



The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Report: #2019-P-35
Date: September 3, 2019

Subject:

Envision Durham – Engagement and Outreach – Public Opinion Survey Summary, File D12-01

Recommendation:

That the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That a copy of Report #2019-P-35 be received for information; and
 - B) That a copy of Report #2019-P-35 be forwarded to Durham's area municipalities; conservation authorities; and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for information.
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Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the introductory Public Opinion Survey Summary results and to outline the related activities undertaken during the launch of Envision Durham – the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) (see Attachment #1).

2. Background

- 2.1 On May 2, 2018, Regional Council authorized staff to proceed with Envision Durham, as detailed in [Commissioner's Report #2018-COW-93](#).

- 2.2 On February 5, 2019, the Planning Division launched the first stage (“Discover”) of the public engagement program for Envision Durham by publishing a project web page and public opinion survey, as detailed in [Commissioner's Report #2019-P-4](#).
- 2.3 During the initial stage, the Envision Durham project and its scope were first introduced to the public. The purpose of this early “Discovery” stage was three-fold:
- a. To reintroduce the purpose of the ROP. The Official Plan is Regional Council's core land use planning document, guiding Regional decision-making on long-term growth and development. It also provides policies to ensure an improved quality of life, securing the health, safety, convenience and well-being of present and future residents.
 - b. To explain that the Region is undertaking the MCR because under the Planning Act, the Region is required to review the ROP every five years, and to bring it in line with Provincial plans and policy statements.
 - c. To present Envision Durham as an opportunity to plan for change and establish a progressive and forward-looking planning vision for Durham Region to 2041.

3. Overview of Engagement from Stage 1

- 3.1 The use of digital engagement tools, including a project web page, the use of social media, and an online survey, were instrumental during the “Discover” stage. During the launch, over 1,300 people visited the project web page (durham.ca/EnvisionDurham) to learn more about the review, and to:
- a. Take the online public opinion survey (391 survey responses).
 - b. Watch a brief introductory video of the MCR process (435 video views on YouTube).
 - c. Opt-in for Envision Durham project updates (116 email subscribers).
- 3.2 This stage was promoted by way of:
- a. News releases and public service announcements.
 - b. Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.
 - c. Email notifications.
 - d. Publications in internal and external newsletters.
 - e. Materials published online.
- 3.3 In addition, there has been broad distribution of print materials, such as posters and postcards promoting Envision Durham within Regional Headquarters, area

municipal Town Halls, libraries and community centres.

- 3.4 The engagement program was also designed to take a “go to them” approach. For example, Regional staff hosted 16 “pop-up” information kiosks in various locations across the region to encourage broad participation.
- 3.5 The primary call-to-action during Stage 1 was to encourage interested parties to complete an introductory public opinion survey, available through the project web page, or via durham.ca/EnvisionDurhamSurvey (now redirected to the project web page).
- 3.6 The online survey tool was designed to be mobile-friendly; however, paper copies and accessible formats, including in alternate languages, were available upon request.
- 3.7 The survey went live on February 5th, and remained open for a 60-day period, closing at midnight on April 6, 2019. A total of 391 people completed the survey, which represented approximately 30% of the visitors to the project web page during that same period.
- 3.8 The survey included the following four main components:
 - a. Tell us about yourself. This component gathered basic demographic information about each individual survey respondent (five closed-ended questions).
 - b. What’s important to you? This component asked survey respondents to rate various land use planning issues on a scale of importance (25 rating questions).
 - c. Where are your preferred planning priorities? This component asked survey respondents to mark the location of planning priorities, and to leave comments, on an interactive map of the region (ten map-based questions).
 - d. Share any additional comments. This final component allowed survey respondents to elaborate on issues of their choosing, and to provide feedback on matters not already covered in the survey (three open-ended questions).
- 3.9 Between all four components, the survey contained a total 43 questions and was estimated to take 10 to 20 minutes to complete (dependent upon the individual user). As previously noted, 391 people completed the survey, which generated over 44,000 data points. Responses are anonymous.

3.10 The introductory Public Opinion Survey Summary (see Attachment #1) provides a robust summary of findings, including relevant quotes from survey participants, for each component of the survey.

3.11 The survey summary was prepared by Regional planning staff in consultation with Regional staff from the Office of the CAO, Corporate Communications Division.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Regional staff would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the public opinion survey, and those who continue to participate in the MCR.

4.2 The Planning Division initiated Stage 2 (“Discuss”) of the public engagement program for Envision Durham on March 5, 2019, wherein participants are being asked to provide input on various theme-based Discussion Papers being released over the course of 2019. The Discussion Paper topics are as follows:

- a. Agriculture and Rural System ([Commissioner’s Report #2019-P-12](#), released March 5, 2019).
- b. Climate Change and Sustainability ([Commissioner’s Report #2019-P-26](#), released May 7, 2019).
- c. Growth Management, including but not limited to reports on:
 - The Urban System ([Commissioner’s Report #2019-P-31](#), released June 4, 2019).
 - Land Needs Assessment (LNA) and related technical studies, i.e. Employment Strategy, Intensification Strategy, Designated Greenfield Area Density Analysis, etc.
 - Additional feasibility studies, if required based on the results of the LNA.
- d. Environment and Greenlands System (Commissioner’s Report #2019-P-36, released September 3, 2019).
- e. Transportation System.
- f. Housing.

4.3 These discussion papers provide an overview and background on theme-based land use planning matters and pose various questions to gather opinions and help shape future policy.

4.4 Regional staff will report to Committee on the results of the Discussion Papers through future reports during the next stage of the public engagement process.

4.5 It is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to Regional Council, as well as Durham's area municipalities, conservation authorities and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for information.

5. Attachments

[Attachment #1: Engagement and Outreach – Public Opinion Survey Summary](#)
(Enclosed Booklet)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Planning and
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Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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