



# Merton Planning Study

Open House – May 15 & 16, 2013



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Merton Planning Study?**

The study is a comprehensive review of the lands generally located south of Upper Middle Road, north of the QEW, between Bronte Road and Third Line in order to develop appropriate land use policies for the study area.

### **Why are we doing the Merton Planning Study?**

The Livable Oakville Plan, which was unanimously adopted by Council, has policies that recognize the Merton lands as a Special Policy Area and require the lands to be studied to determine the long term land uses in this area. The lands are identified in the Livable Oakville Plan as “lands for potential future development”. The town’s policies enable a town facilitated study, involving the Region of Halton, Conservation Halton, and area stakeholders, to ensure the town controls the study process. The study process will result in land use designations for the study area lands which will add employment and population that will serve towards meeting the town’s minimum intensification targets, as all of the lands are within the existing urban area and the built boundary.

### **Why a study now?**

The recent sale of the Saw Whet Golf Course and interest from major landowners in this area to develop their lands has highlighted the need for the town to undertake a study at this time. Completing this study will ensure that there is a comprehensive plan in place with Council approved policies to guide future development.

### **Doesn’t the Livable Oakville Plan have policies that meet our population and employment targets? Why consider more development?**

The Livable Oakville Plan sets out a land use planning framework to direct and manage growth to 2031 based on population and employment forecasts. While growth is intended to be accommodated through development of the existing urban areas, primarily in the growth areas (e.g. Midtown Oakville), the growth forecasts are not absolute or static. Additional growth in the “potential future development” areas identified in the plan will add to the intensification opportunities to be provided throughout the Town. The intention of the study is to ensure that any potential growth can be accommodated in accordance with the policies of the plan to ensure appropriately phased development takes place in the most optimal, cost-effective and coordinated manner.

### **Is the Natural Heritage System being changed?**

No. The majority of the lands in the study are currently designated “Parkway Belt”. This designation reflects the provincial *Parkway Belt West Plan*, approved in 1978. The plan was developed for a number of reasons including to reserve lands for future utility corridors such as hydro corridors or highways, as well as to preserve natural areas. Many of the reserved lands under the Parkway Belt West Plan are no longer needed for their initial intended purpose.

In 2010, Infrastructure Ontario made applications to the province to remove the majority of lands in the study area from the Parkway Belt. To reflect the future removal of these lands from the Parkway Belt, the Region of Halton replaced the Parkway Belt designation in the Region of Halton Official Plan with underlying “Urban Area” and “Natural Heritage System” designations to reflect those lands where development could take place, and those lands to be preserved having natural features and forming part of the Natural Heritage System (i.e. Fourteen Mile Creek). These amendments are currently under appeal at the Ontario Municipal Board. In anticipation of the removal of the lands from the Parkway Belt, and to reflect the directions in the Region of Halton Official Plan, the town has policies to complete the Merton Planning Study. As part of the study, the existing Livable Oakville Plan policies are taken into consideration. As such, the natural features identified on Schedule B in the Livable Oakville Plan, which have policies regarding their protection, remain protected.

### **How will the natural areas be preserved and protected? What about trees?**

In addition to the existing Livable Oakville Plan policies which identify the natural features and provide policies for protection, the Merton Planning Study requires a more detailed study be undertaken through an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The EIS will identify, in greater detail, the features and environmental factors that make up the natural areas which are to be protected from development (e.g. Fourteen Mile Creek and its surrounding valley lands). Features that fall outside of the identified natural areas, such as some individual trees, will be subject to additional examination during site-specific development applications. As part of a development application, applicants are required to conduct and submit a tree inventory and tree preservation plan. Town staff review these plans early in the development application process to ensure potential impacts to trees are mitigated to the best extent possible.

### **When would development occur?**

No development can occur until Council has approved an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) which sets out the policies for the future land uses in the study area. The OPA will be the final outcome of this study process (illustrated on the next page). To develop the OPA, the completion of a number of technical background reports is required to inform the creation of policies. The technical reports are extensive and include the completion of an Environmental Impact Study, Area Servicing Plan, Functional Servicing Study, Transportation Study, Stage 1 Archeological Assessment, as well as Noise and Odour Studies. The scope and technical analysis required by the reports are defined by the town through detailed terms of reference. The technical work is to be completed by individual land owners’ consultants. The town has also hired peer review consultants to review and assess the technical reports to ensure the town, Region of Halton and Conservation Halton requirements are met.

The study process also includes a public consultation process and an evaluation of criteria based on the Livable Oakville Plan policies and the Council endorsed Merton Planning Study objectives.

Development proposals will be subject to additional development applications such as plans of subdivision and zoning by-law amendments, which will all be subject to further review, analysis and public consultation.

### **Are we going to lose park space?**

No. As part of the study, parkland will not be lost. Langtry Park is the only park within the study area which forms part of the town's park inventory. All draft options propose to maintain the existing park. Additional required parkland has been included in the options for consideration.

### **Who are the major landowners in the study area?**

The major landowners are Infrastructure Ontario (IO) and Bronte Green Corporation (BCG). IO owns the lands associated with Fourteen Mile Creek and the Deerfield Golf Course. BCG recently purchased Saw Whet Golf Course. Other landowners include the Region of Halton, the Town of Oakville and private individuals. The Region of Halton operates several facilities on their lands including the Halton Regional Centre, Woodlands Operations Centre, and the Mid-Halton Wastewater Treatment Plant. The town owns land for a small stormwater facility and also leases some of the lands owned by IO.

### **Are there lease agreements relating to the IO lands?**

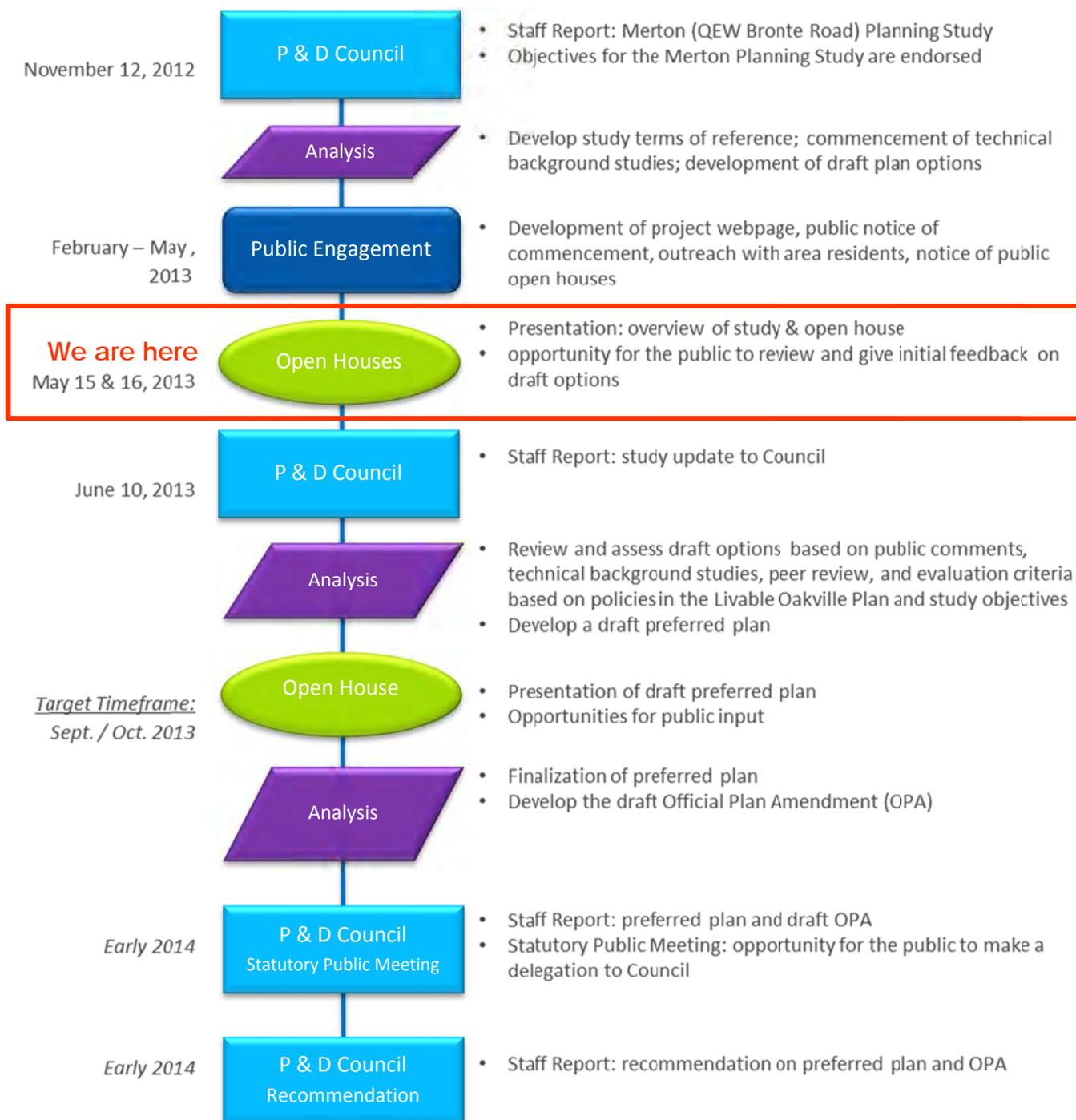
Yes. Currently IO has a lease agreement with the Town of Oakville relating to some portions of the IO lands. There is a provision in the lease agreement that allows the province to enter the lands to examine them at any time. This allows the province to conduct its own studies at any time. The provisions of the lease with the town do not restrict the timing of filing applications to change the land use designations on IO's property.

Under the lease agreement between the town and IO, there are certain restrictions that apply to a portion of the leased lands over by Third Line. For that portion of the leased lands, any potential changes to the land uses would not be in force until those lands are no longer designated only for Public Open Space and Buffer by the Parkway Belt West Plan, or are deleted from that Plan. In addition, there is a six year notice period, which the province can initiate at any time, before the province can terminate the lease as it applies to those lands. This gives the town time to determine the appropriate future use of the lands through the Merton Planning Study.

### **How will cultural heritage resources be conserved?**

Cultural heritage is an important feature and is being considered through the study. The study lands contain or are adjacent to listed and designated cultural heritage resources. Properties designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* include the White Oak Tree at 1179 Bronte Road, the Merton Mount Pleasant Cemetery along North Service Road West, and the Hilton Farm at 2013 North Service Road West. Other properties are listed on the heritage register and are considered properties of interest for potential future heritage designation. Any future site-specific development application on properties containing or adjacent to designated properties will be required to conduct a heritage impact assessment.

## Next Steps and Study Process



### Stay informed and get involved!

Visit our project webpage to learn more: <http://oakville.ca/business/merton-planning-studies.html>

You can also sign up to be on our project mailing list at: [mertonstudy@oakville.ca](mailto:mertonstudy@oakville.ca)

### Have more questions? Contact us!

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