

Town of Whitby

Staff Report

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Report Title: Town-Initiated Official Plan Review - Special Meeting of Council

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: May 29, 2024

Report Number: PDP 35-24

Department(s) Responsible:

Planning and Development Department
(Planning Services)

Submitted by:

R. Saunders, Commissioner of Planning
and Development

**Acknowledged by M. Gaskell,
Chief Administrative Officer**

For additional information, contact:

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1. Recommendation:

1. That Report PDP 35-24 be received for information as part of the Special Meeting of Council in accordance with Section 26 (3) of the Planning Act, which directs Council to consult with the approval authority (Region of Durham) and other prescribed public bodies, as well as hold a Special Meeting of Council open to the public to generally discuss the revisions that may be required as part of the Official Plan Review.

2. Highlights:

- The Town of Whitby, along with its retained Consultants, SGL Planning and Design, and Dillon Consulting, is undertaking a five-year legislated review of the Whitby Official Plan.
- The review and update will build upon the 2018 Official Plan and focus on changes to ensure consistency and conformity with Provincial land use planning legislation and policies, as well as Regional policies, specifically the new Region of Durham Official Plan (Envision Durham).

- Envision Durham recently introduced changes that must be reflected in the Town of Whitby's Official Plan, including the delineation of a Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) around the Whitby GO Station and related policies, the identification of areas where increased growth and intensification is to occur, and an Urban Boundary expansion to the year 2051, particularly around Brooklin.
- Section 26(3) of the Planning Act directs Council to consult with the approval authority (in this case, the Region of Durham) and other prescribed public bodies, as well as hold a Special Meeting of Council open to the public to generally discuss the revisions that may be required as part of the Official Plan Review.
- This Community Open House and Special Meeting of Council will introduce the scope of the Official Plan Review and outline its key components.
- Background information will be presented to Council and members of the public, followed by an opportunity for public input and questions to staff and the Consultant team.

3. Background:

Official Plan Review

Municipalities are required to review and update their Official Plans every five years in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act.

The Town of Whitby's Official Plan policies address important community-building matters, such as where housing, industry, offices, shops, and new roads should be located, as well as what important features of the natural and urban environment should be protected and maintained.

The Whitby Official Plan was last updated in 2018 with a planning horizon to 2031, and an estimated population growth of approximately 192,000 per previous Regional and Provincial forecasts.

The 2018 Official Plan update resulted in significant changes to previous policies, introduced and updated several Secondary Plans, and established a long-term vision for the Municipality that directs where and how to manage increased growth and development pressure. Since the 2018 Whitby Official Plan came into the force, the Province has assigned a Municipal Housing Target for the Town of Whitby of 18,000 homes by 2031, towards the Province's goal of 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

The new Envision Durham Regional Official Plan sets a new planning horizon to 2051 and a further forecasted population growth for Whitby to approximately 244,000 people and over 95,000 jobs.

This Official Plan Review will build upon the 2018 Whitby Official Plan Review and focus key updates to plan for more housing and jobs to the year 2051, and conform to changes in legislation and policy made by the Province of Ontario, and the new Envision Durham Regional Official Plan.

It is important to update the Whitby Official Plan now for conformity and consistency with recent legislative and policy changes, as growth and development continues to place pressure on local housing supply, infrastructure and services. Refer to Report [PDP 38-23](#) for information on Council authorization to initiate the Official Plan Review.

Housing Accelerator Fund

The Town of Whitby has been allotted \$24.9 million in funding from the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) in support of the National Housing Strategy administered by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). This funding will support additional housing units in Whitby through nine (9) local HAF initiatives and other associated projects, while creating and supporting long-term systemic changes.

Several components of the Official Plan Review will support achieving Whitby’s HAF commitments and housing targets.

4. Discussion:

Building upon the 2018 Official Plan update, this Official Plan Review will concentrate on four (4) key focus areas that support the Town’s commitments to:

- managing growth and development of the Town in a sustainable manner to support the vision and pillars of the Whitby Community Strategic Plan;
- meeting provincial and federal housing supply targets and commitments; and
- achieving consistency and conformity with Provincial legislation and policies, as well as Regional policies, specifically the new Region of Durham Official Plan (Envision Durham). Refer to Attachment #1 for Excerpt Map 1. Regional Structure – Urban & Rural Systems, Envision Durham Regional Official Plan.

While the Official Plan Review is being undertaken as one comprehensive project, the updates will happen via four “streams” that will result in Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), as outlined in the following table:

Focus Area/OPA	Description	Targeted Council Adoption
<p>1. Whitby GO Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA)</p> <p>PMTSA’s are areas planned to accommodate greater densities around a major transit station,</p>	<p>Delineate the PMTSA and meet conformity requirements of Provincial policy and legislation and Envision Durham.</p> <p>Consider increasing height and density, where appropriate, to expand the housing supply within the PMTSA in accordance with the Planning Act.</p>	<p>Q4 2024</p>

Focus Area/OPA	Description	Targeted Council Adoption
<p>such as Whitby GO train station.</p> <p>Refer to Attachment #2 for the Whitby GO PMTSA Study Area Map.</p>	<p>Consider Inclusionary Zoning to support the provision of affordable housing units. The Province permits Inclusionary Zoning within a PMTSA.</p>	
<p>2. Strategic Growth Areas (SGA), Nodes and Corridors</p> <p>SGAs, nodes and corridors are already identified in the Whitby Official Plan and further refined by Envision Durham, as the areas of the municipality that are planned for increased population and employment intensification.</p>	<p>Consider increasing existing height and density in select SGAs, Nodes and Corridors to conform to Envision Durham Intensification Targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brock/Taunton Regional Centre; • Rossland/Garden Urban Central Area; • Thickson/Dundas Urban Central Area; and, • Major Transit Routes. <p>While Downtown Brooklin and Downtown Whitby are considered SGAs, they will continue to be subject to the height and density restrictions in their related Secondary Plans to continue to protect the unique heritage character of these areas.</p>	<p>Q4 2024</p>
<p>3. Brooklin Urban Expansion Area</p> <p>Updates related to the expansion of the Brooklin urban area as set out in Envision Durham.</p> <p>Refer to Attachment #3 for the Brooklin Urban Expansion Area Study Area Map.</p>	<p>Delineate the Expansion Area per the 2051 Urban Area Boundary identified in Envision Durham</p> <p>Update the Brooklin Community Secondary Plan to include more detailed planning for the new Employment Area (industrial) lands and Community Area (residential/commercial) lands shown within the 2051 Urban Area Boundary.</p>	<p>Q2/Q3 2025</p>

Focus Area/OPA	Description	Targeted Council Adoption
	Review other policies/designations and refine as necessary (e.g. Natural Heritage; Transportation) to ensure consistency and alignment.	
4. Official Plan General	All other updates required to conform to upper-level policy and legislation. Other technical and housekeeping amendments as necessary.	Q1 2026

Engagement

A detailed Engagement Plan has been developed that will seek feedback from the public and stakeholders, and staff will report to Council at key milestones for each of the four (4) Official Plan Review streams outlined above.

Both in-person and virtual opportunities will be developed to provide access to project information, including how to stay informed, as well as platforms for submitting questions and comments, including:

- A dedicated Official Plan Review project page on Connect Whitby: connectwhitby.ca/opreview;
- Community Open Houses (in-person and virtual);
- Outreach to Indigenous Communities;
- Meetings with stakeholders as needed;
- Consultation with relevant Town Departments, Regional staff, and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority;
- Statutory Public Meetings and circulation to Commenting Agencies in accordance with Planning Act requirements; and,
- Presentations and updates to Committees of Council and Council Members.

Next Steps

- Engagement opportunities are ongoing at: connectwhitby.ca/opreview.
- Future in-person Community Open Houses planned to begin in late June.
- Staff to report back with engagement results, and bring forward draft recommendations via Statutory Public Meetings beginning in the fall of 2024.

5. Financial Considerations:

The Whitby Official Plan Review is approved as part of the 2022-2026 budget and is a priority item in the Corporate Business Plan. Components of the Whitby Official Plan Review are further supported by the Housing Accelerator Fund.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

In person and virtual engagement opportunities will be provided throughout the duration of the project. A dedicated project website and Interested Party lists will be maintained by Town Planning and Development staff. Interested Parties will receive notifications at key project milestones. The Official Plan Review will also be promoted more broadly through the Town's various communication channels.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

A Core Staff Team from the Planning and Development Department, Strategic Initiatives, Community Services (Parks Planning) and Communications will guide and provide input into the Whitby Official Plan Review. A Technical Advisory Committee has also been established, with representatives from the Region of Durham (Planning and Economic Development Department; Public Works), and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority. Input will also be sought from various commenting departments and agencies throughout the Official Plan Review process.

8. Strategic Priorities:

The Whitby Official Plan Review will support and advance the Town's strategic pillars of the Community Strategic Plan, by providing policy updates that manage growth and development of the Town in a sustainable manner, resulting in safely designed and inclusive neighbourhoods that support a range of housing options, as well as protecting space for important community amenities, such as parks, schools, healthcare services and more resilient built and natural environments.

The Official Plan Review will provide for increased access to Employment Area lands that will assist Whitby in being more economically innovative and competitive.

The Official Plan Review will involve community and stakeholder consultation to ensure Whitby's government is accountable and responsive to the community's needs as the Municipality grows over time. It will also support the Town's efforts to improve Accessibility and Sustainability and will ensure that all materials are provided in an accessible format.

9. Attachments:

Attachment #1 – Excerpt Map 1. Regional Structure – Urban & Rural Systems

Attachment #2 – Whitby GO PMTSA Study Area Map

Attachment #3 – Brooklin Urban Area Expansion Study Area Map