

Project Background

Planning for Major Transit Station Areas is a component of the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review and Growth-Related Integrated Development Strategy update, initiated in 2018. The intent of the Major Transit Station Areas work is to ensure that the City has enabling policies in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan, City of Hamilton Official Plan and Region of Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan that support intensification around the B-Line Light Rail Transit stops and GO Transit rail stations.

The initial Major Transit Station Areas work from 2018 only considered the 14 Light Rail Transit stops proposed from McMaster University to the Queenston traffic circle and the calculation of density potential was based on a radius of approximately 500 metres from these stops. While some public consultation was undertaken for this initial work, among other intensification considerations, the project was put on pause in 2019 when the Province announced it was cutting funding for Hamilton's B-line Light Rail Transit project. The remainder of the Municipal Comprehensive Review work continued, but without integration of the Major Transit Station Areas planning.

In 2021, the Province recommitted to funding the Light Rail Transit project, with additional funding provided by the Federal Government. On September 15, 2021, City Council ratified a memorandum of understanding with Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to move forward with the 14-kilometre Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) project. Major Transit Station Areas workplan adjustments needed to be made to reflect 2019 updates to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe which revised the definition of a Major Transit Station Area to include an area of approximately 500-800 metres from a higher order transit station or stop. Additionally, the project needed to consider the potential for identifying some or all of the Major Transit Station Areas as Protected Major Transit Station Areas, so that Inclusionary Zoning policies and regulations could be applied.

In June 2022, Council approved Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment No. 167, which introduced updates to a broad range of local policies as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review and to implement the Council direction for a firm urban boundary growth scenario to 2051. Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment No. 167 introduced a basic framework for Major Transit Station Areas policies, with the understanding that a future phase of work would provide more detailed land use planning direction, including the assignment of minimum density targets for each area.

Dillon Consulting was re-engaged on the Major Transit Station Areas project in late June 2022, and were tasked with updating the earlier work from 2018 with the following considerations:

- Inclusion of Light Rail Transit stops at Parkdale, Nash and Eastgate, as well as the three GO Transit rail stations;
- Revision of the boundaries of the Major Transit Station Areas and associated Intensification Areas to include lands up to approximately 800 metres from the associated higher order transit station or stop;

- Developing modelling of potential build-out conditions in the Intensification Areas of the Major Transit Station Areas in accordance with updated Urban Hamilton Official Plan policies focused on accommodating a firm urban boundary;
- Identification of which Major Transit Station Areas should be planned as Protected Major Transit Station Areas and the corresponding assignment of density requirements for new buildings and structures in the Protected Major Transit Station Areas as required by the *Planning Act*, and,
- Application of assumptions for other intensification opportunities at full build out, notably through gentle intensification permissions like Additional Dwelling Units.

Report PED23105 was presented to Planning Committee in September 2023 and provided the initial findings of the Major Transit Station Areas work undertaken by Dillon Consulting. Recommendation b) of Report PED23105 was approved as follows:

“That Council authorize staff to commence public and stakeholder consultation on the Major Transit Station Area draft report identified in Recommendation (a) to PED23105, and that staff report back on the results of the consultation and any changes or revisions to the report at the time that the Major Transit Station Area final report is presented for approval.”

Report PED23105(a) responds specifically to Recommendation b) of Report PED23105.