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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development
Report: #2025-INFO-01
Date: January 17, 2025

Subject:

Regional staff comments in Response to Environmental Registry of Ontario Posting [019-9209](#), Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan.

Recommendation:

Receive for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 On November 27, 2024, the province released a [preliminary management plan](#) for the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park through Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) posting [019-9209](#), that presents proposed policies to guide the park's long-term development, protection and management.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the preliminary management plan and highlight Regional staff comments that were provided to the province in a letter (Attachment 1) on January 15, 2025, in advance of the commenting deadline of January 26, 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1 Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park was established on July 1, 2024. It is a 532-hectare (1,350 acre) recreational class park, comprised of non-contiguous parcels on the Oak Ridges Moraine, within the Township of Uxbridge. A recreational class park means that the park provides a variety of compatible outdoor recreation opportunities throughout its natural surroundings.

- 2.2 While the park is currently made up of non-contiguous parcels, the province's intention is to identify priority land parcels for potential acquisition or inclusion within the boundary. The Region is actively engaged in this process.
- 2.3 The planning and management of provincial parks is governed by the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 (PPCRA). The PPCRA requires the preparation of a park management plan for each provincial park in Ontario. The province is requesting feedback on the preliminary management plan until January 26, 2025.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 The Region provided comments to the province on the establishment of a recreational class urban provincial park in the Township of Uxbridge through Report [#2024-COW-2](#).

4. Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan

- 4.1 The preliminary management plan for Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park outlines the purpose, vision, and objectives for the park. The purpose of the park is identified as providing connection across the Oak Ridges Moraine for recreational networks, adjacent urban areas and people and nature.
- 4.2 Key objectives of the park are to:
- a. permanently protect the park's biodiversity;
 - b. provide visitors with opportunities for ecologically sustainable outdoor recreation;
 - c. provide visitors with opportunities for natural and cultural heritage appreciation; and
 - d. facilitate scientific research.
- 4.3 Five zones have been established within the park's boundary: nature reserve, natural environment, historical, access, and development. A map showing these zones can be found on page 18 of the linked preliminary management plan. The preliminary management plan outlines permitted uses and a distinct management intent for each zone. For example, the Natural Environment Zones, which makes up 67 percent of the park is intended to provide protection for the natural environment, while also permitting low-intensity recreational uses such as hiking, cycling, equestrian and cross-country skiing.

5. Regional Staff Comments

- 5.1 Regional staff are supportive of the proposed direction for planning and management of the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park and have offered the province the following comments for consideration.
- 5.2 Section 7 of the preliminary management plan outlines proposed policies for the management of the park. To assist with readability, it is recommended that individual policies be numbered within the final park management plan.
- 5.3 Figure 4 and Section 6.4 of the preliminary management plan identify a potential future park access point on Regional Highway 47 in the vicinity of Parratt Road. Before permitting an access on Regional Highway 47, the Region would require Ontario Parks to complete, to the satisfaction of the Region, a Traffic Impact Study that identifies the most appropriate access location and configuration. This study should also recommend any road or intersection improvements that may be required to support safe operation of the access. Ontario Parks would be responsible for implementing the recommendations of such a study.
- 5.4 The [Regional Cycling Plan](#) identifies cycling connections, including cycling tourism routes and parts of the Primary Cycling Network (PCN), that border the park boundaries. Connections include Concession 6, south of Wagg Road, Wagg Road between Concession 6 and Concession 7, north of Wagg Road. These cycling routes, and particularly the PCN components, should be considered in any park implementation and management planning to ensure that access points are in alignment with them.
- 5.5 It is recommended that Ontario Parks complete an analysis of projected road volumes of park users from various modes. This analysis would help to determine if modifications to planned and existing transportation infrastructure, as identified through the [Regional Cycling Plan](#) and [Transportation Master Plan](#), would be needed to address potential impacts and identify mitigation measures for the Region's road network, Strategic Goods Movements Network (preferred haul routes Regional Highway 47 and Goodwood Road), and the surrounding community.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Objective 1.3 – protect, preserve and restore the natural environment, including greenspaces, waterways, parks, trails, and farmlands;
- b. Objective 1.5 – expand sustainable and active transportation;
- c. Objective 2.3 – influence the social determinants of health to improve outcomes for vulnerable populations;
- d. Objective 2.5 – build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging; and
- e. Objective 3.2 – leveraging Durham’s prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Regional staff have provided the above noted comments, in the form of the attached letter, for the province’s consideration as they finalize the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan.
- 7.2 Staff will keep Council informed as the management plan progresses and further park planning, and development milestones are achieved.
- 7.3 Regional staff comments contained with this report and the attached letter were prepared in consultation with the Works Department

8. Attachments

Attachment #1: Region of Durham Staff Comments in Response to Environmental Registry Posting 019-9209, Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Commissioner of Community Growth and
Economic Development



Sent Via Email

January 15, 2025

Kendra Couling, Park Planner
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**Brian Bridgeman,
 MCIP, RPP, PLE**
 Commissioner of Community
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Dear Ms. Couling:

**RE: Region of Durham Staff Comments in Response to
 Environmental Registry Posting 019-9209, Uxbridge Urban
 Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan.**

Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park is located in the Township of Uxbridge, within the Region of Durham. On November 27, 2024, the province released a preliminary management plan for Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park that presents proposed policies to guide the long-term development, protection and management of the park. The Region of Durham previously provided comments on the establishment of the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park through Report [#2024-COW-2](#) and appreciates the opportunity to now provide input into the development of the park's management plan.

Regional staff comments on the preliminary management plan are focused on the Region's transportation system. Regional Roads in the vicinity of the park include; Regional Road 47 and Goodwood Road, which are also identified as preferred haul routes within the Region's Strategic Goods Movement Network. Please accept the following Regional staff comments for consideration as the management plan is finalized:

- 1) Section 7 of the preliminary management plan outlines proposed policies for the management of the park. To assist with readability, it is recommended that individual policies be numbered within the final park management plan.
- 2) Figure 4 and Section 6.4 of the preliminary management plan identify a potential future park access point on Regional Highway 47 in the vicinity of Parratt Road. Before permitting

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access on Regional Highway 47, the Region would require Ontario Parks to complete a Traffic Impact Study to the satisfaction of the Region that identifies the most appropriate access location and configuration. This study should also recommend any road or intersection improvements that may be required to support safe operation of the access. Ontario Parks would be responsible for implementing the recommendations of such a study.

- 3) The [Regional Cycling Plan](#) identifies cycling connections, including cycling tourism routes and parts of the Primary Cycling Network (PCN), that border the park boundaries. Connections include Concession 6, south of Wagg Road, Wagg Road between Concession 6 and Concession 7, north of Wagg Road. These cycling routes, and particularly the PCN components, should be considered in any park implementation and management planning to ensure that access points are in alignment with them.
- 4) It is recommended that Ontario Parks complete an analysis of projected road volumes of park users from various modes. This analysis would help determine if modifications to planned and existing transportation infrastructure, as identified through the Regional Cycling Plan and [Transportation Master Plan](#), would be needed to address potential impacts and identify mitigation measures for the Region's road network, Strategic Goods Movement Network, and the surrounding community.

If you have any questions about these comments, please contact the undersigned at Amanda.Bathe@durham.ca.

Sincerely,

Amanda Bathe

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- c: Doug Robertson, Senior Project Manager,
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