

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-97  
Date: September 24, 2021

---

**Subject:**

Envision Durham – Growth Management Study – Release of Employment Strategy  
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.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to release for agency and public comment, the **Employment Strategy Technical Report**, which is the third of four technical reports prepared in support of the LNA. The first technical report was the Region-Wide Growth Analysis released July 2, 2021 and the second was the Housing Intensification Study released September 3, 2021.
- 1.3 In the fall of 2021, a Council Education Session will be held to provide members of Council with an opportunity to learn about the Growth Management Study and the LNA process, to ask questions and provide feedback. 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 September 24, 2021, the Employment Strategy Technical Report will be posted on the Envision Durham project webpage at [durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://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](mailto:EnvisionDurham@durham.ca) or by mail. Any comments on the release of the Employment Strategy Technical Report are requested by October 25, 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 The 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. 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. 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).
- 2.3 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 are 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 September 3, 2021) evaluates the supply and demand for housing within the Built-up Area. This evaluation includes a detailed assessment of likely opportunities and supply potential for intensification and associated population and employment accommodation. A key outcome of this report is a recommendation for a 50 per cent intensification target for the Region.
  3. The **Employment Strategy** (subject of this report) provides an assessment of trends in employment and 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** (to be released on October 1, 2021) will evaluate 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). A key outcome of this report will include a recommended density target for Designated Greenfield Areas and recommendations on urban area land required to accommodate residential units and population related jobs to 2051.
- 2.4 A **Land Needs Assessment Recommendations Report** will compile the key outcomes, technical analysis and related recommendations in the above reports, which will be presented to Planning and Economic Development Committee later this year.
3. **Employment Strategy Technical Report Overview**
    - 3.1 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.
    - 3.2 The Employment Strategy Technical Report presents several key findings:
      - Durham Region's employment forecast is 460,000 jobs by 2051. To achieve this forecast, a total of 236,400 new jobs are required over the 2016 to 2051 period, representing an average annual growth rate of 2.1%.

- Based on a review of existing Employment Area densities and trends in employment uses, an overall region wide minimum Urban Employment Area density target of 26 jobs per gross hectare has been recommended.
- The Region received 47 Employment Area conversion requests. Two conversion requests were subsequently withdrawn by the proponent. Each of the remaining 45 conversion request has been reviewed in detail against the evaluation criteria endorsed by Regional Council in the spring of 2020. In addition, several areas were identified in consultation with Regional Planning staff that, although not subject to a privately initiated request, warranted consideration for conversion. The report identifies 408 gross hectares (1,008 gross acres) of Employment Area lands as appropriate for recommendation for conversion to non-employment uses.
- The report also identifies an Employment Area shortfall. It is estimated that a Settlement Area Boundary Expansion will be required to designate approximately 1,150 gross hectares (2,800 acres) of Urban Employment Area lands in the new Regional Official Plan.

3.3 Further details can be found in the Employment Strategy Technical Report (Attachment #1).

#### **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 Employment Strategy Technical Report is now available for public review. The report will be posted on the Envision Durham project web page at [durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://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 (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.).
- 6.4 Those wishing to provide input on the report may do so via email to [EnvisionDurham@durham.ca](mailto:EnvisionDurham@durham.ca) or by mail. Any comments on the release of the Employment Strategy Technical Report are requested by October 25, 2021.
- 6.5 The next and final technical report to be released as part of the Land Needs Assessment will be the Community Areas Urban Land Needs Technical Report.

## **7. Attachments**

Attachment #1: [Employment Strategy Technical Report](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

---

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

#### 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 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](#) presented 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 Technical Report. The purpose of this report is to document the capacity for accommodating residential and mixed-use growth within the region's built-up area (BUA).