

# EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW



**HEMSON**  
Consulting Ltd.

February 2009

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report provides a review of the Town of Oakville's employment land supply and recommends policy directions to be considered as part of the Town's new official plan, *Livable Oakville*, and to come into conformity with the 2006 Provincial *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (the *Growth Plan*). The employment land review is one of many studies being undertaken as part of the Town's broader "municipal comprehensive review", which is required for future planning purposes. The key findings are as follows:

- Like most other communities in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton (GTAH), the Town of Oakville economy has performed well over the past 20 years. Employment has grown steadily and industrial and commercial building markets have been strong.
- Consistent with its past economic performance, employment in the Town of Oakville is forecast to grow by approximately 46,000 jobs over the next 25 years. Under this forecast, the Town's share of the total Regional employment will decline from approximately 36% in 2006 to 33% in 2031 as growth occurs in the new employment areas of in Milton and Halton Hills.
- Employment land will play a key role in accommodating this job growth, accounting for approximately 40% of the Town's growth forecast. Employment in major offices is also forecast to grow rapidly to 2031, as the Town becomes more attractive in the GTAH office market.
- At a minimum, the Town's entire designated and planned supply of employment is required to accommodate future demand, in particular the highly competitive planned supply in the North Oakville expansion area. Even with the North Oakville land supply, the Town will eventually exhaust the land supply resulting a shift in and a narrowing of the character of the available long-term economic opportunities.
- As a result, a key priority over the planning period to 2031 should be to protect and maintain the employment land supply and resist the conversion of employment land to non-employment uses. The Town needs employment land to accommodate job growth, and the conversion of employment land is generally not required to achieve other planning objectives.
- Given its limited supply, the Town should also take actions to maximize the economic potential of employment land. Options to increase employment density should be considered, not only to advance the Town's economic vision, but also to conform to the *Growth Plan*, which encourages municipalities to plan for a more compact urban form, including higher-density employment uses and major office development.
- The Town should also consider options to improve its competitive position for major offices and, over time, encourage a shift in the location major offices to the Midtown Oakville Urban Growth Centre (UGC).

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## I INTRODUCTION

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Hemson Consulting Ltd. was retained by the Town of Oakville in July 2008 to undertake an employment land review study. The study is required to provide input to the Town's new official plan— *Livable Oakville* — and to bring the Town's planning documents into conformity with the new Provincial *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (the *Growth Plan*).

Like most communities in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton (GTAH), employment land is important to the Town of Oakville. Employment land is anticipated to play a major role in accommodating job growth and economic development over the planning period to 2031. Without a competitive supply of designated employment land, the Town of Oakville will have difficulty competing for new investment and achieving its own economic goals, as well as those of the Region of Halton within the Provincial vision for growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).

The purpose of this study is to review the supply and demand for employment land in the Town of Oakville to 2031; to review the Town's existing policy framework for employment lands; and to recommend new policy directions to be considered through *Livable Oakville*, consistent with the Town's broader community vision and recent Provincial planning initiatives.

### A. FOCUS OF THE STUDY IS ON THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE'S EMPLOYMENT LANDS

For planning purposes, employment lands in Oakville are made up of two components: the older, historic employment areas along the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) in south Oakville and the new planned employment lands in the North Oakville expansion area. The analysis of employment land in this report is based on a detailed inventory prepared by Oakville planning staff, and includes lands in both south and north Oakville.

#### 1. What is Employment Land?

Employment land was traditionally referred to as “industrial” in terms of land use areas, but today it accommodates a much wider range of economic uses, including: manufacturing and distribution; warehousing; research and development; commercial, institutional and accessory retail uses; and, in some cases community facilities and places of worship.

Employment land is occupied primarily by large, land-extensive, low-rise, industrial-type buildings. In some cases, major office buildings and retail development are also accommodated on employment land. For the purposes of employment land planning, however, major office and retail uses are treated separately<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup>This definition of employment land for planning purposes is limited to the type of development described here. Of course, this

- Major offices are treated as a separate category of employment because they develop at very high densities, under a unique market dynamic and only in a small number of locations; and
- Large-format retail development is treated as a separate category because it accommodates mainly population-related employment, which is not a significant factor in planning for employment land. Planning for population-related employment growth already occurs in the normal secondary planning process for retail and institutional uses.<sup>1</sup>

The focus of this employment land review study is on how to plan for the typically single-story, industrial-type buildings that occupy the majority of employment land and business park environments in the GTA, and also within the Town of Oakville. Major office and retail uses are treated separately for analytical purposes, although they may nevertheless be located on employment land.

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*defined term for planning purposes differs from a plain language usage of the term which might include all land parcels containing any type of employment including retail and institutional uses.*

<sup>1</sup>*There are a limited amount of service commercial uses that tend to locate in industrial-type buildings on employment land, which are accounted for in our approach to employment land planning. Such uses include arterial commercial and quasi-industrial commercial uses within industrial multiples, community facilities such as schools, professional associations, day cares and places of religious assembly and others.*

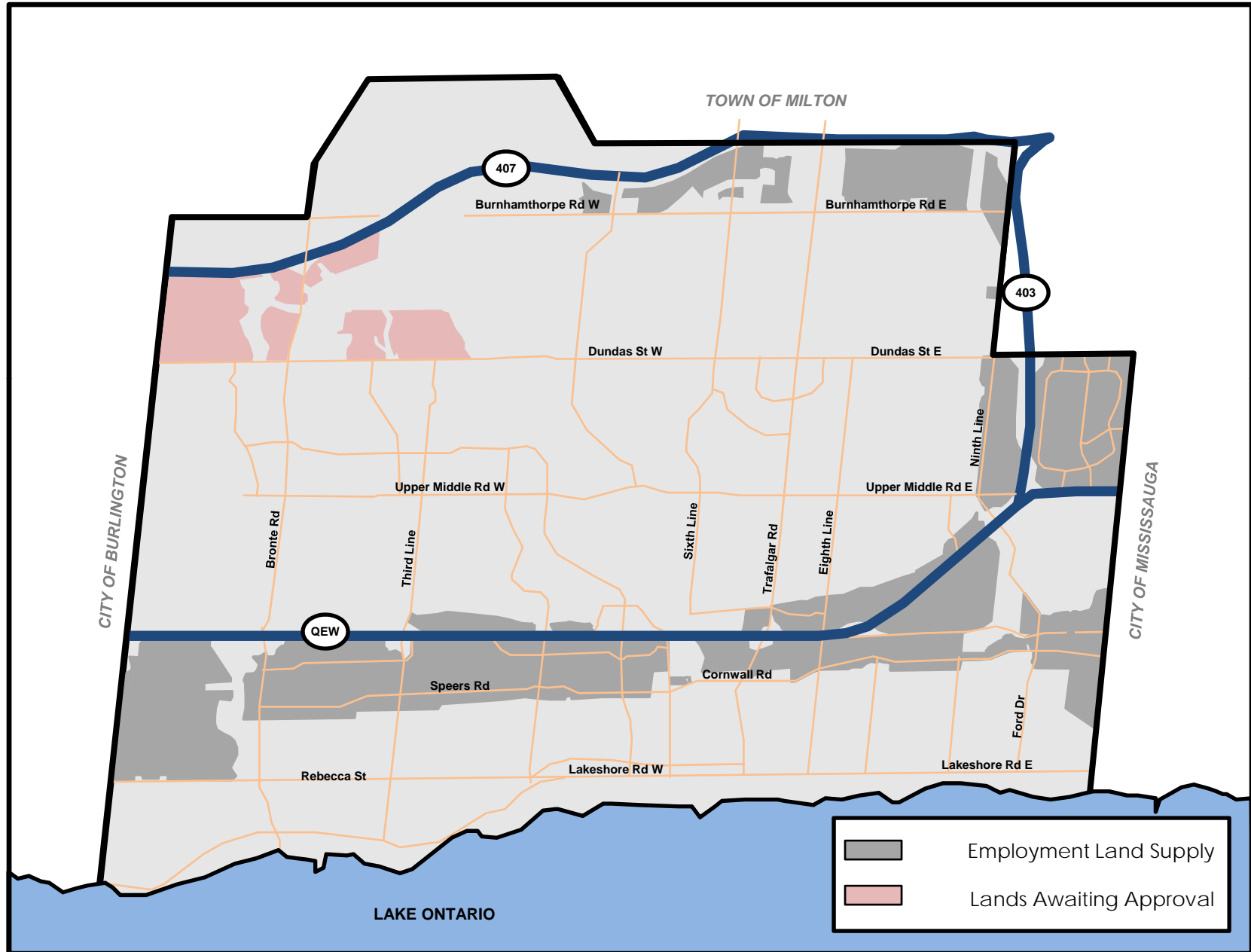
From a geographic perspective, the Town's official plan permits a broad range of employment and employment-related uses, including a some service and commercial uses.

## **2. Employment Land Includes Opportunities in Both South and North Oakville**

The pattern of employment land in the Town of Oakville reflects the historic pattern of industrial land development in the community, which began in the south with the establishment of the Ford automotive plant:

- The Ford plant was established in south-east Oakville in the early 1950s on a site approximately 200 hectares (500 acres) in size, with access to the QEW and Canadian National Railway (CNR) rail line.
- Following the establishment of the Ford plant, a "ribbon" of industrial and commercial use developed westwards along the QEW corridor, providing the Town with a growing economic base.
- Today, there are seven established employment areas in south Oakville, which are designated as *Employment Districts* in the Town's official plan. The seven *Employment Districts* are: Burloak; Midtown; Old Oakville; QEW East QEW West; Winston Park; and Winston Park West, as shown on Map 1.

# TOWN OF OAKVILLE – EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY



Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., based on the Town of Oakville Employment Land Inventory.

The employment land supply in south Oakville is nearly fully developed and is also very well-defined — the entire developed supply is concentrated in the QEW corridor. This condition is unlike some other communities, such as the City of Mississauga or City of Brampton, where elements of employment land supply are scattered on sites outside of the major employment areas, but designated for employment uses in various secondary plans.

In addition to the employment land in south Oakville, there are planned future employment lands in the North Oakville Secondary Plan (NOSP) area, which is bounded by Dundas Street (Regional Road 5) to the south, Highway 407 to the north, Tremaine Road to the west and 9th Line to the east.<sup>1</sup> Within the NOSP, there is an approved area of employment land along the south side of Highway 407 in the east NOSP as well as future areas in the draft West NOSP.

### 3. Analysis Focuses on Sites That Are Designated For Employment Land Uses

For the purposes of this study, employment land in the Town of Oakville is defined as lands that are designated and zoned for employment land uses. In south Oakville, this includes the land in the seven *Employment Districts* that is primarily designated and zoned for:

- *Light Employment* (the E1 Zone), which permits light industrial operations, offices and some service and community-serving uses;
- *General Employment* (the E2 Zone), which permits more traditional industrial operations, including outside storage, transportation and waste processing activities and are restricted to interior sites to minimize the potential for land use conflicts; and
- *Transitional Employment* (the T1 Zone); which permits a greater range of employment uses including industrial-retail uses and service establishments at the periphery of designated employment areas, with the intention of establishing an interface and buffer between more intensive, interior employment uses with that of adjacent residential, commercial or public open space uses and major municipal roads.

A small amount of land zoned for medium and heavy industrial uses (the M2 and M3 Zone) is also included in the Town's employment land supply. Lands that are located within Town's *Employment Districts*, but are zoned for commercial, public or open space uses, are not considered part of the employment land inventory.

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<sup>1</sup>The North Oakville development area is planned to accommodate the bulk of the community's long-term growth in both population and employment and the community services to support them.

It is important to note that commercially-designated lands are only excluded from the employment land inventory for the purposes of analysis. Such lands remain within the Town's designated *Employment Districts*, and therefore are considered to be lands within a designated *Employment Area* for the purposes of conformity with the *Growth Plan*.<sup>1</sup>

The Town of Oakville's employment land supply is conceptually illustrated on Map 1. Full details are provided in the Appendix to this report.

## **B. A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW IS REQUIRED TO DEVELOP NEW POLICIES**

New policies for employment land are required for a number of reasons. New policies are required to meet *Growth Plan* requirements, particularly economic objectives and objectives for "complete communities". New policies are also required to address development pressure to convert employment land to non-employment uses, especially to higher-value residential and retail commercial uses. Strong policies are required to resist this pressure and secure the Town's economic future.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Growth Plan* defines *Employment Area* on page 42 as "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" Consulting Ltd, January 2005.

### **1. New Policies Are Required to Meet Provincial *Growth Plan* Conformity Requirements**

The Province of Ontario has recently undertaken a number of planning policy and growth management initiatives affecting long-range planning. These include the 2006 *Provincial Growth Plan*, the 2005 *Provincial Policy Statement* (PPS) and recent amendments to the *Planning Act*.

Through these new policy initiatives, the Province is seeking to achieve a set of "good planning" principles, which include more compact urban form, achieving a good balance of jobs and housing and directing growth to existing built-up areas, in an effort to limit the need for additional greenfield designations over the period to 2031.

### **2. The Principle of "Complete Communities" Is a Major Consideration**

The good planning principles sought by the *Growth Plan* are embodied in the notion of "complete communities" defined as communities that will be able to meet the daily needs of residents through convenient access to public transportation, a mix of economic activities, as well as local services, housing and community infrastructure.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Defined on page 41 of the *Growth Plan* as communities that "...meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing, and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation and open space for their residents. Convenient access to public transportation and



As a key element of complete communities, the *Growth Plan* seeks to promote economic vitality by ensuring there is enough readily available land for future economic activities, that the broader economic region is in a sound position to adapt to new economic trends, and that employment activities are planned to support the Province's growth management objectives. In particular:

- The *Growth Plan* directs municipalities to accommodate employment growth by “ensuring the availability of sufficient land for employment to accommodate forecasted growth to support the GGH's economic competitiveness” (Section 2.2.1);
- The *Growth Plan* directs municipalities to provide an adequate supply of lands and locations to accommodate future employment growth and to promote economic development and competitiveness by planning for, protecting and preserving *Employment Areas* (Section 2.2.6)<sup>1</sup>;
- The *Growth Plan* builds on the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), which states in Section 1.3.2 that conversions may only be permitted through a

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*options for safe, non-motorized travel is also provided*”

<sup>1</sup>The term *Employment Area* is defined on page 42 of the *Growth Plan* as “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”.

comprehensive review and where it has been demonstrated that the land is not required over the long term and there is a need for conversion; and

- Strict criteria are provided regarding the conversion of employment land to non-employment uses.<sup>2</sup> Under the *Growth Plan*, major retail uses are not considered employment uses for the purposes of employment land conversion. Although these uses generate jobs, for long-range planning purposes, under the *Growth Plan* they are excluded and planned for separately.

The *Growth Plan* and PPS policies are further reinforced by *Planning Act* amendments (known as “Bill 51”), which seek to strengthen a municipality's ability to refuse applications to convert employment land by removing a private applicant's ability to appeal such applications to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Taken together, these new Provincial policies seek to minimize the conversion of employment land to other uses, although it is recognized that some change may be appropriate in localized circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The conversion policies can be found in Section 2.2.6.5, which states that conversions of employment land may only be permitted through a municipal comprehensive review and where a series of tests are met.

<sup>3</sup>By setting out policies to determine where the conversion of employment land may be considered appropriate (Section 2.2.6 .5) the *Growth Plan* recognizes that there may be some circumstances

The *Growth Plan* also provides some more specific planning direction regarding the preferred location, and form and desired use of employment lands:

- Municipalities are encouraged to designate and preserve lands within settlement areas within the vicinity of major transportation infrastructure (Section 2.2.6.9);
- The *Growth Plan* requires that municipalities, in planning employment land, facilitate the development of transit-supportive, compact built form that minimizes surface parking (Section 2.2.6.10); and
- Under the *Growth Plan*, major office and institutional development should not be located on employment land, but rather in the Urban Growth Centres, major transit station area or other areas with planned higher order transit service (Section 2.2.6).

Under the *Growth Plan*, a set of specific intensification and density targets must also be achieved. The Region of Halton, like all other single and upper-tier municipalities in the GGH, is directed to:

- Plan for a density of 50 residents and jobs combined per ha in new greenfield areas; and
- Accommodate 40 per cent of new units within the built boundary after 2015.

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*where conversion of employment land could be considered appropriate and good planning.*

The *Growth Plan* also identifies a series of Urban Growth Centres (UGC)s, which are intended to be a focus of investment for higher density, transit-oriented development. Midtown Oakville has been identified by the *Growth Plan* as an UGC and a higher density target — 200 jobs and people per hectare — is to be achieved in this location.

A strong local policy framework is required to guide development to land use areas in ways that support these Provincial initiatives.

### **3. New Policies Are Required to Address Pressure for Conversion**

The Town of Oakville, like most other communities in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton (GTAH), has been under intense pressure to convert employment land to other urban uses, particularly residential and retail uses.

The pressure for conversion is occurring for many reasons, including a constrained urban land supply, strong population growth pressure and the substantial price differential between employment and non-employment land. The potential for higher land values, more intense development and a quicker return on investment generates a strong incentive for private landowners to seek conversions of employment land to these other non-employment uses.

New policies are required to address pressure for conversion and for new residential designations, and also to identify those areas where some change may be appropriate for sound local planning reasons and considering key Regional and Provincial planning objectives.

Within the new Provincial policy context, this employment land review study is required by the Town of Oakville to review its existing policies regarding areas of employment, the retention and conversion of employment land and options to direct major office and institutional development to the Midtown Oakville UGC. This report, therefore, constitutes the portion of the Town's municipal comprehensive review under the PPS and the *Growth Plan* that addresses employment uses.

### **C. THIS REPORT IS ORGANIZED INTO FOUR CHAPTERS**

This report describes the results of our review of employment land in the Town Oakville. It provides background on the issue of employment land and recommends a number of policy directions to be considered a part of *Liveable Oakville* and, ultimately, the new *Town of Oakville Official Plan*. The conclusions are organized into four chapters:

- The introduction describes the purpose of the study, issues to be addressed and the structure of the report.
- The second chapter describes the employment growth outlook for the Town of Oakville, including the overall employment forecast and the jobs that will need to be accommodated on employment land.
- The third chapter reviews the supply of employment land that is currently designated to accommodate future employment growth and reaches conclusions on the adequacy of the land supply to accommodate future growth in employment.
- Based on these conclusions, the final chapter suggests a number of key policy directions that might be considered as a means to achieve City, Regional and Provincial planning objectives.

It is important to note that this employment land review is only one of a number of studies being undertaken as part of *Livable Oakville*, including:

- The Bronte Village Revitalization Study;
- A Plan for Kerr Village;
- The Midtown Oakville Review;
- The Uptown Core Review; and
- The Residential Intensification Study.

The Town's "municipal comprehensive review" includes the results of these studies, as well as the employment land review study and additional work being undertaken by Town of Oakville planning staff. The outcome of all studies being undertaken as part of *Liveable Oakville* will need to be considered before decisions and policy choices can be made regarding employment land in Oakville.

It is also important to note that, as this study is being undertaken, the national and global economies are in a period of great uncertainty. Reflecting current conditions, a period of slower growth can be expected over the 2006 to 2011 census period. Due to the long-term nature of planning and growth management, however it is important to not let short-term cyclical trends unduly influence the longer-term outlook and to plan for growth.

In our view, decisions about employment land in the Region of Halton and Town of Oakville must remain focussed on long-term community planning objectives.

## **II THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE IS FORECAST TO ACCOMMODATE APPROXIMATELY 50,000 NEW JOBS OVER THE PLANNING PERIOD TO 2031**

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This chapter discusses the outlook for employment growth and employment land in the Town of Oakville. The employment forecast for the Town of Oakville is prepared within the context of the overall employment outlook for the Region of Halton, as provided in the *Growth Plan*.

According to the *Growth Plan*, employment in the Region of Halton is forecast to double between 2001 and 2031, which is a significant amount of growth. Most of the Region's future employment growth will be accommodated on employment land, which, again, are business park environments primarily occupied with single-storey industrial-type buildings.

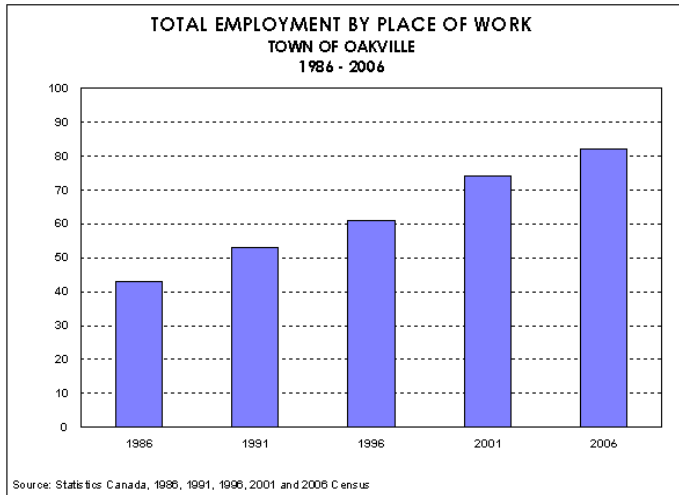
The Town of Oakville is anticipated to play a major role in achieving the Provincial vision for economic growth in the Region of Halton, particularly with respect to employment land. Over half of the Town of Oakville's future employment growth will be employment land employment, characterized by modern, high-value industrial buildings. While Oakville cultivates a distinct small-town character within the wider region, the need for employment uses is required to sustain the local economy and to provide opportunities for residents to find good jobs within their community.

### **A. THE TOWN OF OAKVILLE HAS DEVELOPED A STRONG ECONOMIC BASE**

The Town of Oakville is an established employment area in the GTA that is home to the manufacturing and service sectors, particularly activities related to the automotive sector. Employment has grown strongly over the past 20 years. The Town's industrial and commercial building markets have been healthy, reflected in strong employment land absorption. In recent years, however, the rate of growth has slowed somewhat as the supply of employment land in southern Oakville has filled in.

#### **1. Employment in the Town of Oakville Has Grown Strongly Over Past 20 Years**

As illustrated by the graph on the following page and in Table 1, employment in the Town of Oakville has nearly doubled over the past 20 years, growing from approximately 43,000 jobs in 1986 to approximately 82,000 jobs in 2006. As shown in Table 2, employment in the Town of Oakville has consistently grown at a faster rate than the GTA overall, even during the recession-dominated 1991 to 1996 Census period.



Year	Employment	Growth	Growth Rate
1986	43,200	—	—
1991	53,300	10,100	4.3%
1996	61,100	7,800	2.8%
2001	73,500	12,400	4.0%
2006	82,100	8,400	2.0%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

Note: Employment is “place of work” employment, including the usual place of work and work at home components and no-fixed place of work employment.

Year	Employment	Growth	Growth Rate
1986	2,280	—	—
1991	2,500	220	1.9%
1996	2,530	30	0.2%
2001	2,940	410	3.0%
2006	3,180	260	1.6%

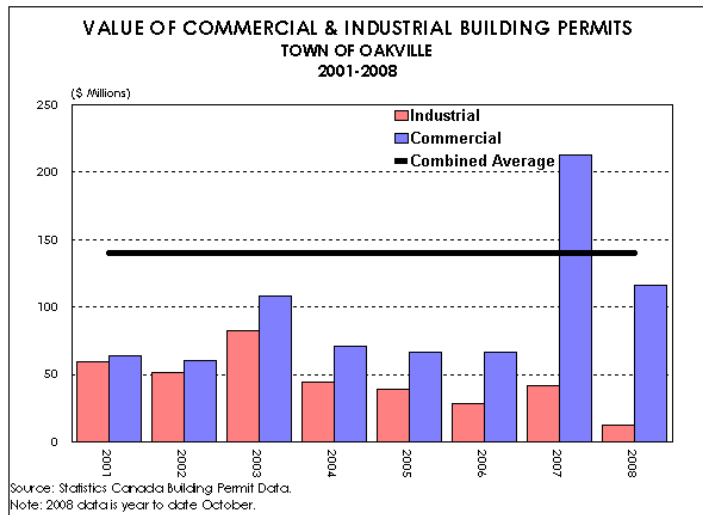
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

Note: Employment is “place of work” employment, including the usual place of work and work at home components and no-fixed place of work employment.

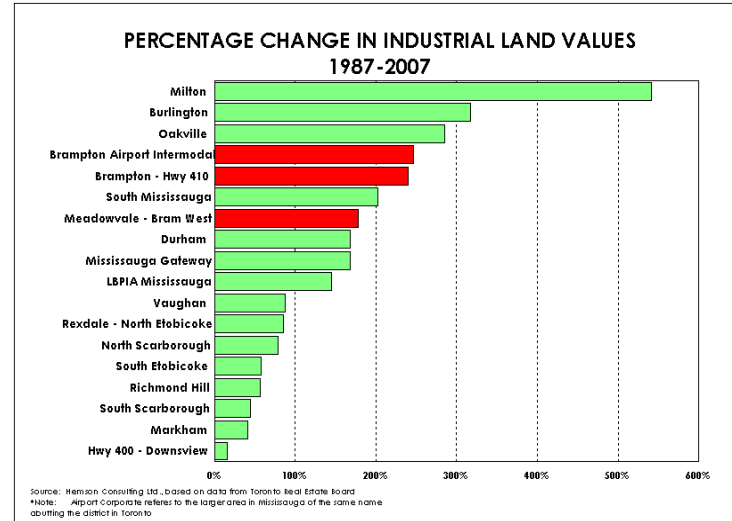
## 2. Industrial and Commercial Building Markets Have Been Strong

As with employment growth, the level of new, non-residential construction in the Town of Oakville indicates continued strong interest by businesses to locate in the Town with a substantial increase in new building. As shown in the graph following, Oakville has averaged approximately \$140 million industrial and commercial construction combined over the period from 2001 to mid-2008.

A similar picture is painted by changes in land values. As shown in the graph below, the value of industrial land has risen sharply in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) over the past 20 years, particularly in the western areas. The three highest rates of increase in the GTAH have been observed in the Region of Halton, including the Town of Oakville.



The rise in value of industrial land indicates a high demand and a high desirability for employment land in the Town of Oakville. As a point of comparison, general inflation over this period has been about 63 per cent; only the last five areas shown on the graph have seen increases below this rate.



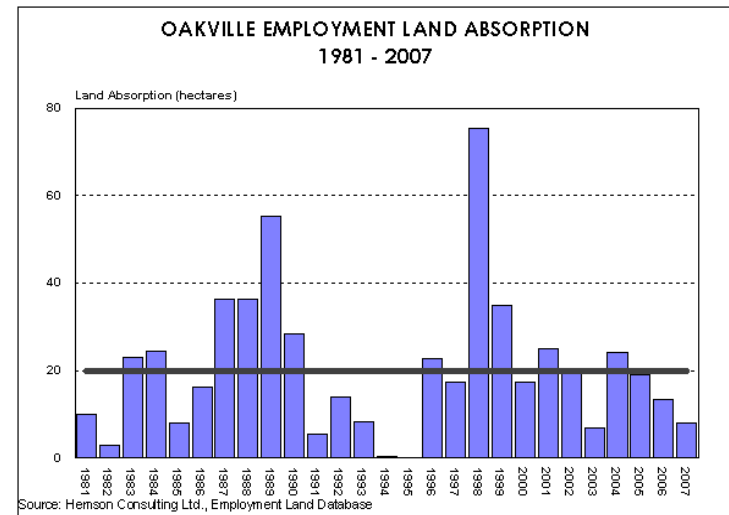
A final indication of the strength of Oakville’s employment land market is the relatively low rates of industrial building vacancy. As shown in Table 3 following, the Town of Oakville has one of the lowest industrial vacancy rates in the GTAH. The Town’s industrial vacancy rate indicates a continued strong demand for industrial building space.

Oakville	3.9%
Brampton	4.7%
Toronto	5.0%
Vaughan	5.6%
Whitby	6.2%
Richmond Hill	6.4%
Mississauga	6.6%
Milton	6.7%
Markham	6.8%
Burlington	10.2%
<b>GTAH</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

Source: Cushman, Wakefield, LePage, Greater Toronto Industrial Report, Second Quarter 2008.

### 3. Oakville Has Had High Levels of Employment Land Absorption

The combination of strong employment growth and strong non-residential building construction has led to the development of significant amount of employment land in the Town of Oakville. As shown in the graph below, since 1981 Oakville has averaged approximately 20 hectares per year of employment land absorption.



Similar to most communities in the GTAH, employment land absorption in Oakville has fluctuated with economic trends in Southern Ontario. Employment land absorption was rapid through the 1980s, declined through the early 1990s and then has declined gradually in recent years, mainly as a result of the constrained land supply in south Oakville locations.

The Oakville economy has been performing very well. Employment has grown, non-residential building markets have been healthy and high levels of employment land absorption have occurred. Consistent with its past level of performance, employment in the Town of Oakville is forecast to grow steadily to 2031.



## B. FORECAST IS FOR CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH TO 2031

The forecast of employment for the Town of Oakville has been prepared within the context of the overall economic outlook for the GTAH, and the *Growth Plan*, which anticipates a doubling of employment between 2001 and 2031 for the region of Halton.<sup>1</sup>

According to the *Growth Plan*, employment in the Region of Halton is forecast to grow from approximately 218,000 jobs in 2006 to 390,000 jobs in 2031. Notwithstanding that employment growth fell somewhat short of expectations during the 2001 to 2006 Census period and will almost certainly do so again in the period to 2011, the fundamentals are in place for continued, long-term growth. Within this context, employment in Oakville is forecast to grow to approximately 128,000 jobs by 2031.

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<sup>1</sup>For details, see *The Growth Outlook for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, Hemson Consulting Ltd, January 2005.

### 1. Current Economic Slowdown is Part of the Normal Business Cycle

One of the most interesting features of the 2006 Census is the pattern of employment growth that is shown during the 2001 to 2006 period:

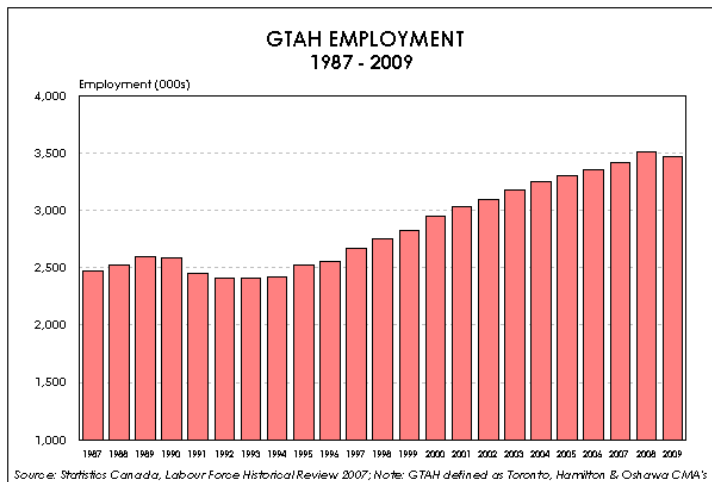
- Overall, the Census reported that employment in the GTAH grew by only 8.4% over the five years, compared to a forecast of 11.7%<sup>2</sup>. And for the Town of Oakville, while employment from 2001 to 2006 grew by a quite healthy 11.7%, this was also lower than had been expected.
- More recent data is now indicating why this pattern occurred: less employment growth than expected has taken place on employment lands, and somewhat more has taken place in other locations in activities such as retail, health, education and public administration.
- However, while industrial-type activities had little net growth in the GTAH between 2001 and 2006, there was a significantly increase in building space. The combination of little employment growth and the addition of new space indicates a decline in employment density in employment areas. This decline in employment density largely explains the geographical distribution of growth.

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<sup>2</sup>The *Monthly Labour Force Survey* reported growth of 10.6% in the same time period, which is somewhat closer to what the forecast expectations had been.

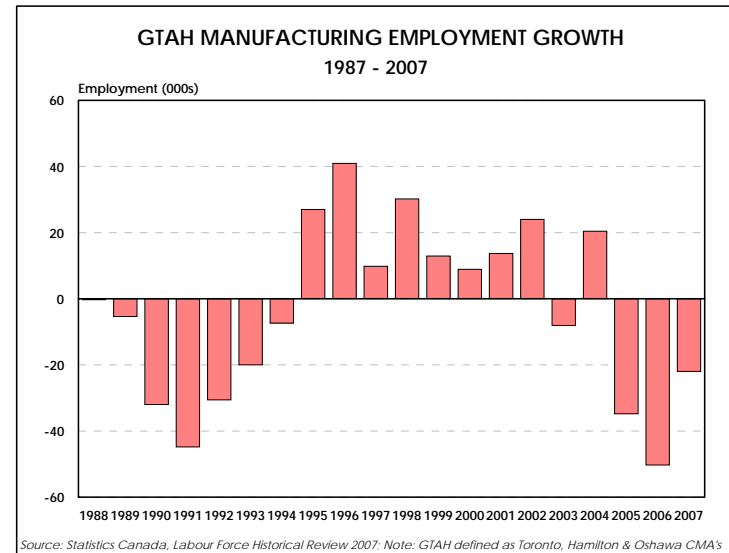
## 2. Long-Term Growth Forecasts Incorporate the Cyclical Nature of the Economy

Notwithstanding the pattern of employment growth during the 2001 to 2006 period, on an annualized basis, the pattern of sustained employment growth in the GTAH is clear. As shown in the graph below, since the end of the recession of the early and mid-1990s, employment in the GTAH has grown rapidly and steadily in the GTAH. The current recession is not indicated by the peak employment in 2008 and declines as of beginning of 2009.



Within this pattern of sustained employment growth, however, some important changes in the composition of employment are worth noting. The manufacturing sector, in particular, continues to restructure in response to shifting competitive environments.

As shown in the graph below, following a period of strong gains from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, manufacturing employment has declined in recent years. The decline in manufacturing employment has been the result of many factors. Among the stable and growing manufacturers, their increased productivity has been a contributor to economic growth as an increased value of goods has been produced with fewer workers through capital investment and automation.

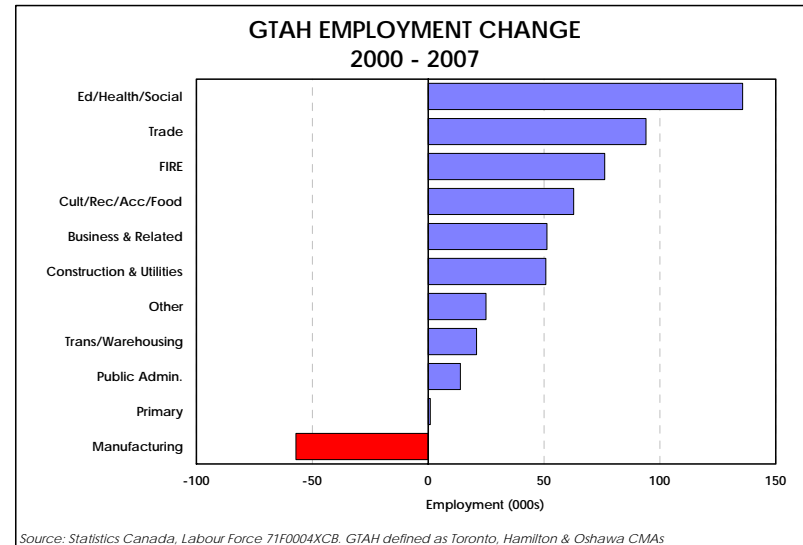


However, many manufacturers have been in a more challenging situation as they have faced strong competition from foreign markets, particularly China and India. In addition, for the last two or three years, until the dramatic economic events of the Fall of 2008, high energy and materials costs and the high value of the Canadian dollar were becoming significant challenges for the Canadian manufacturing sector.

Undoubtedly, when 2008 annual data are available, they will show declines in manufacturing employment in 2008 and, certainly, there is a clear expectation of further declines during 2009. However, although job losses in the GTAH have occurred as a result of restructuring in the manufacturing sector and will continue to do in the near term, these jobs have, at least well into 2008, been replaced with gains in employment in other economic sectors: education, health and social services, trade and professional and business services.

As shown in the graph following, employment overall in the GTAH has continued to grow despite some significant challenges to the manufacturing sector. This is a further indication of the strength and diversity of the GTAH economy and its ability to replace job losses, when they occur, with other economic activities.

There is no question that the current recession in the United States and Canada will yield cyclical declines in both manufacturing output and manufacturing employment. However, all sectors of the economy will also be affected, at least in the short term.



Since the focus of this report is on planning and development, it should also be recognized that the recession will have significant short-term effects on the residential and non-residential and real estate and development sectors in the GTAH. Not only is there a general reduction in demand, but the financial crisis has made buyers nervous and investors cautious, and has significantly reduced the level of risk many lenders are willing to tolerate.

It is important, however, that the local effects on the real estate markets not be overstated. There are some key differences between the Toronto area market and some other Canadian markets and virtually all major U.S.A. markets. While the real estate problems are mostly related to the housing market, non-residential land markets have in some degree followed patterns in the housing market.<sup>1</sup>

Within a broader national and global context, the GTAH is anticipated to remain the primary economic engine in Ontario and Canada. The GTAH remains well placed to be a focus of continued growth when the economic recovery occurs. As a result, economic output is still anticipated to continue to grow over the long-term, accompanied by associated growth in employment and income.

### **3. Oakville's Total Employment is Forecast to Grow to 130,000 Jobs by 2031**

Within the context of anticipated long-term economic growth in Canada, the GTAH and the Region of Halton, employment in the Town of Oakville is forecast to grow to 130,000 jobs in 2031. The Oakville employment forecast is summarized in Table 7 below.

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<sup>1</sup>*Housing in the Toronto area still more affordable than it was relative to the late 1980s real estate boom here and has not been "over-priced" or has needed to "correct" in the dramatic fashion being seen in markets in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton or the innumerable troubled housing markets in the United States, including the major cities on both coasts and in the southwestern states.*

Under this forecast, the Town of Oakville's share of Regional employment will decline from approximately 36% in 2006 to 32% in 2031. The forecast is consistent with the *Growth Plan* target for the Region of Halton to 2031, including a consideration of the growth outlook for the other municipalities within the Region.

The model used to prepare the forecast is "top down", in that it incorporates the allocations shown in the Schedule 3 of the Provincial *Growth Plan*. The model also incorporates "bottom-up" factors, most importantly the residential and employment land supply. In the Town of Oakville, the supply of employment land is finite, which has important implications for the future growth outlook.

<b>Table 4</b>			
<b>Town of Oakville Historic and Forecast Employment Growth</b>			
	Employment	Employment Growth	Growth Rate
1986	43,000	—	—
1991	53,000	10,000	4.3%
1996	61,000	8,000	2.8%
2001	74,000	13,000	4.0%
2006	82,000	8,000	2.0%
2011	90,000	8,000	1.8%
2016	103,000	13,000	2.9%
2021	115,000	12,000	2.2%
2026	121,000	6,000	1.1%
2031	128,000	7,000	1.0%
Change 2006– 2031	—	46,000	1.8%

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd.

Note: Employment is "place of work" employment, including the usual place of work and work at home components and no-fixed place of work employment, allocated to Oakville in accordance with the method used in the *Growth Outlook for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*.

**NOTE TO DRAFT:**

**The forecast employment growth is based on the latest version of the forecasts used for Sustainable Halton. This table may be subject to minor revision as the Sustainable Halton numbers are finalized in February 2009.**

**C. EMPLOYMENT LAND WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN ACCOMMODATING FUTURE GROWTH**

The approach used by Hemson Consulting Ltd. to forecasting employment growth is based on the three standard land use-based categories—major office, population-related and employment land employment. The categories and their main characteristics are summarized below.

- **Major Office Employment** is employment contained within free-standing buildings over 20,000 sq.ft. in size. This is in accordance with standard employment forecast category definitions in the *Growth Outlook for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and distinct from the term major office as used for a different policy purpose in the *Growth Plan*.<sup>1</sup>
- **Population-Related Employment** is employment that exists in response to a resident population that is primarily not located in employment areas or major office jobs. This category includes retail, education, health care, local government and work at home employment.

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<sup>1</sup>For employment forecasting and most land-use planning purposes, major offices are traditionally defined as freestanding office buildings greater than 20,000 net sq. ft. in size. The Growth Plan uses the same expression — major office — for a different purpose. In the Growth Plan, major office policies address the desire to locate office buildings of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> or greater in transit-oriented locations to encourage greater transit use. Except as otherwise noted, this report's definition of major office is 20,000 sq.ft. or more.

- **Employment Land Employment** is jobs accommodated in primarily low-rise industrial-type building space and multiples, the vast majority of which are located within business parks and industrial areas. On a geographic basis, most designated employment areas accommodate some population-related employment and, in a smaller number of cases, major office.

It is primarily for employment land employment where there is the most competition with other communities, and where land use planning and local economic development policy can have the strongest influence on the amount of employment that is accommodated:

- Population-related employment, including large-format retail uses, is driven mainly by growth in population. It is accommodated within existing areas and through the normal course of secondary planning for most new residential communities; and
- As a result of its very high density and limited land requirements, the location of major offices is driven mainly by market forces and, historically, has not been greatly influenced by land use planning. With the exception of the City of Toronto, most of the transit-oriented nodes that have traditionally been planned for office have been poor performers.
- In order for a community to compete for employment land development, however, a marketable supply must be designated in community plans.

In the Town of Oakville, employment land employment is forecast to account for approximately half of the total employment growth over the 2006 to 2031 period. This reflects the role that employment land currently plays in accommodating economic development and the type of development anticipated in the future.

### 1. Town of Oakville Economic Base is Oriented Towards Manufacturing and Services

Consistent with the industrial orientation of much of the GTAH economy, employment in the Town of Oakville is oriented towards traditional industrial sectors. According to the 2006 Census, the largest sector of employment is manufacturing, followed by business and related services. This is illustrated in the graph below.



Within the manufacturing sector, Oakville's main strength is in the automotive industry. However, according to Oakville staff, the Town also has concentrations in advanced manufacturing, pharmaceutical and knowledge-based industries:

- The largest private sector employer in the Town of Oakville is the Ford Motor Company of Canada, which in 2006 employed approximately 3,500 people. A range of other major auto-related facilities are also located in Oakville, including manufacturers of auto-related components and equipment;
- Oakville accommodates a number of firms related to the pharmaceutical industry, including the manufacturing of medical equipment, marketing and distribution medical devices and medical product manufacturing. Some of the Town's major pharmaceutical industry employers include: BD Canada, GlaxoSmithCline and Nycomed Canada; and
- The Town also accommodates a number of advanced manufacturing activities, including the manufacture of landing gear and flight control, commercial communication towers and satellite dishes and the manufacturing of water filtration devices. Some of the major employers in these industries include GE Water and Process Technologies, Goodrich Landing Gear, and GE Lighting Canada.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For the list of the Town's top 100 employers, please see <http://www.oakville.ca/economicdevelopment/employers.htm>

## 2. Employment Land Continues to Accommodate Major Components of The Town's Economic Base

Currently in the Town of Oakville, employment land employment accounts for approximately 60% of the total employment, meaning that it accommodates a significant component of the economic base:

- By type, employment land employment in Oakville accounts for estimated 46,000 or 56% of the Town's 2006 employment of 82,000 jobs. Currently, this employment is accommodated mainly in the Town's seven *Employment Districts* along the QEW.
- An estimated 8,800 jobs, or approximately 11% of the Town's employment are in major offices. This employment is accommodated within the designated *Employment Areas* as well as other locations, particularly central Oakville and the downtown.
- The balance, approximately 27,300 jobs, are population-related and scattered throughout the community, including residential neighbourhoods and the downtown. Some are also within the Town's designated *employment areas*, primarily as retail and institutional uses.

The estimated employment by type for the Town of Oakville in 2006 is shown in Table 9 below.

<b>Table 5</b>		
<b>Town of Oakville Employment by Type, 2006</b>		
Employment Type	Number of Jobs	Percentage
Major Office Employment	8,800	11%
Population-related employment	27,300	33%
Employment Land Employment	46,000	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,100</b>	<b>100%</b>

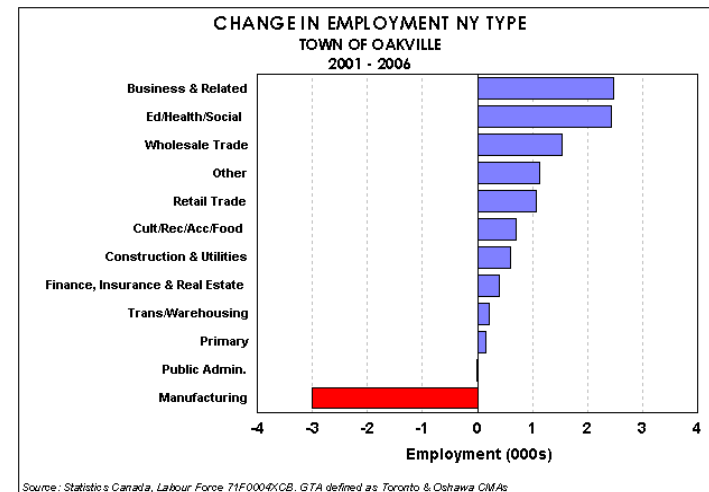
Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd based on Statistics Canada, Census of Canada

This is similar to many other communities in the GTA/H that also accommodate a significant share of employment on employment land. Across the entire GTA/H economic area, approximately 40% of the total employment is employment land employment. Excluding the central cities of Toronto and Hamilton, the rest of the GTA/H is at approximately 55% of total employment in employment land employment.

By geography, Oakville's employment land supply accommodates an even larger share of employment because it contains virtually all of the Town's employment land employment, but also much of the Town's major office employment and some of the population-related employment, including retail and institutional uses. This is consistent with other communities in the GTA/H.

### 3. Evolution of Manufacturing Is Not Necessarily Reducing Demand for Employment Land

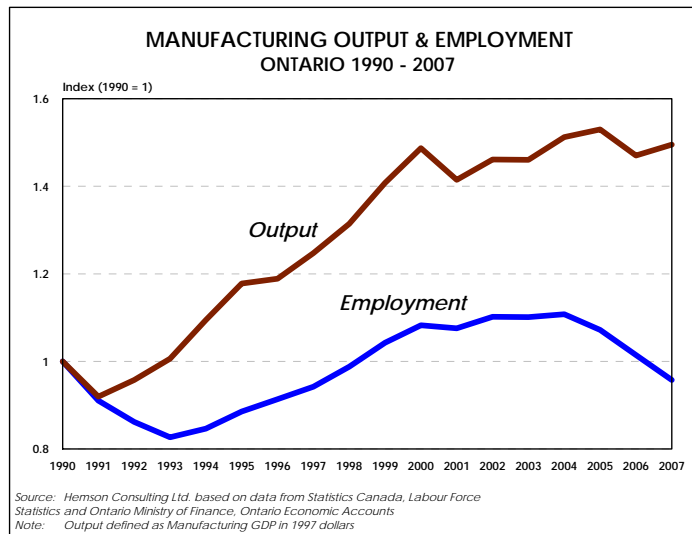
Like the GTA/H overall, it is clear that some changes are occurring in the composition of employment in the Town of Oakville. From the previous graph, it is interesting to note that, for the first time in decades, manufacturing is not the largest sector of employment and, as shown below, manufacturing employment in Oakville actually declined over the 2001 to 2006 period. This change in employment in Oakville reflects GTA/H and national patterns, some of which were discussed above.





Changes in the structure of employment and changes in the nature of work for some people do not necessarily reflect changes in the overall structure of the GTA economy. And, employment is not always the best guide to demand for employment lands; the GTA remains an industrial-based economy.

As shown below, manufacturing output continues to grow at a more rapid rate than manufacturing employment, in fact output had been increasing in recent years while employment declined. Notwithstanding the declines in *both* output and employment that are occurring now (but not yet reflected in the data in the graph), the point “gap” between employment and output is expected to continue to reflect increased productivity.



When the output of manufacturing is taken into account, it appears as if the GTA is still oriented towards manufacturing. It can be argued from a development perspective that land demand is far more correlated to output and the level of economic activity than it is to a straight employment measure.

For example, the logistics and distribution sectors are critical to supply chain management both for the manufacturing sector and for management of goods produced here and abroad. These sectors are small from an employment perspective, but have far greater implications for employment land, for two reasons:

- First, much of the economic activity accommodated in these sectors is in the form of large efficient highly automated distribution facilities with relatively low employment densities; and
- Second, while it may not be a large or intensive employer, the transportation and distribution sectors play a key role in the complex economic relationships that make up the GTA economy, including providing a critical support to good producing industries.

Taken together, in our view it is not appropriate to conclude from recent economic trends that there will be reduced demand for employment land over the long-term, notwithstanding the strong cyclical factors at play today.

If anything, the development of new generation facilities that combine storage with other functions such as offices, assembly and manufacturing may increase demand for industrial-type buildings in employment areas. Over the long-term, we remain of the view that Ontario will remain a key centre for employment and industry with associated growth in industrial-type buildings on employment land.

#### 4. Approximately 40% of Future Employment Growth Will Be Employment Land Employment

Employment land has played a major role in accommodating employment in the Town of Oakville in the past, and this relationship is anticipated to continue:

- Employment land employment is forecast in accordance with anticipated market demand, the upper limit of which is defined by the Town's currently designated and planned employment land supply. The result is a forecast growth of approximately 18,700 jobs or 41 % of the total employment growth from 2006 to 2031.
- Population-related employment is forecast to grow in accordance with population growth, so much of this growth will occur in conjunction with the residential development of the North Oakville area. The result is a forecast growth of approximately 11,700 jobs or 26% of the total employment growth to 2031.
- Growth in major office employment is forecast to continue over the long term, based on the anticipation that the expectation that the Town will remain an attractive location for office development.

- New development opportunities, particularly in the Trafalgar–Highway 407 area as currently planned, will keep the Town competitive for office development. Over time, it is also hoped that planning can direct some of this office growth to the Midtown Oakville UGC, in accordance with the *Growth Plan*.

The employment forecast by type is summarized in Table 6 below.

<b>Employment Forecast By Major Type Town of Oakville, 2006 to 2031</b>				
Employment Type	2006	2031	Growth	Share
Major Office	8,800	24,000	15,200	33%
Population-related	27,300	39,000	11,700	26%
Employment Land	46,000	64,700	18,700	41%
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,100</b>	<b>127,700</b>	<b>45,600</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd.

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

#### **NOTE TO DRAFT:**

**The forecast employment growth is based on the latest version of the forecasts used for Sustainable Halton. This table may be subject to minor revision as the Sustainable Halton numbers are finalized in February 2009.**

Consistent with the experience of other 905 communities in the GTA, most of the growth in employment land employment will be characterized by modern, high value, industrial-type development, in particular uses focussed on warehousing and distribution.<sup>1</sup> Examples of the type of facilities that Oakville can expect to locate on employment land in the future are shown on the following page.

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There will continue to be strong demand for all types of urban land uses in Oakville, including demand for employment land. Approximately 40% of the total growth in employment anticipated for the Town of Oakville will be accommodated on employment land, particularly North Oakville. Demand for major offices is also anticipated to grow significantly over the forecast period as the Town continues to mature and develop.

Recent trends in industrial development, combined with the strong locational advantages of the North Oakville expansion area, suggests that future employment land development will be characterized largely by high-value, modern and attractive facilities. With some of the most desirable employment land in the GTA, the Town of Oakville is also in a position to compete for more prestige and intensive forms of employment land development, including major offices.

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<sup>1</sup>For detail, see *Understanding Employment Land in the Region of Peel, Hemson Consulting Ltd., 2005*. It is also noted in this report that trends towards integrating offices and other uses within a single facility may actually be having the effect of reducing the need for traditional office concentrations.

# EXAMPLES OF NEW FACILITIES IN OAKVILLE & PEEL REGION



**Loblaw Office Building**  
1 Presidents Choice Circle, Brampton  
597,432 sq.ft



**Zarpac**  
1185 North Service Rd E, Mississauga  
57,000 sq.ft



**Industrial Building**  
6300 Kennedy Rd, Brampton  
45,958 sq.ft



**Office / Industrial Building**  
Airport Rd & Mayfield Rd, Caledon  
43,128 sq.ft



**Omron Dualtec Automotive Electronics Inc.**  
2270 Bristol Circle, Oakville  
80,000 sq.ft



**Automodular**  
2235 Speers Rd, Oakville  
260,000 sq.ft

Given the Town's constrained land supply, however, over the forecast period there will also be growing pressure to convert employment land to other urban uses, in particular pressure to convert lands designated for employment and office uses to retail and residential uses. Policies will need to be developed to address this pressure, in the context of the Town's and overall Regional employment land requirements.

Under the *Growth Plan* and the PPS, municipalities are directed to plan for an appropriate supply of employment land to accommodate future employment growth and economic development. Accordingly, the next chapter turns to a discussion of the current supply of employment land in the Town of Oakville and whether or not it is adequate to accommodate forecast growth.

### III OAKVILLE IS VERY WELL-POSITIONED TO ACCOMMODATE FUTURE DEMAND

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Like other communities in the GTAH, one of the main reasons for the Town of Oakville's past economic success is a competitive supply of employment land. The historic employment areas along the QEW corridor, however, are maturing and the supply and range of vacant sites available is narrowing. These areas will continue to play an important role in accommodating existing employment, but likely not as a location for major new job growth.

Increasingly, the areas where new employment growth will be accommodated in the Town of Oakville are the employment lands in North Oakville, along Highway 407. The long-term market prospects for the North Oakville employment lands are excellent, given the area's superior transportation access and broader trends in industrial development.

Given anticipated market demand in the Region of Halton and the role that the Town of Oakville is anticipated to play in accommodating the Provincial vision for growth in the Region of Halton, at least the current amount of employment land is required, including the entire existing supply of employment land in south Oakville and the currently planned amount in north Oakville.

#### A. OAKVILLE HAS A VERY COMPETITIVE SUPPLY OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

The Town of Oakville has a total employment land supply of almost 2,000 net ha. Most of this supply, almost 1,500 net ha, is located in south Oakville along the QEW and is nearly fully-developed. The remainder, just over 500 net ha, is planned for the North Oakville area and is largely vacant.

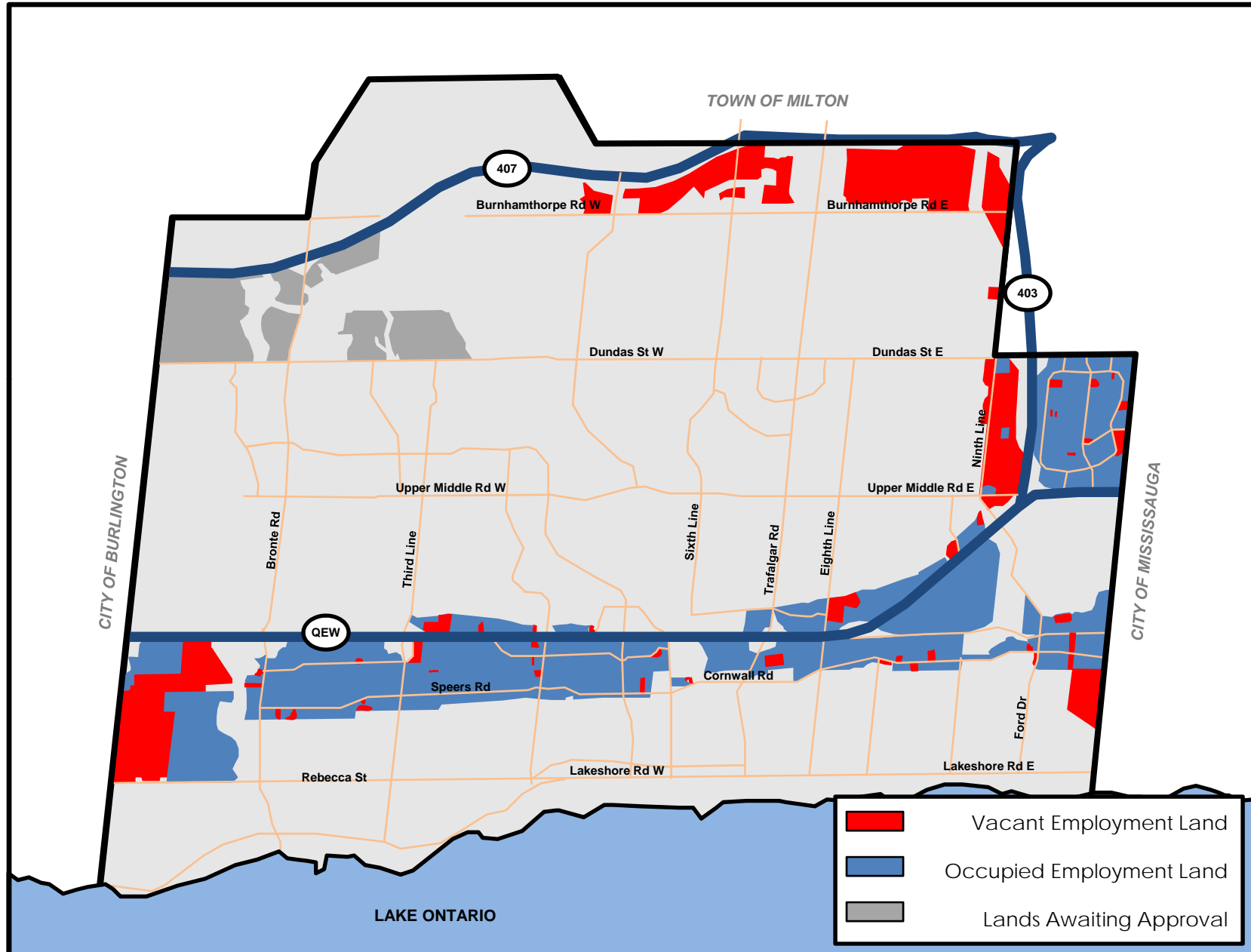
##### 1. Oakville Has a Total Supply of 2,000 Net ha, of Which Approximately 40% is Vacant

The Town of Oakville has a total supply of nearly 2,000 net ha of employment land. The net employment land area (net ha) excludes roads, storm water management ponds and other services which tend to be roughly 20% of the gross land area, excluding non-developable areas such as natural features, hydro corridors or buffer areas.<sup>1</sup> The Town of Oakville's occupied and vacant employment lands supply is shown on the following page.

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<sup>1</sup>Like major offices, the Growth Plan uses a different definition of net land area which includes roads, services and other non-developable areas. For the purposes of analysis, the commonly accepted definition is used, the conclusions of which can then be restated to other definitions.

# TOWN OF OAKVILLE – VACANT & OCCUPIED EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY



Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., based on the Town of Oakville Employment Land Inventory.

In addition to the local roads and public uses, within the boundaries of the Town's employment districts there are parcels of land that are in uses other than employment land as defined for the purposes of this analysis. Table 7 shows the overall land areas within the districts, but distinguishing between the employment lands under consideration in this report from lands used for retail, utilities, open space or residential<sup>1</sup> uses as well as the hospital site in North Oakville<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Pre-existing residential uses within now-designated employment areas are excluded from employment land where the parcel is 0.5 ha or less, on the basis that these properties are not likely to be developed for employment uses in the foreseeable future. Those parcels with a residential unit on parcels of greater than 0.5 ha are included as vacant employment land supply on the assumption that these parcels will be subdivided and redeveloped for employment purposes.

<sup>2</sup>The new hospital site in North Oakville, while a major employment generator and within the employment district in west North Oakville, is part of the population-related employment base and is not included as employment land for the purposes of this analysis.

<b>Table 7</b>	
<b>Town of Oakville Land Uses within Employment Districts</b>	
<b>Land Area in ha, December 2008</b>	
	Total Net ha
<u>South Oakville Employment Districts</u>	
Employment Land (as defined in this report)	1,450
Major Retail Uses	120
Utilities and Rights of Way	20
Open Space and Public Uses	10
Residential Uses	<1
Sub-Total South Oakville	1,610
<u>North Oakville Employment Areas</u>	
Employment Land (as defined in this report)	520
Proposed Hospital Site	20
Sub-Total North Oakville	540
<u>Total Town of Oakville</u>	
Employment Land	1,970
Other Uses	180
Total Oakville	2,150

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., based on GIS-based information provided by Town of Oakville.

**NOTE TO DRAFT:**

**There are still a small number of parcels being verified for size and use, so there data may be subject to *minor* changes in the final report.**



As shown in Table 8, approximately 40% of the Town's employment land supply is vacant, with the largest component of vacant lands in North Oakville, approximately 510 net ha.

South Oakville <i>Employment Districts</i>	Occupied Net ha	Vacant Net ha	Total Net ha
QEW East	340	50	390
QEW West	475	25	500
Burloak	140	95	235
Winston Park	160	10	170
Winston Park West	25	75	100
Mid Town Core	50	5	55
Old Oakville	>5	>1	<5
Sub total South Oakville	1,190	260	1,450
North Oakville Expansion Area	10	510	520
Total	1,200	770	1,970
Share	61%	39%	100%

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., based on information provided by Town of Oakville.

**NOTE TO DRAFT:**

**There are still a small number of parcels being verified for size and use, so there data may be subject to *minor* changes in the final report.**

**2. Supply of Vacant Employment Land in South Oakville is Becoming Increasingly Constrained**

Despite an apparently large supply of vacant employment land in south Oakville, only a small amount is considered readily available for development. Most of the vacant supply in south Oakville is characterized by small scattered sites that may prove to be a challenge to develop.

This component of supply is referred to as “long-term” vacancy for employment land planning. In most communities, this, “tail end” of the supply tends to remain vacant for longer periods of time as a result of physical or other constraints to development. The nearly fully-developed nature of employment land in south Oakville is, however, a very good indication of strong market demand for sites along the QEW corridor.

Most of the Town's remaining vacant employment opportunities in south Oakville are located within the Winston Park West and Burloak Districts. Lands within the Winston Park West District are, however, constrained from a servicing perspective. While the Burloak District had been constrained by a number of factors, recent improvements to the area's transportation access are expected to make the area more attractive for development as employment land over the planning period.

### **3. Employment Land in North Oakville Will Be Highly Competitive**

In order to be most competitive, employment land must be well served by the road network, preferably 400 series highways, and large enough to provide a range of sites and a unique sense of place. Based on these criteria, and consistent with work undertaken as part of *Sustainable Halton*, the North Oakville employment lands are considered to be highly competitive and marketable:

- The lands have direct access to Highway 407 and the QEW, and offers sites with good exposure which are often valued by prestige users who wish to establish a corporate identity with the visual appearance of their building; and
- The lands are large, making it easier to avoid land use conflicts and provide a range of sites size, price and ownership options. The size of the area also permits the Town a great deal of flexibility in responding to changes in economic conditions, space requirements and shifts in demand.

Taken as a whole, the Town of Oakville has a highly competitive employment land supply. The near fully-developed nature of the Town's existing employment lands reflects strong market demand. The planned employment land in North Oakville are considered highly marketable, and a major competitive advantage for the Town within the GTA-H employment market.

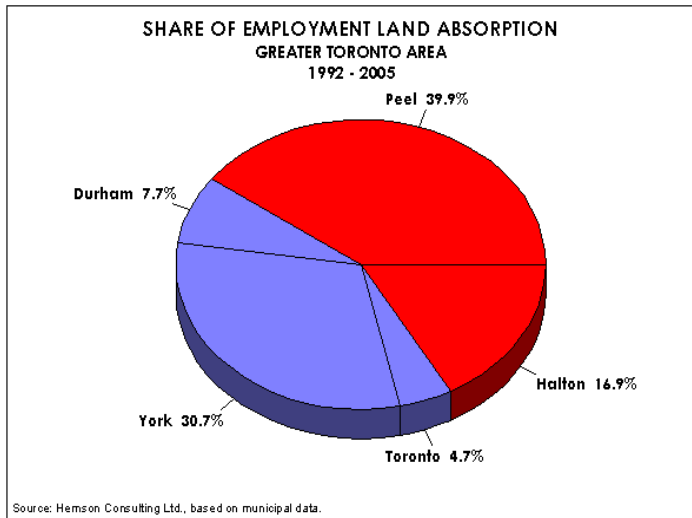
### **B. ABILITY TO PROVIDE LARGE VACANT PARCELS IS A MAJOR ADVANTAGE**

Like other communities in the GTA-H, particularly in the Regions of Peel and York, one of the Town of Oakville's major competitive advantages is its ability to provide large vacant development parcels. The potential to provide large vacant parcels, primarily in North Oakville, is an advantage because it provides the Town with flexibility in adapting to changing market conditions and accommodating future market demand.

#### **1. Demand For Employment Land Continues to Favour GTA-West Locations**

As discussed in our previous employment-related reports for the Region of Halton, the Region of Peel, and the City of Mississauga since the recession of the early 1990s, more than half of the total employment land absorption in the GTA-H has taken place in the GTA-west market, particularly in the Regions of Peel and Halton.

The combination of favourable positioning with respect to major US markets, a well-developed transportation network and increased trade volumes has enabled the GTA west locations to accommodate significant amounts of new development over the past 30 years. As shown on the graph on the following page, the Regions of Peel, Halton and York have dominated the GTA-H employment land market since the recession of the early 1990s.



## 2. The Pending Build-Out of Established Employment Areas Will Present Significant Market Opportunities

Further improving the employment land prospects for the Town of Oakville is the pending build-out of competing employment areas and business parks in southern Peel Region, particularly the City of Mississauga. The community's historic share of the market has already begun to shift to other locations:

- The City of Mississauga has traditionally been one of the GTA's most rapidly-growing locations for employment land development and has emerged as one of the most important centres for manufacturing, trade, and warehousing in the GGH.

- However, following decades of steady employment land development, Mississauga's supply of greenfield employment land is nearly built-out. Recent work for the City has estimated that the City's employment land supply is about 85% occupied and will be fully occupied by about 2012.<sup>1</sup>
- As the City of Mississauga nears build out of its major business parks, the GTA West market will see significant shifts, as Mississauga's former market share is taken up by the City of Brampton and communities within the Region of Halton.
- In particular, the Town of Milton Derry Green Corporate Business Park and the Halton Hills Highway 401 frontage lands area both expected to perform very well because they are, from a market perspective, largely a western extension of Mississauga's successful business parks along Highway 401; and
- Likewise, the employment lands to be provided through the North Oakville expansion area are anticipated to perform very strongly, given their superior access to Highway 407 and other transportation corridors.

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<sup>1</sup>For details, see the Employment Land Review Study prepared by Hemson Consulting Ltd., for the City of Mississauga in June 2008.

The GTA West remains very well-positioned to accommodate employment land development because of its strategic location and transportation access. More specifically, because of the increased reliance of economic activity in the GTAH on truck transportation and efficient production systems, the location of new industrial development will be increasingly dependent upon access to large development parcels and good transportation infrastructure, particularly roads.

### **3. Even with North Oakville, the Town May Not Be Able to Take Full Advantage of Future Opportunities**

Detailed employment land planning for the North Oakville area began in June 2000, with the preparation of a strategic land use options study.<sup>1</sup>

Based on the anticipation of continued strong demand for employment land in the GTAH and the area's strong locational advantages, the study originally recommended the designation of approximately 900 net ha of employment land. Through more detailed secondary planning, however, the total amount of employment land was reduced— from approximately 900 net ha to 530 net ha.

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<sup>1</sup>For detail, see the Strategic Land Use Options Study , prepared for the Town of Oakville and City of Burlington by Hemson Consulting Ltd. In June 2000,

The reduction in the employment land area for the NOSP was primarily the result of more aggressive natural heritage and environmental protection in the development of the final land use concept. Notwithstanding that the reduction served an important planning objective — a greater level of environmental protection — it has restricted, somewhat, the the ultimate amount of employment the Town will be able to attract.

As a result of the reduction in employment land in North Oakville, the amount of new employment growth and business investment that occurs in the Town of Oakville is limited by the available supply of land. As a result, and given the anticipation of continued strong demand, we conclude that at least the current supply is required.

### **C. AT LEAST THE CURRENT AND PLANNED SUPPLY OF EMPLOYMENT LAND IS REQUIRED**

The adequacy of the employment land supply in the Town of Oakville has already been considered within a regional context through preliminary analysis undertaken for *Sustainable Halton*, the Region's growth management and *Growth Plan* conformity work. Through this work, it has been determined that the Town will play a major role in accommodating Regional employment growth and, therefore, in achieving the Provincial vision for employment growth in the Region of Halton.

### **1. Analysis for Sustainable Halton Indicates a Regional Need for Additional Employment Land**

It has been the Regional planning expectation for some time that the Town of Oakville will play a major role in accommodating job growth in Halton. This expectation is based on a number of factors, chief amongst which are the Town's strong locational advantages, high quality of life and strong past performance.

As part of the background analysis undertaken as part of *Sustainable Halton*, the adequacy of the Region's employment land supply is being assessed. As of February 2009, the expectation is that the Region will require 800 to 1,000 gross hectares (640 to 880 net hectares) of employment land to accommodate growth to 2031. This is based on maintaining the existing designated supply in all four local municipalities, including Oakville.

Therefore, the Town's current and planned supply is required, including the employment land supply in south and North Oakville. As contemplated in *Sustainable Halton* and explained in numerous previous studies, the North Oakville lands are suitable and marketable for this purpose.

### **2. Demand For Employment Land May be Even Higher Than Preliminary Estimates Suggest**

The lower end of the land estimate range of the Region of Halton's employment land requirements was prepared using a density factor of 37.5 employees per net ha, which is typical for newer employment areas in the GTA.

Current economic trends, however, indicate that densities on some employment lands are declining, and may well continue to decline over the forecast period. The anticipated decline in density results from a number of factors:

- First, over the forecast period, the average density of new employment land is likely to decline because of the development of larger and more efficient industrial buildings, which are being built at lower than average densities. Many new distribution facilities in the Region of Peel are operating at densities as low as 10 to 15 employees per net ha and new development in Milton has been identified at similar densities.
- Second, consistent with the experience of most other communities in the GTA, the average density of existing employment areas tends to decline over time as existing uses become more efficient and some older facilities become under-used, or change in use from standard employment activities.

The challenge of relatively low and declining employment land densities is now widely recognized by most planners and, more recently, by the Province in their background report on employment land:

The manufacturing sector is expected to continue to be a major contributor to the economy of the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the whole of Ontario. Productivity is expected to continue to grow in this sector, primarily due to new technologies and increases in production efficiencies. Research shows that the Greater Golden Horseshoe is following North American and global trends of building bigger and more efficient industrial facilities that house

fewer employees, particularly in the logistics and distribution sectors. So, even as employment density (jobs per hectare) in manufacturing declines, it is expected that this important economic sector will continue to generate significant land demand.<sup>1</sup>

The trend towards lower employment densities suggests that, at a Regional level, future demand for employment land may be even higher. As a result, for planning in Oakville a density factor of 37.5 employees per net ha for long-term land need remains sound. This assumption allows for some downward flexibility in employment densities from the approximately 40 employees per net ha of current development.

The most important implication of this possibility is that future employment growth in the Town of Oakville may require even *more* employment land than currently planned. At minimum, the Town's existing designated supply needs to be maintained.

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<sup>1</sup>Planning for Employment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Background Paper, May 2008, prepared by the Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, May 2008.

### 3. Conversion of Employment Land is Generally Not Required to Achieve Other Planning Goals

One of the more common arguments advanced in support of applications to convert employment land to other uses is that such a conversion would help to achieve other planning goals, usually related to providing residential intensification or retail space to serve local residents. In the Town of Oakville, however, there is little need to convert employment land to achieve either objective:

- There is a large supply of potential sites for residential intensification in the Town of Oakville, particularly within the Midtown Oakville UGC, the Uptown Core, the Palermo Area and the Trafalgar Corridor in the North Oakville Secondary Plan area.
- This circumstance is consistent with the experience of other communities in the GTA. The reason is that the potential supply of land to accommodate higher-density residential forms, such as apartment buildings, is nearly unlimited.
- As a result, from a planning perspective, there is no need to increase the supply of such sites to achieve the Town's planned level of residential intensification.
- Similarly, there is little need to convert employment land to accommodate retail use. The Town of Oakville has a relatively large supply of commercial designated land as identified in recent work undertaken as part of *Liveable Oakville*.

- While there may be a need for additional retail space, this demand should be focussed in the Town's nodes and corridors, consistent with Provincial planning objectives to focus such uses in transit-oriented locations.
- According to the Town's recent retail and service commercial review, there appear to be sufficient opportunities for expansion and retail and service commercial intensification within the existing nodes and sites.
- While the review has yet to be finalized, on a preliminary basis the key conclusion is that the redesignation of other urban lands for new commercial sites is not required or recommended at this time, including the conversion of employment land to retail uses.<sup>1</sup> The Town will be finalizing the commercial review as part of its broader planning exercise and municipal comprehensive review.

Given the sufficient supply of both residential intensification and commercial development opportunities, the conversion of employment land is not required to achieve the Town's planned urban structure in this regard. On the contrary, converting employment land produces at least two undesirable planning effects:

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<sup>1</sup>For detail, see the Town of Oakville Retail and Service Commercial Policy Review, Phase 3: Recommendations, prepared by urbanMetrics in September 2006.

- Firstly, it reduces a limited and finite resource (employment land) to accommodate other urban uses that could be developed in other locations in the Town, and are directed by Provincial and Regional policies to be accommodated in other locations; and
- Secondly, it increases the already large supply of sites for uses that Town wishes to focus in specific nodes and centres, such as Midtown Oakville UGC and Trafalgar Corridor. Permitting residential and retail uses in unplanned locations makes achieving the Town's objectives for these locations more difficult.

The combined effect of converting employment land in Oakville is to make the Town's planned residential and commercial structure more difficult to achieve and to also reduce the Town's capacity to achieve its economic development objectives. Neither of these consequences is consistent with the Town's best economic interests, its planned role in accommodating Regional employment growth or the Provincial vision for employment growth in the GGH and in the Region of Halton.

In order to take full advantage of future economic opportunities, the Town of Oakville will need to retain virtually all of the currently designated employment land in its current designation, and also take specific actions to promote a more efficient use of the existing land and building supply. The final chapter turns to a discussion of the key policy directions that are recommended to achieve these planning objectives.

### III A NUMBER OF KEY POLICY DIRECTIONS ARE SUGGESTED TO BETTER REFLECT THE TOWN'S VISION FOR LONG-TERM ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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The review of employment land presented in this report concludes that demand in Oakville will exceed the land supply within the forecast period, including existing lands and those planned in new communities. As a result, the Town of Oakville is well-positioned to define its own vision for economic prosperity in the context of Provincial planning objectives, including:

- Ensuring the availability of sufficient supply of employment land accommodate forecast growth to support the GGH's economic competitiveness (pursuant to Section 2.2.1 of the *Growth Plan*);
- Minimizing the conversion of employment land to other non-employment uses including residential and major retail uses (pursuant to Section 2.2.6 of the *Growth Plan* and Section 1.3.2 of the PPS); and
- Promoting a more intensive pattern of development, including employment intensification, consistent with broader *Growth Plan* objectives for more compact urban form and limiting the greenfield land supply that is required to accommodate growth.

The following policy directions are suggested to achieve these objectives, and to better reflect the Town's vision for long-term economic prosperity.

- At a minimum, the Town should maintain the currently designated employment land supply and the planned employment lands in the NOSP area. The conversion of employment land should be resisted;
- The Town should consider options to encourage higher employment land densities, including the intensification of existing employment areas and higher densities on greenfield lands, where possible; and
- In anticipation of the ultimate build out of the employment land supply, the Town may also want to consider options for improving the community's competitive position for major office development and, over time, encourage a shift in the location of major offices to the Midtown Oakville UGC.



**A. TOWN SHOULD MAINTAIN THE CURRENTLY  
PLANNED EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLY**

Within the context of the analysis undertaken for *Sustainable Halton*, there is a need to retain virtually all of the currently planned employment land, including lands designated in south Oakville, and designated and planned supply in the NOSP. As a result of declining densities, there is even the possibility that the Town's employment forecast cannot be accommodated on the available land base.

For these reasons, there is a strong need to retain the Town's employment land supply, and little need to convert employment land to achieve other planning objectives. There is a large supply of potential residential intensification sites in the community, and major new commercial development should be directed to existing nodes and intensification corridors, consistent with Provincial, Regional and local planning policy directions.

To this end, a number of policy directions are recommended to maintain the current supply and resist the conversion of employment land to other use. These are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

**1. New Policies Should Clarify the Role that Employment  
land Will Play in the Town's Economic Future**

One of the major policy directions of the *Growth Plan* and the PPS is to restrict the conversion of employment land to non-employment uses. The Town of Oakville also has a vision for a balance of live-work opportunities and a diversification of employment opportunities. Given these objectives, a primary planning policy priority should bring a strong emphasis to the role that employment land will play in the Town's economic future.

This could take the form of a number of policies, beginning with a refinement of the overall goals and objectives for employment set out in Part B, Section 3 of the Town's official plan: *Employment*, including:

- The inclusion of a policy to protect and maintain the economic health of the designated *Employment Districts* to support a healthy local economy;
- Highlighting the need to provide a variety of employment land opportunities to remain flexible in the market, including large and small sites and old and new areas, all of which play an important economic role in the community; and
- The recognition that maintaining employment land as one of the Town's key economic assets is an important long-range planning objective, notwithstanding that it may develop more slowly, particularly during a period of recession, such as we are entering today.

The Town may also wish to consider updating the language in Part C, *General Policies*, Section 4: *Employment*, to reflect the nature of the Town as an increasingly mature and fully designated community. In particular:

- The Town may wish to consider new policies that specifically seek to “protect”, rather than “ensure” or “designate” serviced land or business areas to accommodate employment development, as set out in Section 4.2; and
- The Town may also wish to indicate its support for the redevelopment and revitalization of older employment areas, as opposed to limiting this policy direction to only the Central Business District and community shopping areas, as set out in Section 4.3.

And finally, the Town may wish to consider updating the language in Part D, *Land Use Policies*, Section 3: *Employment*, to include;

- Clarification that all lands designated for employment and employment-related uses within the *Employment Districts* are considered to be lands within designated employment areas for the purposes of the *Growth Plan* conversion policies (Section 2.2.6.5); and
- Clarification that the types of retail uses permitted in the *Transitional Employment* designation are distinct from the six categories of commercial land use established in Section 2 of the official plan, and that the introduction of retail commercial uses would change the planned role and function of the land use.

## 2. Both The Occupied and Vacant Employment Land Supply be Maintained

The continued use and redevelopment of industrial lands along the QEW corridor for new employment users should be encouraged but without redesignation of lands to major retail<sup>1</sup> or residential uses. These lands are well-suited to industrial-type users and continue to accommodate significant elements of the Town’s current economic base.

Although servicing and access issues need to be resolved in the short term in the Winston Park West and Burloak *Employment Districts*, these economic assets should also be maintained. Recent work undertaken by the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) has estimated the cost of servicing in Winston Park West to be between \$15 to \$20 million for local services and additional \$20 to \$25 million for Provincial highway interchange upgrades.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Town will need to carefully consider its objectives here and be careful to specifically define uses. For example, auto dealerships are, technically speaking, a retail use but are often permitted in employment districts and generally considered compatible with industrial-type uses.

<sup>2</sup>For detail, see *Perspectives on a Development Strategy for Winston Park West Employment District*, prepared by the Ontario Realty Corporation, January 19, 2009.

Lands that have been designated or planned for employment in North Oakville should also be maintained. The amount of employment land designated in the North Oakville area is already substantially less than originally recommended, with the result that the Town may not be able to take full advantage of future economic opportunities. The lands are required not only because they are competitive but also because, once they are developed, the Town's long-term urban structure will be set.

### **3. New Policies For Large Stand-Alone Industrial Users May Need to be Developed**

The Town of Oakville contains some large industrial facilities that were developed when the Town's greenfield land supply was largely vacant — in particular the Ford plant in the QEW East *Employment District* and the Petro-Canada refinery in the Burloak *Employment District*. Over time, the land supply around these large uses has developed, including residential uses.

The Town's existing official plan policy ensures that buffers are required between employment uses and residential area, in particular the concept of the *Transitional Employment* designation. It should also be noted that most large industrial users are very interested in being properly buffered from residential neighbours to ensure that they can proceed with regular industrial operations and trucking without attracting complaints.

Given the current economic conditions, and the potential for potential for land use conflicts over the planning period, the Town may wish to implement a similar policy direction for the boundary between residential and industrial uses in these two locations.

- The Town may wish to consider the development of new policies requiring buffers for the Ford lands to address possible changes that may occur in the long term in response to global economic challenges; and
- The Town may also wish to consider the development of new policies for the Burloak Employment District, similar to the policy directions being considered in the City of Mississauga's Southdown *Employment District* which also accommodates a number of heavier, or traditional industrial uses.

The City of Mississauga is currently considering new policies for Southdown that seek to maintain existing industrial activity to the interior of the Employment District, including the protection of existing industrial activity, with a broader range of business employment uses along the edges of the area. A similar approach may be considered for the Burloak *Employment District*.

In either case, new policies should be based on securing continued employment including lands, if any, which may be considered surplus to the operation. As well, given that the Ford lands are highly visible from the QEW corridor, the Town may also wish to state its position with respect to the urban design role that these lands play in establishing the Town's character.

#### 4. The Conversion of Employment Land Should Be Resisted

The Town of Oakville has been, and is anticipated to be under pressure to convert employment land. From a planning perspective, there is only a “need” to make changes to the employment land supply, including conversion to non-employment uses, if it is required to achieve a particular local, regional or Provincial planning objective. For the Town of Oakville, there is little need to convert employment land to achieve such planning objectives:

- There is a large supply of potential residential intensification sites, and strong policy directions to encourage such development in particular locations such as the urban growth centres;
- While there may be a need for some additional retail commercial space, recent work for the Town has concluded that the supply is generally sufficient and efforts should be made to focus new retail space in space in existing nodes and corridors; and
- While there may be circumstances where some change may be appropriate at the edge of older employment areas, particularly along major arterial roads, these opportunities have already been identified with the *Transitional Employment* designation.

As a result, it is recommended that the Town generally resist the conversion of employment land to non-employment uses. The following policy directions are suggested:

- The Town should consider replacing Section 3.2k), regarding the redesignation of employment land, with the conversion policies and tests set out in Section 2.2.6.5 of the *Growth Plan*. Section 3.2k) should also contain a specific policy that no employment land conversions will be permitted until the time of the next official plan review.
- The Town may wish to consider strengthening the conversion policies in the various *Employment District* plans, which contain objectives for land use and development but do not explicitly address the issue of conversion. The district plans could also be updated to include objectives encouraging the use and re-use of existing lands for continued economic use.
- In particular, policies for the Midtown Core *Employment District* will likely need to be strengthened in order to achieve the Town’s vision for the area as a focus for higher intensity employment uses. The Town may wish to clarify that the Midtown Oakville UGC is the only area within the Midtown Core where residential uses are considered appropriate.
- It may also be helpful to clarify that scattered vacant sites within the designated *Employment District* are not suitable for conversion to non-employment use. Permitting non-employment uses on these sites is not appropriate because of the potential for land use conflict and are destabilisation, which is contrary to both local and Provincial planning policies.

### 5. Current Conversion Applications Should be Considered in the Context of These Conclusions

The Town of Oakville currently has a number of applications either in progress or pending that involve the redesignation of certain lands to non-employment use. The applications are illustrated on the map on the following page. Current applications for a change in use within the Town's designated *Employment Districts* include:

- An application to permit high density residential development on a site designated *Transitional Employment* at the southern edge of the QEW West *Employment District*;
- An application to permit high density residential development and office uses on a site designated *Arterial Commercial* within the Midtown Core *Employment District*; and
- An application to permit retail commercial land uses on a site designated *Transitional Employment* in the Burloak *Employment District*.

Based on the suggested policy directions in this report, most of the current applications for the conversion of land within the designated *Employment Districts* should be refused. The following points warrant attention:

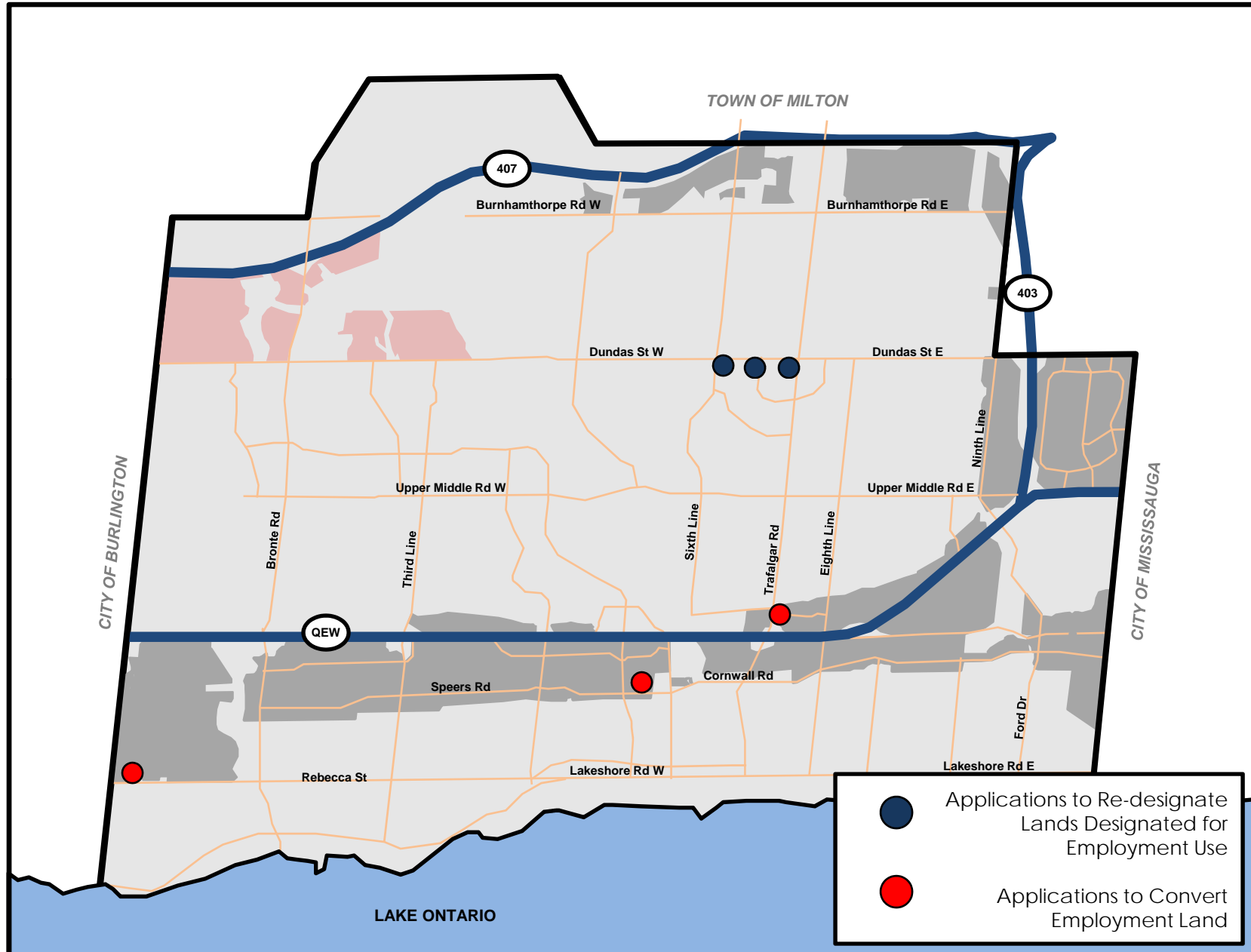
- The application to permit high density residential use in the QEW West *Employment District* should not be approved, even if the site may be viewed as obsolete or expected to remain part of the area's long-term vacancy over the planning period.

Conversion of the subject site would have the effect of lowering the perceived risk of failure in seeking the conversion of other sites in the vicinity, which in turn would increase the value expectations of nearby landowners and lead to a destabilisation of the area over time.

Long-term vacant sites should be retained as employment land, particularly in the Town's older *Employment Districts*. Long-term vacancy, including periodic vacancy of the standing building stock, is part of the natural life-cycle of employment areas in central locations and is not, in our view, evidence of a need for conversion from a land use planning perspective;

- The application for a mix of residential and office uses in the Midtown Core *Employment District* should not be approved. Existing Town and Provincial policies direct residential uses to the mixed use area designated in the south-west quadrant of the Trafalgar Road and QEW interchange. This is also the location of the Midtown Core UGC as identified in the *Growth Plan*.

# TOWN OF OAKVILLE – CURRENT DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS



Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd., based on the Town of Oakville Employment Land Inventory.

- On a more general note, applications to permit “blended” commercial or residential permissions within the Town’s *Employment Districts* should not be permitted, either in the form of live-work, or mixed residential and office uses. Such applications remain conversions of employment land within the meaning of both the PPS and the *Growth Plan* and are not considered appropriate.

With respect to application in the Midtown Core *Employment District*, if the applicant is of the view that there is a sufficient market demand for the proposed office space, the Town should take the view that this in itself indicates the attractiveness of the site and location for higher density employment development, making it even more important to retain this location exclusively for employment uses.

If the Town chooses or is forced to approve such applications, the minimum requirement should be that the employment component or office space is built in advance or conjunction with the residential elements of the proposal; and

- The key issue to be considered regarding the application to permit retail commercial land uses on a site designated *Transitional Employment* in the Burloak *Employment District* is the City’s overall commercial land needs. Based on the preliminary conclusions of the commercial review, and the Town’s existing policy context, the application would be refused.

The planned role and function of the *Transitional Employment* designation excludes retail commercial land uses, which are planned to be accommodated in a variety of other locations throughout the community. As noted previously, however, the Town has yet to finalize the commercial policy review. Should a need for additional retail commercial space be identified in this location, the application may be acceptable.

The Town is also facing a number of applications for the redesignation of lands to accommodate employment uses in the Uptown Core *Residential District*, including lands designated for office uses. Although such applications are not considered a conversion of employment land within the meaning of the *Growth Plan*, in our view the Town should still be concerned with maintaining sites designated to accommodate employment and employment-related sectors, even if they are not within *Employment Districts*.

Given the key role that employment land will play in achieving the Town, Region’s and Provincial economic objectives, the key policy position in the new official plan should be that no conversion be permitted except at the time of the next official plan review. Implementing policies should be included in each of the *Employment District* plans, in particular the Midtown Core.

## **B. OPTIONS TO ENCOURAGE MORE EFFICIENT USE OF EMPLOYMENT LAND SHOULD BE CONSIDERED**

In addition to retaining the existing employment land supply, the Town should seek to make the most efficient use possible of the remaining sites in south Oakville, and future employment land development for the future employment areas in North Oakville. To achieve this objective, the Town will need to encourage employment intensification, the continue use and reuse of the existing building stock and higher greenfield development densities.

### **1. Employment Intensification Should be Encouraged**

One of the major opportunities for employment intensification in the Town of Oakville is the employment areas along the QEW corridor. These areas have been very attractive locations for development as a result of their competitive location.

Planning to take advantage of intensification opportunities in these *Employment District* would be consistent with *Growth Plan* directions to promote a more compact urban form. The Town may consider revising current policies regarding development standards, in particular:

- The Town may consider revising the range and scale of uses within the employment designation as set out in Section 3.3 (b), which indicates development will occur at a floor space index not exceeding 1.0.

A more flexible approach using built form instead of coverage may better suit the Town's purposes and encourage a greater level of intensification within existing areas.

- The Town may also consider the inclusion of urban and environmental design and streetscape standards for new and older employment districts as a broader update of the general development policies for employment areas to ensure pedestrian access and general livability for workers. Streetscape improvements necessarily improve private property investment in landscaping and upkeep.

Such plans, however, will likely require investments in infrastructure in order to maintain the attraction of these areas for new investment, particularly with respect to transportation infrastructure. Investment will be required to bring employment land in the *Winston Park West Employment District* to market. Additional investment will be required to maintain and improve the competitiveness of all existing employment areas, particularly older industrial areas north and south of the QEW where traffic congestion is already an issue.

Given the scale of investment that is likely involved to encourage employment intensification, the Town may wish to explore options for financial assistance from senior levels of government. And considering the Town's commitment to sustainability, opportunities for greening infrastructure and making available new technologies for business may also be considered.



## 2. Changes to Site Design and Other Development Standards Could Be Considered

While *significant* changes in the employment density profile cannot be achieved, there are some actions that can be taken to increase the density of new employment land through changes to site design and strategies to attract more employment-intensive uses.

Increased building density on employment land could be influenced by measures such as reducing the land areas devoted to landscaping, encouraging multi-storey construction for the office portion of industrial buildings, encouraging the shared use of entrances, truck turning area or parking, and the provision of structured parking.

Some of these changes, such as reduced or eliminated landscaping, may achieve a desired density goal, but may be contrary to other public interests. Many of the changes affecting operations are not currently economically feasible for many businesses nor part of “normal” development practices and may be resisted. For example, shared use of space for truck entrances, turning, loading or storage may introduce significant hurdles for liability and security.

The introduction of additional development and operational costs to businesses through regulation or inconvenience would also need to be carefully considered in the broader context of the economic competitiveness of the GTAH in North America and the competitiveness of the Town within the GTAH.

## 3. Financial Incentives May Need to Be Provided to Promote Employment Intensification

In most communities, including the City of Brampton, the redevelopment economics of older employment areas or “brownfields” favours residential or major retail use in virtually every circumstance. Both of these types of development are strongly discouraged in employment areas under the *Growth Plan*.

As a result, financial incentives could be required to shift the development economics to promote redevelopment or intensification of existing areas for employment uses. A number of successful examples and tools can be drawn from the City of Toronto, including Community Improvement Plans (CIP), Tax Increment Equivalent Grants (TIEGs), the sale or lease of publicly owned lands, and a range of other programs to provide direct and in-kind financial incentives.<sup>1</sup>

Any number, or a combination of all of these types of initiatives, could be considered as a means to promote employment intensification in Oakville.

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<sup>1</sup>For details, see the Long-Term Employment Land Strategy, City of Toronto (Phase 2 Report) prepared by Hemson Consulting Ltd. in January 2007.

**C. A STRATEGY TO ENCOURAGE MORE MAJOR OFFICES MAY BE REQUIRED**

The existing *Oakville Official Plan* policies acknowledge the role the Town might play in attracting office development. Attracting offices to the North Oakville employment lands are a priority that will require a strong policies to identify highly visible lands as prestige locations. Oakville also anticipates prestige employment and office uses at the intersection of Highway 407 and Trafalgar Road in the North Oakville East Secondary Plan area, and high density uses in the Trafalgar Urban Core, with “major offices” in the northernmost area.

Attracting additional major office users may also be possible along the QEW corridor where there is an large established office market through Oakville and Burlington. Existing office development in the corridor is largely highway oriented and in a suburban business park built form. It is the general intent of the Town and Region to encourage a shift, over time, of major offices to the urban growth centres, including the Midtown Core. The intended development would be more urban in form and more transit oriented. More than planning policy, however, will be required to actually achieve these objectives:

- Major office development is highly sought after in all communities across the GTAH. They have the potential to concentrate jobs as desired by the *Growth Plan* within Urban Growth Centres, in major transit nodes and intensification corridors. Land use planning, however, has historically had a weak influence on the location of major offices.
- The location of major offices is driven primarily by market demand. With only a handful of exceptions, major office development since the early 1990s outside of downtown Toronto has occurred not in major transportation nodes, but in greenfield business parks with superior highway transportation access.
- A combination of location, highway access, existing or new anchor offices, and quality of the lived environment are factors which influence location decisions.

As the Town plans for a future in which it will increasingly accommodate more intensive development and provide metropolitan-wide services, it is clear that senior levels of government will need to provide some level of assistance in implementation. Such assistance would ideally include:

- Investment in the transportation infrastructure, particularly in the lakeshore corridor and other planned transit nodes, to implement *Growth Plan* policies for transit-supportive development.

- Investment in other Provincially-funded facilities such as hospitals and other health care facilities;
- Assistance in ensuring that a full range of urban amenities are provided to enhance the appeal of high density living; and
- Participation in potential Ontario Municipal Board hearings regarding applications to convert employment land to other uses or implementing intensification proposals where there may be strong community resistance.

The Town of Oakville is entering an exciting period of change. The focus of new development will shift to North Oakville, and with it a new set of challenges and opportunities will be presented to the community. Protecting both the vacant and occupied employment land supply will be critical to achieving the Town's, Region's and Provincial economic objectives.

Given that the Town is planning for its eventual built out, Oakville should also be seeking to make the most of its designated employment land supply and improve its market appeal for higher density employment development, in particular major offices. We trust that the forecast information provided in this report is of assistance to Town staff and Council as they make plans for the future.

**APPENDIX**

**Detailed Employment Land Supply Information**

## Town of Oakville Employment Land Supply Details

<b>Burkloak Park</b>						
Use	Occupied		Vacant		Total	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
<b>Employment</b>	140.64	140.64	115.73	96.13	256.37	236.77
<b>Major Retail</b>	24.79	24.79	0.95	0.95	25.74	25.74
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	4.50	4.50	0.00	0.00	4.50	4.50
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Residential</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	169.94	169.94	116.68	97.08	286.62	267.01

<b>Midtown Core</b>						
Use	Occupied		Vacant		Total	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
<b>Employment</b>	52.29	52.29	4.01	4.01	56.30	56.30
<b>Major Retail</b>	40.18	40.18	0.00	0.00	40.18	40.18
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	15.70	15.70	0.00	0.00	15.70	15.70
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.05
<b>Residential</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	108.22	108.22	4.01	4.01	112.23	112.23

## Town of Oakville Employment Land Supply Details

<b>QEW West</b>						
<b>Use</b>	<b>Occupied</b>		<b>Vacant</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Employment</b>	476.51	476.51	23.79	23.79	500.30	500.30
<b>Major Retail</b>	10.52	10.52	0.00	0.00	10.52	10.52
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	0.00	0.00	1.13	1.13	1.13	1.13
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	0.75	0.75	0.93	0.93	1.68	1.68
<b>Residential</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	487.79	487.79	25.84	25.84	513.63	513.63

<b>Winston Park</b>						
<b>Use</b>	<b>Occupied</b>		<b>Vacant</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Employment</b>	158.52	158.52	12.21	12.21	170.73	170.73
<b>Major Retail</b>	34.81	34.81	0.00	0.00	34.81	34.81
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	0.23	0.23	0.30	0.30	0.53	0.53
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	5.64	5.64	0.00	0.00	5.64	5.64
<b>Residential</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	203.03	203.03	12.52	12.52	215.55	215.55

## Town of Oakville Employment Land Supply Details

<b>Old Oakville</b>						
<b>Use</b>	<b>Occupied</b>		<b>Vacant</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Employment</b>	1.99	1.99	0.90	0.90	2.89	2.89
<b>Major Retail</b>	1.12	1.12	0.00	0.00	1.12	1.12
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Residential</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	3.11	3.11	0.90	0.90	4.01	4.01

<b>QEW East</b>						
<b>Use</b>	<b>Occupied</b>		<b>Vacant</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>Net</b>
<b>Employment</b>	338.00	338.00	55.74	50.04	393.74	388.04
<b>Major Retail</b>	4.26	4.26	0.00	0.00	4.26	4.26
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.02
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	0.04	0.04	3.32	3.32	3.36	3.36
<b>Residential</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	342.32	342.32	59.05	53.35	401.38	395.67

## Town of Oakville Employment Land Supply Details

<b>Winston West</b>						
Use	Occupied		Vacant		Total	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
<b>Employment</b>	24.46	24.46	92.70	74.40	117.16	98.86
<b>Major Retail</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Residential</b>	0.19	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.19
<b>Total</b>	24.65	24.65	92.70	74.40	117.35	99.05

<b>Oakville</b>						
Use	Occupied		Vacant		Total	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
<b>Employment</b>	1192.41	1192.41	305.08	261.48	1497.49	1453.89
<b>Major Retail</b>	115.68	115.68	0.95	0.95	116.63	116.63
<b>Utilities &amp; ROW</b>	20.45	20.45	1.43	1.43	21.88	21.88
<b>Open Space &amp; Public Use</b>	6.48	6.48	4.25	4.25	10.73	10.73
<b>Residential</b>	0.19	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.19	0.19
<b>Total</b>	1339.06	1339.06	311.70	268.10	1650.77	1607.15