

REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Planning, Public Works and Transportation Committee

REPORT FROM: Keith Hamilton, Planner - Policy

DATE: June 14, 2019

REPORT NO.: PLS-2019-0042

RE: Final Recommendation Report for Cannabis Cultivation and Processing in Halton Hills (Official Plan Amendment No. 35; Amendments to Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-0050, 401 Corridor Zoning By-law 2000-0138, and Site Plan Control By-law 2013-0070).

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PLS-2019-0042, dated June 14, 2019, regarding the Final Recommendation Report for Cannabis Cultivation and Processing in Halton Hills (Official Plan Amendment No. 35; Amendments to Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-0050, 401 Corridor Zoning By-law 2000-138, and Site Plan Control By-law 2013-0070) be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council adopt Official Plan Amendment No. 35, dated June 2019 (attached as SCHEDULE 1 to this report);

AND FURTHER THAT the municipally initiated Zoning By-law Amendment to Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-0050, as amended, as generally shown on SCHEDULE 2 to this report be approved;

AND FURTHER THAT the municipally initiated Zoning By-law Amendment to the 401 Corridor Zoning By-law 2000-138, as amended, as generally shown on SCHEDULE 3 to this report be approved;

AND FURTHER THAT the amendments to Site Plan Control By-law 2013-0070 as generally shown on SCHEDULE 4 to this report be approved;

AND FURTHER THAT in accordance with Section 34(17) of the Planning Act, no further notice is determined to be necessary.

BACKGROUND:

This report represents the final stage of the Town's land use study on cannabis cultivation and processing. The study was triggered by the emergence of medical

marijuana production facilities in Ontario and the federal Cannabis Act, which legalized the production of cannabis for recreational uses. It follows a statutory public meeting held on May 6th, 2019 on proposed Official Plan, Comprehensive Zoning By-law, 401 Corridor Zoning By-law, and By-law 2013-0070 amendments.

1. Study to Date

1.1 Initial Research and Background Report

In April of 2018 Town staff began researching cannabis production to better address medical marijuana growing facilities within Halton Hills. This research included a review of federal legislation on cannabis, past and present, as well as a policy scan of municipalities that had regulated cannabis production under the pre-Cannabis Act medical regulations. With recreational cannabis legalization on the horizon, a Town study on cannabis cultivation and processing was formalized with the goal of establishing local regulations for these activities in Halton Hills.

Meridian Planning Consultants were retained by the Town in June of 2018 to assist with the Town's study and to develop a background report on cultivation and processing. This report, taken to the Planning and Public Works Committee on September 10th, 2018, provided the following:

- A summary of federal regulations for cannabis and licences available under the Cannabis Act;
- An overview of potential regulatory considerations for Town policy, including odour concerns associated with production, and social considerations; and,
- A discussion on where the use(s) could be permitted within the Town and regulatory tools that could be applied;
- Specific options for regulating cannabis cultivation and processing in the Agricultural/Rural Area, and Prestige Industrial and Employment Areas, including:
 - Evaluating all proposals in the Employment Areas and Agricultural/Rural Areas on a case by case basis through a Zoning By-law Amendment application;
 - Permitting in the Employment Areas as-of-right in the Zoning By-law subject to setbacks from sensitive land uses; and,
 - Permitting in the Employment Areas and Agricultural/Rural Areas as-of-right in the Zoning By-law subject to setbacks from sensitive land uses.

Town Planning staff submitted a covering report to the background report (PLS-2018-0068). This report introduced the need for the study and background report, and outlined next steps for the project.

1.2 Interim Control By-law

On September 24th, 2018 the Town of Halton Hills passed an Interim Control By-law (2018-0062) prohibiting the use of land, buildings or structures for Cannabis Production Related Uses. The By-law is now in effect in all Agricultural, Protected Countryside, and Prestige Industrial and Gateway zones in Halton Hills for a one year period. This By-law was developed by Planning staff in consultation with the Town Solicitor and Meridian Planning Consultants. The By-law serves to provide Town staff adequate time to complete the ongoing study prior to any cannabis production-related uses establishing themselves within Halton Hills.

1.3 Public Consultation – Online Engagement

In December of 2018 the Town launched a ‘Let’s Talk Halton Hills’ webpage for the cannabis study. This page served as the platform for the online public survey on cannabis retail and production operations. Questions on production focused on the location of cultivation and processing operations, setbacks from sensitive land uses, and potential benefits and concerns associated with these operations in Halton Hills. The survey was open to the public from December 18th to January 16th, and a summary of the results was included in staff report PLS-2019-0022 (Directions Report). As stated in this report, key points taken from the survey results are:

- The majority (65 percent) of respondents felt cultivation is acceptable in both agricultural and industrial areas, with 24 percent supporting agricultural areas only, and the remaining 11 percent favouring industrial areas only;
- The majority (66 percent) of respondents felt processing is acceptable in both agricultural and industrial areas, with 18 percent supporting industrial areas only, and the remaining 16 percent favouring agricultural areas only;
- Respondents were more favourable (41 percent) to cultivation and processing operations being discreet and positioned further back from the road, with 19 percent being more in favour of clearly identifiable operations from the road. The remaining 40 percent of respondents had no opinion for this question;
- Where respondents were asked to select uses from which cultivation and processing should be set back the most common response was schools (382), with youth-oriented facilities (334) and daycare centres (330) close behind. Residences (231) and health facilities (158) were also common responses;
- The majority of respondents (70 percent) indicated they have no general concerns about the Town allowing operations in Halton Hills;
- Responses for the next question of the survey ranked (on average) ‘Potential for economic benefit’ as most important when considering cultivation and processing in Halton Hills. This was followed by ‘Impact on surrounding property values’, ‘Odour from growing and processing’, and ‘Threat to public safety’ as least important (on average); and,
- For the final question, the majority of respondents (64 percent) felt attracting commercial cannabis cultivation and processing should be part of the Town’s economic development efforts.

1.4 External Agency/Stakeholder Group Circulation

Two separate agency/stakeholder group consultations took place for the cannabis study, the first being a circulation of the background report in October of 2018. A list of agencies/groups contacted and a summary of comments received were included in staff report PLS-2019-0022 (Directions Report). Key comments coming out of this circulation included:

- The preference for case-by-case evaluation of proposals in any proposed regulations;
- Concern over the proximity of potential cannabis operations to sensitive land uses such as schools and daycares;
- A need for setbacks from sensitive land uses defined in proposed regulations;
- Consideration for the varying scale of building sizes and servicing requirements for cannabis operations;
- Concern over indoor cultivation operations developing on prime agricultural land;
- Concerns over the impacts of emitted odours on surrounding uses; and,
- Concern that as-of-right permission for any type of operation will hinder the ability to evaluate the potential impacts properly.

In April of this year Planning staff circulated the Directions Report (PLS-2019-0022) to selected agencies and stakeholder groups for comment. Groups consulted for this circulation included; Halton Region, Halton Catholic District School Board, Halton District School Board, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation, Niagara Escarpment Commission, Ontario Federation of Agriculture and Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce. This circulation sought comments on the Council-endorsed preferred policy approach outlined Directions Report (summarized in the next section).

Both Halton District and Halton Catholic District School Boards stated a preference for policy approach requiring rezoning for all proposals in the urban employment areas. Additionally they requested consideration for setbacks larger setbacks from sensitive land uses. These comments will be addressed in greater detail in the Comments section.

1.5 Directions Report

On April 9th, Planning staff brought a Directions Report (PLS-2019-0022) on cannabis cultivation and processing to the Planning, Public Works and Transportation Committee. The report presented three policy options for cultivation and processing and recommended Option B as the staff-preferred approach. Planning staff also gave a presentation and took questions from Councillors present.

For the Directions Report, Staff developed three policy options for consideration. The policy options are based on the following components:

- Site specific rezoning, where Official Plan policies would require a proposal to go through the Zoning By-law Amendment process, subject to public consultation and internal/external agency review and comment.
- Site Plan Approval, where proposals would require a Town-approved Site Plan, subject to internal/external agency review and comment.
- Setbacks, where a proposed operation would be required to situate a set distance from Town prescribed sensitive land uses.

These components were identified based on research and information provided in the Background Report prepared by Meridian Planning Consultants. They were then organized into three options summarized in the table below:

Option	Required Rezoning	Site Plan Approval	Setbacks Required
A	Yes	Yes	Yes
B	Ag/Rural Area Only	Yes	Yes
C	No	Yes	Yes

The Directions Report recommended Option B as the preferred approach for Town policy on cannabis cultivation and processing. This option would require site specific rezoning and Site Plan Approval for all proposals in the Agricultural/Rural Area with setbacks imposed. Cultivation and processing would be permitted in the Urban and Rural Employment Areas, and Prestige Industrial Areas of the Premier Gateway, subject to Site Plan Approval and setbacks.

Justification for the preferred option was provided in the Directions Report as follows:

- Requiring site-specific zoning in the Agricultural/Rural Area will help address Halton Region concerns over the size of facilities, their potential impacts on prime agricultural land, key features of the Natural Heritage System, and varying servicing requirements;
- Requiring, at minimum, Site Plan Approval for cannabis production operations (excluding outdoor cultivation) supports the view of Meridian Planning Consultants, Halton Region, and the School Boards that each proposal be evaluated on a case by case basis;
- That the majority of those surveyed viewed cannabis cultivation and processing as acceptable in agricultural and industrial areas;
- That the majority of those surveyed had no concerns over cannabis production in Halton Hills, with many also seeing the potential economic benefit as very important;
- That consideration for joint cultivation and processing proposals supports the Provincial Policy Statement principle of providing for a diversified economic base (section 1.3.1) in Employment Areas; while recognizing that processing activities can be considered agriculture-related (section 2.3.3).

Town Council endorsed the preferred policy option and authorized a Statutory Public Meeting on the matter through approval of the Directions Report on April 15th.

1.6 Statutory Public Meeting

On May 6th, Planning staff brought a Public Meeting Report (PLS-2019-0029) on cannabis cultivation and processing to Council, which was received in conjunction with a Statutory Public Meeting, held on the matter. This report included:

- A project timeline, including milestones achieved;
- A summary of the policy options presented in the Directions Report;
- An analysis of the public survey on cultivation and processing; and,
- The next steps for the project.

The Statutory Public Meeting on cannabis cultivation and process and proposed amendments to the Town's Official Plan, Comprehensive Zoning By-law, 401 Corridor Zoning By-law, and Site Plan Control By-law was held in Council on May 6th. At the meeting Planning staff presented a timeline of the project and detailed analysis of the results of the public survey. Meridian Planning Consultants then presented the policy options and rationale for the preferred option selected by staff. Public input from this meeting and staff responses will be discussed in the Comments section.

COMMENTS:

1. Planning Context

Policies that have been reviewed and considered by Planning staff over the course of this study include the Federal Cannabis Act, Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Greenbelt Plan and Halton Region Official Plan.

1.1 Federal Cannabis Act

The Cannabis Act and Regulation SOR-2018-144 came into effect in October of 2018 to legalize recreational cannabis production. The Act introduced six classes of licences related to the production of cannabis and related activities. These licences and their implications on land use are described in detail in the Background Report prepared for this study by Meridian Planning Consultants (Schedule One to PLS-2018-0068). While cannabis production is largely governed at the federal level, municipalities do have the ability to define and regulate cannabis production and related activities as they would with other land uses. The introduction of federal regulations for recreational cannabis production drove the need for clear Town policy on cannabis cultivation and processing operations.

1.2 Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS)

The Background Report for this study considered Section 1.2.6.1 of the PPS on land use compatibility. This section refers to the development of 'major facilities' and the need to mitigate adverse effects on sensitive land uses through appropriate separation. This section of the PPS was referenced in the early stages of the study given the potential for cannabis operations to develop in large industrial-type buildings. Based on this, setbacks for cannabis cultivation and processing operations from sensitive land uses became a key consideration.

Notwithstanding the above, the study has also considered Section 1.3 of the PPS which requires municipalities to promote economic development and provide for a range of employment uses. The preferred policy option put forward by the Town provides opportunity for the cannabis industry to develop locally by permitting as-of-right in Employment Areas, while also considering the potential impacts on sensitive land uses by requiring site specific zoning in the Agricultural/Rural Area. Staff and Meridian are satisfied that the recommended policy approach is consistent with the PPS.

1.3 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Section 2.2.5.1 of this Plan requires municipalities to promote economic development by making efficient use of existing employment areas and ensuring the availability of land in appropriate locations for a variety of employment. The Growth Plan also provides "Policies for Protecting What is Valuable", including the Natural Heritage System and the Agricultural System. In considering these and other policies of the Growth Plan, staff and Meridian are satisfied that the recommended approach:

- Promotes economic development by providing clear policy on where cannabis cultivation and processing can locate and under which criteria;
- Is in keeping with the Agricultural System policies; and,
- Continues to protect key features of the natural heritage system through policy that will include development criteria and the requirement that proposals are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The preferred policy option identified in the Directions Report provides both a clear path to permitting and regulating operations and requirements to ensure environmental impacts are also considered.

1.4 Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Plan identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and ecological and hydrological features, areas and functions occurring in the landscape. In a Halton Hills context, the Greenbelt Plan includes the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Protected Countryside. The preferred policy option identified in the Directions Report permits indoor cannabis

cultivation and processing uses subject to criteria which will be evaluated through a site specific rezoning and Site Plan Approval. These approval processes would allow Town and external agency staff ample opportunity to assess the impacts a proposal would have on such resources. Staff and Meridian are satisfied that the recommended policy approach conforms to the Greenbelt Plan.

1.5 Halton Region Official Plan

Section 99 (7), under 'Agricultural System and Agricultural Area', states uses in these areas should "promote a diverse, innovative and economically strong agricultural industry in Halton by tailoring its products and marketing to meet local and regional needs and demands". Additionally, Section 72 (10) of the Regional Official Plan under 'Urban Area' states this designation should "provide for an appropriate range and balance of employment uses including industrial, office and retail and institutional uses to meet long-term needs". Further, Section 72 (10.1) advises "to direct where employment uses should be located to protect areas designated for such uses". The preferred policy option would direct cultivation and processing in the Urban Areas to employment lands which have been designated and preserved for similar uses.

Section 91 of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) states the goal of the Agricultural System is to maintain a viable agricultural industry while preserving the open-space character and landscape of non-urbanized areas. Additionally the ROP sets out multiple policies for protection of the Regional Natural Heritage system (NHS), starting in section 115. Given the presence of the NHS in the Town's Agricultural/Rural Area, the potential exists for cultivation and processing proposals to be situated on, or in close proximity to lands within this system. The preferred policy option requiring site specific zoning in the Agricultural/Rural Area would provide both the Town and Region opportunity to carefully evaluate such proposals, should they present themselves.

2. Public Comments and Issues

Proposed amendments to Town policies regarding cannabis cultivation were presented to the Public by way of Report No. PLS-2019-0029 and a Statutory Public Meeting on May 6th, 2019. There were approximately 5 (five) interested persons in attendance at the meeting with 1 (one) of those individuals coming forward with a written letter outlining their concerns.

Additionally, staff received 1 (one) email prior to the preparation of the Directions report and 5 (five) phone calls/counter inquiries from residents in regards to cannabis cultivation and processing. The following sections describe specific public concerns and provide staff responses:

2.1 Proposed Setbacks from Sensitive Land Uses and Micro Cultivation:

Comments received through the written letter provided at the Public Meeting requested that setbacks from sensitive land uses for micro cultivation operations be reduced. Additionally, the letter requested clarification on whether setbacks would apply to dwellings (a proposed sensitive use) on the same property as cultivation and/or processing operations.

The letter noted above also requested a meeting between Planning staff and two individuals present at the Public Meeting. This meeting took place on May 8th at Town Hall where the individuals outlined their concerns with 150m setbacks for micro operations in the rural area. Specifically noted was that these operations could have a maximum of 200m² (2,153ft²) operating space which would limit the ability for these operations to have impacts on surrounding uses. Additionally the individuals noted that micro cultivation licences are still subject to the same air filtration requirements under federal regulations as large scale standard operations.

Staff Response

In considering the above, and after consultation with Meridian Planning Consultants, Planning staff are of the opinion that the 150m setback is justified based on existing policies for surrounding municipalities. In the absence of established cannabis cultivation and processing industry in Halton Hills, where impacts on surrounding uses would be documented, it would be premature to reduce setbacks until more research on such impacts is available.

Notwithstanding the above, Planning staff conducted further research on micro cultivation operations under the Cannabis Act. Given Regulation SOR-2018-144 under the Act limits the operating area of a micro operation to 200m², it is likely the impacts on such an operation would be less than those of an operation under the standard cultivation licence, which is not subject to such a limit. As a result, Planning staff has included consideration for reduced setbacks for micro operations in the proposed Official Plan Amendment, which will be expanded on in Comments Section 4.1.

Planning staff have also considered the question of whether setbacks could be applied to a sensitive land use (i.e. dwelling) existing on the same site as a licenced cultivation and/or processing operation. In the Employment Areas (Urban, Rural and Prestige Industrial) such a use would not be permitted on the same site as cannabis operation. In the Agricultural/Rural Areas, dwellings are often permitted on properties where another use (i.e. agricultural) is present. Given dwellings currently exist on the same lots as agricultural and industrial operations without imposed setbacks in the Agricultural/Rural Area, there would be no basis to impose setbacks from dwellings on the same lot as a proposed cannabis operation.

2.2 The Impact of Odour on Individuals and Surrounding Uses

Comments received through email the prior to the release of the Directions Report expressed concern over the odour that would be emitted from cannabis operations permitted in Halton Hills. More specifically, concerns were raised over the direct impact on individuals and uses adjacent, or in close proximity to a proposed operation.

Staff Response

Over the course of the Town's land use study on cannabis cultivation and processing staff have considered this issue and researched it accordingly. A report titled 'Odours from Marijuana Production' released by Public Health Ontario in April of 2018 indicated that substances causing odours in the cannabis production process would not be present at levels high enough to cause long term health effects. The report also acknowledges that federal regulations ultimately govern odour mitigation for cannabis operations, but that additional measures can still be taken in the permitting process. In considering the potential impacts of odour from cannabis operations in areas where proposed amendments would permit the use, the preferred policy option would:

- Require 150 metre setbacks from sensitive land uses for proposals in the Urban and Agricultural/Rural Areas;
- Ensure all proposals go through the Town's Pre-Consultation process where applicants would be required to identify all odour mitigation practices to be applied to their operations; and,
- Provide Town and agency staff the opportunity to carefully assess the potential impacts of odour for proposals in the Agricultural/Rural Area where adjacent sensitive uses are more likely to be present.

3. External Agency/Stakeholder Group Comments

The Background and Directions Reports, and draft amendments were circulated to external agencies and stakeholder groups for review and comment over the course of the study. Planning staff have taken into consideration all comments provided when drafting the final proposed amendments for cannabis cultivation and processing.

For information purposes, staff has provided comments on some of the concerns raised regarding the preferred policy option and proposed amendments:

3.1 Preference for Case-by-Case Evaluation for all Proposals

Where some commenting agencies expressed a preference for all cannabis cultivation and processing proposals to be subject to case-by-case evaluation, Planning staff ultimately selected a policy option that would permit these uses in the Employment and Prestige Industrial Areas as-of-right. Detailed rationale for this was provided in the Directions Report (PLS-2019-0022). Given that Employment Areas are designated to develop uses that will generate employment, the preferred policy option provides for an

expedited process for proposals in these areas. Notwithstanding, the preferred policy option would still see proposals be evaluated by Town and agency staff through Site Plan Approval, subject to setbacks from sensitive land uses.

3.2 Preference for Greater Setbacks from Sensitive Land Uses

Following a review of public and agency comments on setbacks, and past research completed for this study, staff has opted to continue with the 150m setbacks proposed in the Directions Report. Comments received have asked staff to consider greater setbacks for operations in the Employment Areas, while comments received at the Statutory Public Meeting requested lesser setbacks in all areas to increase the number of potential lots for future operations. Planning staff are of the opinion the proposed 150m setbacks would ensure operations could not establish themselves on a lot abutting or across the road from a lot where a sensitive use is present in the Urban Area. In the Agricultural/Rural Area, staff is of the opinion the 150m setback would protect sensitive uses, while providing proposed operations the opportunity to be repositioned on larger lots where they could meet the requirement.

3.3 Proposals in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area

Over the course of this study, Town staff has consulted with Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) staff on how proposals for cultivation and processing will be assessed in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area (NEPA). Both Town and NEC staff agreed there should be consistency over how proposals are addressed in the Town's Agricultural/Rural Area and the NEPA where the NEC has development control. After the circulation of the Directions Report, Town and NEC staff began working together to develop a revision to the proposed Official Plan Amendment that would address proposals in the NEPA. Proposed revisions agreed upon by both parties will be provided in the next section.

4. Revisions to Proposed Amendments

This section outlines changes made to proposed amendments after the Statutory Public Meeting. They reflect information received from both agency/stakeholder group and public consultation. Revisions proposed are as follows:

4.1 Setbacks from Micro Operations

The proposed criteria for cannabis cultivation and processing in the Agricultural/Rural Area (through the proposed Official Plan Amendment) provides for case-by-case evaluation of proposals. In cases where a micro cultivation is being proposed, it is reasonable to expect impacts from production could be minimal compared to those created by a larger, standard cultivation/processing operation. As a result, staff has added the following to criteria k) in Item 5 of the proposed OPA:

“Additionally, where proposed cultivation is to be operated under a micro cultivation licence, consideration for reduced setbacks (where required) will be given.”

Adding this language would allow those evaluating a proposal for micro cultivation to consider a reduced setback. Should a reduced setback be deemed appropriate, the required site specific rezoning would then mandate that only micro cultivation be permitted on the subject site, eliminating the potential for a larger operation to establish itself in the future.

4.2 Cannabis Cultivation and Processing in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area

Town and NEC staff has agreed upon the following revisions to the proposed Official Plan Amendment to address proposals in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area:

Under Item 5, following the criteria for Indoor Cultivation:

“Where zoning by-laws do not apply (in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area), the above-noted criteria will be applied in considering the suitability of the location for indoor cannabis cultivation including setbacks from Rural Cluster lots where a sensitive land use (specified in Section D3.4.1.4.8) is present. These criteria will be applied in addition to any other relevant municipal or provincial policy.”

Under Item 6, following the criteria for the Processing of Cannabis:

“Where zoning by-laws do not apply (in the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area), the establishment of a cannabis processing facility will be assessed using the above-noted criteria for an agricultural-related use including setbacks from Rural Cluster lots where a sensitive land use (specified in Section D3.4.1.4.8) is present”.

The revisions would ensure proposals in the NEPA would be evaluated against similar criteria to those in the Halton Hills Agricultural/Rural Area. A consistent policy approach across the entire Agricultural/Rural and NEPA also helps to avoid confusion among applicants and a preference for one area over the other.

These proposed revisions were included in a NEC staff report on May 16th to the Commission. The report was received and the recommendation that the Commission endorse this approach was approved.

4.3 Cannabis Cultivation and Processing on Lots Adjacent to Settlement Areas

Following a review of the draft amendments presented at the Statutory Public Meeting, consideration was given for lots within settlement areas adjacent to the Agricultural/Rural Area. These lots have the potential to be situated near cultivation and processing operations in either the Urban or Agricultural/Rural Areas. Town staff and Meridian Planning Consultants have agreed sensitive uses (as listed in SCHEDULE 2) as they may exist on such lots, should be provided consistent separation from cannabis cultivation and processing operations. As a result the draft Official Plan Amendment has been revised to require that a 150 metre setback be imposed on cultivation and/or processing operations from settlement area lots (where sensitive uses exist) that border the Agricultural/Rural Area boundary.

Town staff and Meridian Planning Consultants have agreed upon the following revisions to the proposed Official Plan Amendment to address proposals on lots adjacent to Settlement Areas:

Under Item 5, immediately following the criteria for Indoor Cultivation:

“Notwithstanding the above, a lot on which cannabis cultivation is located shall be set back 150 metres from Urban, Hamlet, and Rural Cluster Area lots, where a sensitive land use (specified in Section D3.4.1.4.8) is present.”

Under Item 6, following the criteria for the Processing of Cannabis:

“Notwithstanding the above, a lot on which cannabis processing is located shall be set back 150 metres from Urban, Hamlet, and Rural Cluster Area lots, where a sensitive land use (specified in Section D3.4.1.4.8) is present.”

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report relates directly to the implementation of the Town Strategic Plan. Under Section C – Foster a Prosperous Economy, this report supports Objective C.8 – To facilitate the establishment of a competitive business environment that is easily able to adapt to changing circumstances and priorities. By establishing a regulatory framework that will define and regulate cannabis production, the Town is adapting to an emerging market that will continue to expand in wake of the legalization of cannabis for recreational purposes.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

CONSULTATION:

Town staff, as well as Planning staff from Halton Region and Niagara Escarpment Commission were consulted in preparation of this report. Additionally, Meridian Planning Consultants were consulted for advice in preparation of the draft amendments attached to this report.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement feeding into the preparation of this report is summarized as follows:

Let's Talk Halton Hills Webpage and Public Survey

In December of 2018, a Let's Talk Halton Hills page was created for cannabis cultivation and processing. This webpage included a 'Question and Answer' tool for the public to post questions and receive feedback from staff. 'Newsfeed' and 'Document Library' components were also available where the public could gather information published by Town staff related to the study. This page was also the platform for an online public survey available from December 19th to January 16th, consisting of questions directly related to cannabis production in Halton Hills. Input gathered from this survey has been summarized as part of this report. Through this engagement, staff has been able to inform and consult with the public, consistent with the Town's Public Engagement Matrix.

Statutory Public Meeting

A Statutory Public Meeting, accompanied by a Public Meeting Report and draft amendments, was held on May 6th in accordance with Planning Act requirements for public consultation. At this meeting Planning staff and Meridian Planning Consultants presented background information and the preferred policy options in Council. As it relates to the Town's Public Engagement Charter, this meeting met the Inform and Consult levels of engagement by presenting project information and responding to questions and concerns.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

This report supports the Economic Prosperity pillar of Sustainability and in summary the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is Good. Specifically this report supports the Economic Prosperity theme of a 'Diversified and Resilient Economy' by creating policy to facilitate the development of a new industry in the local economy.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Public Notice of Council's decision regarding the passage of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments will be completed in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act.

CONCLUSION:

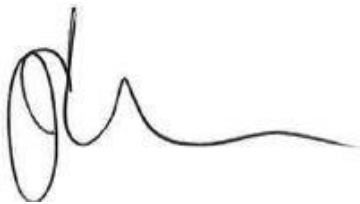
Staff has completed background research, agency/stakeholder and public consultation as part of a land use study on cannabis production. A Background, Directions, Statutory Public Meeting, and Final Recommendation Report have been prepared in support of proposed amendments to the Town's Official Plan, Zoning By-law 2010-0050, Zoning By-law 2000-0138, and By-law 2013-0070 for cannabis cultivation and processing. Three policy options were developed as part of the study and staff is of the opinion that the preferred option (reflected in the draft amendments attached to this report) conforms, or does not conflict with relevant Provincial and Regional policies. Further the proposed amendments respect the need for careful evaluation of proposals for cannabis cultivation and processing, while also helping to facilitate the development of a new industry in Halton Hills by providing clear policy on where and how proposals can be approved.

For these reasons, Planning staff recommends that Council approve the Official Plan, Comprehensive Zoning By-law, 401 Corridor Zoning By-law, and Site Plan Control By-law amendments attached as SCHEDULES 1, 2, 3, and 4 to this report.

Reviewed and Approved by,



Bronwyn Parker, Manager of Planning Policy



John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability



Brent Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer