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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

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From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2022-INFO-9  
Date: February 11, 2022

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**Subject:**

Envision Durham – Growth Management Study – Alternative Land Need Scenarios, File D12-01

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The Region is undertaking a Growth Management Study (GMS) as part of Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of the Regional Official Plan (ROP). The first phase of the GMS is the preparation of a Land Needs Assessment (LNA) to quantify the amount of Settlement Area Boundary Expansion that will be required to accommodate future population and employment growth to the year 2051.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council and interested stakeholders, agencies, and members of the public of additional land need scenarios that are currently being assessed. This report also outlines the assessment framework in which the scenarios will be measured, the approach to consultation and public input, and the timeframe in which a recommended scenario and the Summary Land Need Assessment will be presented to Planning and Economic Development Committee.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 As a key component of Envision Durham, a Growth Management Study (GMS) is being completed over two phases. The first phase of the GMS focuses on the completion of a Land Needs Assessment (LNA). The LNA is a detailed review of the Region's land base to determine how much of the Growth Plan population and employment forecasts for Durham Region can be accommodated within existing urban areas, in the built-up area, and the designated greenfield area. Any growth that cannot be accommodated within existing urban areas would trigger a requirement for additional urban land by means of a Settlement Area Boundary Expansion. The second phase of the GMS will focus on determining the most appropriate locations for any required Settlement Area Boundary Expansion(s).
- 2.2 In accordance with the LNA methodology issued by the Province, land needs are to be assessed across two different areas, including Community Areas and Employment Areas, as defined below:
- **Community Areas:** areas where most of the housing required to accommodate the forecasted population will be located, as well as most population-related jobs, most office jobs, and some employment land employment jobs. Community areas include delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield areas.
  - **Employment Areas:** areas where most of the employment land employment jobs are located (i.e. employment in industrial type buildings), as well as some office jobs and some population-related jobs, particularly those providing services to the employment area. Employment areas may be located in both the delineated built-up area and designated greenfield areas.
- 2.3 During the summer and early fall of 2021, four Technical Reports constituting the LNA were released for public review and comment:
- a) The **Region-Wide Growth Analysis** (released on July 2, 2021) presented region-wide population and employment forecasts, various trends in demographics, unit mix, housing prices, and built form. The Report included a forecast housing unit mix for new units to be built during 2021 to 2051 timeframe of 22% low density units, 31% medium density units, and 48% high density units.

- b) The **Housing Intensification Study Technical Report** (released on September 3, 2021) evaluated the supply and demand for housing within the built-up area, including a detailed assessment of likely opportunities and supply potential for intensification and associated population and employment accommodation. The Report recommended a Regional intensification target of 50%, consistent with the Growth Plan.
  - c) The **Employment Strategy Technical Report** (released on September 24, 2021) provided an assessment of trends in employment and analyzed the current state of the region's Employment Areas, provided recommendations on Employment Area conversions, recommended an overall Employment Area density target of 26 jobs per hectare, and identified an additional Employment Area land need of 1,164 hectares, (2,876 acres).
  - d) The **Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report** (released on October 1, 2021) evaluated the existing state, current trends, and long-term development potential of designated greenfield areas (i.e. lands within the urban area boundary that are outside of the built-up area). The Report provided a recommended overall designated greenfield areas density target of 64 people and jobs per hectare and an additional Community Areas land need of 737 hectares (1,821 acres).
- 2.4 In response to comments received from BILD and others on the draft LNA, Regional Planning staff agreed at the October 5, 2021 Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting to run modelling and assess a range of alternative land need scenarios. Since then, Regional staff have engaged the GMS consultant team to define and run an appropriate range of alternative land need scenarios.

### **3. Additional Land Need Scenarios**

- 3.1 Correspondence from BILD, other development interests, certain area municipalities, and others, voiced concern that the proposed housing mix contained in the draft Region Wide Growth Analysis was too heavily weighted towards high density forms of development, and did not adequately represent the market demand for low density housing (i.e. single detached dwellings). Other correspondence, including from individual members of the public, certain area municipal comments, and other organizations indicated that the draft LNA targets were either appropriate, or could be more aggressive to limit settlement area expansions by more heavily prioritizing the protection of farmland, mitigating climate change, and maximizing higher density intensification opportunities. This public input includes 42 individual

pieces of correspondence sent to the Regional Chair citing the desire for higher density targets in the designated greenfield area and increased secondary units in existing dwellings.

- 3.2 Regional staff and the GMS consultant team have identified additional land need scenarios intended to respond to comments and present a fulsome range of alternatives to inform a future decision on how the Region should grow during the 2022 to 2051 timeframe. Five Community Area land need scenarios explore at a region-wide scale how housing and population growth could be accommodated, and two scenarios explore Employment Area density targets.
- 3.3 The key interrelated metrics for the five Community Area land need scenarios are:
- Housing unit mix (2022-2051);
  - Intensification target (2022-2051);
  - Designated greenfield area density target (at 2051); and
  - The resultant Community Area land need and quantum of additional urban land required through Settlement Area Boundary Expansion.
- 3.4 Each scenario has been defined by prioritizing one or more of these metrics as the key driver, with the other metrics being resultant outcomes. For example, prioritizing a unit mix with a high share of low-density housing will result in a lower intensification and designated greenfield area density target and higher land need. Conversely, prioritizing intensification will drive a unit mix that includes a higher share of medium and high-density units and result in a lower land need. Accordingly, the alternative Community Area land need scenario metrics described below are initial outcomes and approximate until the modelling is complete:
- 3.5 **Community Area Land Need Scenario 1** implements the housing unit mix from the Growth Plan background technical report entitled: “Greater Golden Horseshoe: Growth Forecasts to 2051”, prepared by Hemson Consulting, dated August 26, 2020. Since this Scenario was used as background information, it is also being run as a test against other provincial policy targets. In this case, the housing unit mix has been fixed, which drives the interrelated intensification target and designated greenfield area density target. Given the high proportion of low-density housing, this scenario is anticipated to be furthest away from achieving the provincial intensification target, and would result in the highest amount of additional Community Area land.

- Housing unit mix: 56% low density, 23% medium density, 19% high density, 2% secondary units
- Intensification target (initial outcome): approximately 35%
- Designated greenfield area density target (initial outcome): approximately 50 to 55 people and jobs per hectare

3.6 **Community Area Land Need Scenario 2** is based on a housing unit mix that is still predominately oriented towards low-density housing, but with an increased share of medium and high-density housing. Under this scenario, the resultant intensification target is anticipated be closer to meeting the Growth Plan minimum of 50%.

- Housing unit mix: approximately 40% low density, 26% medium density, 32% high density, 2% secondary units
- Intensification target (initial outcome): approximately 45%
- Designated greenfield area density target (initial outcome): 53-58 people and jobs per hectare

3.7 **Community Area Land Need Scenario 3** will achieve of the minimum Growth Plan intensification target of 50% by shifting the unit mix, particularly the share of low-density units, towards medium and high-density units.

- Housing unit mix (initial outcome): approximately 33% low density, 32% medium density, 33% high density, 2% secondary units
- Intensification target: 50%
- Designated greenfield area density target (initial outcome): approximately 54-59 people and jobs per hectare

3.8 **Community Area Land Need Scenario 4** is the consultant recommended scenario that was presented through the release of the four draft Land Needs Assessment Technical Reports in the fall of 2021 and further discussed in Section 2.2 of this Report:

- Housing unit mix: 22% low density, 31% medium density, 46% high density, 2% secondary units
- Intensification target: 50%
- Designated greenfield area density target: approximately 57-62<sup>1</sup> people and jobs per hectare

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<sup>1</sup> As a result of updates to the underlying analysis, the designated greenfield area density as recommend in the draft Community Urban Area Land Needs Technical Report is being revisited.

3.9 **Community Area Land Need Scenario 5** prioritizes intensification at a rate that exceeds the minimum target contained in the Growth Plan. To achieve this higher rate of intensification, a further shift in the housing unit mix away from low density would be required. This scenario is anticipated to result in the lowest amount of additional urban area land being required.

- Housing Unit Mix (initial outcome): approximately 20% low density, 31% medium density, 46% high density, 2% secondary units
- Intensification Target: approximately 55%
- Designated Greenfield Area Density Target (initial outcome): approximately 59-64 people and jobs per hectare.

3.10 There are two Employment Land Need Scenarios. The key metrics associated with the Employment Land Need Scenarios are Employment Area intensification and Employment Area density targets, which combine to determine the resultant Employment Area Land Need.

3.11 **Employment Land Need Scenario 1** is based on the Employment Area density target as presented in the draft Employment Strategy Technical Report of 26 jobs per gross hectare. **Employment Land Need Scenario 2** assumes that there will be an even further increase in the intensification of existing developed employment lands, resulting in an increased region wide Employment Area density target of 27 jobs per gross hectare that would result in about a 15% decrease in land need.

3.12 The GMS consultant team is currently working on the technical analysis of the alternative land need scenarios and is also concurrently updating underlying technical work and modelling assumptions where warranted. This includes:

- Updates to incorporate the additional Employment Area conversions recently endorsed by Council;
- Adjustments in response to comments on the Technical Reports including detailed analysis provided by BILD; and
- Incorporation of the draft Natural Heritage System mapping.

3.13 Once the modelling is completed, the quantum of additional urban land under each alternative land need scenario will be generated.

#### 4. Scenario Assessment Framework

4.1 The modelling exercise will produce numeric outcomes and land need for each scenario. To provide Council, stakeholders and members of the public with

additional information and context, each scenario outcome will also be measured against an assessment framework.

4.2 The assessment framework was developed by considering the key theme areas of: Conformity with the Growth Plan; Regional Priorities; Future Forward Planning; and, Regional Official Plan and Envision Durham Planning Objectives, all of which inform how growth in Durham should occur over the next 30 years. A literature review of existing policies and strategies under each theme was conducted, resulting in the following principles and questions that will be used to measure the scenarios.

a) **Principle 1: Achieving Targets**

- Does the scenario achieve the minimum targets of the Growth Plan, before advancing additional settlement area boundary expansion?

b) **Principle 2: Housing Market Choice**

- Does the scenario provide for the development of a fulsome range of housing types?
- How does the scenario respond to market demand?

c) **Principle 3: Setting up Strategic Growth Areas for Success**

- Does the scenario support the ability of Urban Growth Centres, Regional Centres, Major Transit Station Areas, and Regional Corridors to achieve their planned function as higher density, mixed-use, and transit supportive urban communities?

d) **Principle 4: Protecting the Rural System, preparing for Climate Change and achieving Sustainable development:**

- To what extent would the scenario negatively impact existing agricultural and rural areas?
- Does the scenario provide efficient and sustainable development patterns, including transit-oriented development?
- Does the scenario respond to the Region's Climate Change Emergency declaration?

e) **Principle 5: Competitive Economic and Employment Conditions**

- To what extent does the scenario capitalize on the Region's economic and sector strengths, including providing for appropriate Employment Area land to ensure Durham remains economically attractive and competitive over the long term?

4.3 The results of the scenario modelling and assessment will be made publicly available for review and comment as described below.

## 5. Workplan and Planned Consultation

5.1 The modelling and assessment of the additional land need scenarios is underway. This work and future recommendations will be informed by feedback and input from interested stakeholders, agencies, and members of the public. The following are the anticipated major milestones and consultation activities over the coming months:

- **February 17** - Present additional land need scenarios, early modelling indications, and assessment framework to the Envision Durham Area Municipal Working Group.
- **March 10** – Results of scenario modelling completed. Alternative scenarios will be reviewed against the assessment framework. Preliminary results posted on the [Envision Durham website](#) for public review.
- **March 10** – Survey goes live providing opportunities for public feedback on the alternative land need scenarios.
- **March 11** – Council Information Package report released informing Council of the above information and consultation process.
- **March 24** – Virtual Public Information Centre scheduled for 7pm. Notification of Public Information Centre will be advertised via local Newspapers, e-mailed to the Envision Durham interested parties list, social media channels and a public service announcement.
- **April 14** – response survey closes.
- **May 3** – Present the recommended land need scenario for both Community Areas and Employment Areas to Planning and Economic Development Committee.

5.2 Upon Regional Council's endorsement of a preferred land need scenario, and the associated quantum of additional urban land need, the GMS will proceed to evaluate the most suitable location(s) for Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (i.e. Phase 2 of the process).

## 6. Previous Reports and Decisions

6.1 See Appendix 1.



## **7. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

7.1 By planning for growth in a sustainable, progressive, and responsible manner, the Land Needs Assessment and supporting technical reports address the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a) Under Goal Area 2, Community Vitality:
  - 2.1 Revitalize existing neighbourhoods and build complete communities that are walkable, well connected, and have a mix of attainable housing;
  - 2.5 Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging;
- b) Under Goal Area 3, Economic Prosperity:
  - 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business;
  - 3.2 Leverage Durham's prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth;
  - 3.4 Capitalize on Durham's strengths in key economic sectors to attract high-quality jobs;
- c) Under Goal Area 4, Social Investment:
  - 4.1 Revitalize community housing and improve housing choice, affordability and sustainability;

## **8. Next Steps and Conclusion**

8.1 The release of this report will also be announced by way of:

- Public service announcements;
- Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn; and
- Email notifications and report circulation.

8.2 A copy of this report will be forwarded to all Envision Durham Interested Parties, Durham's area municipalities, Indigenous communities, conservation authorities, the Building Industry and Land Development (BILD) – Durham Chapter, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Circulation will also be provided to agencies and service providers that may have an interest in where and how long-term growth in the region is being planned for (school boards, hospitals, utility providers, etc. as specified in Appendix 2).

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP  
Commissioner of Planning and  
Economic Development

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## Appendix 1 – to Report #2022-INFO-9

### 4. Previous Reports and Decisions

#### 4.1 Several Reports have been prepared related to Envision Durham and Growth Management related topics:

- On May 2, 2018 Commissioner's Report [#2018-COW-93](#) requested authorization to proceed with the municipal comprehensive review of the Durham Regional Official Plan;
- Over the course of 2019, six theme-based Discussion Papers were released seeking public input on a range of topics. The Discussion Papers can be found on the project webpage at [durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://durham.ca/EnvisionDurham)
- On June 2, 2020 Commissioner's Report [#2020-P-11](#) recommended evaluation criteria and a submission review process for the consideration of Employment Area conversion requests.
- On July 29, 2020 Commissioner's Report [#2020-P-14](#) outlined Amendment #1 to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including recommended comments to the Province on the updated 2051 growth forecasts for the Region of Durham and the updated Land Needs Assessment Methodology.
- On December 1, 2020 Commissioner's Report [#2020-P-27](#) provided proposed policy directions and boundary delineations for existing and future Major Transit Station Areas.
- On March 2, 2021 Commissioner's Report [#2021-P-7](#) provided proposed policy directions related to all key components of Envision Durham, including initial directions for the Urban System and growth related topics. Also included was a Growth Opportunities and Challenges Report prepared by the Region's consultants, which serves as a starting point for the LNA and related technical studies.
- On July 2, 2021 Commissioner's Report [#2021-INFO-71](#) reviewed the Region-Wide Growth Analysis. The purpose of the report is to analyze the region's long-term population, housing, and employment growth forecast within the context of provincial and regional policy, historical trends, and predicted future influences.

- On September 3, 2021 Commissioner's Report [#2021-INFO-94](#) presented the Housing Intensification Study. The purpose of the report is to document the capacity for accommodating residential and mixed-use growth within the region's built-up area (BUA), and determine the intensification potential of strategic growth areas (SGAs).
- On September 24, 2021 Commissioner's Report [#2021-INFO-97](#) summarized the Employment Strategy. The purpose of the Employment Strategy is to provide a comprehensive assessment of current industrial and office market conditions and trends, anticipated growth patterns, market opportunities and disrupters that are anticipated to influence employment growth across Durham Region through 2051. This report include a recommended Employment Areas density target and future land need to accommodate Employment Area growth to 2051.
- On October 1, 2021 Commissioner's Report [#2021-INFO-100](#) presented the Community Area Urban Land Needs Assessment which provided an assessment of the Region's current and future Designated Greenfield Areas, including development trends and amount of developed, non-developable, and vacant areas. The Report recommended an overall Designated Greenfield Areas density target and future land need to accommodate greenfield growth to 2051.
- On December 7, 2021 Commissioner's Report [#2021-P-25](#) provided staff recommendations on Employment Area conversion requests received through Envision Durham and additional areas identified by staff and the GMS consultant team as appropriate for conversion.
- On December 22, 2021, Regional Council received a [memorandum](#) from Commissioner Brian Bridgeman that responded to the request for additional information related to Commissioner's Report #2021-P-25 and the Employment Area conversion requests.

Appendix 2 – to Report #2022-INFO-9

**Circulated Agencies and Service Providers**

- Canada Post
- Bell Canada
- Rogers Communications
- Shaw Cable TV
- Compton Communications
- Persona Communications
- Canadian Pacific Railway
- Canadian National Railway
- Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. and Enbridge Pipelines Inc.
- Trans-Northern Pipelines Inc.
- TransCanada Pipelines Inc.
- Hydro One Networks Inc.
- Ontario Power Generation Inc.
- Durham District School Board
- Durham Catholic District School Board
- Conseil Scolaire Viamonde
- MonAvenir Conseil Scolaire Catholique
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Ministry of Transportation
- Greater Toronto Airports Authority

- Transport Canada
- Metrolinx
- Trent-Severn Waterway
- Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board
- Durham Region Police Department
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Elexicon
- Hydro One Networks Inc. (Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge)
- Independent Electricity System Operator
- Ontario Tech University
- Trent University Durham
- Durham College
- Durham Workforce Authority
- General Motors of Canada
- Lakeridge Health
- Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade
- Brock Board of Trade
- Clarington Board of Trade
- Newcastle & District Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce
- Scugog Chamber of Commerce

- Uxbridge Chamber of Commerce
- Whitby Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Ajax BIA
- Bowmanville BIA
- Brooklin BIA
- Pickering Village BIA
- Port Perry BIA
- Uxbridge BIA
- Downtown Whitby BIA
- Business Advisory Centre Durham
- Spark Centre