

To: Development Services Committee

From: Warren Munro, HBA, RPP, Commissioner,  
Development Services Department

Report Number: DS-22-76

Date of Report: April 6, 2022

Date of Meeting: April 11, 2022

Subject: Durham Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review: City  
Comments on the Region of Durham's Growth Management  
Study - Alternative Land Need Scenarios

Ward: All Wards

File: 12-03

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this Report is to obtain Council's approval of City comments on the Region of Durham's Growth Management Study – Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report dated February 11, 2022 (the "Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report"). The Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report is a key component of Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review (M.C.R.) of the Durham Regional Official Plan (D.R.O.P.).

The Region has requested that the City provide comments on the Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report by April 14, 2022. However, City staff have confirmed with Regional staff that the submission of City comments after the requested deadline is acceptable and appropriate, in order that staff's comments may be considered by Council at its regularly scheduled meeting of April 25, 2022 and submitted together with Council's resolution on the matter.

A copy of the Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report dated February 11, 2022 can be found at the following link: [www.durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://www.durham.ca/EnvisionDurham).

Attachment 1 contains recommended City comments on the Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Development Services Committee recommend to City Council that Report DS-22-76 dated April 6, 2022 be endorsed as the City's comments on the Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report prepared by the Region of Durham as part of Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Durham Regional Official Plan.

### **3.0 Executive Summary**

Not applicable.

### **4.0 Input From Other Sources**

The following have been consulted in the preparation of this Report:

- Commissioner, Community Services

### **5.0 Analysis**

#### **5.1 Envision Durham: The Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Durham Regional Official Plan**

On May 2, 2018, Regional staff received authorization to proceed with Envision Durham, the M.C.R. of the D.R.O.P. Envision Durham is an opportunity to undertake a core review of the current D.R.O.P. and establish a progressive and forward-looking planning vision for the Region up to 2051.

On February 5, 2019, the Region initiated the first stage (“Discover”) of the public engagement program for Envision Durham by launching a project web page and public opinion survey. With the release of the first of a series of discussion papers on March 5, 2019, Regional staff launched the second stage (“Discuss”) of the engagement program, where participants were asked to provide input on various themes presented through the discussion papers.

To date, the following six discussion papers have been released:

- Agriculture and Rural System Discussion Paper (released March 5, 2019);
- Climate Change and Sustainability Discussion Paper (released May 7, 2019);
- Growth Management – Urban System Discussion Paper (released June 4, 2019);
- Environment and Greenlands System Discussion Paper (released September 3, 2019);
- Transportation System Discussion Paper (released October 1, 2019); and,
- Housing Policy Planning Discussion paper (released December 3, 2019).

As previously directed by Council, the City has submitted comments to the Region on each of the six above-noted discussion papers.

The Region has now initiated the third stage (“Direct”) of the public engagement program. Under this stage, the first policy direction report released by the Region related to the conversion of Employment Areas. The Region provided a ninety (90) day submission window for the public, including the development community, to submit requests related to the conversion of Employment Areas. The final date to submit a request for consideration through Envision Durham was September 23, 2020.

As directed by Council on December 14, 2020, the City submitted comments to the Region pursuant to Report DS-20-149 dated December 4, 2020 regarding various Employment Area conversion requests. These consisted of four (4) Employment Area conversion

requests received from private landowners and three (3) City-initiated Employment Area conversion requests pertaining to employment lands located in Oshawa.

On December 22, 2021, Regional Council adopted amended recommendations of the Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee on Employment Area conversion requests.

The second policy direction report issued under the Direct stage of Envision Durham related to Major Transit Station Areas (M.T.S.A.s). The Region provided a ninety (90) day submission window for the public, including the development community, to submit comments on the M.T.S.A. Policy Direction Report dated December 2020. The final date to submit comments for consideration through Envision Durham was March 1, 2021.

As directed by Council on February 22, 2021, the City submitted comments to the Region pursuant to Report DS-21-20 dated February 3, 2021 regarding M.T.S.A.s.

The third policy direction report issued under the Direct stage of Envision Durham related to potential additions and changes to land use planning policies in the D.R.O.P. The Region provided a one-hundred-and-twenty (120) day submission window for the public, including the development community, to submit comments on the Proposed Policy Directions Report dated March 2021. The final date to submit comments for consideration through Envision Durham was June 30, 2021.

As directed by Council on June 21, 2021, the City submitted comments to the Region pursuant to Report DS-21-118 dated June 2, 2021 regarding the proposed policy directions.

The Region is now in the process of completing a Growth Management Study, which will be completed in two phases. The first phase of the Growth Management Study will focus on the completion of a Lands Needs Assessment. The Land Needs Assessment is a review and calculation of the ability of the Region's existing urban land base to accommodate the population and employment forecasts contained in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 (Growth Plan, 2020), and seeks to determine if any additional urban land is required. The following four (4) technical reports have been released to inform the Land Needs Assessment:

- Region-Wide Growth Analysis (released July 2, 2021);
- Housing Intensification Study (released September 3, 2021);
- Employment Strategy (released September 24, 2021), and,
- Community Area Urban Land Needs Analysis (released October 1, 2021).

The second phase of the Growth Management Study will focus on the most appropriate locations for Settlement Area Boundary Expansions, if they are required. The Region will be reporting on these matters separately.

A component of the first phase of the Region's Growth Management Study involved the collection of submissions from the public and the development community regarding Settlement Area Boundary Expansions requests. The deadline to submit requests in this regard was May 31, 2021. Following the completion of the Land Needs Assessment,

Regional staff will proceed to Phase Two (2) of the Growth Management Study to assess the most appropriate location(s) for Settlement Area Boundary Expansion(s).

On September 7, 2021, the Region released the Proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment – Policies and Delineations for Protected M.T.S.A.s Report. The final date to submit comments for consideration through Envision Durham was September 30, 2021.

The City submitted comments to the Region pursuant to Report DS-21-163 dated September 8, 2021 regarding the proposed Protected M.T.S.A.s Regional Official Plan Amendment. On December 22, 2021, Regional Council adopted Amendment Number 186 to the D.R.O.P which established the policy framework for Protected M.T.S.A.s.

Most recently, the Region has requested comments on the Alternative Land Need Scenario Report which was released in response to comments received on the four technical reports released between July and October 2021 (as noted above). A public information centre was held on March 24, 2022 to discuss the alternative land need scenarios. In addition, an online survey was launched on March 10, 2022 to solicit feedback on the alternative land need scenarios. Regional staff have advised that the submission of City Comments following the City Council meeting on April 25, 2022 is satisfactory.

## **5.2 Growth Management Study**

The Growth Management Study is a key component of Envision Durham. The first phase of the Growth Management Study is the preparation of a Land Needs Assessment.

The Land Needs Assessment is a detailed review of the Region's land base to determine how much of the Growth Plan population and employment forecasts for the Region can be accommodated within the existing Urban Area, which is comprised of both the Built-up Area and the designated Greenfield Area. Any growth that cannot be accommodated within the existing Urban Area would trigger a requirement for additional urban land by means of a Settlement Area Boundary Expansion. The second phase of the Growth Management Study will focus on determining the most appropriate locations for any required Settlement Area Boundary Expansion(s).

In accordance with the Land Needs Assessment methodology issued by the Province, land needs are to be assessed across two different areas, namely Community Areas and Employment Areas, as defined below:

- **Community Areas:** areas where most of the housing required to accommodate the forecasted population will be located, as well as most population-related jobs, most office jobs, and some employment land employment jobs. Community Areas may be located in both the delineated Built-up Area and designated Greenfield Area.
- **Employment Areas:** areas where most of the employment land employment jobs are located (i.e. employment in industrial type buildings), as well as some office jobs and some population-related jobs, particularly those providing services to the Employment Area. Employment Areas may be located in both the delineated Built-up Area and designated Greenfield Area.

To date, four (4) draft technical reports constituting the Land Needs Assessment have been released for public review and comment. These are as follows:

- Region-Wide Growth Analysis (released July 2, 2021) – Presented Region-wide population and employment forecasts, various trends in demographics, unit mix, housing prices, and built form. The report included a forecast housing unit mix for new units to be built during the 2022 to 2051 timeframe consisting of 22% low-density units, 31% medium density units, and 48% high-density units.
- Housing Intensification Study (released September 3, 2021) – Evaluated 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. The report recommended a Regional intensification target of 50%, consistent with the Growth Plan.
- Employment Strategy (released September 24, 2021) – Provided an assessment of trends in employment and analyzed the current state of the Region's Employment Areas, provided recommendations on Employment Area conversions, recommended an overall Employment Area density target of 26 jobs per hectare, and identified an additional Employment Area land need of 1,164 hectares, (2,876 acres).
- Community Area Urban Land Needs Analysis (released October 1, 2021) – Evaluated 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). The report provided a recommended overall designated Greenfield Areas density target of 64 people and jobs per hectare and an additional Community Areas land need of 737 hectares (1,821 acres).

### **5.3 Additional Land Needs Assessment Scenarios**

In response to comments received on the draft Land Needs Assessment, Regional staff confirmed at the October 5, 2021 Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting the need to run modelling to assess an appropriate range of alternative land need scenarios.

Regional staff developed five (5) Community Area land need scenarios and two (2) Employment Area density target scenarios. These scenarios are discussed further in Sections 5.4 and 5.5 of this Report, respectively.

### **5.4 Community Area Land Need Scenarios**

The four key metrics for the Community Area land need scenarios are:

- Housing unit mix (2022-2051);
- Intensification target (2022-2051);
- Designated Greenfield Area density target (at 2051);
- The resultant Community Area land need and quantum of additional urban land required through Settlement Area Boundary Expansion.

Each scenario has been defined by prioritizing one or more of these metrics as the key driver, with the other metrics being resultant outcomes.

#### **5.4.1 Community Area Land Need Scenario 1**

- Based on a housing unit mix that is approximately 56% low density, 23% medium density, 19% high density, 2% secondary units
- Intensification target of approximately 35%
- Designated Greenfield Area density target of approximately 50 to 55 people and jobs per hectare
- Implements the housing unit mix from the Growth Plan background technical report entitled: “Greater Golden Horseshoe: Growth Forecasts to 2051”, prepared by Hemson Consulting, dated August 26, 2020.
- Given the high proportion of low-density housing, this scenario is anticipated to be furthest away from achieving the provincial intensification target, and would result in the highest amount of new Community Area land being required.

#### **5.4.2 Community Area Land Need Scenario 2**

- Based on a housing unit mix that is approximately 39% low density, 26% medium density, 32% high density, 3% secondary units
- Intensification target of approximately 45%
- Designated Greenfield Area density target of 53 to 58 people and jobs per hectare
- Based on a housing unit mix that is still predominately oriented towards low-density housing, but with an increased share of medium and high-density housing.

#### **5.4.3 Community Area Land Need Scenario 3**

- Based on a housing unit mix that is approximately 34% low density, 30% medium density, 33% high density, 3% secondary units
- Intensification target of 50%
- Designated Greenfield Area density target of approximately 54 to 59 people and jobs per hectare
- Will achieve the minimum Growth Plan intensification target of 50% by shifting the unit mix, particularly the share of low-density units, towards medium and high-density units.

#### **5.4.4 Community Area Land Need Scenario 4**

- Based on housing unit mix that is approximately 28% low density, 28% medium density, 41% high density, 3% secondary units

- Intensification target of 50%
- Designated Greenfield Area density target of approximately 57 to 62 people and jobs per hectare
- Represents the consultants' recommended scenario that was presented through the release of the four draft Land Needs Assessment Technical Reports in the fall of 2021.

#### **5.4.5 Community Area Land Need Scenario 5**

- Based on a housing unit mix of approximately 20% low density, 31% medium density, 47% high density, 3% secondary units. (Note: totals do not add to 100% owing to rounding.)
- Prioritizes intensification at a rate that exceeds the minimum target contained in the Growth Plan. To achieve this higher rate of intensification, a further shift in the housing unit mix away from low density would be required.
- This scenario is anticipated to result in the lowest amount of additional Community Area land being required.
- Intensification target of approximately 55%
- Designated Greenfield Area density target of approximately 59 to 64 people and jobs per hectare.

### **5.5 Employment Land Need Scenarios**

The key metrics associated with the Employment Land Need Scenarios are Employment Area intensification and Employment Area density targets, which combined will determine the resultant Employment Area Land Need.

#### **5.5.1 Employment Land Need Scenario 1**

- Based on the Employment Area density target as presented in the draft Employment Strategy Technical Report of 26 jobs per gross hectare.
- 15% of the share of employment growth accommodated by intensification.

#### **5.5.2 Employment Land Need Scenario 2**

- Based on assumption that there will be an even further increase in the intensification of existing developed employment lands, resulting in an increased Region-wide Employment Area density target of 27 jobs per gross hectare that would result in about a 15% decrease in land need.
- 20% share of employment growth accommodated by intensification.

## **5.6 Scenario Assessment Framework**

The assessment framework was developed by considering the key theme areas of:

- Conformity with the Growth Plan;
- Regional Priorities;
- Future Forward Planning; and,
- Regional Official Plan and Envision Durham Planning Objectives, all of which inform how growth in Durham should occur over the next 30 years.

The following principles were used to measure the scenarios:

### **1. Achieving Targets**

- Does the scenario achieve the minimum targets of the Growth Plan, before advancing additional Settlement Area Boundary Expansions?

### **2. Housing Market Choice**

- Does the scenario provide for the development of a fulsome range of housing types?
- How does the scenario respond to market demand?

### **3. Setting up Strategic Growth Areas for Success**

- Does the scenario support the ability of Urban Growth Centres, Regional Centres, M.T.S.A.s and Regional Corridors to achieve their planned function as higher density, mixed-use, and transit-supportive urban communities?

### **4. Protecting the Rural System, preparing for Climate Change and Achieving Sustainable Development**

- To what extent would the scenario negatively impact existing agricultural and rural areas?
- Does the scenario provide efficient and sustainable development patterns, including transit-oriented development?
- Does the scenario respond to the Region's Climate Change Emergency declaration?

### **5. Competitive Economic and Employment Conditions**

- To what extent does the scenario capitalize on the Region's economic and sector strengths, including providing for appropriate Employment Area land to ensure Durham remains economically attractive and competitive over the long term?



## **5.7 Next Steps**

Regional staff will consider all public and stakeholders comments on the Alternative Land Need Scenarios, and at the scheduled May 3, 2022 meeting of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee, will recommend a preferred scenario taking into account the input received.

A Regional Council decision on the preferred scenario will enable the second phase of the Region's Growth Management Study to commence. Upon Regional Council's endorsement of a preferred land need scenario and the associated quantum of urban land needs, phase two of the Region's Growth Management Study, will proceed to evaluate the most suitable locations for Settlement Area Boundary Expansions. According to Regional staff, this is not expected to occur until the first quarter of 2023.

It is City staff's understanding that the City will have an opportunity to review and provide input on the Region's proposed Settlement Area Boundary Expansions prior to a decision being made by Regional Council.

## **5.8 Staff Comments**

Staff comments on the Alternative Land Need Scenarios Report are contained in Attachment 1 to this Report.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

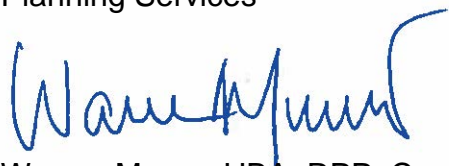
There are no financial implications associated with the comments in this Report.

## **7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan**

The Recommendation in this Report advances the Accountable Leadership, Economic Prosperity and Financial Stewardship, and Environmental Responsibility goals of the Oshawa Strategic Plan.



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## Staff Comments on the Region of Durham's Growth Management Study – Alternative Land Need Scenarios

### 1.0 Overall Comments:

- 1.1 Staff support the development of a wide range of housing options for residents, which is important for a healthy housing system. A full range and mix of housing, including affordable housing, to accommodate a range of incomes and household size and the promotion of the "missing middle" (e.g. townhouses, stacked townhouses and low-rise apartment buildings) form of residential development should be focused on.

Policy 6.1.1 of the Oshawa Official Plan states:

"It is the intent of the Plan to monitor and identify the local housing needs of residents, including specialized housing needs such as, but not limited to, seniors' and students', and a diversified labour force, and plan for and encourage the provision of a range of residential accommodation by housing type, tenure, size, location and cost, in order to address these needs within a complete community. In areas outside of the Major Urban Area, housing choice shall largely be limited to single detached dwellings, consistent with the character of the area.

For the purposes of this Plan, "complete communities" means communities where:

- (a) People's needs for daily living are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing (including affordable housing), schools, recreation, open space, and community infrastructure and alternative transportation options through transit-supportive development;
- (b) There is an appropriate ratio of population to jobs;
- (c) Decisions are based on integrating social, economic and environmental considerations; and
- (d) People can live, work, study and play in a safe, vibrant, healthy and prosperous environment."

City staff request that the Region give consideration to the existing built form and land use context when determining an appropriate housing unit mix and associated land needs across the Region, particularly with respect to Greenfield Areas in lower-tier municipalities where there are former rural settlements. In these circumstances, it is challenging for a lower-tier municipality to achieve the same Region-wide minimum density targets for residents and jobs in designated Greenfield Areas containing former rural settlements while still preserving the existing built heritage resources and character of former rural settlements. For this reason, it may be

appropriate to direct a larger proportion of the Region's anticipated lower density housing to those lower-tier municipalities containing formal rural settlements containing a high concentration of built heritage resources.

It is also appropriate to consider a lower minimum density target than the fifty (50) residents and jobs combined per hectare in these areas containing former rural settlements, whose character and built form it is desirable to protect. In this regard, staff note that on March 28, 2022, pursuant to Item DS-22-58, City Council passed a motion to request the Province to allow lower-tier municipalities to implement lower minimum density targets in terms of combined jobs and population in designated Greenfield areas where preservation of the existing characteristics of a former rural settlement, such as the former hamlet of Columbus, is desirable, and to allow the municipality to exclude the area of the former rural settlement for the purposes of calculating the population density targets in the Provincial Growth Plan.

## **2.0 Community Area Land Need Scenarios:**

2.1 Staff do not support Community Area Land Need Scenario 1. This scenario is not supported for the following reasons:

- This scenario has a high proportion of low-density housing and it is anticipated that the intensification target will be approximately 35%. This intensification target falls below the Growth Plan intensification target of 50% and does not conform to the Growth Plan.
- This scenario does not provide for a fulsome range of housing types, as 56% of the housing unit mix would be low density.
- This scenario will not meet market demand as it predominantly features low-density housing types.
- This scenario would require the highest amount of additional Community Area land, which would have negative effects on the Region's agricultural and rural system. This scenario does not provide efficient and sustainable development patterns.
- This scenario does not support the planned function and transit-supportive development in Strategic Growth Areas.
- This scenario may lead to increased traffic congestion on the City and Regional road networks.

2.2 Staff do not support Community Area Land Need Scenario 2. This scenario is not supported for the following reasons:

- This scenario has a high proportion of low-density housing and it is anticipated that the intensification target will be approximately 45%. This intensification target falls below the Growth Plan intensification target of 50% and does not conform to the Growth Plan.

- This scenario does not provide for a fulsome range of housing types, as 39% of the housing unit mix would be low density.
- While this scenario will require less additional Community Area land than Scenario 1, it will still have a negative impact on the Region's agricultural and rural system.
- This scenario does not support the planned function and transit-supportive development in Strategic Growth Areas.
- This scenario may lead to increased traffic congestion on the City and Regional road networks.

2.3 Staff support Community Area Land Need Scenario 3 as the recommended scenario. This scenario is supported for the following reasons:

- This scenario has balanced housing by unit types, meets the Growth Plan intensification target of 50% and conforms to the Growth Plan.
- This scenario will require less additional Community Area land than Scenarios 1 and 2 and this will help mitigate the impact on the Region's agricultural and rural system.
- This scenario may lead to decreased traffic congestion on the City and Regional road networks.
- A supply of low, medium and high density housing unit mix meets market demand.
- This scenario has minimal negative impacts on the Region's agricultural and rural system and it achieves sustainable development.
- This scenario supports the planned function and transit-supportive development in Strategic Growth Areas.

2.4 Staff also support Community Area Land Need Scenario 4. This scenario is also supported for the following reasons:

- While not as balanced as Scenario 3, this scenario provides a balance which is more representative of current development trends and market demands, meets the Growth Plan Intensification target of 50% and conforms to the Growth Plan.
- This scenario will require less additional Community Area land than Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 and this will help mitigate the impact on the Region's agricultural and rural system.
- This scenario may lead to decreased traffic congestion on the City and Regional road networks.
- A supply of low, medium and high density housing unit mix meets market demand.

- This scenario has minimal negative impacts on the Region's agricultural and rural system and it achieves sustainable development.
- This scenario supports the planned function and transit-supportive development in Strategic Growth Areas.

2.5 Staff do not support Community Area Land Need Scenario 5. This scenario is not supported for the following reasons:

- It is anticipated that this scenario will result in a housing unit mix of 20% low density, 31% medium density, and 47% high density housing, which will not provide a fulsome range of housing types.
- Under this scenario, there may not be sufficient market demand for this amount of high-density housing.

### **3.0 Employment Area Land Need Scenarios:**

3.1 Staff have the following comments regarding Employment Area Land Need Scenario 1:

- This scenario has an employment growth intensification target of 15% compared to the growth intensification target of 20% in Scenario 2. This scenario will result in an increased need for Employment Area land in the Region.
- This scenario may have a negative impact on the Region's agricultural lands and rural system.
- This scenario is based on an Employment Area density target of 26 jobs per gross hectare, as presented in the Region's draft Employment Strategy Technical Report. This falls short of the current employment density target of 27 jobs per gross hectare identified for lands designated as Industrial within Greenfield areas, as stipulated in Policy 2.4.2.4 of the Oshawa Official Plan. Consequently, the density target being proposed could result in potentially fewer jobs than are currently planned to be achieved, in the Oshawa context.

3.2 Staff have the following comments regarding Employment Area Land Need Scenario 2, which is City staff's preferred scenario:

- This scenario has an employment growth intensification target of 20%. An increase in intensification on existing employment lands, which are currently developed or underutilized, will result in a more efficient use of land and reduction of the amount of Employment Area land needed.
- A reduction in new Employment Lands will also have a reduced impact on the Region's agricultural lands and rural systems.
- This scenario is based on an Employment Area density target of 27 jobs per gross hectare, which slightly exceeds the target of 26 jobs per gross hectare contained in the Region's draft Employment Strategy Technical Report. The target under this scenario matches the employment density target currently

identified in Policy 2.4.2.4 of the Oshawa Official Plan for lands designated as Industrial within Greenfield areas.