



City of Hamilton

Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Planning Committee

Date: March 24, 2026

Report No: PED23105(a)

Subject/Title: Major Transit Station Areas and Protected Major Transit Station Areas – Proposed Official Plan Amendments for Provincial Review and Public Consultation

Ward(s) Affected: City Wide

Recommendations

- a) That the Major Transit Station Areas Report Addendum (February 2026), prepared by Dillon Consulting, attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED23105(a), **BE RECEIVED**;
- b) That the proposed Urban Hamilton Official Plan amendment, attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED23105(a) and the proposed Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment, attached as Appendix "C" to Report PED23105(a), **BE RECEIVED**;
- c) That Planning Division staff **BE DIRECTED** to send the proposed Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment, attached as Appendix “B” to Report

PED23105(a) and the proposed Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment, attached as Appendix "C" to Report PED23105(a) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for review and comment, in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*;

- d) That Planning Division staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide a Communications Update to the Mayor and members of Council summarizing comments from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (if received) on the proposed Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment attached as Appendix "B" to Report PED23105(a) and the proposed Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment, attached as Appendix "C" to Report PED23105(a);
- e) That Planning Division staff **BE DIRECTED** to:
- i. Schedule and give notice of a statutory Open House meeting to consider the draft Urban Hamilton Official Plan amendment and draft Former City of Hamilton Official Plan amendment, in accordance with the *Planning Act*;
 - ii. Prepare a draft Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment and draft Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment in consideration of the feedback heard at the statutory Open House meeting and any comments received from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and,
 - iii. Schedule and give notice of a combined statutory Public Meeting and Special Meeting, in accordance with sections 17 and 26 of the *Planning Act*, to consider the draft Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment and draft Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to present the proposed Official Plan Amendments to implement the Major Transit Station Area policies of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and Protected Major Transit Station Area requirements of the *Planning Act*, and to seek direction to initiate the legislated consultation.
- Under the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) municipalities are required to delineate the boundaries of Major Transit Station Areas around higher order transit corridors and plan for a minimum density of people and jobs to maximize the number of potential transit users within walking distance of a station. The City of Hamilton has three existing GO stations, and 17 planned Light Rail Transit stops.
- The findings of Dillon Consulting's Major Transit Station Area Addendum Report (February 2026) have informed the proposed policy amendments and concludes that all 19 Major Transit Station Areas in Hamilton are anticipated to meet the prescribed minimum density targets of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) based on in-effect planning permissions.
- All Major Transit Station Areas reviewed through this project are proposed to be identified as Protected Major Transit Station Areas with implementing policies for prescribed minimum densities as required by the *Planning Act*. Protected Major Transit Station Areas are locations where Inclusionary Zoning could be applied.
- Once Planning Division staff have received comment from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and have completed the required statutory public consultation, a subsequent report will be brought forward to Planning Committee with the draft Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment and Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment recommended for City and Provincial Approval.

Financial Considerations

Costs associated with the statutory Open House and related engagement activities and any costs associated with mapping or modelling changes as a result of comments from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be accommodated in the existing Hamilton Growth Management Review capital account (Project ID 8141555600).

Background

Planning for Major Transit Station Areas is a component of the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review and Growth-Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS2) update which was initiated in 2018. The Major Transit Station Area work is a conformity exercise to demonstrate the City's existing land use permissions allow for sufficient intensification to meet the minimum density targets as prescribed by the Province.

Additional background on work completed by the City to plan for Major Transit Station Areas is summarized in Appendix "D" to Report PED23105(a).

Analysis

1. Provincial Policy Framework

The *Planning Act* and Provincial Planning Statement (2024) establish specific requirements and policies respecting the establishment of Major Transit Station Areas including:

- Removal of Parking Minimums – Municipalities cannot establish minimum parking standards within Major Transit Station Areas (excluding bicycle parking). Where a landowner chooses to develop parking spaces the City can still establish standards on what percentage of parking spaces must be barrier free.

- Inclusionary Zoning – Is only permitted within approved Protected Major Transit Station Areas.
- Prescribed Minimum Densities – Within Protected Major Transit Station Areas the Official Plan must establish minimum densities that are applied to individual development applications.

A summary of the applicable Provincial policy and legislation is provided in Dillon Consulting's Major Transit Station Areas Report Addendum attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED23105(a). Additional explanation of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and the *Planning Act* in relation to local Major Transit Station Area policies is included as Appendix "E" to Report PED23105(a).

2. Official Plan Policies

2.1 Urban Hamilton Official Plan Policies

Major Transit Station Areas are included as an Urban Structure Element in Chapter E – Urban Systems and Designations of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan. The conceptual locations of Major Transit Station Areas are shown in Appendix B – Major Transportation Facilities and Routes. Section E.2.5 establishes an interim policy framework for Major Transit Station Areas which notes the boundaries of the Major Transit Station Areas will be delineated in a future amendment.

2.2 Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Policies

The West Harbour Secondary Plan area was subject to a non-decision by the Province at the time the Province approved the Urban Hamilton Official Plan. This resulted in the West Harbour Secondary Plan not being incorporated into the Urban Hamilton Official Plan. As such, the former City of Hamilton Official Plan and the former Region of Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan are still in effect for the West Harbour Secondary Plan area.

The Dundurn, Queen and West Harbour GO Major Transit Station Areas have lands within the West Harbour Secondary Plan area.

3. Major Transit Station Areas Report Addendum – February 2026

The Major Transit Station Areas Report Addendum by Dillon Consulting, attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED23105(a) provides an update to their initial 2023 report. Policy context revisions were necessary to explain the revised provincial land use planning context resulting from the replacement of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Provincial Policy Statement with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024). The Provincial Planning Statement maintains the same density requirements for Major Transit Station Areas.

The February 2026 Report Addendum references the following changes stemming from staff direction and themes arising from earlier consultation activities:

- Inclusion of recently approved development application unit counts and/or retail space into revised density calculations and modelling;
- Relocation of the future Dundurn Light Rail Transit stop south towards Main Street West to align with Metrolinx’s changes to the planned transit route;
- Integration of updated heritage property data into the build-out modelling. The methodology used by Dillon Consulting for the build-out modelling is included in their August 2023 Final Report (Appendix “B” to Report PED23105) and their February 2026 Addendum;
- Revisions to certain Major Transit Station Area boundaries and/or Intensification Areas to better capture development opportunities, or remove areas that do not provide development opportunities which would contribute to the achievement of the minimum density target (i.e. undevelopable areas, fringe low density areas); and,
- Updated assumptions for People Per Unit (PPU) increasing from 1.663 to 1.721 based on the 2024 Development Charges Background Study and the average gross floor areas (e.g. including shared amenity space, hallways etc.) per unit decreasing

from 105 m² to 90 m² based on numerous factors including the City's 2024 Housing Needs Assessment. It is important to note the decrease in average floor area was driven by data on the average gross floor area sizes of one- and two-bedroom apartments. The modelling used by Dillon increased the percentage and estimated gross floor area required for bachelor and three-bedroom apartments.

In addition, Dillon Consulting advised that there was an error in its initial 2023 report where a higher density residential area within the Gage Park Major Transit Station Area was excluded from the modelled density output for the station area. This has been corrected in the Dillon February 2026 Report Addendum and resulted in an increase in the estimated build out density compared to the other Major Transit Station Areas.

3.1 Major Transit Station Areas Meeting Minimum Density Requirement

The findings of the February 2026 Addendum Report concludes that all 19 Major Transit Station Areas are anticipated to meet the prescribed minimum density targets of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) at full build-out based on in-effect planning permissions. The estimated build-out densities for each Major Transit Station Area are contained in Appendix "A" to Report PED23105(a) and summarized in Appendix "F" to Report PED23105(a). There are currently approximately 232,415 people and jobs combined within all proposed Major Transit Station Areas and another 356,037 people and jobs (588,452 total people and jobs) could be accommodated within these areas based on current land use policy permissions. This works out to be a density of 238 people and jobs per hectare across all Major Transit Station Areas.

4. Proposed Official Plan Amendments

In accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*, to identify a Major Transit Station Area as a Protected Major Transit Station Area, minimum densities must be applied to the entire area. The proposed Official Plan Amendments include mapping which assigns minimum densities on a block-by-block basis for the entire area of each Protected Major Transit Station Area.

The findings of the Major Transit Station Areas Report Addendum demonstrate the in-effect land use permissions within the City's Major Transit Station Areas allow for sufficient intensification to meet the minimum density targets prescribed by the Province.

4.1 Policy Amendments

The proposed Official Plan Amendments include the following:

- **Amendments to existing Major Transit Station Area policies** - Repeal and replacement of the current Major Transit Station Area policies in Chapter E, Section E.2.5 of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan with a more detailed policy section to implement both Major Transit Station Area policies as required by the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) and Protected Major Transit Station Area policies under the *Planning Act*;
- **Established density targets** - A new table that includes the planned minimum density targets for each Major Transit Station Area, expressed in persons and jobs per hectare combined.
 - The Major Transit Station Areas that overlap with the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan have a higher density target than prescribed by the Provincial Planning Statement for areas supporting Light Rail Transit stops to align with the Urban Hamilton Official Plan density target for the Urban Growth Centre.
 - For Protected Major Transit Station Areas new policies are proposed that ensure new developments meet minimum density requirements;
- **No parking minimums** - Inclusion of policy that clarifies there are no required parking minimums in any Major Transit Station Area or Protected Major Transit Station Area; and,
- **Support land consolidation** - Inclusion of policies which support the consolidation of lands with frontage on the priority transit corridor to facilitate intensification and maintain a suitable transition in built form.

The rationale for all the proposed policy amendments is summarized in Appendix “H” and Appendix “I” to Report PED23105(a).

4.2 Mapping Amendments

The proposed mapping amendments include:

- Revisions to Volume 1, Schedule E – Urban Structure to delineate the City’s 19 Major Transit Station Areas;
- Creation of a new map schedule to illustrate all Major Transit Station Areas; and,
- Creation of new map schedules for each Protected Major Transit Station Area to illustrate the assigned minimum densities for new buildings and structures.

5. Next Steps

5.1 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Review

The proposed official plan amendments are conformity-related updates and therefore must be adopted and approved by the Province in accordance with Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. The proposed official plan amendments will be circulated to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the prescribed 90-day review period.

Draft official plan amendments will then be prepared which incorporate comments from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as well as feedback received through the Statutory Open House and Statutory Public Meeting to be presented for Council adoption.

5.2 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Approval

Once Council has adopted the Official Plan Amendments they will be sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval. At this time, the Province will solicit public comments through the Environmental Registry of Ontario before issuing its final approval.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has authority to make any modifications to the Council approved Official Plan Amendments including to the Major Transit Station Area boundaries and minimum densities proposed for the Protected Major Transit Station Areas. Staff have monitored the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing review and approval of Major Transit Station Area and Protected Major Transit Station Area Official Plan Amendments from other municipalities to understand where the Province has made modifications.

In most cases the Province has not made any modifications to municipal approved Official Plan Amendments where they have demonstrated that they are consistent with the minimum density targets of the Provincial Planning Statement, including City of London and City of Kitchener. A notable exception is the City of Toronto where after considering the Official Plan Amendments for two and a half years, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing made amendments to increase the height and density policies within the Council approved Major Transit Station Areas and Protected Major Transit Station Areas, in some cases by three or four-fold. The Provincial modifications resulted in the station areas well exceeding the minimum density targets in the Provincial Planning Statement. The City of Toronto is now in the process of updating its zoning by-law permissions to comply with these increased permissions.

5.3 Future Planning for Major Transit Station Areas

While the work completed as part of the Major Transit Station Area project has demonstrated that the City's current land use permissions achieve the minimum density requirements of the Provincial Planning Statement, the Planning Division will undertake future reviews of the City's Official Plan policies with the intent of increasing development permissions that support transit-oriented communities. This may include the creation of new or updates to existing Secondary Plans within proposed Major Transit Station Area boundaries.

Amendments to establish increased land use permissions are not necessary as part of this conformity exercise. There are several City Initiated Projects and Initiatives in

support of residential intensification as summarized in Report PED25244 where amendments to establish increased land use permissions are being considered.

5.4 Inclusionary Zoning

The City of Hamilton is recommending all Major Transit Station Areas be identified as Protected Major Transit Station Areas to establish the necessary policy framework to apply Inclusionary Zoning policies in these areas.

The Inclusionary Zoning Market Feasibility Study prepared by urbanMetrics Inc. was presented to Planning Committee on July 8, 2025, through Report PED23044(b). The next stage of this project is to undertake community and partner engagement on the feasibility study. Inclusionary Zoning cannot be implemented until the Official Plan amendment for Major Transit Station Areas has received approval by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Alternatives

Committee may choose to modify the proposed Official Plan Amendments referenced in Recommendations b) and c) of Report PED23105(a). This option is not preferred as there may be implications with respect to timing of sending any amended proposed Official Plan Amendment to the Province for their review, resulting in potential delays to other related components of the statutory approvals processes.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

1. Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods
 - 1.1. Increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing and reduce chronic homelessness
 - 1.2. Make sure people can safely and efficiently move around by foot, bike, transit or car

Previous Reports Submitted

- [PED23156](#) - Residential Parking Standards Review and Update (August 15, 2023)
- [PED23105](#) - Draft Major Transit Station Areas (September 25, 2023)
- [PED23044](#) – Confirmation of Qualified Consultant to Conduct Peer Review of Inclusionary Zoning – Market Feasibility Study (January 31, 2023)
- [PED23044\(a\)](#) – Inclusionary Zoning – Housing Needs Assessment (February 14, 2023)
- [PED23044\(b\)](#) - Inclusionary Zoning – Market Feasibility Study and Peer Review (July 8, 2025)
- [PED22154\(a\)](#) - Updates and Amendments to the Low Density Residential (R1) and Low Density Residential (R1a) Zones, and Creation of a New Low Density Residential – Large Lot (R2) Zone, Creation of a New Section 5: Parking, and Technical Amendments to Zoning By-law No. 05-200 as Phase 2 of the Residential Zones Project (February 24, 2024)
- [PED25244](#) – Intensification Workplan and Medium and High Density Residential Urban Hamilton Official Plan Review (October 3, 2025)
- [PED26020](#) - City of Hamilton's Response to *Planning Act* Amendments in Provincial Bill 60, *Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025* (January 13, 2026)

Consultation

Planning Division staff sought feedback on the draft Major Transit Station Areas findings from interested community organizations and service providers, as well as the development industry and businesses. Consultation has also been undertaken with staff in the Planning Division, Growth Management Division, Transportation Planning and Parking Division, Public Works Department and Legal Services.

A review of the feedback received through the public engagement opportunities, agency focus group and City staff consultation is provided in Section 2.0 of Dillon Consulting's Major Transit Station Area Report Addendum (February 2026) attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED23105(a). Additionally, a summary of all public engagement is attached as Appendix "G" to Report PED23105(a).

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Major Transit Station Areas Report Addendum (February 2026, Dillon Consulting)

Appendix B: Proposed Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment

Appendix C: Proposed Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment

Appendix D: Project Background

Appendix E: Summary of Provincial Planning Framework

Appendix F: Estimated Major Transit Station Area Densities

Appendix G: Public Consultation Summary

Appendix H: Urban Hamilton Official Plan Text Changes and Rationale

Appendix I: City of Hamilton Official Plan Text Changes and Rationale

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