



TO: Development and Infrastructure Committee
FROM: Planning and Building
**SUBJECT: Report recommending endorsement of Official Plan Review:
Proposed Employment Lands Policy Directions**

Report Number: PB-02-15

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 505-08-02

Date to Committee: January 19, 2015

Date to Council: January 26, 2015

Recommendation:

Endorse a series of proposed policy directions that complete the existing employment land policy directions, as presented in Section 6.0 of planning and building department report PB-02-15 and Appendix F – *Employment Lands Conversion Policies* all of which will guide the development of policies to be brought forward as part of the proposed Official Plan Amendment arising out of the Official Plan Review in Q4 2015; and

Receive the complete list of parcels, areas and employment land designations to be considered through this municipal comprehensive review as contained in Appendices B – *Employment Land Conversion Requests Including the Findings of the Strategic Vacant Land Assessment*, C – *Map of Conversion Requests Including the Findings of the Strategic Vacant Land Assessment*, and D – *List of Designations and Areas to be Considered Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review* of planning and building department report PB-02-15.

Purpose:

The purpose of the subject report is to:

- Propose employment land policy directions, informed by the findings of the Employment Lands Studies and other major studies undertaken through the Official Plan Review. The policy directions will complete the suite of employment

lands policy directions to be considered in the municipal comprehensive review as part of the current Official Plan Review.

- Present the list of land parcels, areas and designations that are being considered for conversion as part of the current municipal comprehensive review¹.

Endorsement of the policy directions will enable staff to proceed to the next phase of policy development which involves drafting the specific textual and mapping amendments to be proposed as part of the Official Plan Amendment arising out of the Official Plan Review.

The subject report is titled a “Directions Report” and serves as an important check in point with Council as a key step within the progression of the Official Plan Review process. The purpose of a Direction report is discussed in the report titled “[2012 Official Plan Review: Comprehensive Work Plan](#)” (PB-53-12). It provides the opportunity to convey staff analysis, public/stakeholder feedback and to present a series of policy directions. Subject to Council’s endorsement of policy directions, staff will draft specific policies to be presented as part of the proposed Official Plan Amendment to implement the findings of Official Plan Review. In this case, policy directions together with the findings of the municipal comprehensive review, will confirm the final directions.

Background:

1.0 Chronology

As part of presenting background information, a chronology has been prepared and is provided in Appendix A - *Employment Lands Work Chronology*.

¹ Municipal Comprehensive Review is defined by Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 as: “An official plan review, or an official plan amendment, initiated by a municipality that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan.”

Discussion:

2.0 Policy Context

The *Planning Act* identifies planning for employment as a matter of provincial interest. The *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan, the Halton Region Official Plan and the City of Burlington Official Plan all provide direction on employment lands planning.

For a full discussion of the planning context please refer to report titled [“Official Plan Review: Proposed Employment Land Conversion Request Assessment Process and Strategic Vacant Land Assessment”](#) (PB-18-14), “Policy Context” (pgs 4-12).

3.0 Key Definitions

Each municipality must plan to accommodate a range of different jobs including office, retail, commercial, industrial and institutional uses based on the population and employment forecasts established by the Province and distributed to the City of Burlington by the Region of Halton. A variety of sections within the City’s Official Plan set objectives and policies designed to meet this objective. The policy discussion in this report relates only to those lands identified within the Official Plan as “area of employment” as defined by the City’s Official Plan. Employment Area is defined in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and:

means those areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities. (PPS, 2014)

Throughout this report the terms “employment area(s)”, “area of employment” and “employment land(s)” are used interchangeably. In all cases it is meant to generally refer to the definition above. One of the findings of the municipal comprehensive review is that the existing definition of “area of employment” in the City’s Official Plan should be reviewed and may require modification.

The discussion below recognizes that employment is accommodated throughout the City. It recognizes that the Functional, Commercial and Mixed Use Policies of the Official Plan all have key roles to play in attracting and accommodating jobs across the entire City. However, this report focuses on those places throughout the City which are

considered “employment areas”. These areas accommodate a large percentage of current jobs. These areas are projected to accommodate close to 60% of all jobs forecast to 2031. This report works along with the other major Directions reports and existing policy to accommodate a wide range of jobs throughout the municipality.

4.0 Scope of the Review

As part of the municipal comprehensive review the City is reviewing the status of a few select parcels of land. Included are those areas identified through the Official Plan Review, specific land use designations, and employment land conversion requests submitted by private landowners. A wholesale review of the city’s entire employment land inventory is not required given that the City’s employment lands are relatively stable and that the City’s projected employment growth can be accommodated within the existing designated lands. The findings of the other major studies supported the above and maintained that there was no need to redesignate employment land for any other purposes. The findings of the employment lands and other major studies noted that only a few issues with the existing designations should be reviewed. Further, as stated in the objectives policy of the Employment Lands section of the Official Plan (Part III, Section 3.2.1 b), the City does not plan to reduce the supply of employment lands through redesignation.

As noted above, there were three ways that specific parcels, areas or entire designations were proposed to be reviewed in greater detail through the municipal comprehensive review:

1. Strategic Vacant Land Assessment: This includes Vacant Employment Lands reviewed through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study and deemed by City staff and BEDC staff to have merit to be considered through this process. These are parcels that were not already part of a request submitted by a property owner/agent. (Appendices B and C)
2. Designations or areas of the City that, by virtue of other Official Plan Review Studies or other work plans, were deemed by staff to warrant consideration through this municipal comprehensive review (Appendix D). These parcels can be divided into three categories:
 - i. Employment lands currently designated within Mobility Hubs which have the potential to develop into key mixed use intensification areas (Burlington GO and Aldershot GO).
 - ii. Mixed Use Corridor – Employment (MXE) and Uptown Mixed Use Corridor - Employment designated lands, throughout the City.

- iii. Employment designations within the Uptown Mixed Use Centre of the Official Plan as they will be informed by the overall refinement and update of the Uptown policies.
3. Requests for employment land conversions submitted by property owner or agent. (Appendices B and C)

Any choice to convert a parcel or to modify a designation through the current municipal comprehensive review will have lasting and irreversible impact on the employment land inventory. On the basis of reasonable estimates of the City's need in the future the number and area of the parcels, areas, and designations identified in the list above far exceed the flexibility available to convert employment lands. Thus, few, if any, of these parcels, areas or designations proposed will be recommended for conversion.

While the list of parcels, areas and designations are being considered for conversion, the findings could suggest a broad range of approaches. These recommendations could include:

- maintaining the status quo (e.g maintain existing designation),
- minor changes to existing designations and their policy, (e.g adding additional permitted uses) or
- conversion for non-employment uses (complete redesignation of the parcel).

5.0 Council Workshop on Employment Lands

As discussed in Appendix A – *Employment Lands Work Chronology*, shortly after the Final Phase 2 Employment Lands Study was received by Council, staff scheduled a Council Workshop on May 6, 2014 to discuss the study and the general topic of employment lands.

The purpose of the Council Workshop was to:

- present the context of employment land planning including the Provincial planning context.
- discuss findings from the consultant's work.
- facilitate a collective discussion with Council.
- obtain feedback from Council to inform the Official Plan Review.
- provide discussion on potential policy directions which could become elements of a long term strategy for employment lands.

As part of resourcing the Council Workshop discussion, staff prepared an Employment Lands Briefing Note dated May, 2014 (Appendix E).

All of the supporting information for the Council Workshop on Employment Lands is posted on the [Community and Corporate Services agenda from May 6, 2014](#) (including the Council Briefing Note, Workshop Handout and a Presentation).

The Council workshop provided another opportunity to share more about employment lands and employment land trends the Council. The workshop focused first on a presentation by Dillon Consulting and Watson & Associates. The session was also designed to provide staff with an opportunity to share with Council the potential policy directions identified through the employment lands work for discussion. The need to think about employment as part of mixed use areas like Mobility Hubs was highlighted as the City's key opportunity to accommodate ICI growth. The discussion touched upon a number of areas including market trends and opportunities and issues of servicing the City's existing vacant employment lands.

6.0 Policy Directions

The ten potential policy directions (A through J) presented at the Council Workshop, provide the organizing framework for the discussion below. It may be helpful to consult Appendix E to review a brief discussion of the *issue* and the *status* of each direction. These policy directions have been prepared to give Council, the public and key stakeholders, a clear understanding of the general approach for modifications to employment lands policy. Final policy language is intentionally not included as the policy will be drafted subject to Council's endorsement of the policy directions and the findings of the municipal comprehensive review. An exception to this approach is with respect to proposed employment land use conversion policies which were already considered and endorsed for consultation purposes by Council in early 2013.

Policy Direction A

Strengthen the policy framework to fully utilize the employment generation and economic potential of employment lands by:

- i. Continuing to support the previously endorsed employment land conversion policies as presented in Appendix F.**
- ii. Preparing policy to fully utilize the employment generation and economic potential of employment lands.**

Council has endorsed an approach for the assessment of Employment Land Conversion requests through this municipal comprehensive review. This work constitutes the City of Burlington's municipal comprehensive review. For its part the Region of Halton identifies employment lands of regional importance through the ROPA No. 38 Employment Area overlay. Any request for conversion of lands identified by the overlay will require discussion with the Region, as well as approval through the upcoming Regional municipal comprehensive review as part of the Region's next Official Plan Review.

As noted in PB-17-14 the work being undertaken through the Employment Lands Study has all been completed and presented for the purpose of informing the City's long term Employment Lands Strategy. Some strategies related to employment land fall within the mandate and role of the Burlington Economic Development Corporation. The following three aims describe the considerations relevant to the Official Plan.

- Retain existing vacant employment lands to provide for a wide range of parcel sizes, locations and characteristics over the long term.
- Build on the existing employment lands policy framework to nurture existing employment lands. The policy should continue to provide a level of predictability and should examine new opportunities to support the continued use and redevelopment of employment lands for employment purposes.
- Focus on encouraging employment growth in mixed use intensification areas, including the City's Mobility Hubs. These areas respond to the location and infrastructure requirements that suit the general needs of the potential growth sectors presented in the Phase 2 ELS report, particularly – Financial Services, Business and Professional/Scientific services, and advanced manufacturing (e.g. industrial/commercial machinery). In the future these areas will accommodate employment uses which are compatible with other sensitive uses and have the potential to contribute to the development of vibrant, mixed use, transit supportive areas.

Consider key stakeholder comments related to employment land conversion policies.

In January 2013, Council endorsed draft employment conversion policies which provided modifications to the existing in-force policies for consultation purposes. The stakeholder session notes from the March 19, 2013 Stakeholder Meeting can be found in Phase 2 ELS document. As part of the session, the draft modifications to the existing conversion policies were presented to the key stakeholders.

Feedback related to the January 2013 modifications came in response to the following questions:

- *Are the proposed conversion policies appropriate?*
- *What enhancements or modifications would you recommend?*

Feedback from conversations with key stakeholders, general feedback on the January modifications and staff remarks are contained in Appendix G.

To review the council endorsed employment conversion policies please see Appendix F.

Modifications to the preamble, guiding principles and objectives to fully utilize the employment generation and economic potential of employment lands.

A direction from the study of employment lands provided a revised objective to be considered throughout the employment lands policies and the Official Plan as a whole. Employment lands are important economic drivers for the City. The direction encourages the City to make policy modifications that take every opportunity to utilize the employment generation and economic potential of employment lands throughout the City.

Minor modifications to the Guiding Principles of the Official Plan (Part I, Policy Framework, Section 3.0) will be included to support and encourage employment intensification through the possible use of incentives in key areas of the City (Strategic Employment Areas and Mobility Hubs), offering a new dimension to the existing intensification guiding principle, which today considers only residential intensification.

Modifications throughout the Employment Lands section of the Official Plan will be proposed to reflect the three aims of the employment lands strategy, as described above. Modifications will also be proposed in order to support the revised conversion policies including reference to *need* as defined by the City. For more discussion on *need* as defined by the City please refer to PB-18-14.

Modifications related to Urban Structure will also reinforce the important role of employment lands in the City's structure. The Urban Structure relates strongly to both demonstrated *need* as defined by the City, and City-building objectives.

Policy Direction B

Build a strategy to promote office development in the Mobility Hubs and the Urban Growth Centre by:

- i. **Preparing a policy for the City to undertake the development of an Office Attraction Study.**
- ii. **Preparing policy to establish Mobility Hubs as priority areas for the development of Community Improvement Plans.**
- iii. **Preparing minor modifications to the existing Community Improvement policies to reflect the importance of a complete mix of uses and to build support for the transition and redevelopment of regeneration areas.**
- iv. **Preparing minor modifications to the existing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) policies to reflect a specific focus for Employment in CIPs within Mobility Hubs.**

Office Attraction Study

The findings of the Phase 2 ELS and the Mobility Hub Opportunities and Constraints Study both recommended that the City should undertake an office attraction study specific to all four Mobility Hubs. This work will be pursued in the context of an implementation strategy for the Official Plan as a whole. The Phase 2 ELS identified that the complex and competitive nature of attracting high rise office development will require a detailed strategy. The terms of reference for the strategy will likely be two pronged. The strategy could focus both on office attraction to Mobility Hub areas as well as on reducing office vacancy throughout the entire area of employment. Any strategy would have specific programs and goals to this end. Such a strategy could support CIP development, meet employment growth targets for the Urban Growth Centre and contribute to the role of Mobility Hubs becoming mixed use, transit supportive development areas in the City. By committing to a strategy that encourages and supports office development in Mobility Hub areas, the City will take a more active role in directing the envisioned change in these important areas.

Community Improvement Plan for Key Mixed Use Areas of the City

The City should consider the use of CIPs for the development of key mixed use/intensification areas in the City such as Mobility Hubs. These areas are expected to change significantly over the next 20 years. The existing CIP policies in the Official Plan can be modified to ensure that future CIPs:

- a. Obtain a complete mix of employment uses which are compatible with other sensitive uses, residential, commercial and institutional uses in Mobility Hub areas (Downtown Burlington, Burlington GO and Aldershot GO);

- b. Assist in the transition and redevelopment of regeneration areas, specifically Mobility Hubs, which are likely to see significant change, guided by detailed master plans over the planning period.

Adding policies which reference CIPs in Mobility Hub areas will assist in supporting the transition of these areas and the importance of employment uses within mixed use areas.

Policy Direction C

Leverage existing assets and work closely with BEDC to build a proactive approach to economic development by:

- i. **Modifying schedules and adding policies for the following five strategic employment areas in the City:**
 1. **QEW Central Corridor**
 2. **Bronte Meadows**
 3. **403 West Corridor**
 4. **407 Corridor**
 5. **Downtown**

Identify the Five Strategic Employment Areas in policy and schedules

BEDC and Planning and Building have both developed new resources to assist in developing a clear understanding of the strategic employment areas of the City. Using these resources the Official Plan should be modified to include policy and, where appropriate, mapping to recognize the unique nature of the strategic employment areas identified and examined through BEDC's work and through the Phase 2 ELS. The purpose of this policy and mapping is not to add more regulation or requirements. Instead the purpose is to include the analysis undertaken in the Phase 2 ELS to provide context in policy to each area, each with their own respective opportunities and constraints in order to support employment generation and economic potential of these lands. The mapping can also be used to geographically scope the development of tools or approaches to support the long-term viability of these areas.

Policy Direction D

**Implement brownfield redevelopment program; and
Consider preparing community improvement plans for some employment areas by:**

- i. Preparing policy that adds new objectives related to the redevelopment of employment lands for employment purposes; working with BEDC to establish priority areas for CIP development and implementation; and directing the development and implementation of a CIP in the near term to support employment development within employment areas.**
- ii. Preparing policy that urge the Region to take a leadership role in providing incentives for development of employment on employment lands.**
- iii. Preparing policy that directs the study of the feasibility of a pilot brownfield CIP for the QEW Strategic Employment Lands.**

Modifications to the Community Improvement Plan policies

As discussed earlier a CIP could be developed for Mobility Hubs. Similarly, approaches to Community Improvement specific to the existing employment areas will be proposed. The Strategic Employment Areas each have challenges and opportunities that will be articulated through policy and that may be addressed through the development of a CIP. A pilot project brownfield CIP related to the geographic extent of one of the Strategic Employment Areas may be an ideal approach.

In developing policy modifications related to CIPs, City staff will:

- Add an objective related to the redevelopment of employment lands for employment purposes.
- Work with BEDC to establish the priority areas for the development of a CIP and to jointly develop and implement such an effort.
- Direct the development and implementation of a CIP in the near term to support employment development within employment areas.

The City will also develop policy that urges the Region to provide incentives that support employment lands. Many Regional Municipalities have taken up the lead in developing complementary CIPs to support key objectives such as employment. The Region could take a leadership role in developing a region-wide CIP. This could include incentives such as Regional Development Charges relief for employment development on key employment lands. This would address Burlington's particular challenge in remaining competitive while approaching build out. Regional incentives to support employment could have a significant impact on the effectiveness and appeal of a local CIP.

Brownfield Pilot Project

Policy should direct that a CIP pilot project for the QEW Central Corridor be developed in partnership with BEDC. This approach recognizes that there are areas of the QEW Corridor that will see significant change in the coming years. This direction will take advantage of work completed previously and may, through a reduced geographic scale act as a pilot project to identify the challenges and opportunities that face redevelopment of employment lands for employment purposes. The Phase 2 ELS did emphasize that today the remaining vacant employment lands in the City are generally not facing contamination issues. However, as the City evolves and businesses turnover there will be a need for a comprehensive strategy and action plan to support the redevelopment of employment lands for employment purposes. A careful monitoring program including regular reporting, will be required to understand the challenges related to successful implementation.

Before embarking on a Brownfield CIP project, the benefits and costs will need to be considered from both the perspective of the City as well as from the perspective of an employment lands owner. Given that the role of this pilot project is to rehabilitate employment lands for employment purposes, the cleanup costs and related requirements could be substantially reduced. Thus, the program will have to be designed to be attractive to owners. Care will be taken in developing a program that:

- responds to property owner's needs and would have the desired impact,
- is affordable to implement,
- can be monitored and evaluated, and
- supports the City's objectives related to employment lands.

Any Brownfield Program will rely on and benefit from efforts previously undertaken in the development of a proposed Brownfield Program (City of Burlington: Brownfield Remediation Assistance Program Community Improvement Plan, February 2010, prepared by MMM Group and MKI).

Policy Direction E

Work with the Region of Halton to track alignment of growth with Best Planning Estimates (BPEs) by:

- i. Preparing policy that enhances the monitoring policies and outlines the commitment to a reporting framework.**
- ii. Preparing policy that will direct the development of an employment and population growth tracking tool to assist in annual reporting.**

- iii. **Prepare policy that reinforces the active role that the City will play in informing and supporting the development of the Region of Halton Official Plan at the time of the required five-year reviews and other opportunities, as well as being an active partner in the development of Servicing Master Plans as they impact or relate to employment areas.**

Modifications to monitoring policies

The existing monitoring policies are proposed to be modified to put more emphasis on regular data collection and reporting related to employment. Monitoring employment is not as straight forward as it is for population and residential uses. New approaches and measures should be tested for their appropriateness and ability to describe the state of employment in the City and to understand the local, regional, and international influences being felt in the City.

The monitoring policies should explain data sources, and measures to be considered including at a minimum:

Land Based data:

- Amount of vacant designated employment land
- Amount of vacant designated serviced employment land available for development
- Annual land uptake by sector

Market Data (BEDC role):

- Average Industrial Vacancy Rate
- Average Office Vacancy Rate
- Industrial land prices
- Jobs added / Jobs lost

Employment Survey Data:

Data from Halton Region's Annual Employment Survey on employment lands including, but not limited to, overview statistics on:

- Size of businesses
- Parcel sizes
- Sectors
- Average floor space per worker
- Floor Space Index (ratio of the total floor area to the total lot area)
- Employment Density
- Strategic Employment District job and business counts

Develop a comprehensive monitoring program

The City in conjunction with BEDC will track mutually agreeable dimensions including those described above, on a yearly basis. The purpose of annual monitoring is to track success and implementation of the Employment Land policy recommendations and projects, benchmarked, where possible against neighbouring municipalities. The annual reporting would provide Council with regular feedback and provide staff with an opportunity to identify and report on trends and opportunities. The reporting will ideally be timed to follow the release of the Employment Survey data from the Region for the preceding year.

Support the Region of Halton through its upcoming Official Plan Review

The City will be an active partner in the early work for the development of the work plan for the upcoming Regional Official Plan Review. City staff will, as permitted through the process, provide feedback and insight specific to the City's interests and participate in discussions with all municipal partners.

City staff will reflect the findings of this Official Plan Review in changes to the City's urban structure to assist in the update of the Best Planning Estimates. This effort will be critical to ensure that anticipated infrastructure requirements are identified and pursued as a matter of policy and through relevant Master Plans at both the Regional and local level.

Policy Direction F

Develop a phasing strategy for the City's un-serviced lands;

Consider developing secondary plans; and

Continue dialog with local utilities, by:

- i. Preparing policy to add a new Municipal Services and Utilities policy section.**
- ii. Preparing policy that recognizes the importance of Utilities and agency partners like the Region in supporting further intensification and redevelopment.**
- iii. Prepare policy to set priorities through the Capital Budget.**

Modify the Utilities section to Municipal Services and Utilities

The existing Official Plan includes Functional policies related to "Transportation" and "Utilities" but does not currently include consideration of municipal services provided by the Region of Halton such as water and wastewater. The City should expand the current "Utilities" section of the Official Plan to include the consideration of "Municipal Services and Utilities".

Policy should include and describe commitment to greater collaboration and coordination with the Region regarding Water and Wastewater services, Transportation services, master servicing plans, best planning estimates (development and monitoring), cost sharing and joint phasing priorities. Discussion of collaboration in relation to transportation and transit vehicles and infrastructure throughout the Region may also be established in the same section.

The City is not directly responsible for delivering the services identified above, and depends upon the work of the Region and of other public and private utilities to support potential employment uses on Employment Lands and throughout the City. Shifting out of the historical Greenfield development paradigm requires more careful planning on the part of many different partners each with their own priorities and drivers along with planning cycles and budgeting processes. The resolution of servicing and transportation constraints on significant employment land parcels should also be considered during the preparation of the City's capital budget. Committing to greater collaboration with the Region and other utility providers will support the City in setting priorities and ensuring that the City's interests are well represented at the time of each partner's Capital Budget setting or Master planning processes.

Policy should also include a commitment to regular discussions with the local utilities including a liaison committee that includes staff from across Development & Infrastructure Division to align municipal services, utilities and other services, particularly in areas where significant redevelopment is expected.

The City currently convenes a Joint Utilities Committee. This will be a critical group to include in the discussion of the type of development expected in the City over the next 20 years. Intensification and redevelopment are posing new challenges from an infrastructure perspective and coordinated approaches will be critical to success. Despite the fact that development in many cases is likely to be using infrastructure that is already in place, upgrades or improvements may be necessary to support redevelopment. In the absence of a coordinated plan and a better understanding of needs, this could present a barrier to development or redevelopment.

Set priorities with BEDC

City staff including broad interdepartmental representation should work with BEDC to establish and commit to funding employment land Secondary Planning and servicing priorities by Strategic Employment Area. Using the information presented in the Phase 2 Employment Lands Study for vacant employment

parcels as a key data source, all major employment land parcels (vacant or occupied) should be pre-screened for technical constraints including servicing, utilities, zoning issues, Conservation Authority regulations, soil contamination, transportation etc. The findings of the pre-screening will inform action plans or efforts to support the redevelopment of employment lands. The findings should identify the importance of improvements to existing services, other findings could be that the development of new services are required to retain existing employment uses and to allow for further employment growth. In some cases secondary planning or functional servicing plans is critical to increasing the available supply of serviced vacant employment lands.

Policy Direction G

Investigate opportunities for limiting the amount or type of institutional uses on serviced employment lands by:

- i. Preparing policy to add criteria reflective of the findings of the ELS Phase 2 Study in conformity with ROPA No. 38.**

Modify the functional policies that permit institutional uses in employment areas.

As stated in the Phase 2 ELS institutional uses within employment areas can limit the type of employment uses that are compatible with sensitive uses on adjacent lands. Refinements to the Functional Policies (Part II, Section 4.0) that currently permit institutional land uses such as churches, schools and community centres in employment areas will be proposed. Currently, the permission is subject to a Zoning By-law amendment and a risk assessment report. Refinements proposed will include additional criteria that speak to the scale and range of uses, location at the periphery of Employment Areas, and consideration of the existing and potential future state of a given employment area. These modifications are consistent with policies for institutional uses found in the Regional Official Plan as amended by ROPA #38. Staff will also review the D-6 Guidelines governing environmentally based land use conflicts and the Regional Official Plan Guidelines to assess the current risk assessment study approach and consider refinements to assist in delivering on the intent of the policy.

Policy Direction H

Prepare a comprehensive strategy for employment land intensification by:

- i. **Preparing policy that recognizes the importance of Utilities and agency partners like the Region in supporting further intensification and redevelopment.**
- ii. **Preparing policy that acknowledges the policy directions and Urban Structure emerging from the other major studies which formed part of the Official Plan Review.**

Support development, intensification and redevelopment of Employment Lands.

Through a variety of efforts, including the policy directions proposed in this report, the City is working to support development, redevelopment and intensification throughout the City's employment lands.

The expansion of the industrial and office sectors is critically important to the City's sustainability and success. Burlington is committed to being competitive and encouraging local economic growth proactively as well as promoting the retention and expansion of existing employment uses to support a range of jobs and a sustainable tax base.

BEDC's role includes assessing all major employment land parcels for technical constraints including servicing, utilities, zoning issues, Conservation Authority regulations, soil contamination, and transportation. As mentioned above, it is critical that the resolution of servicing and transportation constraints on significant employment land parcels be considered during the preparation of the capital budget and relevant master plans. Other Departments have a role in ensuring that major issues are identified and addressed.

Working with BEDC, the Region, the Conservation Authority and utility providers, together with the actions and policy directions noted above there are many opportunities to support development, redevelopment and intensification in the Employment Areas of the City.

The various directions found within this report along with the existing employment land policies of the Official Plan collectively represent the City's employment land intensification strategy.

Support the emerging Urban Structure and the Strategic Employment Areas.

Together with other policy modifications and based on the findings of the municipal comprehensive review, all policy directions should support the emerging Urban Structure and the Strategic Employment Areas.

Some areas of the City will be more appropriate for intensification and redevelopment as identified through the Official Plan Review process. Employment land policies should continue to identify key areas where new employment growth can be supported by transit, transportation and other infrastructure.

Policy Direction I

Clarify the intent and definition of Employment Lands and area of employment in the policies and schedules of the Official Plan by:

- i. Preparing policy that clarifies the role of employment lands in the City and in the Region through modifications to definitions, schedules and policy.**
- ii. Through the municipal comprehensive review, identify any issues in existing Regional Employment Area mapping that may lead to challenges in interpretation.**

Clarify intent of definitions, schedules and policy

Through the process City staff will identify opportunities to clarify the intent, definitions and mapping of Employment Lands and “area of employment” in the policies and schedules of the Official Plan.

Through the municipal comprehensive review some changes to the area of employment may be recommended.

Employment Land policy should maintain the importance of working with the Region to take the findings of the City’s municipal comprehensive review to inform the Region’s Employment Area through the Regional municipal comprehensive review. Many of the City’s employment lands designations are captured in the ROPA No. 38 Employment Area overlay. The overlay indicates employment areas within the City that are considered significant at the Regional scale. At the same time, some care should be taken to ensure that the overlay accurately supports the City’s existing employment designations and policies established prior to ROPA No. 38. The interpretation policies of the Regional Official Plan and the City’s Official Plan are relevant and applicable to this discussion. The City of Burlington must carefully consider the Region’s Employment Area and the City’s existing policies, definitions and mapping to clarify the geographic extent of locally significant employment areas. Coordination on this effort is imperative.

There are some opportunities to clarify the City's definition and interest in employment areas, which is not exactly the same as the Region's interest. The City should clarify in policy, definitions and mapping that the following designations together constitute the "area of employment" of the City:

- Business Corridor
- General Employment
- Mixed Use Corridor – Employment
- Uptown General Employment
- Uptown Office Business Park
- Uptown Mixed Use Corridor – Employment

Each of the designations listed above should remain subject to employment conversion policies. However, as identified in Section 4.0 of this report, several of the above noted designations will be considered through the municipal comprehensive review. Any refinements will have the effect of clarifying and defining the locally identified employment areas of the City. Discussion and consultation with the Region will support this effort.

As noted above, the municipal comprehensive review will be informed by the overall refinements and updates to the Uptown Mixed Use Centre policies. Further discussion related to Uptown policies will be provided through the municipal comprehensive review.

Policy Direction J

Retain and, where applicable, refine existing Employment Land Use Designations by:

- i. Preparing policy modifications related to employment lands within Mobility Hubs and in the existing Mixed Use Corridor – Employment designation that is informed by the municipal comprehensive review.**
- ii. Preparing policy, with due consideration of the Commercial Strategy Study policy recommendations to refine the existing Employment Commercial designation policies.**
- iii. Prepare policy to address technical issues required to support the policy directions proposed in this report.**

Employment Lands within Mobility Hubs

A total of 44% of the employment conversion requests, representing approximately 20% of the total area of employment land submitted by individual request, fall within two of the City's Mobility Hubs identified as being the priority for a complete mix of uses and to attract those potential growth sectors identified in the Phase 2 ELS. Specifically, the Burlington GO and Aldershot GO stations have this focus in the medium term.

The City is keen to preserve employment lands in proximity to Mobility Hubs and Major Transit Station Areas and ensure that sufficient lands are available to support a true mix of uses in these areas including employment. In addition, it is critical to be able to build a policy framework that supports that transition from industrial to include a true mix of employment uses which are compatible with other sensitive uses, along with community uses, retail and residential uses. Each Mobility Hub in the City has a specific context and vision for reurbanization and intensification, some over the medium term and some over the long term. All include some level of high quality employment uses as part of the vision for developing these areas into mixed-use transit-oriented places. Staff will be considering the available tools to support the development and transition of employment uses within Mobility Hub areas.

The Region through ROPA No. 38 has now established an Employment Area overlay in the Regional Official Plan. The development of this overlay took place prior to this Official Plan Review, and while it may have anticipated Mobility Hubs, it could not have predicted the City's focus on the opportunity to consider mixed uses in Mobility Hubs. The Employment Overlay also captures areas which have been identified as *Intensification Areas* in the Regional Official Plan. The Region requires in policy that Local Official Plans establish boundaries and prepare detailed official plan policies or an *Area-Specific Plan*. Understanding the interaction between these two policy directions will be critical in developing effective policies or area-specific plans/master plans.

It must be noted that the City may encounter situations where the Regional overlay could present a challenge to the development of a complete mix of uses in Mobility Hubs. In anticipation of this challenge, the City must take every opportunity through open dialogue with the Region, to ensure that the vision for Mobility Hubs can be accomplished through the Master Plan process for each of the Mobility Hubs.

In support of ensuring that Master Planning is an effective tool, the City will provide input to the upcoming Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review. In particular, the City will urge the Region to recognize the nuances between "greenfield" Employment Areas and Employment Areas within the built boundary with a particular interest in lands within Intensification Areas. Policy vision for

mixed use intensification areas could conflict with the narrower lens of the Region's Employment Area overlay. Discussions with the Region and other local municipalities should recognize mobility hubs as key areas of growth that have significant potential for change over the next 20 years and the need to think in new ways about employment in these critical mixed use areas.

Mixed Use Corridor – Employment

At the outset of the Official Plan Review a key consideration was to examine the existing mixed use corridor designations, with specific attention to the mixed use corridor employment lands (MXE). Findings from the Phase 2 ELS have suggested that the MXE policies, as written today, may not have the effect of including a meaningful employment function. Stakeholder feedback identified the need to clarify the intent of the MXE policies. For all of these reasons a new approach for MXE and Uptown MXE lands will be considered through this municipal comprehensive review.

The question of whether MXE lands should continue to form part of the employment land inventory will be considered through the municipal comprehensive review. The role of MXE and Uptown MXE will be clarified and the policies within the designation will be modified to reflect that role. Although it is premature to consider prior to the completion of the municipal comprehensive review, there are a number of approaches that may be considered alone or in combination.

- Whether the MXE and Uptown MXE lands remain within the City's Employment Area or not, the establishment of a minimum requirement for employment uses could be developed. Such an approach would amend policy to be clear that the City intends to use the employment generation and economic potential of these lands for new non-retail and office type uses having the effect of adding new high quality jobs to mixed use areas of the City.
- Whether the MXE and Uptown MXE lands remain within the City's Employment Area or not, if a development proposal meets the development standards established (described generally above), the designation could contemplate a broadened range of additional non-residential permitted uses for the designation.
- If as a result of the municipal comprehensive review the MXE and Uptown MXE lands are removed from the City's Employment Area, a further broadening of permitted uses with certain criteria could be considered. The designation could establish that, residential uses may be permitted

through a site specific Zoning By-law amendment subject to a number of criteria including but not limited to:

- § Proximity to high frequency transit,
- § Land Use compatibility,
- § Location within a Mobility Hub area,
- § Site Specific considerations, and
- § Built form considerations.

The findings of this analysis and the selection of a preferred approach will be presented in 2015.

Employment Commercial

Employment Commercial is currently included in the Major Retail Areas section of the Official Plan. The lands within this designation are not recognized in the “Employment Lands” mapping of the Official Plan or in the “area of employment” definition. However, the recommendations emerging from the Commercial Strategy Study have recommended that the Employment Commercial lands should be considered to form a component of the City’s Employment Area. Through the Phase 1 and Phase 2 ELS several vacant Employment Commercial parcels were considered to form part of the vacant employment lands inventory, even though they were not defined as “area of employment” in the City’s Official Plan.

The Employment Commercial lands throughout the City should remain outside of the City’s Employment Areas. The policies related to parcels designated Employment Commercial should be clarified and strengthened to support the intent of the designation, that is, to support the surrounding high quality employment lands. Additional policies should be considered to:

- reflect the location of these lands and their relationship to the areas of employment,
- identify policies for redevelopment to include employment uses and limited other uses that support the employees and employment lands that surround these areas,
- recognize that some mixed use areas do not consider or permit the entire range of uses and that appropriate limits for the mix of uses should continue to inform development.

Consistent with existing policy, no further lands will be designated Employment Commercial. These large areas would be in a position to transition over time to include other employment uses and to support existing surrounding employment

uses and users over the very long term while still being sensitive to their proximity to existing areas of employment.

Technical Issues

In order to support many of the directions above, technical modifications to the employment lands policies will be developed. Although not exhaustive, the list below provides a sense of the types of modifications required to support policy directions presented through this report.

- Modify in the preamble section of the Official Plan (Background Information and Trends section (Preamble, 2.5)) to include reference to data collected through the Employment Survey prepared annually by the Region of Halton or other available data.
- Develop policy and appropriate incentives to encourage and direct major office and new office development to the Urban Growth Centre and to the Mobility Hubs or Major Transit Station Areas to support transit oriented development.
- Enhance flexibility of land division policies within Employment Areas to permit the creation of “keyhole” lots. Where other criteria such as safe access are met, this modification would allow for the development of unused land at the rear of existing occupied employment uses as a form of employment land intensification.
- In order to remove potential barriers to development, other modifications will remove the existing FAR limit of 0.5 for designations within the Employment Area. This modification will trigger a review through the Zoning By-law update to ensure that other regulations are appropriate and do not constitute a barrier to employment development.
- Enhance policy to focus on the retention of existing employers.
- In support of ongoing efforts, ensure that language is developed through the Official Plan Review to support small business, encourage home based business and start ups in residential areas and to support business incubator opportunities.
- Review definitions and propose modifications related to the various policy approaches presented above.
- Ensure that transit supportive policies are in place to ensure that employment areas continue to be well served by transit and improvements are possible over time.

Strategy/Process

This directions report is one of several directions reports as part of the Official Plan Review which are being brought forward for Council's consideration as presented in the [Official Plan Review: Revised Comprehensive Work Plan, Schedule and Budget Allocation report, PB-89-13](#).

Options Considered

N/A

Financial Matters:

There are potential financial and human resources implications that arise from the implementation of several of the policies identified in this report. These include the proposed Mobility Hubs Master Plans, Community Improvement Plans and Office Attraction Strategy. The policy directions also call for additional resources from various departments to support the policy directions, including efforts from BEDC, Capital Works, Finance and others. As part of the 2015 Budget process, the Policy and Research Section has proposed a new operating budget item to support the implementation of the Official Plan. While this proposed budget item may provide flexibility to respond to project needs, it is understood that careful prioritization of projects will be critical to supporting the implementation of the Official Plan. It is also expected that staff will prepare business cases to support the advancement of policy initiatives in the future for senior management and Council consideration, as warranted.

Public Engagement Matters:

General Communication and Engagement

Staff continues to provide updates related to the Official Plan Review and the various work plans including the employment lands work through the use of email to the existing list of interested stakeholders. Following discussion of the directions report with Committee, it is anticipated that the next major opportunity to engage with the public will be when specific policies have been drafted and are presented first at an open house scheduled and then again at the statutory public meeting scheduled to deal with the proposed Official Plan Amendment implementing the work of the Official Plan Review.

Employment Land Conversion Requests

A significant communication effort was undertaken in May to alert landowners and stakeholders about the Council endorsed process for collecting individual requests for employment land conversion. A newspaper ad was prepared and ran in a number of publications including The Toronto Star, Novae Res Urbis (GTA edition), and The Burlington Post. The notice of the opportunity was provided to the Official Plan Review mailing list. In addition, all those who had submitted a request prior to the endorsement of the process were provided a direct mailing. Each noted the process and deadline as well as contact information and where to locate background information on the employment lands work.

After the August 1st deadline for submissions, Planning and Building staff organized two information sessions for landowners and stakeholders one held on August 27th and one held on September 19th. The August 27th session included 13 attendees who had made conversion requests. The September 19th session included four attendees. The sessions included presentations from staff, a series of background handouts, and a question and answer period.

A number of individuals were not able to attend either of these sessions. In those cases staff made best efforts to connect on an individual basis to share the details of the process and answer any questions.

Conclusion:

The proposed Employment Lands policy directions have been developed within the context of provincial, regional and local planning objectives, findings of the OPR employment land studies, staff review and analysis, and stakeholder consultation. Subject to Council endorsement and the findings of the municipal comprehensive review, these policy directions will form the basis for the draft Employment Land Policies to be issued and finalized in Q4, 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Enns, Senior Planner

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Appendices:

- A. Employment Lands Work Chronology
- B. Employment Land Conversion Requests Including the Findings of the Strategic Vacant Land Assessment
- C. Map of Conversion Requests Including the Findings of the Strategic Vacant Land Assessment
- D. List of Designations and Areas to be Considered Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review
- E. Briefing Note: Council Workshop on Employment Lands
- F. DRAFT Official Plan Employment Land Conversion Policies showing modifications
- G. Feedback on Employment Land Conversion Policies

Notifications: (after Council decision)

Name:	Mailing or E-mail Address:
Ron Glenn	Region of Halton
Mark Menary	Region of Halton

Approved by:

Bruce Krushelnicki, Director of Planning and Building
Mike Spicer, Acting General Manager, Dev. & Infrastructure
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Reviewed by: