



The Regional Municipality of Durham  
To: The Planning Committee  
From: Commissioner of Planning  
Report No.: 2009-P-59  
Date: September 8, 2009

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**SUBJECT:**

Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 128, Growing Durham – Project Update,  
File: D12-05

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT Commissioner's Report No. 2009-P-59 be received for information.

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**REPORT:**

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update of the status of the provincial approvals process for Regional Official Plan Amendment 128 (ROPA 128).

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Places to Grow Act requires that Council amend the Regional Official Plan (ROP) to conform to Growth Plan by June 16, 2009. The Growth Plan establishes a policy framework to guide decisions on a range of matters including land-use planning, urban form, housing, transportation and infrastructure planning, natural heritage and resource protection.

2.2 To address this requirement, the Growing Durham Study was initiated in August 2007, to develop an approach to implementing the Growth Plan that reflected the needs and aspirations of the regional community. The process involved extensive public and agency consultation resulting in the adoption of ROPA 128 by Council on June 3.

- 2.3 ROPA 128 establishes the Region's vision for growth to 2031— creating healthy and complete, sustainable communities. The Amendment provides a policy framework, allocating population and employment forecasts, meeting density targets, and identifying urban land needs.
- 2.4 Subsequent to approval by Council, ROPA128 was forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval.

### **3. ACTIVITIES OVER SUMMER RECESS**

- 3.1 To initiate the Provincial consultation process, ROPA 128 was posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry on July 20 inviting public comment until August 19, 2009. Comments received will be considered as part of the decision-making process by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- 3.2 The Province also initiated consultation with First Nations. Provincial staff agree that any meetings that take place with First Nations will involve the Region.
- 3.3 At the preparation of this report, we are aware of six submissions that have been made to the province. A summary is provided below.
- Clarington endorsed the resolution of Regional Council made on June 3 regarding the adoption of ROPA 128.
  - The City of Oshawa expressed concerns to the province regarding the preparation of watershed plans, the site specific policy for major retail uses along Taunton Road between Goodman and Oshawa Creeks, and the floor space index targets identified for each of the Regional Centres, Corridors and Waterfront Places. The matters raised by the City were considered during the Regional adoption process.
  - The Seaton landowners expressed concern that ROPA 128 should have incorporated the requisite policies to implement the Central Pickering Development Plan (CPDP). This submission was considered during the Regional adoption process. The ROP already recognizes the CPDP,

however, until the City of Pickering's neighbourhood planning exercises have progressed, an amendment is not contemplated.

- Bousfields, on behalf of Trinison Management Corporation, who own lands in northeast Pickering, indicated their support for ROPA 128.
- Guglietti Brothers Investments Limited owns lands that are impacted by Highway 407 in north Oshawa, adjacent to the southern boundary of Columbus. During consideration of ROPA 128 on June 3, Regional Council removed their lands from the future urban expansion area to balance the addition of other lands within north Oshawa. They requested the Province to return the designation in this area to Employment Area as originally recommended in ROPA 128.
- Sherman Brown Dryer Karol, representing landowners within the downtown Ajax Regional Centre (Bayly Street and Harwood Avenue) expressed concern regarding the increased density targets that their property may be subject to. They indicated opposition to ROPA 128, which could force them to abandon current lease agreements for a commercial plaza on their lands.

3.4 An initial meeting with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, attended by Regional staff and the Growing Durham consultants, was held on July 15, to discuss the approval ROPA 128.

3.5 From the informal discussions it was evident that Provincial staff is continuing to insist that the employment forecast of 350,000 jobs, as specified in the Growth Plan, must be used for planning growth in Durham to 2031. This is notwithstanding the sound rationale provided by the Region's consultant team supporting a slightly more optimistic forecast of 375,000 jobs reflected in ROPA 128.

3.6 Provincial staff also indicated that the ROP should recognize that Seaton will be completely built out by 2031, even though the Central Pickering Development Plan sets no timeline for achieving this target. Staff will be

- explaining the implications of this on the Region's planned employment structure at an upcoming meeting with the Province.
- 3.7 Provincial staff would like to see all potential development in existing Urban Areas accounted for, prior to any urban boundary expansion, in particular, surplus Living Areas available in the Columbus (D12) area of north Oshawa.
- 3.8 Provincial staff is receptive to protecting strategic employment areas beyond 2031. However, they have suggested that more conceptual mapping would be more appropriate than the detail shown in Schedule F. Identifying Living Areas beyond 2031 is not supported by the Province. Other municipalities are proposing to protect employment lands for the longer-term in various ways that may not include a Schedule. Provincial staff is considering what approaches may be acceptable.
- 3.9 Implementation of changes to ROPA 128 to satisfy the province will have an effect on the quantum and configuration of designated land supply.
- 3.10 A conference call with Ministry staff was also held on August 7, to discuss the new policies introduced to the ROP by ROPA 128. Provincial staff indicated general support for the approach.
- 3.11 Overall, the discussions to date have been exploratory in nature, assisting Ministry staff in understanding ROPA 128.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 Another meeting has been scheduled with Provincial staff for September 11. This will enable Regional staff to continue discussion to resolve issues, as well as develop an understanding of how the Province is moving forward with the review process.
- 4.2 Provincial staff expects to formally communicate with the Region in early fall suggesting changes to ROPA 128 that, if accepted by Council, will facilitate approval by the Minister. A final decision by the Minister is targeted for year-end, to meet the timelines for approval provided in the Planning Act.

- 4.3 Planning Committee will be apprised of the discussions with the Province, on an ongoing basis.

A.L. Georgieff, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.  
Commissioner of Planning

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