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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

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From: Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Report: #2021-INFO-94  
Date: September 3, 2021

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**Subject:**

Envision Durham – Growth Management Study – Release of Housing Intensification Study Technical Report, File D12-01

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The Region is undertaking a Growth Management Study (GMS) as part of Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of the Regional Official Plan (ROP). The first phase of the GMS is the preparation of a Land Needs Assessment (LNA) to quantify the amount of Settlement Area Boundary Expansion that will be required to accommodate future population and employment growth to the year 2051.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to release for agency and public comment, the **Housing Intensification Study Technical Report**, which is the second of four technical reports prepared in support of the LNA, (the first technical report being the Region-Wide Growth Analysis which was released on July 2, 2010). The complete LNA with all supporting technical reports and staff recommendations will be brought forward to Committee in the fall of 2021.
- 1.3 The Housing Intensification Study Technical Report will be posted on the Envision Durham project webpage at [durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://durham.ca/EnvisionDurham) for public review and is

provided as Attachment #1 to this report. Those wishing to provide any input may do so by submitting comments electronically to [EnvisionDurham@durham.ca](mailto:EnvisionDurham@durham.ca) or by mail. Any comments on the release of the Housing Intensification Study Technical Report are requested by October 4, 2021.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Envision Durham is currently in Stage 3 (“Direct”). This stage of the project is intended to identify key proposed policy directions for moving forward with the preparation of a new Regional Official Plan.
- 2.2 The Growth Management Study (GMS) is being completed in two phases. The first phase of the GMS focuses on the completion of a Land Needs Assessment (LNA). The LNA is a detailed review of the Region’s land base to determine how much of Durham’s population and employment forecasts can be accommodated within the existing urban areas. Any growth that cannot be accommodated within existing urban areas would trigger a requirement for additional urban land by means of Settlement Area Boundary Expansions. Determining the quantum of additional urban area land is a key outcome of the LNA. The second phase of the GMS will focus on determining the most appropriate locations for any required Settlement Area Boundary Expansion(s).
- 2.3 The LNA is a technical exercise which relies on the assessment of past and current trends as well as forward looking projections. The LNA is being presented through four separate but interrelated reports which are being released sequentially and, organized as follows:
  1. The **Region-Wide Growth Analysis** (released on July 2, 2021) presents region-wide population and employment forecasts, various trends in demographics, unit mix, housing prices, and built form. This report analyzes Durham’s growth potential and informs key inputs and assumptions for the overall LNA.
  2. The **Housing Intensification Study** (subject of this report) evaluates the supply and demand for housing within the Region’s Built-up Areas<sup>1</sup>. This evaluation includes a detailed assessment of likely opportunities and supply potential for intensification and associated population and employment

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<sup>1</sup> “Built-up Areas” were established by the original Growth Plan in 2006 as lands developed, or under development within an urban area/settlement area boundary at that time. Durham’s “Built-up Areas” are illustrated in Attachment #2.

accommodation. A key outcome of this report is a recommended intensification target for the Region, (i.e. 50%).

3. The **Employment Strategy** will provide an assessment of trends in employment and will analyze the current state of the region's Employment Areas. Key outcomes included in this report will be recommendations on Employment Area conversion requests, a recommended density target for Employment Areas, and recommendations on the supply of designated Employment Areas to accommodate employment land related jobs to 2051.
4. The **Community Area Urban Land Needs Technical Report** will evaluate 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). A key outcome of this report will include a recommended a density target for Designated Greenfield Areas and recommendations on urban area land required to accommodate residential units and population related jobs to 2051.

2.4 A **Land Needs Assessment Recommendations Report** will compile the key outcomes, technical analysis and related recommendations in the above reports, which will be presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee later this year.

2.5 The reports are being released by topic in order to allow the public the opportunity to review and comment. Staff will report to the Planning and Economic Development Committee with recommendations on the Land Needs Assessment outcomes in the fall of 2021.

### 3. Previous Reports and Decisions

3.1 Several Reports have been prepared related to Envision Durham and Growth Management related topics:

- On May 2, 2018 Commissioner's Report [#2018-COW-93](#) requested authorization to proceed with the municipal comprehensive review of the Durham Regional Official Plan;
- Over the course of 2019, six theme-based Discussion Papers were released seeking public input on a range of topics. The Discussion Papers can be found on the project webpage at [durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://durham.ca/EnvisionDurham)

- On June 2, 2020 Commissioner's Report [#2020-P-11](#) recommended evaluation criteria and a submission review process for the consideration of Employment Area conversion requests.
- On July 29, 2020 Commissioner's Report [#2020-P-14](#) outlined Amendment #1 to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including recommended comments to the Province on the updated 2051 growth forecasts for the Region of Durham and the updated Land Needs Assessment Methodology.
- On December 1, 2020 Commissioner's Report [#2020-P-27](#) provided proposed policy directions and boundary delineations for existing and future Major Transit Station Areas.
- On March 2, 2021 Commissioners Report [#2021-P-7](#) provided proposed policy directions related to all key components of Envision Durham, including initial directions for the Urban System and growth related topics. Also included was a Growth Opportunities and Challenges Report prepared by the Region's consultants, which serves as a starting point for the LNA and related technical studies.
- On July 2, 2021 Commissioners Report [#2021-INFO-71](#) presented the Region-Wide Growth Analysis. The purpose of the report is to analyze the region's long-term population, housing, and employment growth forecast within the context of provincial and regional policy, historical trends, and predicted future influences.

#### **4. Housing Intensification Study Technical Report**

- 4.1 The purpose of the Housing Intensification report is to document the capacity for accommodating residential and mixed-use growth within the Region's Built-up Area (BUA)<sup>2</sup>, determine the intensification potential of Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), and provide policy recommendations, including recommendations on refinements to the Region's Urban Structure and intensification targets.

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<sup>2</sup> The Built-up Area (BUA) is defined as the extent of urban development when the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe came into effect in June 2006. The outer limit of these lands is the Built Boundary. New development inside the Built Boundary is considered intensification; development outside the built boundary is considered greenfield development. Durham's BUA is illustrated in Attachment #2.

4.2 The Housing Intensification Study has been informed by findings contained in the Region-Wide Growth Analysis Technical Report, in particular historical trends and the overall regional population and employment growth forecast to 2051.

4.3 The Housing Intensification Study has resulted in several key findings:

- Based on an analysis of the intensification potential across Durham, the minimum intensification target of 50% of the growth to 2051 is appropriate, can be met, and can potentially be exceeded.
- The introduction of Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) as a component of the regional urban structure represents an opportunity to accommodate a significant amount of growth in close proximity to existing and planned GO stations and service.
- Focusing growth in Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), particularly the Urban Growth Centres (UGCs), Regional Centres and PMTSAs, has the greatest potential to achieve or exceed the Region's intensification target.
- The capacity for growth and intensification in SGAs, including UGCs, PMTSAs, Regional Centres and certain Regional Corridors is significant. Durham will be able to accommodate the 50% intensification target by 2051. The total supply of new units within the BUA that could be developed exceeds the demand for housing in the BUA by 2051.

4.4 Further details can be found in the Technical Report (Attachment #1).

## **5. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

5.1 By planning for growth in a sustainable, progressive, and responsible manner, the Land Needs Assessment and supporting technical reports address the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a) Under Goal Area 2, Community Vitality:
  - 2.1 Revitalize existing neighbourhoods and build complete communities that are walkable, well connected, and have a mix of attainable housing;
  - 2.5 Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging;
- b) Under Goal Area 3, Economic Prosperity:
  - 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business;

- 3.2 Leverage Durham’s prime geography, social infrastructure, and strong partnerships to foster economic growth;
  - 3.4 Capitalize on Durham’s strengths in key economic sectors to attract high-quality jobs;
- c) Under Goal Area 4, Social Investment:
- 4.1 Revitalize community housing and improve housing choice, affordability and sustainability;

## **6. Next Steps and Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Housing Intensification Study Technical Report is now available for public review. The report will be posted on the Envision Durham project web page at [durham.ca/EnvisionDurham](http://durham.ca/EnvisionDurham). Interested parties are encouraged to subscribe for further project updates and email notifications through this web page.
- 6.2 The release of this report will also be announced by way of:
- Public service announcements;
  - Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn; and
  - Email notifications and report circulation.
- 6.3 A copy of this report will be forwarded to all Envision Durham Interested Parties, Durham’s area municipalities, Indigenous communities, conservation authorities, the Building Industry and Land Development (BILD) – Durham Chapter, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Circulation will also be provided to agencies and service providers that may have an interest in where and how long term growth in the region is being planned for (school boards, hospitals, utility providers, etc.).
- 6.4 Those wishing to provide input on the report may do so via email to [EnvisionDurham@durham.ca](mailto:EnvisionDurham@durham.ca) or by mail. Any comments on the release of Housing Intensification Study Technical Report are requested by October 4, 2021.
- 6.5 The next technical report to be released for the Land Needs Assessment will be the Employment Strategy Technical Report.

## **7. Attachments**

Attachment #1: [Housing Intensification Study Technical Report](#)

Attachment #2: Map representing the Built-up Area in Durham Region

Respectfully submitted,

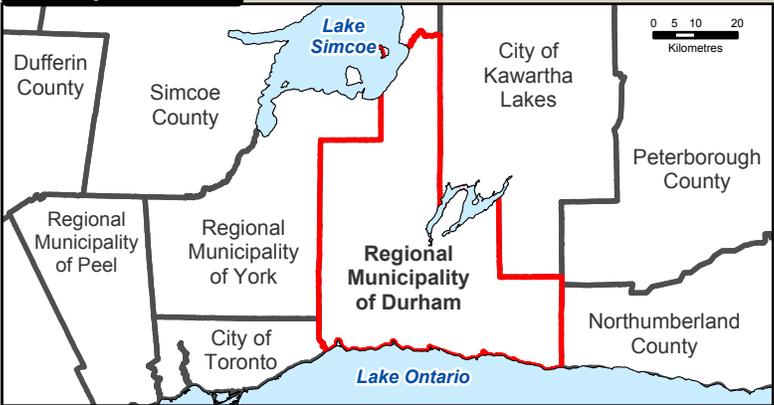
Original signed by

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

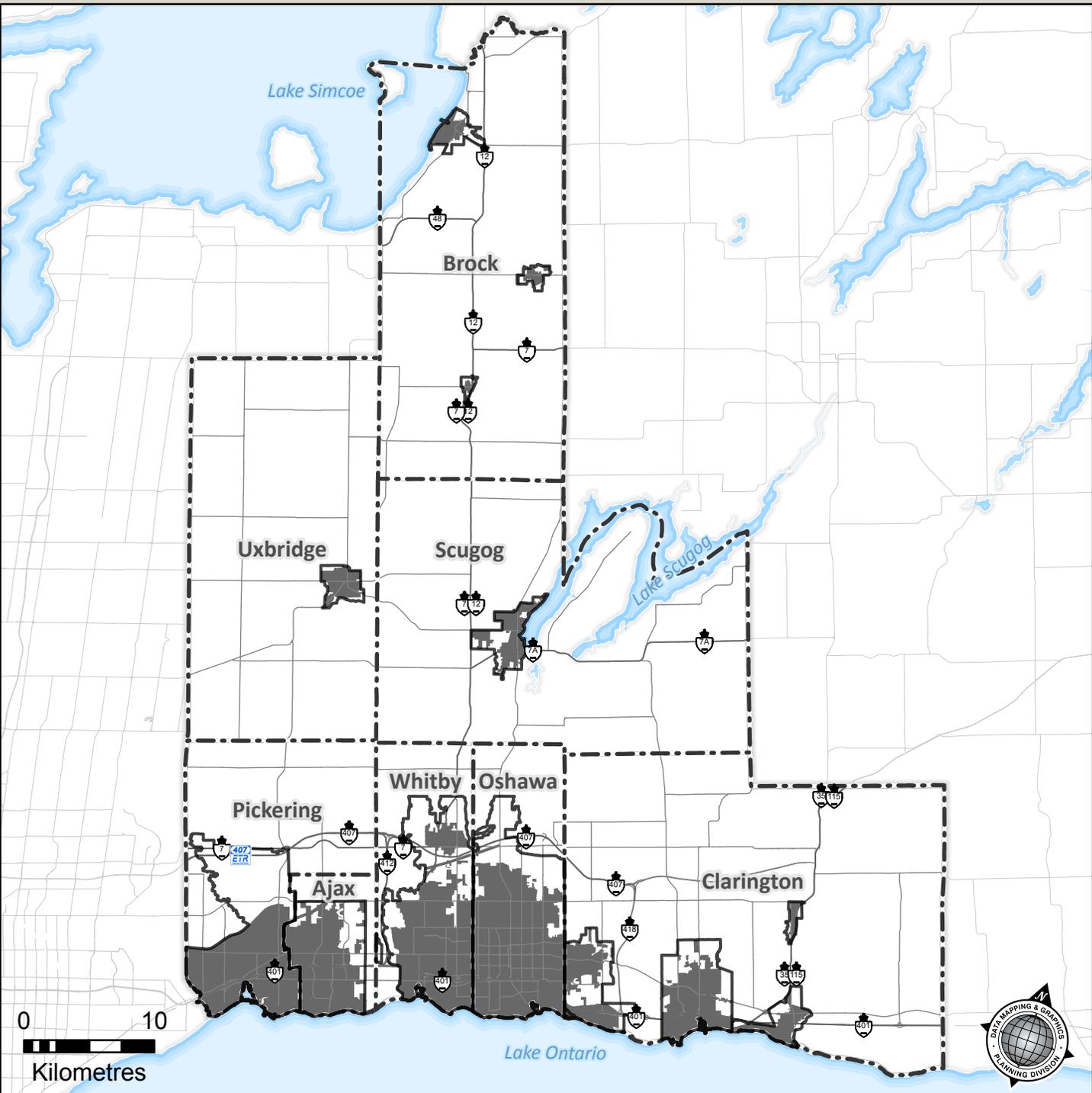
Housing Intensification Study  
 Commissioner's Report: #2021-INFO-94  
 Regional Municipality of Durham

Municipal Context



Legend

- Major Roads
- Built-up Area
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Area Boundary
- Waterbody



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