



# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Planning and Economic Development Committee  
From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2019-P-36  
Date: September 3, 2019

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**Subject:**

Envision Durham – Environment and Greenlands System Discussion Paper, File D12-01

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**Recommendation:**

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

- A) That a copy of report #2019-P-36 be received for information; and
  - B) That a copy of report #2019-P-36 be forwarded to Durham's area municipalities; conservation authorities; the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry; the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks; and the Durham Environmental Advisory Committee for review and comment.
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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Environment and Greenlands Discussion Paper which is the fourth paper in a series being released as part of Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) (see Attachment #1).

1.2 Comments on this Discussion Paper are requested by December 2, 2019 (90-day commenting period).

## 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 initiated the first stage ("Discover") of the public engagement program for Envision Durham by launching a project web page and public opinion survey, as detailed in [Commissioner's Report #2019-P-4](#) and Commissioner's Report #2019-P-35 in the Planning and Economic Development Agenda for September 3, 2019. The Planning Division initiated the second stage ("Discuss") on March 5, 2019, wherein participants are being asked to provide input on various theme-based Discussion Papers 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.; and
    - Additional feasibility studies, if required based on the results of the LNA.
  - d. Environment and Greenlands System, which is the subject of this report;
  - e. Transportation System; and
  - f. Housing.
- 2.3 Each Paper contains discussion questions, with a supplemental workbook, to help facilitate discussion and input.

## 3. Environment and Greenlands System Discussion Paper

- 3.1 The Greenlands System comprises approximately 40 per cent of Durham's land base. It includes Major Open Space Areas, Oak Ridges Moraine Areas, and Waterfront Areas as well as Tourist Activity/Recreational Nodes, Waterfront Places, Open Space Linkages, and Waterfront Links.

- 3.2 The Greenlands System supports environmental conservation, major recreational uses including golf courses and ski hills, and other rural and agricultural land uses.
- 3.3 This Paper provides an overview of the Regional Official Plan policy framework and many of the issues and requirements affecting the Environment and Greenlands System that the Region must consider, including:
- a. Provincial policies, plans, and requirements that the Region's Official Plan must be consistent with and conform to, including recent amendments such as recently proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement;
  - b. Relevant Regional strategies, programs, and initiatives;
  - c. The components and land use designations that comprise the Region's Greenlands System;
  - d. Key trends related to the Environment and Greenlands System occurring in the Region including climate change, the effects of invasive species, the management of excess soil and soil conservation, septage spreading, recognizing the socio-economic benefits associated with natural features and their functions, opportunities for green infrastructure, the potential for ecosystem compensation as a component of the application review process, considerations for traditional ecological knowledge, and opportunities for environmental stewardship;
  - e. Core environmental policy and mapping including: natural heritage and hydrologic features, water resources, watershed planning, source protection, natural hazards, waste, and cultural heritage and archaeological resources;
  - f. The manner by which identification and/or delineation of a Regional Natural Heritage System can be represented in the Regional Official Plan; and
  - g. Other Environment and Greenlands System policy topics that will be considered.
- 3.4 This Discussion Paper was prepared by Regional Planning staff in consultation with staff from the Office of the CAO, the Works Department, Envision Durham's Area Municipal Working Group, the Envision Durham Conservation Authority Working Group, and Provincial staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- 3.5 The Discussion Papers do not present positions on potential changes that may be part of the ROP, but rather provide information and pose questions for consideration.

#### 4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Each of the Discussion Papers will be posted to the project web page at [durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://durham.ca/EnvisionDurham) for public input. Interested parties are encouraged to subscribe for project updates and email notifications through this web page. The Discussion Papers will be announced 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; and
  - e. Materials published online.
- 4.2 Comments on the Environment and Greenlands System Discussion Paper are requested by December 2, 2019 (90-day commenting period). 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.
- 4.3 It is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to Regional Council for information and be forwarded to Durham's area municipalities, conservation authorities, relevant provincial ministries and the Durham Environmental Advisory Committee for review and comment. In addition, environmental and other key stakeholders will be notified of this Discussion Paper's release. The Discussion Paper will also be provided to interested Indigenous communities and others who may have an interest in the Envision Durham study process.

#### 5. Attachments

**Attachment #1:** [Environment and Greenlands System Discussion Paper](#)  
(Enclosed Booklet)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer