

If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact 1-800-372-1102 ext. 2564



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2023-P-6
Date: March 7, 2023

Subject:

Public Meeting Report

Envision Durham – Release of the draft new Regional Official Plan, File: D12-01

Recommendation:

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

- A) That Commissioner's Report #2023-P-6 be received for information; and
 - B) That all submissions received on the Draft Regional Official Plan be referred to the Planning Division for consideration.
-

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee and Council members, the province, agencies, service providers, stakeholder groups, and members of the public that the draft new Regional Official Plan (ROP), in its entirety, is now available for review and comment (see Attachment #1). With the release of this draft, Regional planning staff are taking steps to enable Regional Council to be in a position to adopt the new ROP before the Council summer recess. The deadline for submitting comments on the draft new ROP is Monday April 3, 2023.

- 1.2 On March 6, 2023, the Region will host an in-person Public Open House in the Main Atrium on first floor of Regional Headquarters, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. In addition, on March 7, 2023, a Public Meeting will be held at 11:00 AM during the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting (in hybrid format).
- 1.3 A “Notice of Public Open House” and “Notice of Public Meeting” regarding the release of the draft new ROP was advertised in newspapers across the region the week of February 6, 2023 as well as through the Region’s website, social media channels, and via a public service announcement. Additionally, every person who has registered to be on the Envision Durham Interested Parties List, (over 750 individuals), will also receive notice.

2. Background

- 2.1 The draft new ROP is the culmination of work completed through Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of Durham’s existing ROP. The draft new ROP provides policies and strategic directions that guide future growth, infrastructure and service delivery, land use planning, and development related matters. Envision Durham is the Region’s response to ensure that the new ROP conforms with Provincial Plans or does not conflict with them; has regard to matters of Provincial interest; and is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. Consistent with the provincial Growth Plan, the draft new ROP has a planning horizon of 2051. The new ROP will replace the existing ROP. Upon approval of the new ROP by the Minister, the existing ROP would be repealed.
- 2.2 The Envision Durham MCR process has been the subject of numerous opportunities for public input and engagement. Regional staff, with the assistance of consultants, prepared and consulted on a series of discussion papers, proposed policy directions reports, technical studies, and draft mapping at various intervals throughout the exercise.
- 2.3 The completion of the MCR will enable the initiation of service and infrastructure planning to support mandated levels of growth while supporting Durham’s eight area municipalities as they initiate their own MCRs and conformity exercises.
- 2.4 Further, upon proclamation of certain components of the More Homes Built Faster Act (i.e. Bill 23), the Regional Official Plan will become the official plan of the area municipalities. A proclamation date is not known at this time. Future updated or new area municipal official plans will require Ministerial approval. Ministerial decisions on planning matters cannot be appealed by the Region.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 Since 2019, over 35 reports on various aspects of the Envision Durham process have been prepared by Regional planning staff. The process has been highly collaborative and transparent. A list of previous reports and decisions related to the Envision Durham MCR is available on the project web page within the [Document library](#).

4. Overview of the Draft New ROP

- 4.1 The draft new ROP is intended to guide decisions on long-term growth, infrastructure investment and development – providing strategic policy direction to ensure an improved quality of life – to secure the health, safety, convenience and well-being of present and future residents of Durham. The draft new ROP provides a blueprint for supporting a long-term regional vision where, in 2051, Durham’s reputation as a complete, healthy, sustainable, diverse and welcoming community of communities will be known worldwide as the place to live, learn and thrive.
- 4.2 To help guide Durham along its course towards becoming “the place to live, learn and thrive,” high-level strategic directions are included that were informed by community outreach and engagement activities conducted during the MCR, and form the following chapters in the draft ROP:
- a. A Prosperous Region;
 - b. Healthy Communities;
 - c. Supportive Infrastructure & Services;
 - d. A Vibrant Urban System;
 - e. A Thriving Rural System;
 - f. A Protected Greenlands System; and
 - g. A Connected Transportation System.
- 4.3 The draft new ROP incorporates the work undertaken throughout the Envision Durham process, including:
- a. Proposed Policy Directions across all disciplines;
 - b. Growth Management Study including:
 - Employment Area conversions - In 2021, there was an extensive process to consider employment area conversion requests which culminated in a decision on each request by Council in December of 2021. Council’s decision on these requests is reflected in this draft new ROP without further change;

- identification of Strategic Growth Areas, including all Centres, Corridors and Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) - This component of Envision Durham culminated in the adoption of Regional Official Plan Amendment #186 which establishes a policy framework for the Region's PMTSAs. ROPA 186 was forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval in January of 2022. As of this date the Amendment has not yet been approved by the Minister;
 - allocation of regional population, household and employment forecasts to each area municipality;
 - identification of 2051 Urban Expansion Areas, and
 - allocation of required intensification within the Built Boundary.
- c. Regional Natural Heritage System; and
- d. Implementation of the provincial Agricultural System.
- 4.4 The draft new ROP also incorporates the extent and location of proposed Settlement Area Boundary Expansions (SABEs) that are required to accommodate the Region's population and employment forecasts to 2051 as detailed in Report [#2022-INFO-91](#) released on November 10, 2022. The 2051 Expansion Area Employment Areas have been distributed along 400-series highways, and clustered at future interchanges.
- 4.5 Mapping for the draft New ROP has been organized to address:
- a. Regional Structure – Urban & Rural Systems;
 - b. Greenlands System – Regional Natural Heritage System; Provincial Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan Land Use Designations; Water Resources System, including Key Hydrologic Features, Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas, and Significant Surface Water Contribution Areas and Ecologically Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas; Source Water Protection; Highly Vulnerable Aquifers and Areas of High Aquifer Vulnerability; and Landform Conservation Areas on the Oak Ridges Moraine;
 - c. Transportation System – Transit Priority Network; Road Network; Strategic Goods Movement Network; Active Transportation Network; and Regional Road Right-of-Way Requirements; and
 - d. Aggregate Resources.

4.6 The Greenbelt Plan Areas removed by the province within Pickering, Ajax and Clarington have been identified as Special Study Areas in the draft new ROP. This approach is necessary given the province's stated intention to return removed lands back to the Greenbelt if certain milestones are not achieved, (e.g. progress on planning approvals by 2023, and homes under construction by 2025). The proposed policies in the draft new ROP mirror the province's requirements for development within these areas. As the province is both the approval authority for the new ROP and the authority to be satisfied as to the progress of development in the Greenbelt Removal Areas, any modifications to the ROP due to Greenbelt removals will form part of a future provincial decision.

5. Consultation on Proposed Settlement Area Boundary Expansions and Area Municipal Growth Allocations

5.1 Initial results of Phase 2 of the Growth Management Study, consisting of proposed locations for Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABEs) and Area Municipal Growth Allocations, were released for public review and comment on November 10, 2022. The consultation period closed on January 18, 2023. The proposed locations for SABEs and growth allocations have been incorporated into the draft new ROP, with no changes made to what was released in November 2022. During the commenting window, at the time of preparing this report, the Region had received:

- a. 60 written letters addressed to Envision Durham commenting on proposed SABEs and/or growth allocations;
- b. 46 comments on proposed SABEs received through an online public mapping viewer; and
- c. 55 similarly worded emails stating that it is premature to seek feedback on the proposed SABEs given changes to the Greenbelt Plan, requesting a detailed accounting of the value of Durham's natural assets, timeline and servicing plan for SABEs, and requesting compliance with the Region's Climate Emergency Declaration by prioritizing intensification.

5.2 The nature of the submissions vary, (excluding the 55 similarly worded emails). There are numerous submissions that both support and oppose the proposed SABEs. While staff continue to review and consider these submissions, there are a number that warrant being brought to Committee and Council's attention at this time:

- a. Comments from the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation opposing the implementation of Scenario 2a (the Council Endorsed Scenario), opposing the SABE in northeast Pickering, suggesting if a SABE were to occur that consideration be given to shifting the expansion to the lands in Clarington, and requesting additional studies, including:
 - an opportunity cost assessment of the impact of losing ecosystem services provided within the Carruthers Creek Headwaters;
 - a cumulative effects assessment on the impact to Williams Treaties First Nations harvesting rights;
- b. Comments from the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority and Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority requesting that the impact from ongoing flood modelling be determined before the Region makes a decision on proposed SABEs;
- c. Comments from the Toronto Region Conservation Authority requesting additional lands been protected/removed from the developable land supply in northeast Pickering and added to the Region's Natural Heritage System or Water Resource System in accordance with various noted data sources;
- d. Comments from the Northeast Pickering Landowners Group (NEPLOG) which dispute the total allocation of developable land contained in northeast Pickering, requesting the Natural Heritage System developed by the NEPLOG environmental consultant be used/implemented, and requesting the reduction and reorientation of proposed Employment Areas to be weighted on the south side of Highway 407;
- e. Comments from the Cherrywood Area landowner group requesting that the lands recently removed from the Duffin's Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act and the Greenbelt Plan in west Pickering be considered for Settlement Area Boundary Expansion;
- f. A number of requests seeking alternative Whitebelt lands be included in the proposed SABEs, including lands near the federal Pickering Airport lands and lands within the Urban Separators in Clarington;
- g. Several requests seeking additional lands that are currently within the Greenbelt be added as potential SABEs, (Note, these requests cannot be entertained as the Region does not have the jurisdiction to amend the Greenbelt Plan);

- h. Comments requesting a Community Area designation instead of the currently proposed Employment Area designation, (i.e. new employment conversion requests). Several letters have been received for lands on the north side of the 407 in Whitby in the vicinity of Cochrane Street and Country Lane and for lands on the south side of the 407 in proximity to the Harmony Road interchange. A letter has also been received requesting a portion of the proposed Sunderland Expansion be for Community Area;
- i. Comments seeking the reconsideration of Employment Area conversion requests, including lands in Beaverton (CNR-23 [Beaverton Commons/Mazzotta]) and in Scugog (CNR-17 [Wannop]);
- j. Correspondence from the Township of Scugog supporting the request by Mr. Richard Wannop for the Region to reconsider its decision to not endorse Employment Area Conversion CNR 17 and also requesting the Region assess the impact of increased employment land absorption as a result of servicing initiatives, and if this would result in a lesser Employment Area surplus over the long term; and
- k. Comments from the Municipality of Clarington asking the Region to attend a Clarington Council meeting and host a Public Information Centre in Clarington, reassess the land needs and SABEs required to accommodate the Clarington-endorsed Scenario 2a to account for Greenbelt Plan removals, and to extend the commenting period on SABEs and the Draft Working Copy of the ROP (circulated to the province, Area Municipal and Conservation Authority Working Groups and to internal Regional departments on December 22, 2022) to at least March 31, 2023.

6. Public Consultation on the Draft New ROP

Notification

- 6.1 A copy of this report and notification of the forthcoming Public Open House and Public Meeting will be forwarded upon publication (February 10) to all Envision Durham Interested Parties, Durham's area municipalities, Indigenous communities, conservation authorities, the Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, Durham Environment and Climate Advisory Committee, the Durham Active Transportation Committee, the Building Industry and Land Development (BILD) – Durham Chapter, Durham Region Home Builders' Association, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Circulation will also be provided to agencies and service providers that may have an interest in the planning of long-term growth in the region (e.g. school boards, hospitals, utility providers, etc.).

How to Provide Input

- 6.2 The draft new ROP is now available for public review and comment. Mapping of the proposed Regional Structure, which includes the Urban and Rural Systems of the draft new ROP (Map 1), can also be reviewed by accessing an online map viewer available on the [Envision Durham website](#). Additional proposed mapping, including for the Greenlands System (Map 2), Transportation System (Map 3) and Aggregate Resources (Map 4) are available as PDFs within the draft new ROP online at www.durham.ca/EnvisionDurham (also see Attachment #1).
- 6.3 Those wishing to provide comments may do so by inputting a comment in the online map viewer or by submitting written correspondence by mail or by email to EnvisionDurham@durham.ca. The deadline for comments is end of day Monday April 3, 2023. Previous submissions received have been catalogued and will form part of the Clerk's Record that will be provided to the Minister following Council's adoption of the new ROP.

Public Open House (March 6)

- 6.4 The Region will host an in-person Public Open House on March 6, 2023, in the Main Atrium on first floor of Regional Headquarters, 605 Rossland Road East, Whitby, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. There will not be a formal staff presentation; however, the Public Open House will provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions, discuss the draft new ROP and to provide comments and information to staff.
- 6.5 Any person may attend the March 6th Public Open House; however, you are encouraged to register in advance by visiting the [Envision Durham web page](#).

Public Meeting (March 7)

- 6.6 A hybrid Public Meeting will be held on March 7, 2023 as part of the Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting. The Committee meeting will start at 9:30 am for consideration of other scheduled agenda items; however, **the Public Meeting portion of the Committee meeting specific to the draft new Regional Official Plan is scheduled to commence at 11:00 AM**, or as soon as the other agenda items have been completed. At the start of the Public Meeting, Regional planning staff will deliver a 30-to-40-minute presentation followed by questions from members of Committee and visiting Councillors. It is not expected that delegations from the public will commence until after a lunch break. The purpose of the Public Meeting is to provide interested parties with the opportunity to provide the Planning and Economic Development Committee comments and provide additional information relative to the draft new ROP.

- 6.7 Any person may make submissions concerning the draft new ROP and are invited to attend the Public Meeting in-person at Durham Regional Council Chambers, or virtually.
- 6.8 Members of the public who wish to delegate at the Public Meeting in-person shall be permitted to speak without prior registration, but nevertheless are encouraged to register in advance by emailing EnvisionDurham@durham.ca advising of their name, address, email and who they represent. Members of the public who wish to delegate electronically must register in advance of the Public Meeting by submitting their request to delegate in writing to delegations@durham.ca by 12:00 PM, on Monday, March 6, 2023.
- 6.9 The maximum time for delegations is five minutes. If your delegation involves presentation slides, the slides must be provided to delegations@durham.ca by 12 noon on Monday March 6, 2023 otherwise they cannot be displayed.
- 6.10 Members of the public are invited to view the Public Meeting remotely via live streaming at www.durham.ca/live as an alternative to attending the meeting in-person.
- 6.11 For those unable to attend the Public Meeting but wish to make a written submission on or before March 7th, or for those who want to provide supplemental written information related to their oral delegation, it should be submitted to clerks@durham.ca by 12:00 PM on Monday, March 6, 2023, to allow correspondence to be included on an addendum to the March 7, 2023 Planning and Economic Development Committee agenda.

Future Involvement

- 6.12 If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or does not make written submissions before the new Regional Official Plan is adopted, the person or public body:
- a. Is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the Regional Official Plan, if the Minister refers all or part of the decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT; formerly the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, and formerly the Ontario Municipal Board); and
 - b. May not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the OLT, as appropriate, unless in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

- 6.13 Following Council's consideration and adoption of the New Regional Official Plan, the document will be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval under Sections 17 and 26 of the Planning Act.
- 6.14 Anyone who wants to be notified of Regional Council's decision on the new Regional Official Plan may submit a written request to:

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Planning and Economic Development Department
Regional Municipality of Durham
Durham Regional Headquarters
605 Rossland Road East
Whitby, ON, L1N 6A3
EnvisionDurham@durham.ca

7. Future Regional Council Decision

- 7.1 The Planning and Economic Development Committee or Committee of the Whole will consider a final draft of the new ROP at a future meeting and will make a recommendation to Regional Council.
- 7.2 All persons who make oral submissions, or have requested notification in writing, or who have registered as an Interested Party through the Envision Durham website, will be given notice of the future meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, or Committee of the Whole and Regional Council at which the final draft Regional Official Plan will be considered.

8. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 8.1 This report aligns with/addresses all the strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The draft new ROP is now available for public review and comment at www.durham.ca/EnvisionDurham (also see Attachment #1). Those wishing to provide comments may do so by inputting comments in the online Regional Structure map viewer or by submitting written correspondence by mail or by email to EnvisionDurham@durham.ca. Comments are requested by end of day April 3, 2023. Note: The draft new ROP mapping reflects the proposed SABE locations released on November 10, 2022.

- 9.2 Notification of the early release of the draft New ROP, as well as upcoming Public Open House (March 6) and Public Meeting (March 7) has been advertised via local newspapers, social media channels, and via public service announcement. In addition, a copy of this report and notification of how to provide input, as well as how to participate in the Public Open House and Public meeting will be forwarded upon publication (February 10) to a broad range of public and private interested parties.
- 9.3 Following these consultation activities, staff anticipate bringing forward a final draft ROP for Council's consideration before the Council summer recess. The final draft ROP will be available to the public two weeks prior to the Committee meeting at which it will be considered. Once the new ROP has been adopted by Regional Council, it will be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval.

10. Attachments

Attachment #1: [Draft New Regional Official Plan \(online\)](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer