

Report To:	Regional Chair and Members of Regional Council
From:	Bob Gray, Commissioner, Legislative and Planning Services and Corporate Counsel
Date:	January 19, 2022
Report No:	LPS05-22
Re:	Orlando Corporation North Porta Regional Official Plan Amendment Application – Initiation Report (File No. RQ64A)

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Regional staff be directed to proceed with a Statutory Public Meeting for the Proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment (File RQ64A) – “An Amendment to Address the Addition of Employment Lands to the Urban Area and to the Town of Milton’s ‘401 Industrial/Business Park Secondary Plan’” by the end of the first quarter of 2022 to fulfill the requirements of the Planning Act.
2. THAT the Regional Clerk forward a copy of Report No. LPS05-22 to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, the Town of Oakville, and Conservation Halton, for their information and comment.

REPORT

Executive Summary

- On November 2, 2021, Halton Region received a Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) application submitted by Glen Schnarr & Associates Inc. on behalf of Orlando Corporation. The proposed amendment is provided as Attachment #1 to this report.
- The application proposes to amend the Regional Official Plan to add to the Urban Area the portion of the lands at 8350 Esquesing Line in the Town of Milton that are located between the existing Urban Area designation and the Greenbelt Plan Protected Countryside, referred to in the application as the ‘northern sliver’ lands.
- The purpose of adding these lands to the Urban Area is to permit development for employment uses comprehensively with the majority of the property to the south that is currently within the Region’s Urban Area and which is proposed to form part of the Town of Milton’s 401 Industrial/Business Park Secondary Plan.

- This report provides Regional Council with information on the ROPA application and outlines key policy considerations and next steps in the review of the application.

Background

The lands subject to the ROPA application filed by Orlando Corporation on November 2, 2021 are a part of the property known as 8350 Esquesing Line in the Town of Milton. The lands are located within a part of the Town referred to as the 'North Porta Lands'. The 8350 Esquesing property is generally bounded by Boston Church Road to the west, Esquesing Line to the east, James Snow Parkway to the south, and Lot 4 / Concession IV to the north. The specific lands subject to the ROPA application are located at the northern edge of the property and are bounded by the existing Urban Area designation to the south and the Protected Countryside boundary of Greenbelt Plan to the north. The subject lands are referred to as the 'northern sliver' lands in the application and are proposed to be added to the Urban Area in the Regional Official Plan. A context map showing the location of the subject lands is provided as Attachment #2 to this report. The lands subject to the ROPA application are approximately 14.25 hectares in size.

There are a number of previous and ongoing planning initiatives related to the subject lands and the ROPA application. To assist with understanding this context, a brief summary of these planning processes is provided below:

- ***Sustainable Halton***

Through the Sustainable Halton process, which culminated with ROPA 38 in 2009, Halton identified a strategy to accommodate growth to the year 2031. This included the addition of the area referred to as the 'North Porta Lands', which are located north of the Town of Milton's 401 Industrial/Business Park Secondary Plan area. In this context, the majority of 8350 Esquesing Line was added to the Region's Urban Area to accommodate employment growth to 2031. However, the boundary of the Urban Area designation was delineated based on an existing watercourse at the northern edge of the property. This resulted in the lands north of the watercourse (i.e., the lands now subject to the ROPA application and referred to as the 'norther sliver' lands) being designated as part of the Region's Natural Heritage and Agricultural Systems.

- ***Town of Milton OPA 31 and OPA 67***

The Regional Official Plan requires Local Municipalities to plan comprehensively for new growth areas. The North Porta Lands were added to the Town's Urban Area through OPA 31 and were subsequently planned for comprehensively as part of the OPA 67 – "North Porta Lands", adopted by the Town in August 2021 and forwarded to the Region for review. The Town's amendment proposes to amend the boundary of the adjacent 401 Industrial/Business Park Secondary Plan to incorporate the North Porta Lands. As the 'northern sliver' lands are not currently part of the Urban Area, they are not addressed in either OPA 31 or OPA 67. Instead, they are addressed as part of the ROPA application and other concurrent local applications discussed below.

- **Concurrent Local Development Applications**

In addition to the ROPA application, Orlando Corporation has concurrently filed a number of local development applications with the Town of Milton, including official plan and zoning by-law amendments and draft plans of subdivision. The applications apply to two blocks of land known collectively as the Milton North Business Park, which constitutes the majority of the North Porta Lands.

The purpose of these applications is to enable an overall development proposal for industrial / employment uses as shown in Attachment #3 to this report. The applications will also allow for stormwater management, refinements to the natural heritage system, and updates to the transportation network, among other things. These applications are supported by a number of technical studies and reports. Of particular note for the ROPA application, the Comprehensive Environmental Servicing Strategy (CESS) will address refinements to the Regional Natural Heritage System, including the watercourse, which defines the existing boundary of the Urban Area.

The local development applications were deemed complete by the Town on November 30, 2021 and are now under review. It is important to note that as they are based on the 'northern sliver' lands being added to the Urban Area, the concurrent local development applications are in part dependent on the ROPA application that would bring these lands into the Urban Area.

- **Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR)**

Through the ROPR, Halton is considering how to accommodate growth to 2051, including the assessment of settlement area boundary expansions. Orlando Corporation has participated in the ROPR process and has made submissions related to the subject lands. Settlement area boundary expansions are typically considered as part of a comprehensive process such as the ROPR. However, given the size and context of the subject lands, changes to the Growth Plan that enable consideration of expansions of a certain size outside a municipal comprehensive review, and other timing considerations, Regional staff received Orlando's ROPA application. Regional staff will continue to consider Orlando's submissions and will monitor the timing of these processes to ensure alignment between the ROPA application and the ROPR.

The North Porta Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) Application

As described above, the lands subject to the ROPA application are currently designated Regional Natural Heritage System and Agricultural Area in the Regional Official Plan. Further, they are located between the current boundary of the Urban Area (as defined by an existing watercourse) and the Greenbelt Plan Protected Countryside. Referred to as the 'northern sliver' lands, the subject lands are approximately 14.25 hectares in size.

As part of the ROPA and the concurrent local development applications, the Regional Natural Heritage System designation currently on the subject lands associated with a watercourse is proposed to be realigned to generally be adjacent to the Greenbelt Plan lands. The existing and proposed locations for the watercourse are shown in Attachment #4, which presents excerpts from the environmental study provided in support of the applications. The first figure (Figure 12) identifies the current location of the watercourse, which generally traverses the property from the northwest to the southeast. The second figure (Figure 13) identifies the proposed location of the realigned watercourse and other associated refinements to the Regional Natural Heritage System. Justification for the realignment of the watercourse is contained in this study. Regional staff provided comments on this document in November 2021 and it remains under review.

The proposed realignment of the watercourse would enable the lands south of the watercourse's new location to be re-designated to 'Urban Area', thereby facilitating their development comprehensively with the remainder of 8350 Esquesing Line and the North Porta Lands. In this regard, the applicant is requesting a change in land use designation in the Regional Official Plan from Agricultural Area to Urban Area with an Employment Area overlay.

The ROPA application was filed on behalf of Orlando Corporation on November 2, 2021. The submission was reviewed against the application requirements set out in the pre-consultation meeting with the applicant that occurred on April 28, 2021.

Regional staff have reviewed the application submission and have determined it to be complete in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act* and provided notice to the applicant on November 30, 2021. Subsequent notice of the complete application was provided through local newspapers, signage on the site, and through notices mailed to surrounding property owners. The application has been circulated to internal departments and external agencies for review and Regional staff are awaiting comments.

Next Steps

Regional staff will work co-operatively with partner agencies through the technical review of the submitted information and will also work closely with Town of Milton staff as they process the submitted local official plan and zoning by-law amendments and draft plans of subdivisions.

Public consultation is an important part of the process to amend the Regional Official Plan. To that end, the application and supporting materials will be made available for review on **halton.ca**. The application and supporting materials have also been circulated for comment to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Conservation Halton, and other public agencies. A public information centre and a statutory public meeting will be held in early 2022 to provide opportunities for the public to ask questions and provide feedback on the application.

Following the public information centre and statutory public meeting, and based on all feedback received, Regional staff will prepare a report to Regional Council with a recommendation on the application later in 2022.

Conclusion

Regional staff will process and co-ordinate the review of the submitted technical information provided with the ROPA application and will report back to Regional Council with information to support a future statutory public meeting and subsequently, a recommendation on the proposed amendment.

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

The cost of reviewing the Regional Official Plan Amendment is funded from the Planning Services Operational Budget.

Respectfully submitted,



Curt Benson
Director, Planning Services and Chief
Planning Official



Bob Gray
Commissioner, Legislative and Planning
Services and Corporate Counsel

Approved by



Jane MacCaskill
Chief Administrative Officer

If you have any questions on the content of this report,
please contact:

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Attachments: Attachment #1 – Proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment (RQ64A)
Attachment #2 – ROPA Subject Lands Context Map
Attachment #3 – Development Applications Concept Plan
Attachment #4 – Existing and Proposed Watercourse Location Figures