

Economic and Development Services Committee – January 12, 2026

Update Regarding the Growth Management Study Component of Imagine Oshawa:  
The Official Plan Review (All Wards)

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That the Economic and Development Services Committee recommend to City Council:

Whereas, the City has launched Imagine Oshawa: the Oshawa Official Plan Review (the “Official Plan Review”), which is a City-wide initiative to guide how Oshawa grows and develops in the years ahead; and,

Whereas, a key component of the Official Plan Review is a Growth Management Study, which will determine how much available serviced land will be required to accommodate Oshawa’s future population, including both residents and jobs, as well as consider settlement area boundary expansions, employment area conversions, allocating appropriate density targets across the City and implementing development phasing policies; and,

Whereas the City has retained Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. and WSP Canada (henceforth known as the “Consultant Team”) to undertake the Growth Management Study component of the Official Plan Review; and,

Whereas, the Consultant Team has prepared the following three technical reports as part of the Growth Management Study: a draft Land Needs Assessment, a draft Employment Lands Strategy, and a draft Intensification Strategy; and,

Whereas, a Public Information Centre was held on November 25, 2025 at Oshawa City Hall to present the findings of the three technical reports previously noted and to seek public input and comments; and,

Whereas, the Consultant Team is currently working on the next phase of the Growth Management Study, which is the preparation of a Growth Phasing and Urban Expansion Options Report, which integrates the results of the aforementioned technical documents; and,

Whereas, an unguided approach to land build-out could result in scattered, non-sequential greenfield development, the premature extension of trunk infrastructure, and an imbalanced pattern of residential and employment growth, necessitating the preparation of a phasing plan to align growth with servicing capacity, capital planning and a coherent urban structure; and,

Whereas, the Consultant Team has prepared a memo (see Attachment 1) that provides a preliminary framework for the phasing strategy component of the Growth Management Strategy; and,

Whereas, throughout the consultation period of the Growth Management Study to date, City staff have heard feedback from stakeholders and the public expressing interest in the forthcoming Growth Phasing and Urban Expansion Options Report, with some requesting an opportunity to review and comment on the City's phasing plan; and,

Whereas, in response to said request to review and comment on the City's phasing plan, the Consultant Team has prepared the attached memo to provide high-level information on the Growth Phasing and Urban Expansion Options Report, including an evaluation criteria matrix and the introduction of an initial methodology for organizing development into pre-2041 and post-2041 phases within the 2056 planning horizon, to support the stakeholders' and public's review in advance of releasing the final Growth Management Study, including the Growth Phasing and Urban Expansion Options Report;

Therefore, be it resolved that pursuant to Report ED-26-06 dated January 12, 2026:

1. That staff be authorized to consult with the public and all stakeholders to obtain feedback on the preliminary framework for the phasing strategy component of the Growth Management Study as identified in Attachment 1, to assist with the finalization of the Growth Management Study; and,
2. That upon concluding the public consultation process, staff be directed to report back to the Economic and Development Services Committee with the results of the public consultation and the final Growth Management Study.

<b>To</b>	Laura Moebs, Principal Planner, City of Oshawa
<b>From</b>	Adam Fischer, Manager, Watson & Associates and Rob Rappolt, Manager, WSP
<b>Date</b>	December 17, 2025
<b>Re:</b>	2025 Oshawa Growth Management Study – Phase 3 Phasing Plan Methodology Outline

**Fax** ☐

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**Mail** ☐

**Email** ☒

This memorandum provides a preliminary framework for the phasing strategy component of the City of Oshawa Growth Management Study (G.M.S.). It summarizes key findings from the Phase 2 technical reports, outlines the rationale for a structured phasing plan, provides an evaluation criteria matrix, and introduces an initial methodology for organizing development into pre-2041 and post-2041 phases within the 2056 planning horizon.

The analysis and concepts presented here are intended to lay the groundwork for more detailed technical work in Q1 2026, including additional servicing, market analysis, and capacity assessment. As such, the proposed phasing approach should be viewed as a working methodology that will be tested and refined as further technical analysis and consultation are completed.

## 1. Summary of Technical Findings - Land Needs and Implications for Phasing

The three Phase 2 technical reports - the Land Needs Assessment (L.N.A.), Intensification Strategy, and Employment Lands Strategy (E.L.S.) - collectively confirm that Oshawa has sufficient designated land to accommodate forecast population, housing, and employment growth to 2056, with surpluses in both Community Area and Employment Area lands.

The L.N.A. identifies approximately 1,960 hectares of gross Designated Growth Area (D.G.A.) Community Area land, including the 403 hectares of 2051 Urban Expansion Areas incorporated through Envision Durham. By 2056, the D.G.A. is projected to contain a surplus of roughly 105 hectares. The Intensification Strategy supports this conclusion by confirming that Oshawa can accommodate a substantial share of residential and employment growth within the Built Up Area (B.U.A.) while maintaining a



city-wide intensification target of at least 50 percent. The E.L.S. similarly finds that Oshawa's employment land supply is adequate at the 2056 horizon, with a small surplus of about 10 hectares by 2056.

Taken together, the Phase 2 work establishes that Oshawa's main growth management challenge is therefore not whether additional urban land is required, but how and when existing D.G.A. and Employment Area lands are brought online. With both community and employment land needs largely satisfied by 2056, the Phase 3 Growth Phasing and Urban Expansion Options Report must focus on how to stage development in a manner that supports complete communities, cost-effective servicing, and a balanced residential employment structure.

## 2. Why Develop a Phasing Plan?

From a growth management perspective, a phasing plan is the mechanism that translates the “how much” question addressed through the Phase 2 technical reports into the “where and when” questions of actual urban development. Due to the size of the new urban area and the sequencing required for services, it isn't practical for all landowners to progress with development simultaneously. An unmanaged buildout could result in scattered greenfield development, the premature extension of trunk infrastructure, and an imbalanced pattern of residential and employment growth.

A phasing plan is required to align growth with servicing capacity, capital planning, and a coherent urban structure. By sequencing development, the City can prioritize areas that can be serviced through logical extensions of existing systems, defer high-cost or complex areas, and synchronize growth with capital budgets and development charge cash flow, while also recognizing that it is neither feasible nor desirable to bring all development interests forward at once. A structured sequence helps focus on existing Part II Planning Areas and Strategic Growth Areas, reinforces Central Areas, promotes contiguous, compact growth within the D.G.A. rather than leapfrogging to more remote areas, and supports complete communities by coordinating community and employment land supply so that job growth keeps pace with housing, particularly within key Employment Areas and along major transportation corridors.

Phasing also underpins monitoring and adaptive management. With a phasing plan established, it will be essential for the City to continue monitoring its development progress. This continued monitoring will ensure that the City's phasing plan remains flexible in assessing the progression of development and can be adjusted on an



ongoing basis. This creates a feedback loop between phasing, infrastructure delivery, and policy updates, reducing the risk of long-term misalignment between land supply, servicing, and market realities.

### 3. Evaluation Criteria

Given that the L.N.A. identifies approximately 1,960 hectares of gross D.G.A. Community Area land, with an approximate 105-hectare surplus by 2056, the phasing plan must establish a clear framework for how and when these lands are planned to be developed within the planning horizon and beyond. Phasing of future development within the D.G.A. must consider the:

- Total area of the D.G.A., and its orientation relative to the existing B.U.A. to ensure a contiguous development pattern;
- Opportunity for the City to develop into a complete community, with convenient access to housing, jobs, everyday amenities, and multi-modal transportation options;
- Ability to optimize services in a fiscally responsible manner, and that the provision of those services are planned over the longer term;
- Desire to achieve a complete community that offers housing, jobs, and everyday amenities to existing and planned communities within the City;
- Feasibility of lands to be developed within a reasonable period in the near-term (e.g., within 15 years); and
- Mitigate loss of farmland and adverse impacts to the natural heritage system.

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (P.P.S.) directs that phasing policies, where appropriate, should be established and implemented to ensure that development within D.G.A.s is orderly and aligns with the timely provision of infrastructure and public service facilities.

A key consideration is therefore to prioritize lands that can be serviced in the near-term, and benefit from existing or planned improvements to the transportation system, or other similar major infrastructure investments. Additional criteria, such as the ability for new development to contribute to the City's aspiration of being a complete community, must also be taken into consideration. This includes, for example, optimization of critical public services, such as schools, community centres, and emergency services, and the viability of amenities such as community- or neighbourhood-level commercial uses (e.g., grocery stores) that serve the everyday needs of residents.



The P.P.S. also contains directives for the long-term protection and viability of agricultural land and the natural heritage system. However, it must be acknowledged that through Envision Durham, the entirety of the D.G.A. lands being considered through this G.M.S. have been identified as being required to accommodate the City's projected growth over the planning horizon. Through Envision Durham, which was fully approved by the Province in December 2024, consideration of farmland and the Greenlands system was taken into account and therefore is not being re-assessed through the G.M.S. Importantly, the L.N.A. and E.L.S. do not propose to expand the Settlement Area boundary beyond what was approved through Envision Durham. On this basis, these considerations are not identified as a criterion for the G.M.S. phasing strategy.

The following criteria are therefore recommended to inform the phasing plan:

**1. The logical extension of the existing development pattern within the City.**

New development within the D.G.A.s should occur adjacent to the existing urban area. The logical expansion of the existing development pattern within the City mitigates the possibility of a new development pattern that is non-contiguous and may take a prolonged period of time to become fully integrated with existing development and infrastructure. As a result, a key consideration would be the ability of the new urban area to integrate with the existing developed area. This criterion is important because it lends itself to ensuring that the extension of servicing and transportation infrastructure, including transit, is more efficient and sustainable over the long term, while contributing to a more compact built form, cohesive development pattern, and supporting the City's complete community objective.

**2. Opportunity to develop into a complete community.**

The principle of “complete communities” aims to enhance the physical, social, and built environments to the greatest extent possible through the land use planning process and complementary initiatives and strategies. This criterion focuses on the City and its aspirations to be a complete community that offers a range of housing options, jobs, everyday amenities, including parks and open spaces, as well as access to a multi-modal transportation system and services (e.g., emergency services, public works, human services). The provision of these elements of a complete community needs to be planned in a coordinated and fiscally sustainable manner while meeting the needs of future residents. In particular, the P.P.S. requires municipalities to plan for healthy and



complete communities and to incorporate sustainable development goals, objectives, and policies into their land use plans and implementation processes.

**3. The ability to be serviced efficiently by existing and planned water and wastewater infrastructure.**

The extension of water and wastewater infrastructure represents significant costs and complexity, and therefore there is a desire to ensure that the phasing plan contemplates the ability for this infrastructure to be extended in a manner that is efficient and optimal. Factors to consider in determining this include the existing water and wastewater system, the capacity of those systems, and their relative proximity to the D.G.A.s.

**4. The ability to be serviced efficiently by the existing and planned Regional and City transportation network.**

Similar to the water and wastewater criterion, this criterion is important because of the significant costs, complexity, and time associated with necessary improvements to the Regional and City transportation network, and the long-term land use and fiscal planning that is required. This criterion considers the capacity of the existing road network and planned improvements, as well as the timing of upgrades, taking into account both the existing and planned transit network.

**5. The ability to plan for and protect Employment Areas.**

Employment Areas must be strategically located to ensure their long-term success and ability to support the City's economic development and readiness at a regional scale. Planning for the location of Employment Areas through the phasing plan will contribute to a more cohesive and contiguous system of employment lands, thereby preventing a fragmented employment land pattern. This helps to mitigate the potential for future land use compatibility conflicts that could hinder the planned operation of Employment Areas and their ability to accommodate projected employment growth over the planning horizon.

Planning for Employment Areas through the phasing plan also better enables the assembly of land to accommodate the increased land need for a range of different land uses that are permitted within Employment Areas. Lastly, Employment Areas often have specific infrastructure requirements to ensure their functionality and to position the lands for the market. This includes, for example, proximity and access to major goods



movement facilities and transportation corridors, as well as water and wastewater servicing.

It is not proposed that these criteria be assigned different weights or relative importance. The five criteria must be assessed against various considerations to inform a phasing scenario that achieves a balanced approach for the responsible management of long-term growth and development, ultimately contributing to the City's achievement of its aspiration to be a complete community.

## 4. Phasing Plan Period Considerations

This section sets out a preliminary phasing framework to guide the next stage of technical work in Q1 2026. The central question is how to stage the existing Community Area and Employment Area supply so that growth remains contiguous, serviceable, and fiscally sustainable, recognizing that a moderate surplus of D.G.A. Community Area land to 2056 means some development may extend beyond the current planning horizon. Within this context, the initial methodology involves establishing two time periods for bringing lands forward: pre-2041 and post-2041. The 2041 horizon functions as the first major checkpoint within the 2056 period, representing a practical 15-year outlook that aligns with common 10- to 20-year capital planning windows and reflects the lead time required for environmental assessments, detailed design, property acquisition, and funding approvals. Using 2041 as the dividing line allows the City to focus early growth in locations that can be serviced within the current and next wave of infrastructure investments, while deferring more complex or higher-cost areas to the post-2041 period. Under this structure, the pre-2041 phase would emphasize the:

- Completion of existing Part II Plan areas and active D.G.A. applications that can be serviced through logical extensions of existing systems, while also considering the progression of the 2051 Urban Expansion Areas.
- Strategic Intensification Areas and corridors that support transit, Central Areas, and early achievement of intensification targets.
- Employment Areas where near-term market demand and existing or planned transportation and servicing capacity align.

Within the Community Area, the pre-2041 and post-2041 structures allow the phasing plan to indicate which D.G.A. lands are expected to be substantially developed or committed by 2041, and which are expected to come online afterward, while acknowledging that some post-2041 Community Area lands may not be fully utilized by



2056. For Employment Areas, the situation is somewhat different, given that the City's Employment Areas are anticipated to be largely built out by 2056. Phasing for Employment Areas is therefore less about holding a significant reserve and more about:

- Ensuring a continuous supply of shovel-ready employment lands through the pre-2041 and post-2041 periods.
- Prioritizing early phases in locations that can leverage existing or near-term regional servicing and the goods movement network.
- Allowing later-stage Employment Areas to come online as infrastructure and market conditions warrant, with the understanding that most designated Employment land will be committed or substantially built out by 2056.

The post-2041 phase would then encompass the remaining Community Area D.G.A. lands, as well as later Employment Area stages. Importantly, all later-stage lands are grouped into a single post-2041 pool, within which the City can manage detailed sequencing over time through secondary planning, monitoring, and future updates to the phasing plan. While this phasing plan would initially identify lands within the pre- and post-2041 horizons, it will be vital that the City continually assess the merits of the lands in these phasing periods and make adjustments as required. In this way, the phasing framework remains simple enough to communicate a two-stage structure, pre-2041 and post-2041, anchored in the 2056 planning horizon, while retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to servicing, market, and policy considerations over time.