

Summary of employment areas policy scan

The purpose of this scan is to gather information on current employment planning practices in both a national and international context. The challenge of planning for the future of employment areas is similar in both contexts. Preserving employment lands, accessibility, providing critical infrastructure, access to a skilled labour force, remaining competitive and integrating employment areas into communities are global challenges. Attachment 3 summarizes the findings from the jurisdictional scan into key themes and provides linkages to the Regional Official Plan (ROP) as well as identifies opportunities for consideration for the ROP review. The jurisdictions examined were:

- City of Toronto, Ontario
- Town of Milton, Ontario
- City of Waterloo, Ontario
- City of Montreal, Quebec
- North Okanagan Region, British Columbia
- Chester County, Pennsylvania
- City of Victoria, British Columbia
- Anaheim, California USA
- Sydney, Australia
- London, UK
- Stockholm, Sweden

Theme	Detail	Regional Examples	Policy Consideration
<p>1. Protect and preserve employment areas, specifically inner and core areas, for traditional employment uses such as manufacturing and industrial uses</p>	<p>Protect and preserve inner employment areas (lands that are furthest from residential uses and adjacent to highways) for industrial type businesses that are land intensive (lower employment densities) and that have more disruptive activities (e.g. manufacturing).</p> <p>These areas have specific locational requirements and potential to create land use conflicts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Milton identified these areas as “historical industrial areas” and has provisions in their Official Plan (OP) to preserve them • City of Waterloo preserves employment areas that the city owns with a land holdings company • The City of Toronto OP provides provisions to “preserve core areas for industrial uses” • London, UK designates key industrial sites to retain land for industrial uses. To supplement this, tighter policies have been introduced to limit the release (conversions) of key industrial areas 	<p>The ROP has several policies related to the protection of employment lands including 4.3.3 and 4.3.5</p> <p>Planning staff, through the Employment Area Conversion work, have developed a set of criterion to evaluate employment area conversion requests.</p> <p>Policies that reduce land use conflicts by identifying and maintaining areas for traditional employment uses for the long term will attract and provide for a variety of employment uses, creating opportunity for residents.</p>

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<p>2. Allow and encourage a mix of land uses, increased density and a broader range of employment uses along fringe* and strategic areas</p> <p><i>*While the definition of 'Fringe Areas' varies, it is most commonly defined as the outermost areas or border surrounding the perimeter of an employment area.</i></p>	<p>Allow flexibility for increases in density and mixed uses in areas most accessible by public transportation (along major arterials, nodes, corridors).</p> <p>More flexibility creates integration of employment areas with adjacent non-employment uses and attracts high density employment uses that benefit from mixed-use and amenity rich environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sydney, Australia permits affordable housing on the fringe of employment areas, furthest away from disruptive activities (such as industrial uses). This more flexible approach to land-uses in employment areas creates a mix of land uses. Additionally, Sydney changed their strategic plan employment designations from “industrial” to “employment” to emphasize design rather than specific use • The Town of Milton has a Residential/Employment designation in their OP applying to lands where a mix of uses is appropriate based on specific locational considerations. The main permitted use within this designation is residential and gives consideration to integrating employment uses such as office, light industrial and institutional uses. 	<p>The ROP includes policies to allow for flexibility and mixed uses. It directs mixed-use to Regional Centres and Corridors as a component of City Building.</p> <p>Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) are being identified through the MCR. MTSA work will identify areas with existing high densities or potential for higher densities and will encourage intensification and a mix of land uses, where appropriate, within these areas.</p>
<p>3. Develop implementation plans and guidelines to improve built form, urban structure and public realm within and adjacent to employment areas</p>	<p>Aging built-form has commonly been listed as a weakness of employment areas. By improving the built-form and therefore the public realm, employment areas become more attractive to employers and also help businesses attract talent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Waterloo through their Employment Area Implementation Plan, listed five characteristics of what was considered a successful employment area including character, walkability, transit, amenities, flexibility and safety. Additionally, a master plan was created for each employment area. • Anaheim, CA created landscape design guidelines to beautify the built form, and created a mobility and connectivity plan to 	<p>ROP includes objectives for planning for employment lands to ensure the long term supply and effective planning and design of employment lands.</p> <p>Specifically, policies 4.3.15 and 7.2.5 speak to the design of employment lands to be</p>

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	Implementation plans and guidelines set standards to guide development and policy implementation by creating desirable built-form standards.	<p>encourage bike share program and bus shuttle programs to run to train stations as part of a ‘multifaceted approach’ to update employment areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chester County, PA identified its weaknesses with its employment areas / office parks included limited connectivity to transit, ageing office buildings, limited affordable housing within a reasonable commuting distance, and previously segregating office parks from other office uses. • Montreal’s Master Plan aims to improve architectural and urban quality of employment areas by implementing measures that reinforce the urban character and favour the reconfiguration of these areas in accordance with the architectural and public space improvement principles, increase the multifunctional roles of business and retail areas and through a detailed planning process define the means for redeveloping identified business and retail areas 	<p>transit accessible, walkable and provide safe pedestrian facilities.</p> <p>Further opportunities exist at the Regional and Local Municipal level to develop built form standards or guidelines to improve ageing/existing employment areas that will attract new businesses and highly skilled workforce.</p>
4. Encourage redevelopment and rejuvenation through marketing strategies and incentives	Encouraging redevelopment and rejuvenation of older or in-transition employment areas by implementing strategies and policies addressing these areas to support their redevelopment and attract prospective investors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anaheim, CA uses development agreements as incentives for developers who include plazas and open public space as part of their development plan to, “continue to provide special incentives and improvement programs (e.g., density bonuses)to revitalize major business corridors and employment centers.” 	York Region’s Economic Development Action Plan sets strategic actions each term of Council. The next iteration of the Plan will be done in conjunction with the MCR to align policy with

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Waterloo emphasizes creative solutions to rejuvenate employment areas including eco-industrial parks, marketing strategies, incentives through Community Improvement Plans • Town of Milton included an objective in their Official Plan to revitalize employment areas, by encouraging ‘ revitalization and conversion of older employment and industrial areas, where appropriate’ • Victoria developed responses such as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), incubation and acceleration programs, financial incentives and by creating innovation / creative districts in their Official Community Plan (OCP) • Montreal Master Plan supports the revitalization and redevelopment of sites previously occupied by heavy industry or railyards. The rehabilitation of these sites will contribute to the renewal of the City as well as create added value for its economy. • Chester County, PA identified the threats to its employment areas / office parks which were: outdated buildings responsive to today’s employment market, the overbuilding of specific uses during redevelopment, difficulty of attracting employees and the tech / collaborative economy with shared space, and changes in millennial behaviour. 	<p>implementation. An opportunity exists to examine a Regional or Local approach to identifying existing older or in-transition employment areas and supporting their redevelopment through policy or incentive-based programs.</p>

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<p>5. Increasing densities in underutilized employment areas</p>	<p>Realizing the potential of other employment areas to create new and vibrant areas that add value to the economy.</p> <p>Identify underutilized employment areas for redevelopment to increase densities and address traffic congestion into existing employment areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • London, UK mapped areas of intensification that can support redevelopment at higher densities. The London Plan includes minimum guidelines for employment capacity as well as a set of policies that include taking into consideration locational characteristics and the integration of existing uses in the surrounding areas. • Stockholm’s Master Plan identifies expanding job creation outside the downtown area to ease traffic congestion. This includes the identification of sites outside the downtown that could be re-purposed for employment uses • Montreal intends to support the conversion of large brownfields by defining and implementing a development strategy for each site that would promote the intensification of employment in those areas 	<p>ROP requires that employment lands are flexible and adaptable for future redevelopment and intensification opportunities such as 4.3.18 and 4.3.19</p> <p>Analysis (Planning for Employment Background Report, Attachment 1) has been completed through the MCR process identifying employment areas for intensification potential, noting that since 2011, 60% of employment area employment growth has been accommodated in existing spaces.</p>
<p>6. Ensuring servicing and critical infrastructure are available in employment areas to attract investment</p>	<p>Investing in critical and sought after infrastructure such as broadband, transit and water/wastewater facilities, that will attract new businesses,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Okanagan, BC promotes regional employment land growth by focusing on transportation connections and prioritizing parcels of land that will yield the most benefit in terms of employment lands development by dividing them into ‘Investment Zones’ to ensure each zone has sufficient infrastructure, visibility and market attractiveness 	<p>The ROP includes policies related to infrastructure investment including 4.1.1 and 4.1.5. Further, the Region has made considerable investments in transit infrastructure to support job create and strengthen the Regional economy.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Waterloo Section 7.2 (employment areas) of the Waterloo OP states, “Make strategic investments, or provide support to other public agencies and/or private entities, to provide key competitive infrastructure that supports sustainable business development and activity” 	<p>York Region’s 2019 Capital Budget includes \$949 million in transportation investments.</p>
<p>7. Provide employers with a skilled workforce by ensuring access to housing options and quality education</p>	<p>A skilled workforce is an essential component to business attraction and retention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stockholm relates the importance of remaining attractive for businesses by continuing to offer access to a skilled workforce, high-quality educational institutions and a fully functioning housing market with a wide choice of tenure types 	<p>The Economic Development Action Plan addresses key components of access to a skilled workforce for business attraction. Staff continues to support the York University Markham campus that aims to develop programming that will connect students to the local business community.</p> <p>The ROP includes a comprehensive set of policies related to affordable housing to promote, encourage and provide housing options in York.</p>

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<p>8. Provide amenities for businesses and employees within employment areas and within close proximity to employment areas or business parks</p>	<p>Amenity rich areas and accessible work environments are increasingly important in attracting businesses and workers.</p> <p>Permit a wide range of employment uses adjacent to major road arteries, or broader community nodes, to attract high density employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Toronto OP includes “uses that support the prime economic function of employment areas, such as parks, small scale retail stores and services to meet the daily needs of business and employees, workplace daycare and restaurants, must also be readily accessible within employment areas.” • Stockholm promotes a mix of functions that create vibrant and safe environments with people moving around and encountering others virtually round the clock. This benefits the streetscape and local cohesion and creates a thriving climate for businesses. 	<p>The ROP limits ancillary uses on employment lands to protect them for employment uses (4.3.11)</p> <p>Future opportunities include adding flexibility to this policy to encourage uses that create vibrant multi-functional employment areas without compromising their primary function.</p>