

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



The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2021-INFO-100
Date: October 1, 2021

Subject:

Envision Durham – Growth Management Study – Release of Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report, File D12-01

Recommendation:

Receive for information

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, specifically a population forecast of 1.3 million and an employment forecast of 460,000 jobs.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to release for agency and public comment, the **Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report**, which is the fourth technical report prepared in support of the LNA. The first technical report was the Region-Wide Growth Analysis released July 2, 2021, the second was the Housing Intensification Study released September 3, 2021 and the third was the Employment Strategy Technical Report released on September 24, 2021.

- 1.3 In the fall of 2021, a Council Education Session will be held to provide a detailed overview of the reports and recommendations. The completed LNA with all supporting technical reports and staff recommendations will be brought forward to Planning and Economic Development Committee in December of this year, following the Council Education Session.
- 1.4 On October 1, 2021, the Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report will be posted on the Envision Durham project webpage at durham.ca/EnvisionDurham for public review and is provided as Attachment #1 to this report. Those wishing to provide any input may do so by submitting comments electronically to EnvisionDurham@durham.ca or by mail. Any comments on the release of the Community Area Land Needs Technical Report are requested by November 1, 2021.

2. Background

- 2.1 Envision Durham is currently in Stage 3 (“Direct”). This stage of the project is intended to identify key proposed policy directions for moving forward with the preparation of a new Regional Official Plan.
- 2.2 As a key component of Envision Durham, a Growth Management Study (GMS) is being completed over two phases. To aid in the completion of the GMS, the Region retained the consultant services of Urban Strategies Inc. and Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.
- 2.3 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. Determining the quantum of additional urban area land is a key outcome of the LNA. The second phase of the GMS will focus on determining the most appropriate locations for any required Settlement Area Boundary Expansion(s).
- 2.4 The LNA is a technical exercise which relies on the assessment of past and current trends as well as forward looking projections. The LNA is being presented through four separate but interrelated reports which are being released sequentially and, organized as follows:

1. The **Region-Wide Growth Analysis** (released on July 2, 2021) presents region-wide population and employment forecasts, various trends in demographics, unit mix, housing prices, and built form. This report analyzes Durham's growth potential and informs key inputs and assumptions for the overall LNA.
 2. The **Housing Intensification Study** (released on September 3, 2021) evaluates 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. A key outcome of this report was a recommended intensification target of 50% for the Region.
 3. The **Employment Strategy** (released on September 24, 2021) provides an assessment of trends in employment and will analyzes the current state of the region's Employment Areas. Key outcomes included in this report are recommendations on Employment Area conversion requests, a recommended density target for Employment Areas, and recommendations on the supply of designated Employment Areas to accommodate employment land related jobs to 2051.
 4. The **Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report** (subject of this report) evaluates the existing state, current trends, and long-term development potential of "Designated Greenfield Areas". The term "Designated Greenfield Areas" is specifically defined in the provincial Growth Plan and generally means lands within the urban area boundary that are outside the built-up area¹. The key outcomes of this report include: i) a proposed density target for Designated Greenfield Areas; and ii) consultant recommendations on new urban area land required to accommodate residential units and population-related jobs to 2051, referred to as "Community Areas" in the provincial Growth Plan.
- 2.5 Later this year, a **Land Needs Assessment Recommendations Report** will compile the key outcomes, technical analysis and related recommendations in the above four reports, and will be presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

¹ The Built-up Area (BUA) is defined as the extent of urban development when the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe came into effect in June 2006. The outer limit of these lands is the Built Boundary. New development inside the Built Boundary is considered intensification; development outside the built boundary is considered greenfield development.

3. Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report Overview

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a technical assessment of the region's long-term Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) Community Area land needs to 2051, which will support long-term population and employment growth within the region.
- 3.2 Within Durham Region, there are approximately 5,500 developable hectares (13,600 acres) of DGA lands. As of 2019, approximately 1,190 hectares (2,940 acres) of this total were developed, and approximately 4,320 hectares (10,660) were vacant. Pursuant to the Growth Plan, the minimum density target to be achieved in the DGA is 50 people and jobs per hectare.
- 3.3 Over the 2021 to 2051 planning horizon, approximately 105,800 new housing units are anticipated to be accommodated on DGA lands. To ensure that existing and new DGA lands are able to evolve as complete communities, these areas will need to be planned to accommodate a balance of people and jobs.
- 3.4 The Community Area Land Needs Technical Report has resulted in several key findings:
- Since 2006, the Region's DGA has nearly achieved the minimum DGA density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare through the construction of predominantly low density housing.
 - Based on an analysis of approved and draft approved plans, pending development applications and market trends, the consultant's recommended DGA density target by 2051 for Durham Region is 64 people and jobs per developable hectare for all designated Community Area DGA lands².
 - There is currently insufficient urban area land supply within the region to accommodate forecasted people and jobs across the region by 2051 within the existing DGA lands. The Region will require approximately 750 developable hectares (1,850 acres) of additional DGA land to accommodate the Growth Plan forecast.
- 3.5 Further details can be found in the Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report (Attachment #1).

² Excluding Seaton, the remaining DGA target is 60 people and jobs per developable ha.

4. Previous Reports and Decisions

4.1 See Appendix 1.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

5.1 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.

6. Next Steps and Conclusion

6.1 The Community Area Land Needs Technical Report is now available for public review. The report will be posted on the Envision Durham project web page at durham.ca/EnvisionDurham. Interested parties are encouraged to subscribe for further project updates and email notifications through this web page.

6.2 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.

6.3 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 Association (BILD), 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 (e.g. school boards, hospitals, utility providers, etc.).

- 6.4 Those wishing to provide input on the report may do so via email to EnvisionDurham@durham.ca or by mail. Any comments on the release of Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report are requested by November 1, 2021.

7. Attachments

Attachment #1: [Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Appendix 1 – to Report #2021-INFO-100

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.
- 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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.