that supply from unwarranted conversion to non-*employment* uses. The *City* will need to maintain its supply of land within the *employment area* in order to capitalize on its growth potential over the long term, given the fixed urban boundary.

Any conversion of lands within the *employment area* can only take place at the time of a *municipal comprehensive review*, or in accordance with the Provincial Growth Plan.

From time to time, there may be a compelling reason based on planning grounds to consider conversion, particularly when a conversion can achieve another one of the *City's* strategic objectives.

### 5.2.1 OBJECTIVE

a) To plan for, protect and preserve the *Employment Area*.

b) To conform to the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, the Provincial Growth Plan and the Regional Official Plan to guide the consideration of *employment area* conversion.

### 5.2.2 POLICIES

a) Lands within the Region of Halton Employment Area as identified on Schedule B: Urban Structure, of this Plan, are subject to the policies of Chapter 5: Economic Activity, of this Plan, and the underlying land use designations found in Chapter 8: Land Use Policies – Urban Area.

b) Lands within the Region of Halton Employment Area as identified on Schedule B: Urban Structure, of this Plan, will accommodate a significant component of the *employment* forecast for the city to the year 2031, as identified in Chapter 2: Sustainable Growth, of this Plan.

c) Proposals for the conversion of lands identified within the Region of Halton Employment Area as identified on Schedule B: Urban Structure, of this Plan, *shall* be subject to the policies of the Regional Official Plan and the Provincial Growth Plan and *shall* be considered at the time of a *municipal comprehensive review* undertaken by the Region of Halton, or in accordance with the Provincial Growth Plan.

d) In support of the Region of Halton *municipal comprehensive review* the *City* will provide input related to the policies of the Regional Official Plan and the Provincial Growth Plan, based on findings of local employment related studies to inform the consideration of employment conversions, additions to the Region of Halton Employment Area and modifications to policies to support the long term objectives of *employment areas*.

## 5.3 INNOVATION DISTRICTS

Innovation districts are a type of business and/or industrial district designed to attract and promote clusters of public and private sector firms and organizations engaged in the development of new products, materials, services and knowledge.

Innovation districts are considered to be elements in the knowledge economy. Often they are anchored by post-secondary institutions and several major private firms, around which are clustered small and medium sized firms, support businesses and services and various business incubators and accelerators intended to support new ventures and start ups. The objective is that an innovation district, by supporting proximity, clustering and connectivity, will stimulate economic activity.

The importance of the knowledge based economy is highlighted in the *City's* Strategic Plan. A key priority related to promoting economic growth is to develop an environment that is attractive to high-growth "knowledge-based" companies. The *City* will work to create the technological support, business support, *infrastructure* and educational environment to attract start ups and growing businesses.

While the uses generally associated with innovation districts such as research and development firms, product testing, and support services are permitted in a wide variety of locations in the city, the geographic clustering of similar uses can help to catalyze economic development and innovation in specific areas of the city. While residential uses do not need to be included within a given Innovation District, the ability to conveniently access a full range of residential options is very important.

### 5.3.1 OBJECTIVES

a) To establish a general framework for identifying an area with potential to function as an innovation district.

b) To support the development of economic development strategies that establish the vision and the key elements of an innovation district.

c) To develop land use policies and tools that will support the implementation of economic development strategies for the development of innovation districts through enhanced transit and other *infrastructure* improvements, in order to create a more connected, complete and *sustainable* community feature.

## 5.3.2 POLICIES

a) Innovation districts *may* be identified in this Plan where one or more of the following conditions are present:

(i) an existing or proposed post-secondary institution is located in the area;

(ii) a clustering of a related group of businesses and/or economic activities that have the potential to support the creation of new investments, ventures or start ups to support the development of new ideas, products or services;

(iii) any area of the city with access to *frequent transit corridors* or a Major Transit Station Area Special Planning Area, as identified on Schedule B-2: Growth Framework and Long Term Frequent Transit Corridors, of this Plan; and/or

(iv) an *Employment Area* with access to the *frequent transit corridors* and availability of *infrastructure* and access to a range of housing options within close proximity.

b) Innovation District Study Areas *shall* be identified on Schedule B: Urban Structure, of this Plan.

c) Where an Innovation District Study Area has been generally identified on Schedule B: Urban Structure, of this Plan, an *area-specific plan* will be completed for the District.

d) Until the *area-specific plan* has been completed for an identified Innovation District Study Area, notwithstanding the permissions in the underlying land use designation on Schedule C: Land Use – Urban Area, of this Plan, the following uses *may* be permitted:

(i) *office* uses;

(ii) *industrial* uses that involve assembling, fabricating, manufacturing and other processes;

(iii) research laboratories and information processing;

(iv) communications;

(v) municipal *infrastructure* and *utilities*;

(vi) conference and convention uses and hotels, where they are permitted in the underlying land use designation, subject to addressing land use compatibility requirements; and

(vii) retail and *service commercial* uses in accordance with the policies of the underlying land use designation.

e) An economic development strategy and brand for the development of an innovation district will include the following:

(i) vision and target sectors;

(ii) the identification of economic, networking and physical assets available to support the Innovation District; and

(iii) direction to undertake an *area-specific plan* to determine, in addition to the policies in Subsection 12.1.3 of this Plan, the following:

a. land use vision and objectives related to the vision and target sectors;

b. *infrastructure* investments required to promote connectivity to the *frequent transit corridors* and *MTSAs;*

c. alignment of land use permissions with the vision, including, where an innovation district is located outside of an *Employment Area,* a full range of permitted uses;

d. where an innovation district is located entirely within an *Employment Area,* the identification of opportunities to connect to surrounding communities, mixed use *intensification* areas and where applicable, *MTSAs*, *shall* be a priority. Connections to residential and commercial uses *shall* be identified and appropriate investments in *infrastructure* such as transit and *active transportation shall* be recommended;

e. design standards for the private and *public realm* including *streetscapes* in accordance with the policies of Chapter 7: Design Excellence, of this Plan; and

f. the identification of tools to incentivize preferred outcomes in line with the vision and policies of this Plan and the *area-specific plan.*

## 5.4 STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREAS

There are eight strategic economic development areas found throughout the city. Each of the economic development areas presents a distinct opportunity for supporting economic development and competitiveness and the development of *complete communities*. Some areas include a variety of vacant lands designated for *employment* uses serviced, or planned to be serviced, over the horizon of the Plan, and some include existing developed *employment areas* that *may* have the potential to accommodate *intensification.* Other existing and emerging areas like the Downtown Urban Centre, the Uptown Urban Centre, and *Major Transit Station Areas* represent key opportunities to accommodate significant *employment* close to great neighbourhoods in the city.

These areas are generally identified in the policies of this section of the Plan and *may* be the focus of the development of tools and approaches aimed at supporting the long-term viability and health of the city's lands designated for employment uses and to support the *City's* long term strategy to accommodate *employment.* Opportunities to support the lands designated for employment uses as they change over the coming years will remain a key priority. While Regional water and wastewater infrastructure is generally in place and available, these areas will require careful investment in *infrastructure* from water and wastewater services (in accordance with the Water and Wastewater Master Plan, Regional Official Plan, Development Charges Background Study and the Region of Halton's Financing Policies for Growth Infrastructure), *utilities*, transportation and transit *infrastructure*, *public service facilities* and *public realm* improvements in response to the investments of businesses and the needs of employees.

The policies of this Plan including the land use policies established in Chapter 8: Land Use Policies-Urban Area, will guide appropriate *development*.

### 5.4.1 QEW CORRIDOR

a) This district straddles the QEW and extends from Guelph Line to Burloak Drive and from Mainway to the GO Train line. The area contains smaller, mostly discontinuous, vacant parcels distributed throughout the QEW Corridor.

b) *Development* in close proximity to the Appleby GO *should* be *transit supportive* and consider opportunities to facilitate walking and cycling.

c) In the long term, support for *development* for *employment* uses within this corridor will be critical to re-invest, intensify *development* and increase the number of jobs.

d) The QEW Corridor will be the focus of the development of a long-term *employment intensification* study containing strategies to support *development* and re-investment:

i) such a strategy *should* recognize that the lands north of the QEW/403 have a more intensive *employment* nature;

ii) the strategy will highlight opportunities relative to the *employment* lands south of the QEW/403 and north of the GO Rail Line and Stations. The strategy *should* emphasize and identify investment required to ensure employers and employees are prioritized and provided with convenient transit and safe pedestrian access from the *major transit station areas* to the surrounding *employment* lands;

iii) the strategy will acknowledge that over the long-term, the *City* will consider the development of a pilot *brownfield Community Improvement Plan* to support the *development* of *employment* land for new, more intensive *employment* uses including any required *infrastructure* improvements.

### 5.4.2 BRONTE CREEK MEADOWS

a) This district extends from Burloak Drive to Creek Way and is bordered by Upper Middle Road and Mainway. The area contains the largest concentration of vacant lands designated for employment uses in the city. The *employment* function of Bronte Creek Meadows is a priority for the *City.* This area will be a focus for innovative *employment* uses in accordance with this Plan and the *City's* Strategic Plan.

b) In the near term, this area identified on Schedule B: Urban Structure of this Plan, *should* be guided by the development of an *area-specific plan.*

c) The *area-specific plan* will be prepared in accordance with the policies of Subsection 12.1.3 of this Plan and will at a minimum, consider the following:

i) *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* requirements;

ii) achieving the *employment* density target established for the *Designated Greenfield Area*;

iii) the Natural Heritage System;

iv) future land use that focuses on *employment* uses; and

v) consistency with the policies contained in Chapter 7: Design Excellence, of this Plan.

### 5.4.3 403 WEST CORRIDOR

a) This district straddles the 403 west of the 407. The area contains diverse vacant *employment* land and its relationship to the Aldershot GO Station *should* be an important consideration in its *development.* As a western gateway to the Greater Toronto Area, connections to Hamilton will be important to the long term *development* of the area.

b) A significant area of the 403 West Corridor will be considered as part of the *area-specific plan* for the Aldershot GO MTSA Special Planning Area. The relationship between mixed use areas and *employment* lands will be considered and the opportunities and challenges for connecting the entire corridor with transit service *shall* be considered. Investments in transit will be a priority.

### 5.4.4 407 CORRIDOR

a) This district is the newest *Employment Area* in the city, located on the south side of Highway 407, generally including the lands between and adjacent to the Dundas Street and Appleby Line interchanges. This area is not fully built out and represents key opportunities for prestige *employment development* with visibility and access to Highway 407, along with close proximity to two interchanges at Dundas Street and Appleby Line.

b) In the near-term, support for the *development* of uses that are appropriate in close proximity to residential areas will be prioritized. Investment in transit will be a priority.

c) The 407 Corridor may be the focus of a *Community Improvement Plan* related to the optimal development of this relatively young *Employment Area,* in order to ensure that the area meets its potential as a high-profile *employment* entry node to the city.

### 5.4.5 DOWNTOWN URBAN CENTRE

a) The Downtown is a centre where jobs are found in a spectrum of major *public service facilities* and *institutional uses* as well as a wide range of *offices* and retail and *service commercial uses*. The Downtown Urban Growth Centre will see further *intensification*. There will be opportunities in the Urban Growth Centre to add new *employment* through mixed use development.

b) Over the long-term, the Downtown Urban Centre, also a *MTSA*, will continue to contribute to accommodating jobs and will significantly contribute to accommodating *employment* and meeting the *City's* economic objectives.

c) The Downtown Urban Centre is currently being considered through an *area-specific planning* process, that will consider the importance of

accommodating *employment* over the long term in areas targeted for *intensification*.

d) The City will consider tools available to support *employment* growth within the Urban Growth Centre, including through the implementation stage of the Downtown Area-Specific Plan.

### 5.4.6 UPTOWN URBAN CENTRE

a) Uptown is a mixed use centre which balances a number of land uses including *employment,* residential and other uses. The policies of Uptown support the development of areas where a wide range and mix of uses are permitted. In balance, Uptown is a diverse node with significant opportunities for *development* of *employment* uses on lands designated for employment uses as well as the *development* of *employment* through mixed use *development.*

b) Over the long-term, the Uptown Urban Centre will contribute to accommodating *employment* and meeting the *City's* economic objectives.

c) This area has been subject to *area-specific planning* that considered the importance of accommodating *employment* over the long term in areas targeted for *intensification*.

### 5.4.7 MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS

a) Over the long-term, *Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)* will contribute significantly to accommodating *employment* and meeting the *City's* economic objectives.

b) *MTSAs* are currently being considered through an *area-specific planning* process, that will consider the importance of accommodating *employment* over the long term in areas targeted for *intensification*.

c) The City will consider tools available to support *employment* growth within *MTSAs*, including through the implementation stage of the Mobility Hub *area-specific plans*.

### 5.4.8 MIXED USE NODES AND INTENSIFICATION CORRIDORS

a) Over the long-term, Mixed Use Nodes and *Intensification Corridors* will contribute to accommodating *employment* uses and meeting the *City's* economic objectives.

## 5.5 THE AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

The economic health and long term viability of the *agricultural system* plays an important role in creating a healthy and environmentally *sustainable* city. The policies of this Plan are directed at providing the conditions for *agriculture* and the *agricultural system* to grow and prosper and to adapt to changing conditions. This is addressed both through the policies in this section of the Plan and through the objectives and policies set out in Section 4.9, Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture, and Chapter 9: Land Use Policies - Rural Area, of this Plan.

### 5.5.1 OBJECTIVES

a) To support the economic viability of *agriculture* and the *agricultural system*.

b) To enable *agriculture* and the *agricultural system* to adapt to new challenges and new opportunities.

c) To promote efficient *agricultural operations.*

d) To *encourage* and promote local food production, including urban agriculture.

### 5.5.2 POLICIES

a) The *City* will consider providing incentives and other forms of assistance to support the development of *agricultural*, *agriculture-related* and *on-farm diversified businesses* through the preparation, adoption and implementation of a *Community Improvement Plan* under Subsection 12.1.15 of this Plan.

b) The functional and economic connections between the agricultural land base and the other components of the *agricultural* sy*stem* will be maintained and enhanced.

c) The city's *Employment Areas shall* accommodate industries that are components of the *agricultural* sy*stem.*

d) The *City* will collaborate *w*ith the Region of Halton in implementing Halton Region's Rural Agricultural Strategy to support the long-term *sustainability* and prosperity of the *agricultural system* and the rural economy.

e) The *City* will consider the development of an urban agricultural strategy to identify and support appropriate *agricultural uses* in the Urban Area, in accordance with the policies in Section 4.9, Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture, of this Plan.