



OFFICIAL  
PLAN  
R E V I E W

JUNE 2019

INTRODUCTORY

**DISCUSSION PAPER**



Town of  
Whitchurch-Stouffville

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# 1. Introduction

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is undertaking an Official Plan Review (OPR) to evaluate and update the Town's Official Plan policies. The OPR process is a significant opportunity to engage the community and stakeholders to develop ideas to help shape the future of the Town. The new Official Plan will seek to direct and manage growth in a sustainable manner, promote a more complete and healthy community, and continue to protect and enhance our natural environment, agricultural and rural resources that contribute to the unique character of our community. The OPR will address the opportunities and challenges of planning and building in the Town and will result in a new Official Plan that implements Provincial and Regional planning policies in a locally appropriate manner. The new Official Plan will establish a unified community vision and policy directions for managing growth and development in the Town to the year 2041.

## 1.1. Purpose

This Report serves to initiate the Town's OPR and begin a dialogue with the community and stakeholders regarding the issues and policy directions that need to be considered in preparing the Town's new Official Plan. The purpose of this Introductory Discussion Paper is to:

- introduce the Town's OPR process and provide an overview of the current planning policy framework and context in which the review is being undertaken;
- summarize the current Provincial, Regional and local planning framework and identify preliminary issues that should be addressed in the Town's new Official Plan;
- initiate dialogue with the community, stakeholders, and Council on the issues that should be considered through the OPR; and
- provide an overview of the Town's work program and schedule to undertake the OPR.

## 1.2. What is an Official Plan?

An official plan is a policy document adopted by Council under the provisions of the *Planning Act*. The *Planning Act* is provincial legislation that sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario and establishes the overall content and basis for preparing official plans. As such, the Official Plan addresses matters of Provincial interest and establishes more detailed local planning policies that apply to all lands within the Town.

The official plan expresses the vision and guiding principles for the community and provides policy direction on how land in our community should be managed. An official plan is prepared with input from community members and helps to ensure that the future planning and development needs of the Town will be met. The official plan establishes policies to direct:

- where new housing, industry, offices and shops will be located;
- what services such as roads, transportation, utilities, parks, trails and schools will be needed to accommodate growth and develop healthy and sustainable communities;
- when, and in what order, parts of the community will grow;
- how to promote economic development and develop community improvement initiatives;
- how to protect and conserve cultural heritage resources; and,
- how to protect the Town's agricultural lands and environmentally-sensitive areas.

The policies developed through the OPR will ensure that the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is able to support coordinated growth to the 2041 planning horizon. The planning decisions made by the Town must conform to the policies of the Town's Official Plan, which are primarily implemented through the Town's Comprehensive Zoning By-law. Furthermore, the Town's Official Plan enables a number of planning tools through policy, to implement the Official Plan, including: Secondary Plans, Community Improvement Plans, Land Division, Zoning By-Laws and Site Plan Control.

### **1.3. Need for an Official Plan Review**

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan was adopted by Town Council in October 1980 and approved by the Province in August 1982. The Official Plan has been subject to nearly 145 amendments since that time to address both site-specific development applications and various policy initiatives. Official Plan Amendment No. 109 (OPA 109) was the last comprehensive amendment to the Town's Official Plan which was approved in 2004.

The *Planning Act* requires official plans to be reviewed and updated a minimum of every 5 years to ensure that official plans conform to provincial plans, have regard for matters of provincial interest, and are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.

The Provincial policy framework has significantly evolved since the last comprehensive review of the Town's Official Plan. As such, updates to the Town's Official Plan are required to bring it into conformity with the Provincial Plans which were updated in 2017 as part of the Province's Coordinated Land Use Review, and most recently, the revisions to the Growth Plan, May 2019. Further amendments to the *Planning Act* and the Provincial Policy Statement are anticipated this year and will be considered in the Town's OPR. Under Section 27 of the *Planning Act*, the Town is also required to update its Official Plan to conform with the Region's Official Plan. The Region is currently undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) to update its Official Plan to implement the Growth Plan, which is anticipated to be adopted by the end of 2020. The Town's Official Plan is required to be updated within one year of the approval of the Region's Official Plan update. As such, a large portion of the Town's OPR is being undertaken iteratively with the Region's MCR helping to ensure consistency in policy.

The Town's Official Plan will be updated to provide a more contemporary planning framework for the Town while ensuring consistency and providing greater clarity in interpreting the Town's planning policies. The OPR is also a superb opportunity for the Town to develop policies to address local priorities, such as the development of a complete community to provide a better balance between residential and non-residential growth, age-friendly community building, intensification, and the protection of natural and cultural heritage resources. Furthermore, Council has specifically directed staff to consider employment growth opportunities along the Highway 404 corridor.

The Town's Official Plan will also provide the basis for further updates to the Town's master plans, including the Town's Transportation Master Plan, Water and Wastewater Master Plan, and the Leisure and Community Services Plan.

## 1.4. Official Plan Review Process

Community and stakeholder consultation and engagement will form an integral component of the Town's OPR to develop a community vision and guiding principles thereby informing the future planning directions for the Town. The OPR community and stakeholder consultation and engagement approach is outlined in the OPR Communications Plan.

The overall OPR work program is anticipated to consist of five phases which are summarized below and will result in a comprehensive review and the preparation of a new Official Plan. As required by the Growth Plan, the Town's Official Plan is to be updated to conform with the Region's Official Plan within one year of the approval of the Region's new Official Plan, which is anticipated to be adopted by Regional Council by the end of 2020.

The comprehensive OPR work program is anticipated to include the following phases:

- **Phase 1: Visioning and Consultation (Q2/3 2019)** – will result in a community vision and guiding principles to inform future planning directions, by establishing what the community values and how the Town is envisioned to evolve over the planning horizon to the year 2041.
- **Phase 2: Background Studies and Discussion Papers (Q3/4 2019)** – will involve the preparation of various Discussion Papers and background studies to address the key themes related to growth management, the natural environment, and healthy communities.
- **Phase 3: Policy Development (Q2/3 2020)** – will involve the preparation of Policy Directions Reports and the development of new and updated Official Plan policies to implement the preferred policy directions.
- **Phase 4: Official Plan Amendment(s) (Q1 2021)** – will involve the statutory approvals process for the Official Plan Amendment(s).
- **Phase 5: Secondary Plans (2021)** – may involve undertaking additional studies to assist in implementing or refining the policies of the Town's various Secondary Plans.

The OPR will be undertaken through a review of key themes according to Provincial and Regional policy directions and the issues currently being addressed as a community. A series of Discussion Papers and Policy Direction Reports will be prepared as part of Phases 2 and 3, to address the following key themes:

- **Vision and Guiding Principles** – a community vision and guiding principles will be developed to provide the basis for establishing policy directions which reflects the Town's aspiration for managing growth and change in the Town.
- **Growth Management and Intensification** – this Strategy will provide policy directions for accommodating the Town's forecasted population and employment forecasts and identify land need requirements to the year 2041. The Strategy will be supported by planning for infrastructure and public service facilities required to support growth.
- **Natural Environment** – planning for the natural environment will address matters related to agriculture and rural policy, the protection and enhancement of natural heritage resources, the management of mineral aggregate resources, archaeology, source water protection and watershed planning.
- **Healthy Communities** - planning for healthy communities will address matters related to the development of complete communities, housing and affordability, sustainability, energy conservation and climate change adaptation.

- **General Policies/Housekeeping Amendments** – this component will address matters related to the implementation and interpretation of the Official Plan policies as well as general housekeeping amendments to improve the overall readability and clarity of the Official Plan.

## 1.5. Community Profile

Whitchurch-Stouffville is part of the Region of York, and is one of Canada’s fastest growing municipalities. Business and living benefits include access to a large local market, infrastructure and a highly skilled workforce. Located in the heart of the Greater Toronto Area, the Town has easy access to transportation routes as well as to recreational and cultural destinations. Highway 404 forms the western boundary of the Town, with links to all of Ontario’s “400” series Highways. The Town has access to commuter trains and buses as well as regional transit services.

The community is a blend of urban and rural settlements within the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Province’s Greenbelt, comprised of prime agricultural and rural lands and an expansive and connected greenlands system. There are four main settlement areas, including the Community of Stouffville, Ballantrae-Musselman’s Lake, Vandorf-Preston Lake and Gormley, in addition to a number of rural clusters, including: Bethesda, Bloomington, Cedar Valley, Lemonville, Lincolnville, Pine Orchard, Pleasantville, Ringwood, Vivian and Wesley Corners. Each of these communities has its own character, and contribute to the diversity of the Town.

From 2006 to 2016, the Town experienced a massive increase in population growth of 87% (24,390 to 45,837 persons). According to the 2016 Canada Census, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville was the third fastest growing community in Canada, and the second fastest growing municipality in Ontario.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has a very diverse local economy with strengths in knowledge-based industries, advanced manufacturing, building and construction as well as agriculture and tourism sectors. In 2016, the Town had 24,570 persons in the labour force, including 23,285 persons (65% of the population) employed.

Over a 10-year span from 2006 to 2016, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville experienced a rapidly growing and diversifying community. Some of the most prominent community changes include:

- population has experienced growth from 24,390 in 2006 to 45,837 in 2016;
- an increase in family size from 2.8 in 2006 to 3.1 in 2016 and,
- an increase in median income from \$86,364 in 2006 to \$96,622 in 2016.

Additionally, a few other notable changes in the community include:

- a 30% increase in the visible minority population from 7% in 2006 to 37% in 2016;
- an increase in the number of residents identifying as immigrants from 4,395 (18%) in 2006 to 14,740 (32%) in 2016;
- an increase in the number of couples with children from 2,960 in 2006 to 7,350 in 2016; and,
- an increase in married couples from 5,785 in 2006 to 10,935 in 2016.

The growing and diversifying Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville requires updated Official Plan policies to reflect the needs and character of the changing community and manage growth to the year 2041.

## 2. Planning Policy Framework

Planning at the official plan level is undertaken within a framework established by the Province of Ontario, which is guided by the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS), and applicable Provincial Plans. Furthermore, in instances where there is an upper-tier government, such as the Region of York, Provincial policy is implemented at the Regional-level through the York Region Official Plan, which is further implemented through more detailed local planning policies in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan.

The Town's Official Plan must be consistent with the PPS, and conform to the Provincial Plans and the York Region Official Plan. The Region is in the process of undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) to comprehensively implement the policies of the Growth Plan, which will result in an amendment to the York Region Official Plan, and provide updated land use planning policies to be implemented in the Town's Official Plan. The Town's Official Plan has not undergone a comprehensive review and update since 2004, and amendments are required to implement the current Provincial legislation, policies and plans, and the policy directions resulting from the Region's on-going MCR.

This Section provides an overview of the applicable Provincial and Regional planning policy framework that will inform the Town's Official Plan Review (OPR) and identify the key planning policy issues that will need to be addressed.

### 2.1. Provincial Planning Framework

The provincial planning framework is primarily established through the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS), and Provincial Plans applicable to the Town, including the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (Growth Plan), the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017 (ORMCP), and the Greenbelt Plan, 2017. The Provincial Plans were recently amended and updated in 2017 as part of the Province's Coordinated Land Use Review, and further revisions to the Growth Plan took effect in May 2019.



In May 2019, the Province released a new Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“A Place to Grow”), intended to provide municipalities greater flexibility in implementing the Growth Plan. Furthermore, the Province is currently reviewing the *Planning Act* and PPS, 2014, with the intent of streamlining the development approvals process and address implementation challenges. The proposed changes are aligned and intended to implement Ontario’s Housing Supply Action Plan, May 2019, which

is intended to make the development of housing more efficient and affordable. It is anticipated that additional updated legislation and policy changes may come into effect in 2019, that will impact the provincial planning framework. The implications of these forthcoming changes will need to be addressed through the Region's MCR and the Town's OPR.

### **2.1.1. Planning Act**

The *Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.13* provides the fundamental land use planning framework in Ontario. It governs the overall content and preparation of official plans as outlined in sections 16(1) and 16(2), which states:

*An official plan shall contain,*

- a) *goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environment of the municipality or part of it, or an area that is without municipal organization;*
- a.1) *such policies and measures as are practicable to ensure the adequate provision of affordable housing;*
- b) *a description of the measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public in respect of,*
  - i. *proposed amendments to the official plan or proposed revision of the plan,*
  - ii. *proposed zoning by-laws,*
  - iii. *proposed plans of subdivision, and*
  - iv. *proposed consents under section 53.*

and,

*an official plan may contain,*

- a) *a description of the measures and procedures proposed to attain the objectives of the plan;*
- b) *a description of the measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public in respect of planning matters not mentioned in clause (1)(b); and*
- c) *such other matters as may be prescribed.*

The *Planning Act* requires that a decision of the council of a municipality, in exercising any authority that affects a planning matter: shall be consistent with the policy statements issued under the Act, that are in effect on the date of the decision; and shall conform with the provincial plans that are in effect on that date, or shall not conflict with them, as the case may be (S. 3 (5)).

Section 26 (1) of the *Planning Act* requires municipalities to review and revise official plans to ensure that it:

- a) *conforms with provincial plans or does not conflict with them, as the case may be,*
- b) *has regard to the matters of provincial interest listed in section 2, and*
- c) *is consistent with policy statements issued under the Act.*

The *Planning Act* identifies matters of Provincial interest that municipal councils “shall have regard to” when carrying out their responsibilities under the Act (Section 2), including the preparation and adoption of an official plan. These matters are:

1. *the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;*
2. *the protection of agricultural resources of the Province;*
3. *the conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base;*
4. *the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;*
5. *the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water;*
6. *the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems;*
7. *the minimization of waste;*
8. *the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;*
9. *the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies;*
10. *the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;*
11. *the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;*
12. *the adequate provision of employment opportunities;*
13. *the protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities;*
14. *the co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies;*
15. *the resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private conflicts;*
16. *the protection of public health and safety;*
17. *the appropriate location of growth and development;*
18. *the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be pedestrian-oriented; and*
19. *the promotion of built form that,*
  - a. *is well designed*
  - b. *encourages a sense of place, and*
  - c. *provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.*
20. *the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate.*

The official plan is the primary tool in implementing these Provincial interests in a manner that is appropriate and meaningful to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Section 26 (1.1) of the *Planning Act* prescribes certain conformity requirements for municipal official plans, requiring such documents to be reviewed and updated not less frequently than every 5 years to ensure these requirements are achieved, or after 10 years where a new official plan comes into effect.

Section 27 (1) of the *Planning Act* requires a lower-tier municipality to amend its official plan documents to conform to upper-tier official plans within one year of the upper-tier official plan coming into effect. Furthermore, the Growth Plan requires that local municipalities update their official plans within one year of the Region's Official Plan Amendment coming into effect, to implement their MCR.

#### *2.1.1.1. More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108)*

The *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* (Bill 108), was introduced to the legislature on May 2, 2019 and received Royal Assent on June 6, 2019. The Act will come into force and effect on a day to be named by proclamation of the Lieutenant Governor. Bill 108 makes numerous changes to Ontario's planning regime, including the: *Planning Act, Conservation Authorities Act, Development Charges Act, Endangered Species Act, Environmental Assessment Act, Local Planning Appeal Tribunal Act, and Ontario Heritage Act.*

Bill 108 repeals many of the amendments previously enacted through the *Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017* (Bill 139). Bill 139 renamed and reconstituted the Ontario Municipal Board as the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (the “LPAT”), and made significant changes to the *Planning Act* and land use planning approval process.

The following summarizes the key changes to the *Planning Act* through Bill 108.

### ***Additional Residential Unit Policies***

The second unit policies are revised to require an official plan to include policies to authorize two additional residential units in either a single detached house, semi-detached house or rowhouse and by authorizing a residential unit in an ancillary building or structure. This policy essentially permits the construction of two additional residential units on a lot, whereas the existing policy only permits only one additional residential unit, either within the dwelling or in an ancillary building or structure. A second unit would also be exempted from development charges to encourage the creation of additional housing supply.

### ***Inclusionary Zoning***

The inclusionary zoning policies allow an official plan of a prescribed municipality to contain policies that authorize inclusionary zoning, which accommodates the inclusion of affordable housing units within buildings containing other residential units (i.e., market units), and provides for the affordable housing units to be maintained as affordable housing units over time. The changes only allow official plans of municipalities that are not prescribed to contain inclusionary zoning policies for an area that is:

- i. identified as a protected major transit station area; or
- ii. an area in respect of which a development permit system is adopted or established in response to an order made by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The changes are intended to focus the use of inclusionary zoning to high growth areas and near higher order transit stations.

### ***Reduced Decision Timelines for Appeals***

The statutory timelines for planning approval authorities to make a decision on an official plan, zoning by-law and plan of subdivision application are reduced, which would allow appeals based on a non-decision to occur sooner. The proposed statutory timelines are even shorter than they existed prior to Bill 139, and include:

- i. official plan and official plan amendment decisions are changed from 210 to 120 days;
- ii. zoning by-law decisions are changed from 150 to 90 days; and
- iii. plans of subdivision decisions are changed from 180 to 120 days.

Furthermore, Bill 108 restricts third party appeals related to non-decisions on official plan amendments. The changes would provide that only appeals related to non-decisions on official plan amendments may be made by: the municipality that adopted the plan, the Minister (if the Minister is not the approval authority), and in the case of an official plan amendment, the person or public body that requested the amendment.

The changes through Bill 108, also remove the extension of time for appeal provisions, which provided for a 90 day extension to official plan amendments at the request of the person or public body that made the request, or by written notice from the municipality to the approval authority, which allowed for further mediation prior to filing the appeal.

### ***Local Planning Appeal Tribunal and Appeal Process***

Certain amendments previously made to the *Planning Act* by the *Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017* (Bill 139) are repealed, with the general intent to revert back to the appeal procedures that were previously in place under the OMB. The intended outcome is that the appeal process will occur faster, and reduce the backlog of existing cases. Furthermore, it is intended to establish a consistent appeals process, subject to the new rules, as opposed to different procedures and requirements that apply to cases appealed under the former OMB versus the LPAT.

The changes to the LPAT appeals procedures that were previously introduced by Bill 139 were intended to give municipal council greater decision making authority on matters that directly affected their municipality, and limit the decision making authority of the LPAT to matters of consistency or conformity with Provincial policies, plans, and the upper-tier official plan.

The LPAT's two hearing process is replaced by a single hearing with the intent to make the process more efficient. The changes also broaden the LPAT's jurisdiction over major land use planning matters (i.e., official plans and zoning by-laws) and give the Tribunal the authority to make a final determination on appeals.

Bill 108 requires an appellant to explain in the notice of appeal how the decision is inconsistent with, fails to conform with or conflicts with the other document, but would no longer be limited to just those grounds. The tests for official plan amendments will be what constitutes "good planning" on the merits of the application, not just conformity with an upper-tier official plan, Provincial Plan, or consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement. The LPAT would then be authorized to make a final decision.

Furthermore, Bill 108 provides that where new evidence is presented at a hearing, and was not provided to the municipality before council made the decision, the Tribunal may consider whether the information could have materially affected the council decision. If the Tribunal determines, that it could have done so, it shall not be submitted into evidence until council is given an opportunity to reconsider its decision in light of the new information. Council is then given the opportunity to make a written recommendation to the Tribunal, and the Tribunal "shall have regard" to council's recommendation.

With the changes to the *Local Planning Appeal Tribunal Act*, it is expected that the LPAT will revise and reissue its Rules of Practice and Procedure to remove many of the previous Bill 139 related procedures.

### ***Community Benefits Charge By-law***

Section 37 of the *Planning Act*, which currently permits the securing of public benefits in exchange for increases in height and density through a zoning by-law, is replaced in conjunction with development charges reform and parkland charges reform, and captured as part of a "Community Benefit Charge". Municipalities will need to adopt a strategy and a by-law to govern and implement the Community Benefit Charge. The Province may, by regulation, exempt certain types of development from the Community Benefit Charge, and cap the charge as a percentage of land values. The changes move

discounted services (i.e., soft services, such as libraries, parks, recreation) from the development charges framework to be recovered through the new community benefits charge, which also includes density bonusing and parkland dedication.

A municipality may by by-law impose community benefits charges against land to pay for capital costs of facilities, services and matters required because of development or redevelopment in the area to which the bylaw applies. The changes are intended to provide greater certainty and make upfront development costs more predictable. Some highlights include:

- A community benefits charge may be imposed for development or redevelopment that meets specified requirements and would be subject to the following applications: a zoning by-law or a zoning by-law amendment, a minor variance, part lot control; a plan of subdivision; a consent; plan of condominium approval; and the issuance of a building permit. The Minister may also prescribe types of development or redevelopment for which a community benefits charge may not be imposed.
- Other community benefits charge may not be imposed with respect to facilities, services or other matters that are identified or associated with any of the services set out in the *Development Charges Act, 1997*.
- The amount of the community benefits charge cannot exceed an amount equal to the prescribed percentage of the value of the land as of the day before the day the building permit is issued for development or redevelopment. A dispute resolution process is provided in cases where the landowner is of the view that the charge exceeds the maximum allowable charge.
- All money received under a community benefits charge by-law must be paid into a special account, and a municipality must spend or allocate 60% of the monies in the special account each year.
- Revisions are proposed to the parkland dedication provisions, in instances where a municipality has passed a Community Benefits Charge By-law, the Community Benefits Charge may replace the parkland dedication provisions in some cases.

The changes have the potential to significantly alter, and likely reduce the financial tools available to the municipality to ensure that growth pays for growth. Until such time as the regulations are available, it remains uncertain as to the potential implications on municipalities.

### ***Restriction on Third Party Appeals of Plans of Subdivision***

Currently, a person or public body has a right to appeal the decision of an approval authority to approve a plan of subdivision if that person or public body has, before the approval authority made its decision, made oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to the approval authority. Under Bill 108, only the applicant, municipality, Minister, public body or prescribed list of persons have the right to appeal an approval authority's decision on a draft plan or subdivision, lapsing provision or any condition of draft plan approval.

### ***Mandatory Development Permit System***

Currently, the Minister and an upper-tier municipality may require a local municipality to adopt or establish a development permit system. The local municipality has discretion to determine what parts of its geographic area are to be governed by the development permit system. The revisions will allow

the Minister to require a local municipality to adopt or establish a development permit system that applies to a specified area or to an area surrounding and including a specified location. The ability of the province to require the use of the development permit system in Major Transit Station Areas and Provincially Significant Employment Zones, may permit approvals potentially as fast as 45 days.

Bill 108 repeals or amends various legislative changes made to the *Planning Act* through the *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015* and *Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017*, as outlined below. Until such time as the Act takes force and effect, the current legislation remains in effect. The Town's OPR will need to address the *Planning Act* changes to the extent they impact the Official Plan.

#### *2.1.1.2. Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015 (Bill 73)*

The *Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015*, largely took effect on June 1, 2016, and made significant amendments to the *Planning Act*, along with changes to the *Development Charges Act*. The reforms introduced by Bill 73 were intended to give citizens a greater, more meaningful say in determining how their communities will grow, and to give municipalities more tools to fund community services and growth.

Some of the key changes to the *Planning Act*, which are applicable to the Town and the OPR process include:

#### ***Civic Engagement***

A greater focus on civic engagement is provided by requiring that the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) (formerly the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB)) must have regard to all information received from the municipality when adjudicating non-decision appeals. Official plans are also required to contain a description of the measures and procedures for consulting and informing the public with regard to proposed amendments to official plans, proposed zoning by-Laws and amendments, plans of subdivision and proposed consents.

#### ***Greater Certainty and Stability***

The changes provide for a greater level of certainty and stability by changing the PPS review cycle from 5 to 10 years, which provides municipalities more time to update their Official Plans. New official plans are now required to be reviewed and revised, as necessary, within 10 years of a new official plan coming into effect, whereas the 5 year official plan review cycle remains in place when reviewing and updating an existing Official Plan.

The amendment restricts certain appeals of lower-tier official plans, and conformity update official plan amendments unless it does not conform with the upper-tier official plan. Furthermore, no privately-initiated applications to amend a new official plan are permitted within 2 years of a new official plan coming into force and effect, unless the amendment is supported by a resolution of Council.

In addition to existing matters of provincial interest, official plans must also have regard to the promotion of built form that is: well designed, encourages a sense of place and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe.

### ***Local Decision Making and Accountability***

The changes allow for the approval authority and adopting municipality to agree to an extension of up to 90 days in addition to the 180-day decision timeline for approving an official plan/official plan amendment, before a non-decision may be appealed. Transition requirements have been clarified to state that applications for official plan amendments are subject to previous policies/legislation only if the complete application was made prior to transition date.

### ***Dispute Resolution***

A variety of changes were made to assist in resolving disputes in order to minimize the potential for appeals to the LPAT, including:

- An official plan may not be appealed where it implements provincially approved matters, including: boundaries of a vulnerable area as defined in the *Clean Water Act, 2006*, the boundary of the Lake Simcoe watershed, the boundary of the Greenbelt Area or Protected Countryside Area or the boundary of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area; forecasted population and employment growth in a lower-tier official plan in accordance with an allocation in the upper-tier municipality's official plan that has been approved by the Minister; and settlement area boundaries in lower-tier official plan which reflect the boundary set out in the upper-tier municipality's official plan that has been approved by the Minister.
- Second unit policies may not be appealed at the time of an official plan update.
- The entire appeal of a new official plan is not permitted, as a result of a full and comprehensive update, and appeals must be related to specific policies.
- Municipalities are entitled to an additional 60 days to engage in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to resolve appeals prior to forwarding the matter to the LPAT.
- Appellants need to explain the reasons for an appeal in respect of consistency/conformity with provincial/local policies - failure to do so means that the appellant may not be able to argue the issue before the LPAT.

### ***Transparency***

A greater level of municipal transparency is required with respect to parkland dedication and bonusing provisions which requires the municipality to make available annual financial statements. A Parks Plan is required to be developed by a municipality prior to adopting new/updated alternative parkland official plan policies, to ensure that municipalities are only accepting cash-in-lieu if there is no need for additional parkland. The calculation of the cash-in-lieu or parkland is now based on a reduced maximum ratio of 1 hectare for every 500 dwelling units, rather than 1 hectare for every 300 dwelling units. However, there is no change to the standard parkland dedication rate based on percentage of land for development, and the alternative rate of 1 ha for every 300 units is retained when land for parks is being provided.

The Town's new Official Plan will contemplate and reflect the new Provincial direction with respect to: official plan reviews; additional matters of Provincial interest; consultation and public input on planning applications; and official plan appeals.

### ***2.1.1.3. Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 (Bill 139)***

The *Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017* (Bill 139) received Royal Assent on December 12, 2017. A number of amendments related to Ontario's planning system took effect on April 1, 2018, including the replacement of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) with the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), changes to *Planning Act* approval processes, and revisions to the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Bill 139 created an extensive range of reforms including placing a greater scope of authority with local Councils and planning authorities.

The legislation established the new Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), which replaced the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Appeals now go to the LPAT and are subject to those rules and processes, including a revised scope for appeals and hearings. Appeals are limited to decisions not being consistent with a Provincial Policy Statement or not in conformity with Provincial Plans or an official plan. In this regard, the new LPAT system is more oriented to assess the conformity of municipal decisions with applicable Provincial and municipal policy. Municipal decisions may only be overturned if it is determined that the decision under appeal is not consistent with or does not conform to the required Provincial and municipal (upper and lower-tier) policy frameworks. In such cases, the matter is returned to municipal Council for additional consideration.

A new municipal tool is provided to support "higher order transit" infrastructure, referred to as the Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) tool. The tool restricts appeals of Protected MTSA matters when a municipality establishes the required official plan policies (i.e., transit-supportive densities and height).

Appeals of a Provincial decision on an official plan or official plan amendment are not permitted where the Province is the approval authority (i.e., upper-tier MCR/OPA).

Furthermore, municipal official plans are also now required to include policies addressing climate change and policies dealing with the adequate provision of affordable housing.

### ***2.1.2. Provincial Policy Statement, 2014***

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS) came into effect on April 30, 2014 and replaced the previous 2005 PPS. The PPS is issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and provides direction on key provincial interests related to land use planning and development in Ontario. In implementing the PPS, the Town's Official Plan and land use planning decisions "*shall be consistent with*" the PPS.

The PPS establishes that the official plan is the most important tool for implementing the provincial interests and requires that municipal official plans shall identify provincial interests and set out appropriate land use designations and policies. The policies of the PPS are complemented by Provincial Plans and local municipal official plans which provide a comprehensive framework for long-term planning that supports and integrates the principles of strong communities, a clean and healthy environment and economic growth. Planning decisions must conform with Provincial Plans which take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

The PPS, 2014 provides policy direction related to three key themes:

- **Building Strong Healthy Communities** (Section 1.0) – to promote efficient land use and development patterns; promote strong, liveable, healthy, and resilient communities; and ensure appropriate opportunities for employment and residential development.
- **The Wise Use and Management of Resources** (Section 2.0) – to protect natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral and cultural heritage and archaeological resources for their economic, environmental and social benefits.
- **Protecting Public Health and Safety** (Section 3.0) – to reduce the potential for public cost or risk to Ontario’s residents from natural or human-made hazards.

The changes to the PPS, 2014 build upon the former PPS and include modest modifications to existing policies as well as the introduction of new policies. Key themes addressed by the changes to the PPS, 2014 include:

- the incorporation of the interests of Indigenous communities through improved coordination and protection of cultural and archaeological interests;
- improved recognition of the needs and diversity of rural and northern communities, including recognition of the diversity of Ontario’s communities;
- greater emphasis on planning for the impacts of climate change;
- greater emphasis on the promotion of healthy communities and active modes of transportation;
- recognition and protection of goods movement corridors; and
- requirements for prime agricultural areas and provision for further diversification of on-farm diversified uses such as agri-tourism, and flexibility for larger-scale agricultural uses to support farming communities.

Updates to the Town’s Official Plan are required to ensure consistency with the PPS, 2014.

The Province is currently reviewing the PPS and changes are anticipated in 2019. As outlined in Ontario’s Housing Supply Action Plan, May 2019, the following changes to the PPS are being considered:

- encourage the development of more and different types of housing;
- reduce barriers and costs for developers and provide greater predictability;
- update planning and development policies to reflect Ontario’s changing needs; and
- recognize local decision making in support of new housing and economic development.

#### *2.1.2.1. Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario Agricultural Areas, 2016*

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) developed the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas (Publication 851), 2016, to assist in interpreting the PPS, 2014 and outline the range of uses that are permitted in prime agricultural areas. The PPS permits a range of uses in Ontario's prime agricultural areas which are classified as: agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. The PPS specifically defines the permitted uses and establishes criteria for considering what type of uses may be permitted in prime agricultural areas.

The intent of the Guidelines is to support a thriving agricultural industry and rural economy and limit non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas in order to ensure settlement areas remain the focus of growth and development. The Town's new Official Plan will need to consider these Guidelines as a large portion of the Town's land is comprised of prime agricultural areas. The new Official Plan should establish policies to permit a broad range of agricultural, agricultural-related, and on-farm diversified uses in prime agricultural areas, and appropriate criteria to accommodate agricultural-related and on-farm diversified uses to enhance the viability of agricultural uses.

#### **2.1.2.2. *Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Document, 2017***

The Ontario Ministry of Food and Agriculture's (OMAFRA's) updated Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formulae Document and Guidelines for Livestock Facility and Anaerobic Digester Odour Setbacks, took effect on March 1, 2017. The objective of the MDS is to prevent land use conflicts and minimize nuisance complaints related to odour. The MDS establishes a two-way approach, made up of two separate but related formulas, which provides land use planning tools for determining a recommended separation distance between a livestock barn, manure storage or anaerobic digester and another land use:

- **MDS I** – provides the minimum distance separation between proposed new development and any existing livestock barns, manure storages and/or anaerobic digesters located in areas where the keeping of livestock is permitted; and
- **MDS II** – provides the minimum distance separation between proposed new, enlarged, or remodelled livestock barns, manure storages and/or anaerobic digester and existing or approved development located in areas where the keeping of livestock is permitted.

The calculated setback distances will vary based on a number of factors, and will result in unique distances for different types of operations in different circumstances and locations. In rural and prime agricultural areas, the PPS, 2014, requires that new land uses, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, comply with the MDS Formulae. References to the MDS are to be included in municipal planning documents such as zoning by-laws and official plans. Before a land use planning approval can be given, or a building permit can be issued, conformity to MDS setbacks must be demonstrated.

The Town's new Official Plan will need to ensure that planning decisions are consistent with the PPS, and appropriately implement the Province's MDS Formulae to ensure planning approvals comply with the MDS requirements.

#### **2.1.3. *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019***

"A Place to Grow", the new Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), 2019 pursuant to the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, took effect on May 16, 2019, and replaced the 2017 Growth Plan. Updates to the Growth Plan were the result of consultations the Province undertook in early 2019 on Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan, 2019. The proposed changes are intended to provide greater flexibility for local municipalities to address pressing planning matters related to settlement area expansions, planning for major transit station areas, and employment area conversions. The entire Town is subject to the policies of the Growth Plan. **Figure 2.1** identifies the extent of the Provincial

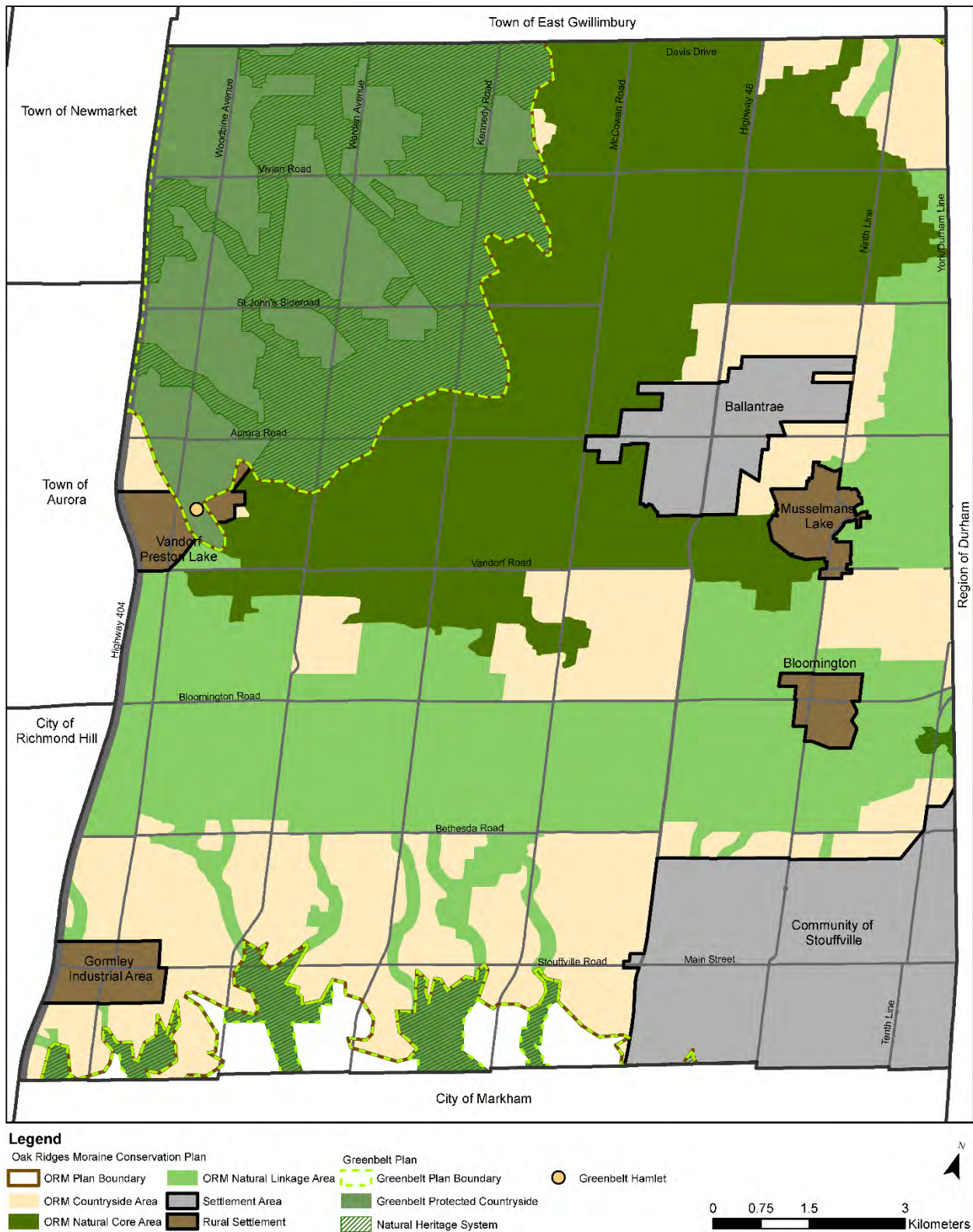
Plans applicable to the Town and associated land use designations and the delineation of the Town's settlement areas.

The Growth Plan builds on the PPS and establishes a more detailed provincial policy framework for implementing Ontario's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) by better managing growth and establishing a long-term framework for where and how the Region will grow.

All decisions on planning matters must conform with the Growth Plan, 2017. The majority of the policy directions related to growth management that impact the Town need to first be implemented in the York Region Official Plan through the Region's on-going municipal comprehensive review (MCR), and then through the Town's new Official Plan. A key change to the Growth Plan, 2017 is the definition of "municipal comprehensive review", which is:

*"A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality under section 26 of the Planning Act that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan."*

Figure 2.1 – Provincial Plan Areas



The MCR is required to be undertaken by the Region to comprehensively apply the policies of the Growth Plan. Section 5.2.3(2) of the Growth Plan states that:

*“Upper-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, will, through a municipal comprehensive review, provide policy direction to implement this Plan, including:*

- a) identifying minimum intensification targets for lower-tier municipalities based on the capacity of delineated built-up areas, including the applicable minimum density targets for strategic growth areas in this Plan, to achieve the minimum intensification target in this Plan;*
- b) identifying minimum density targets for strategic growth areas, including any urban growth centres or major transit station areas, in accordance with this Plan;*
- c) identifying minimum density targets for employment areas;*
- d) identifying minimum density targets for the designated greenfield areas of the lower-tier municipalities, to achieve the minimum density target for the upper- or single-tier municipality;*
- e) allocating forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan to the lower-tier municipalities in a manner that would support the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan; and*
- f) addressing matters that cross municipal boundaries.”*

The Town’s OPR is being undertaken concurrently with the Region’s MCR, which is anticipated to result in an iterative process to bring the Town’s Official Plan into conformity with the Growth Plan and the Region’s updated Official Plan. The Town’s Official Plan is required to be updated within one-year of the approval of the Region’s Official Plan update.

Key requirements of the Growth Plan that are applicable to the Town are summarized below, including key changes that were made to the 2017 Growth Plan, and took effect on May 16, 2019.

### **Managing Growth**

The Growth Plan establishes population and employment forecasts to be used for planning and managing growth to the year 2041. The Region’s MCR will result in the allocation of the population and employment growth forecasts to the local municipalities and provide the basis for identifying any additional land needs to accommodate the forecasted growth. **Table 2.1** outlines the population and employment growth forecasts for the Region of York.

**Table 2.1 – Growth Plan Population and Employment Forecasts**

<b>Region of York</b>	<b>2031</b>	<b>2036</b>	<b>2041</b>
<b>Population</b>	1,590,000	1,700,000	1,790,000
<b>Employment</b>	790,000	840,000	900,000

The Growth Plan policies (S. 2.2.1) direct that the vast majority of growth be directed to settlement areas that:

- i) have a delineated built boundary;
- ii) have existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems; and
- iii) can support the achievement of complete communities.

Whereas more limited growth will be directed to settlement areas that:

- i) are rural settlements;
- ii) are not serviced by existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems; or
- iii) are in the Greenbelt Area.

Furthermore, within settlement areas, growth is to be focused within delineated built-up areas; strategic growth areas; locations with existing or planned transit; and, in areas with existing or planned public service facilities.

The Growth Plan allows municipalities to plan for development beyond the horizon of the Plan within strategic growth areas in the delineated built-up areas; these areas must be identified in official plans, and are subject to minimum density targets, and may not exceed the existing or planned infrastructure/servicing capacity.

The Community of Stouffville will continue to accommodate the vast majority of growth within the Town, as it is the only settlement area with a delineated built boundary as identified on Schedule F to the Town's Official Plan, and provides for full municipal water and wastewater services. Furthermore, the Community of Stouffville will accommodate identified strategic growth areas, which will be delineated in the Official Plan, including the Downtown GO and Lincolnville GO Major Transit Station Area, and other intensification areas, which may include the Gateway Mixed Use Area and the Western Approach Area, and the Highway 48 Corridor.

### **Settlement Area Boundary Expansions**

Settlement area boundaries are required to be identified in official plans. Under the 2017 Growth Plan, a settlement area expansion could only occur through the Region's MCR subject to certain criteria, and where it is demonstrated that there is a need for additional land to accommodate the forecasted growth to 2041, based on meeting the minimum intensification and density targets. Section 2.2.8.3 outlines the requirements for assessing the feasibility of the most appropriate location for a settlement area boundary expansion, which includes considerations for existing and planned infrastructure, avoiding key hydrologic areas and the natural heritage system, and avoiding prime agricultural areas where possible and adverse impacts on agricultural operations.

The policies may provide consideration for a settlement area boundary expansion within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), if justified, through the Region's MCR, and provided the expansion is not located within the Natural Core Area and Natural Linkage Area designations of the ORMCP, and subject to meeting the policies of 2.2.8.2 and 2.2.8.3.

The policies are more restrictive for contemplating settlement area boundary expansions within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt Area; however, these policies would not be applicable to the

Town since only settlement areas currently identified as a “Town/Village” in the Greenbelt Plan may be permitted to expand.

The 2019 Growth Plan introduced substantive changes to the policies regarding settlement area boundary expansions, which are intended to enable local municipalities to undertake limited expansions or adjustments to settlement area boundaries prior to (or in advance of) the approval of the Region’s MCR.

The new policies may permit minor settlement area expansions (provided they are no greater than 40 ha), and settlement area boundary adjustments (provided there is no net increase in land within the settlement area), outside of the Region’s MCR. However, the policies do not permit the adjustment or expansion of settlement areas within the Greenbelt Area (which includes lands within the Greenbelt Plan and the ORMCP).

Similarly, a new policy may allow minor adjustments to the rural settlement area boundaries in keeping with the rural character of the area, and subject to more limited criteria, in advance of the Region’s MCR. Again, this policy would not apply where the rural settlement area is located in the Greenbelt Area.

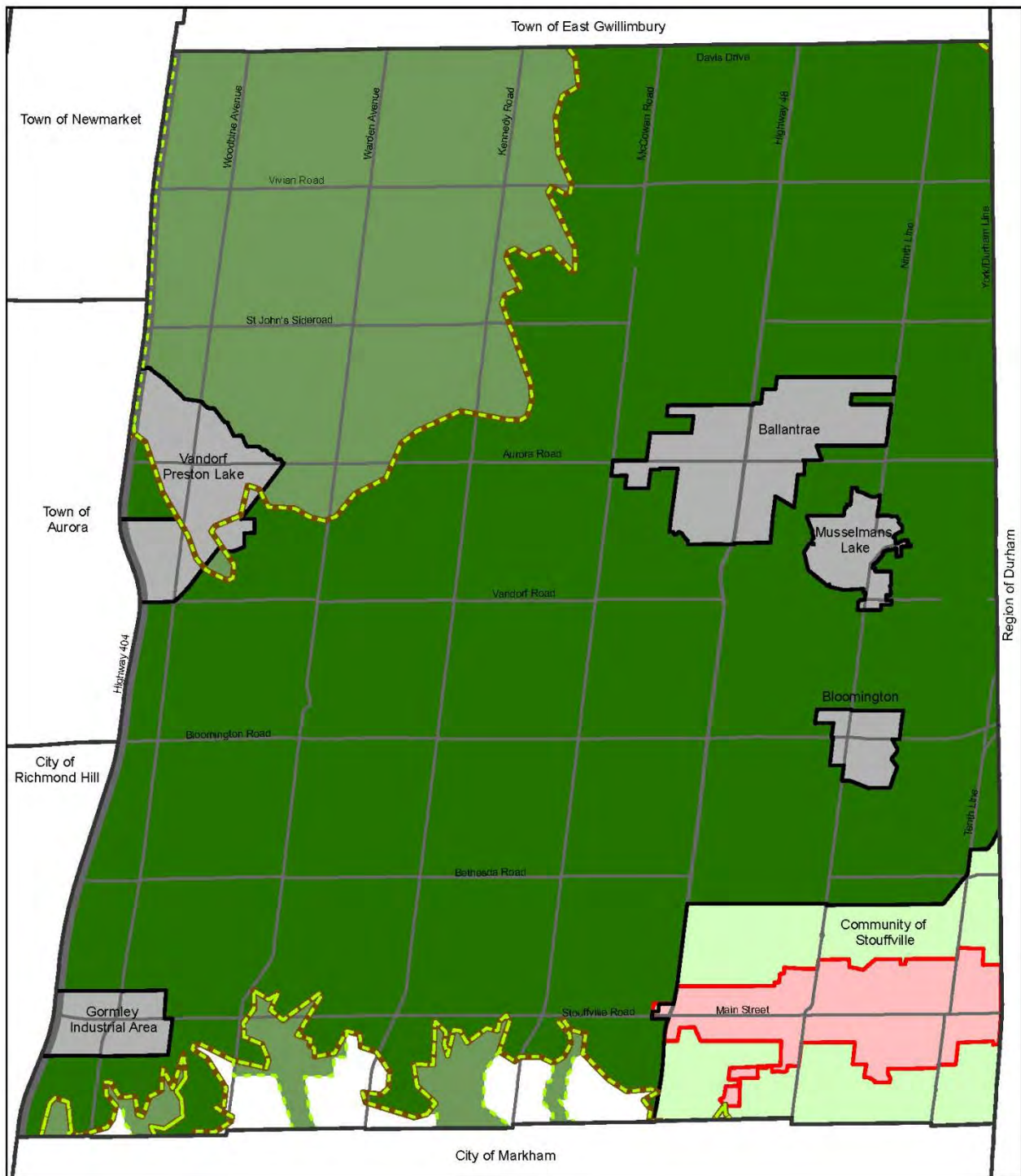
### **Intensification and Designated Greenfield Area Density Targets**

The Growth Plan, 2019 provides intensification targets within delineated built-up areas and density targets for designated greenfield areas which must be achieved at a Regional level across the entire delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield area. Additionally, for the purpose of their implementation, the Region through its MCR, must delineate the following areas within the York Region Official Plan:

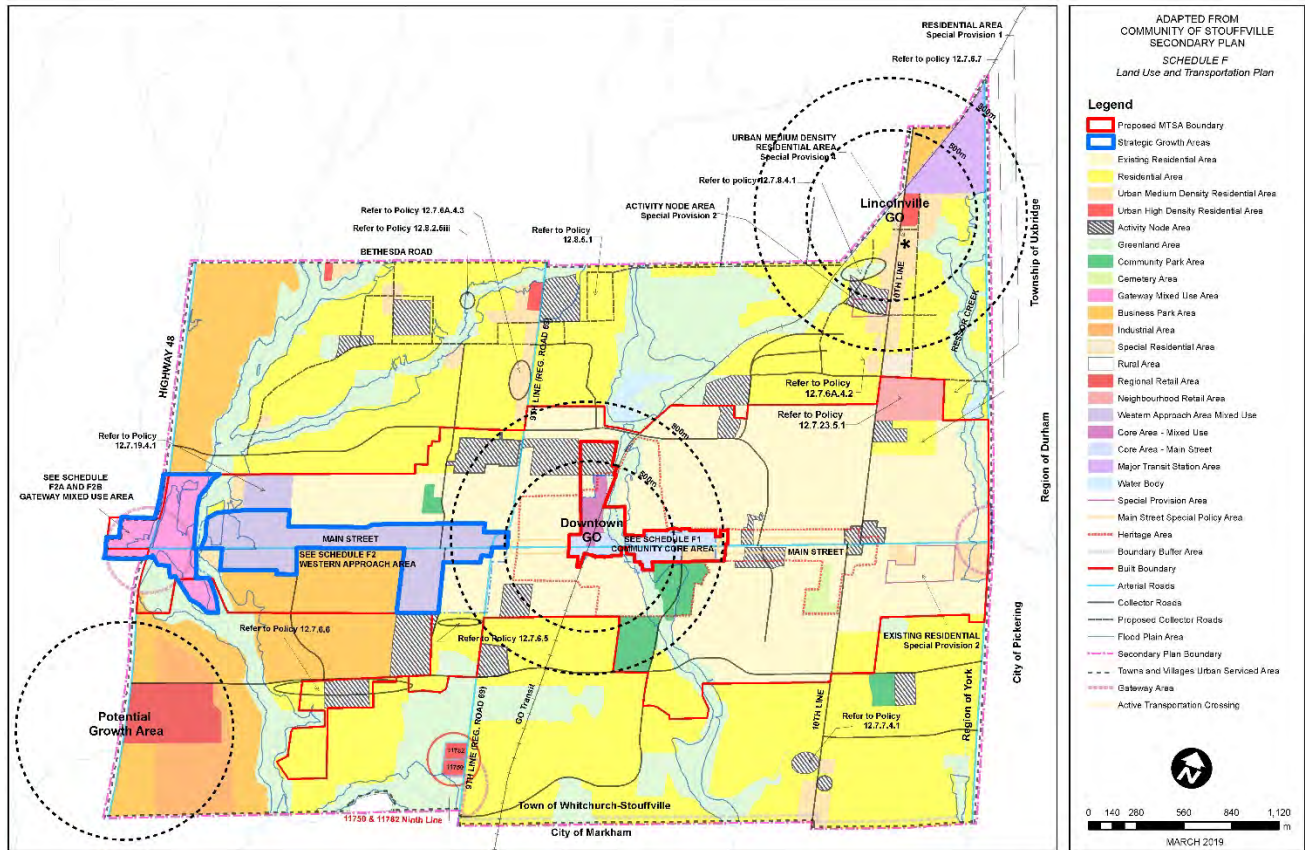
- a) Delineated built-up areas;
- b) Urban growth centres;
- c) Major transit station areas; and
- d) Other strategic growth areas for which a minimum density target will be established.

**Figure 2.2** identifies the Growth Plan elements that are applicable to the Town in interpreting and implementing the Growth Plan, which include: the delineated built-up area, designated greenfield areas, rural settlements, strategic growth areas (which include Major Transit Station Areas), and the Town’s existing settlement area boundaries, which include Settlement Areas and Rural Settlements within the Oak Ridges Moraine, and a Hamlet within the Greenbelt Plan). **Figure 2.3** identifies the strategic growth areas as they relate to the Community of Stouffville.

Figure 2.2 – Settlement Areas and Growth Plan Elements



**Figure 2.3 – Community of Stouffville Growth Plan Elements**



**Table 2.2** provides the Growth Plan definitions as they relate to interpreting and implementing the policies of the Growth Plan.

**Table 2.2 – Definitions of the Growth Plan Elements**

Term	Definition
<b>Settlement Area</b>	Urban areas and rural settlements within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and</li> <li>lands which have been designated in an official plan for development in accordance with the policies of this Plan.</li> </ol>
<b>Designated Greenfield Area</b>	Lands within settlement areas (not including rural settlements) but outside of delineated built-up areas that have been designated in an official plan for development and are required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan.
<b>Delineated Built Boundary</b>	The limits of the developed urban area as defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of measuring the minimum intensification target in this Plan.
<b>Delineated Built-up Area</b>	All lands within the delineated built boundary.

Term	Definition
<b>Rural Settlements</b>	Existing hamlets or similar existing small settlement areas that are long-established and identified in official plans. These communities are serviced by individual private on-site water and/or private wastewater systems, contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development and are subject to official plan policies that limit growth. All settlement areas that are identified as hamlets in the Greenbelt Plan, as rural settlements in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, or as minor urban centres in the Niagara Escarpment Plan are considered rural settlements for the purposes of this Plan, including those that would not otherwise meet this definition.
<b>Major Transit Station Area</b>	The area including and around any existing or planned higher order transit station or stop within a settlement area; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. Major transit station areas generally are defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk.
<b>Strategic Growth Areas</b>	Within settlement areas, nodes, corridors, and other areas that have been identified by municipalities or the Province to be the focus for accommodating intensification and higher-density mixed uses in a more compact built form. Strategic growth areas include urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and other major opportunities that may include infill, redevelopment, brownfield sites, the expansion or conversion of existing buildings, or greyfields. Lands along major roads, arterials, or other areas with existing or planned frequent transit service or higher order transit corridors may also be identified as strategic growth areas.

The following minimum intensification targets and designated greenfield area density targets are applicable to the Region of York; however, until such time as the Region’s MCR is approved, and targets are established for the Town through the Region’s MCR, the existing targets will remain in place.

The new Growth Plan policies are intended to provide a simplified approach to implementing the minimum intensification targets and the minimum designated greenfield area density targets that reflects the objective of supporting provincial transit investments, the planned growth rates and local realities of different communities in the region, including market demand for housing. The application of different intensification and density targets recognizes that "one-size does not fit all" and are intended to make it easier to understand and measure the impacts of growth in the Region.

- Intensification Target** – The minimum percentage of residential development occurring annually within York Region’s delineated built-up area is 50%, by the time the MCR is approved. The 2017 Growth Plan provided that the intensification target would transition from 50% to 60% by the year 2031, however, this is no longer the case. Until the Region’s MCR is approved and in effect, the annual minimum intensification target contained in the York Region Official Plan will continue to apply (the current target is 40%). Development within rural settlements are not considered to contribute to the intensification target. All municipalities are to develop a strategy to achieve the minimum intensification target and intensification throughout the delineated built boundary.

The minimum intensification target only applies to lands within the delineated built-up area of the Community of Stouffville, as shown on Schedule F of the Town’s Official Plan (**Figure 2.3**). The delineated built-up area represents the limits of the developed urban area as defined by the

Minister. The minimum intensification target represents a Region-wide target and it is recognized that minimum density targets may vary by each local municipality. The Town's current Official Plan policies seek to achieve the development of 2,020 new residential units within the delineated built-up area to the year 2031, whereas the Region's Official Plan identifies a target of 1,500 units.

It is anticipated that the Region of York will be able to achieve a minimum intensification target of 50% of all residential development occurring annually to be within the Region's delineated built-up areas. The Town's OPR will assess opportunities for intensification within the strategic growth areas and delineated built-up area of the Community of Stouffville, and provide updated policies for managing growth.

- **Designated Greenfield Areas Density Target** – New designated greenfield areas within York Region will be planned to achieve an overall minimum density target that is not less than 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare by 2041. The density target is to be measured over the entire designated greenfield area within the Region, and it is recognized that minimum density targets may vary by each local municipality. The Growth Plan density target specifically excludes the calculation of employment areas, which may have implications on the overall density target for residential development. New development within designated greenfield areas are to be planned to support the development of complete communities, support active transportation and viable transit services.

The 2017 Growth Plan established a minimum density target of not less than 80 residents and jobs combined per hectare. Existing designated greenfield areas that were approved prior to July 1, 2017, would remain subject to the existing minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare until the next MCR, and be planned to achieve a minimum of 60 residents and jobs combined per hectare following the MCR. As such, the minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare, from the 2006 Growth Plan continues to apply.

- **Employment Density Target** – Upper and single-tier municipalities in consultation with local municipalities are to establish minimum density targets for all employment areas within settlement areas to reflect the current and anticipated type and scale of employment and reflect opportunities for intensification.

### **Major Transit Station Areas**

The Growth Plan directs intensification to higher order transit corridors and station areas. The Growth Plan, 2019, revised policies to provide a more streamlined approach that enables the Region to delineate and set density targets for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA's) in advance of the MCR. The Growth Plan defines MTSA's to generally include the lands within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station (intended to be equivalent to a 10-minute walk). MTSA's on priority transit corridors are required

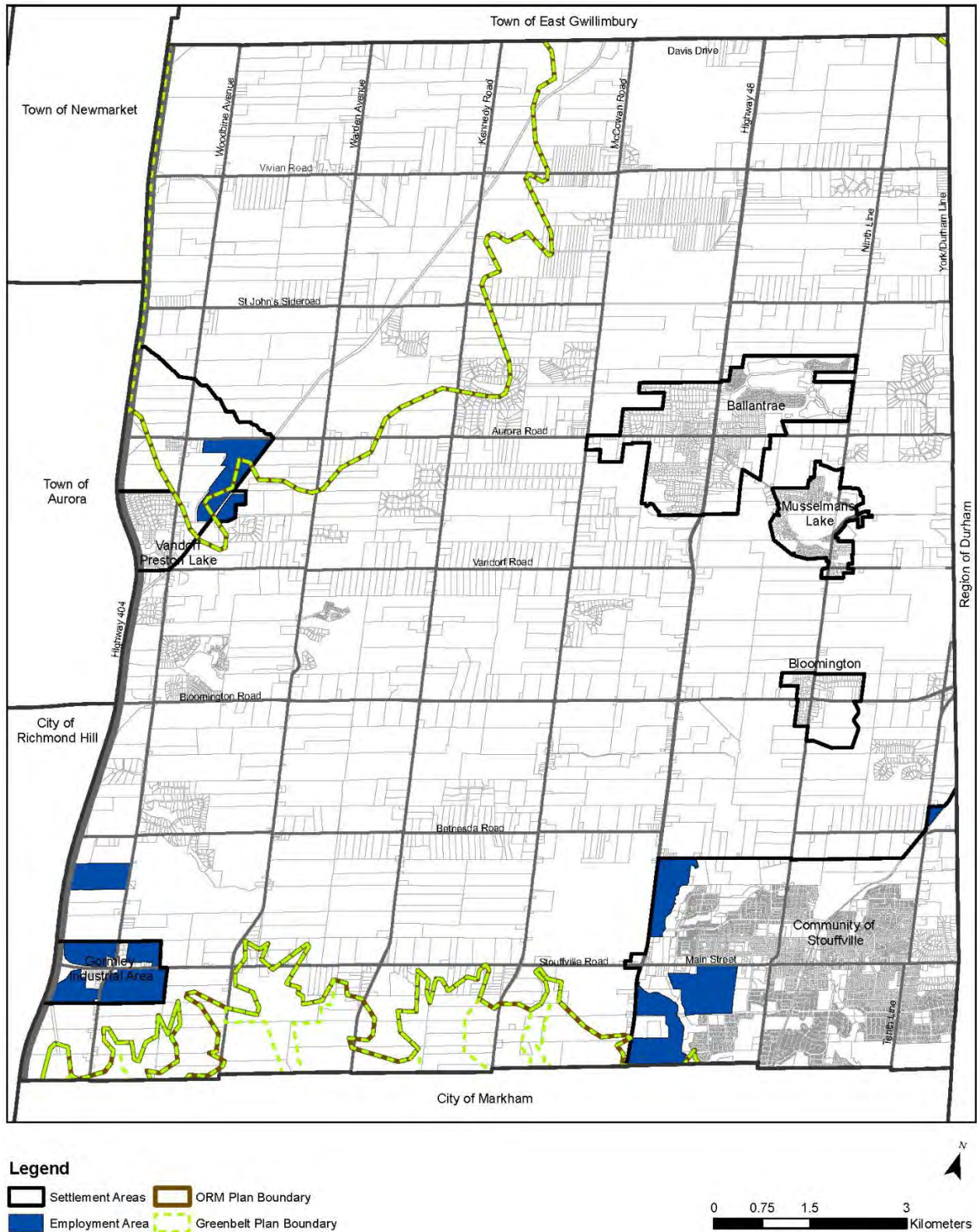
to be delineated and minimum density targets are to be established in official plans. MTSA's on priority transit corridors that are served by the GO Transit rail network are to be planned to achieve a density target of 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare. While the GO Transit rail line through the Community of Stouffville is not identified as a "priority" transit corridor, the Downtown GO and Lincolnville GO stations are considered to be an "additional" MTSA and are to be identified through the Region's MCR with a planned minimum density target of 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare. All MTSA's are to be planned and designed to be transit supportive through increased densities and accommodate a diverse mix of uses in more compact built forms.

The Town is currently undertaking the Lincolnville GO MTSA study which will result in a land use plan and policy directions for accommodating intensification within this designated greenfield area of the Town, and will provide further input to the Region's MCR regarding the intensification potential for the Lincolnville GO MTSA. Intensification potential within the Downtown GO MTSA will be further considered through the Region's MCR and the Town's OPR.

### **Employment Areas**

The promotion of economic development and competitiveness in the GGH is a key policy direction of the Growth Plan, by making more efficient use of existing employment areas and ensuring the availability of sufficient land in appropriate locations for a variety of employment uses. Municipalities are to plan for employment areas within settlement areas by prohibiting residential or sensitive land uses, prohibiting major retail uses or establishing a size or scale threshold for major retail uses, and by providing an appropriate interface between employment uses and non-employment uses to maintain land use compatibility. Municipalities are to designate and preserve lands within settlement areas located adjacent to major goods movement facilities and corridors for areas of manufacturing, warehousing and logistics. The Region, in consultation with the Town, is required to designate employment areas in the Official Plan and protect them for the long-term, which may occur in advance of the MCR. **Figure 2.4** identifies the employment areas within the Town, which are generally designated Business Park Area, Industrial, or Prestige Industrial in the Town's Official Plan.

Figure 2.4 – Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Employment Areas



The Growth Plan, 2019, introduced significant changes to the employment policies which are intended to ensure that employment lands are appropriately protected for employment uses. This includes the identification of provincially significant employment zones by the Minister, while providing some flexibility for municipalities to undertake an employment area conversion in advance of the approval of the Region's MCR.

#### *Employment Area Conversions to Non Employment Uses*

The conversion of employment areas to non-employment uses may be permitted through the Region's MCR and subject to satisfying certain criteria. However, the Growth Plan, 2019 may permit employment area conversions through a one-time window prior to the approval of the Region's MCR, and subject to more limited criteria. The conversion would also need to "maintain a significant number of jobs on those lands." Furthermore, any change to an official plan to permit new or expanded opportunities for major retail in an employment area may only occur in accordance with the employment area conversion policies.

Through the Region's MCR, minimum density target for all employment areas and opportunities for intensification within employment areas will be identified.

#### *Provincially Significant Employment Zones*

The Growth Plan identifies new provincially significant employment zones, which are defined as: "*areas defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of long-term planning for job creation and economic development. Provincially significant employment zones can consist of employment areas as well as mixed-use areas that contain a significant number of jobs.*" Provincially significant employment zones are intended to support co-ordination of planning for jobs and economic development at a regional scale and require their protection through appropriate official plan policies and designations.

The Minister has not identified any provincially significant employment zones within the Town. A provincially significant employment zone is identified within the Highway 404/Highway 407 area (zone No. 7) which includes existing designated employment lands within Richmond Hill, Markham and Toronto, and extends north to the municipal boundary between the City of Markham and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Consistent with Town Council's resolution of December 11, 2018, and Regional Council's motion of motion of March 21, 2019, the Province was requested to identify provincially significant employment zones within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville which includes the following areas:

- Existing Gormley Industrial Area and Employment Expansion Area – located at the interchange of Highway 404 and Stouffville Road;
- Existing Vandorf Preston Lake Employment Area and Employment Expansion Area – located at the interchange of Highway 404 and Aurora Road; and the
- Proposed Davis Drive Employment Area – located at the interchange of Highway 404 and Davis Drive.

The identification of provincially significant employment zones along the Highway 404 corridor and the designation of additional employment areas will be further assessed through the OPR. The Growth Plan provides that the Province may review and update the provincially significant zones in response to a municipal request. Requests for the identification of additional provincially significant employment

zones are currently being reviewed by the Province. Furthermore, the Growth Plan provides that the Minister may identify provincially significant employment zones and may provide specific direction for planning in those areas to be implemented through appropriate official plan policies and designations and economic development strategies.

## **Housing**

The Growth Plan requires that the Region in consultation with the local municipalities, will support housing choice through official plans and zoning by-laws that achieves the minimum intensification and density targets in the Plan, as well as the other policies of the Growth Plan by:

- identifying a diverse range and mix of housing options and densities, including second units and affordable housing to meet projected needs of current and future residents;
- establishing targets for affordable ownership housing and rental housing; and
- identifying land use planning and financial tools, to support their implementation and align with land use planning and applicable housing and homelessness plans required under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

## **Agriculture and Local Food Production**

The Growth Plan places greater emphasis on the preservation of agricultural lands to ensure a secure local supply of food for future generations, and recognizes the importance of supporting and enhancing the agri-food network, for both economic benefits and community health. There is new emphasis on supporting the “Agricultural System” as a whole, beyond just Prime Agricultural Areas (S. 4.2.6). Policies within this section require growth management to consider opportunities for supporting and enhancing the Agricultural System, and encourages municipalities to implement regional agri-food strategies, along with other approaches to sustain the system, moving beyond a sole focus on the landscape itself.

The Growth Plan requires that the Province is responsible for identifying, establishing, or updating the Agricultural System in order to implement the Growth Plan. The mapping of the Agricultural System under the Growth Plan was issued by the Province in February 2018, and is currently in force, and may only be revised and updated through the Region’s MCR. The Growth Plan provides that in implementing the Agricultural System, upper-tier municipalities may refine the provincial mapping of the agricultural land base at the time of initial implementation in their official plans, based on implementation procedures issued by the Province. This may occur separately for each lower-tier municipality and in advance of the Region’s MCR. However, once the provincial mapping has been implemented in the Region’s Official Plan, it may only be further refined through the Region’s MCR.

## **Natural Environment**

The Growth Plan includes enhanced policies for the protection of key hydrologic features and key natural heritage features for lands within the Natural Heritage System as mapped by the Province. The mapping of the Natural Heritage System under the Growth Plan was issued by the Province in February 2018, and is currently in force, and may only be revised and updated through the Region’s MCR.

The Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan applies to lands located outside of the Greenbelt Area, since lands within the Greenbelt Area, which includes the Greenbelt Plan and the ORMCP, already have a defined natural heritage system in place. Therefore, the mapping of the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan is less applicable to the Town.

## **Infrastructure to Support Growth**

The Growth Plan places a greater emphasis on the coordination of infrastructure planning, land use planning and infrastructure investment to support growth in a fiscally responsible manner. The policies support a connected transportation system for the movement of people and good, with an emphasis on improving public transit and transit-supportive development. Municipal water and wastewater systems are to be planned through a comprehensive water or wastewater master plan informed by watershed planning. Public service facilities should be planned to support growth and the co-location and integration of public services within community hubs is encouraged to promote cost effectiveness.

## **Climate Change**

The Growth Plan gives consideration to addressing climate change and achieving the goals of the Growth Plan. Section 4.2.10 specifically addresses climate change, and requires municipalities to develop policies in their official plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals. There is also a large focus on the promotion of green infrastructure and low impact development throughout the Plan.

## **Provincial Implementation/Guidance Documents**

To assist in implementing the Growth Plan, the Province has committed to preparing various implementation and guidance documents, which include:

- Land Needs Assessment Methodology for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, May 2018;
- The Municipal Comprehensive Review Process, Draft March 2018;
- Application of the Intensification and Density Targets, Draft March 2018;
- Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe, February 2018;
- The Regional Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, February 2018;
- Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidance Document, Draft March 2018; and
- Watershed Planning in Ontario, Guidance for Land-use Planning Authorities, Draft February 2018.

The Implementation/Guidance documents will inform the Region's MCR and the Town's OPR in implementing the policies of the Growth Plan.

### **2.1.4. Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017**

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017 (ORMCP) is a Provincial Plan approved pursuant to the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act*, which received Royal Assent on December 14, 2001. Planning decisions are required to conform with the ORMCP. The ORMCP is an ecologically based plan that provides land use and resource management direction for the moraine, of which 79% of the Town falls within the ORMCP, and comprises part of the Greenbelt Area. The communities of Stouffville, Ballantrae-Musselman Lake, Vandorf Preston Lake, Gormley and Bloomington are located within the ORMCP. **Figure 2.1** illustrates the extent of the ORMCP and the associated land use designations. The ORMCP establishes a planning framework through various land use designations which include the Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside Area, Natural Linkage Area, and Natural Core Area, and settlement areas. The ORMCP also establishes a more prescriptive regulatory system for protecting key natural heritage

features and hydrological features though enhanced areas of influence and minimum vegetative protection zones.

The Town's Official Plan was brought into conformity with the ORMCP, 2001 through OPA 112 (addressing the majority of lands within the ORMCP) and OPA 113 (addressing the portion of Vandorf-Preston Lake that is within the ORMCP).

The ORMCP, 2017 includes modest revisions from the ORMCP, 2001, as part of the Province's Coordinated Land Use Review. The majority of changes were to better align the ORMCP with the changes to the PPS and other Provincial Plans, the key changes include:

- new definitions and permitted uses for agricultural uses, on-farm diversified uses, and agriculture-related uses to promote agricultural economic activity;
- requirement for Agricultural Impact Assessments for infrastructure and mineral aggregate operations to minimize impacts on agricultural operations;
- exemption from environmental study requirements for agricultural buildings where a minimum 30 metre buffer is provided from all key natural heritage and key hydrologic features;
- align the settlement area expansion policies with the MCR requirements of the Growth Plan; and
- changes to incorporate updated settlement area boundary mapping.

The Town's OPR will result in updated planning policies to conform to the ORMCP, 2017.

#### **2.1.5. Greenbelt Plan, 2017**

The Greenbelt Plan, 2017 is a Provincial Plan approved pursuant to the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*. The Greenbelt Plan, 2017 was revised to replace the 2005 Greenbelt Plan, as part of the Province's Coordinated Land Use Review. Planning decisions are required to conform with the Greenbelt Plan.

The Greenbelt Plan establishes a framework for where and how future growth should be accommodated by providing enhanced protection for agricultural land and natural heritage systems. The Greenbelt Plan builds upon the ORMCP by improving natural linkages between the ORMCP lands and surrounding natural heritage systems and water resources.

The Greenbelt Plan establishes a Protected Countryside Area which is intended to enhance the agricultural and environmentally protected lands, while improving linkages between these areas. The Protected Countryside is comprised of an Agricultural System, a Natural Heritage System, and settlement areas, which are identified as either Towns and Villages, or Hamlets. The lands within the northwest portion of the Town are located within the Greenbelt Plan Area. **Figure 2.1** illustrates the extent of the Greenbelt Plan Area and the associated land use designations.

The Greenbelt Plan, 2017 includes various revisions from the Greenbelt Plan, 2005. The majority of changes were to better align the changes to the PPS and the Growth Plan, the key changes include:

- policies regarding settlement area boundary expansions for Towns/Villages within the Greenbelt Plan are more restrictive through additional criteria which are now included in the Growth Plan and may only be considered through the Region's MCR (i.e., must be a modest expansion to a maximum of 5% of the size of the settlement area or a maximum of 10ha, of which no more

than half the area may be for residential uses, and expansions to Hamlets within the Greenbelt Plan are not permitted);

- new policies to support the achievement of complete communities and provision of public service facilities;
- further direction for addressing climate change and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
- new policies to support the agricultural system and connections to the agri-food network;
- requirements for the preparation of an agricultural impact assessment related to settlement boundary expansions, infrastructure corridors and mineral aggregate operations within prime agricultural areas, to minimize impacts on agricultural areas;
- new definitions and permitted uses for agricultural uses, on-farm diversified uses, and agriculture-related uses to promote agricultural economic activity;
- exemption from environmental study requirements for agricultural buildings where a minimum 30 metre buffer is provided from all key natural heritage and key hydrologic features;
- new policies to establish criteria for development and site alteration to protect key hydrologic areas (significant groundwater recharge areas and highly vulnerable aquifers); and
- the addition of new urban river valleys and other boundary adjustments to the Greenbelt Plan.

The Town's Official Plan has not yet been brought into conformity with the Greenbelt Plan, and amendments are required through the Town's OPR to conform with the policies of the Greenbelt Plan.

#### **2.1.6. Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, 2009**

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, 2009 is a Provincial Plan approved pursuant to the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008*. The LSPP is a watershed based plan that promotes the importance of restoring and protecting the health of Lake Simcoe and includes policies to achieve this objective. The Plan addresses long term environmental issues in Lake Simcoe and its watershed by: promoting immediate action to address threats to the ecosystem, such as excessive phosphorus; targeting new and emerging causes of stress such as invasive species and climate change; protecting and restoring important natural areas such as shorelines and wetlands; and restoring the health of the fish and other aquatic life.

The LSPP applies to the Lake Simcoe Watershed which generally includes the lands north of Bloomington Road within the Town. The LSPP contains policies that must be addressed in an Official Plan. Many of these provisions apply directly to shoreline planning matters that do not impact the Town. Further, the lands are also covered by the ORMCP and Greenbelt Plan which provide many similar policy requirements for protecting key natural heritage features and hydrological features from development.

However, there are certain provisions of the LSPP that require consideration in updating the Town's Official Plan, which include:

- the preparation of comprehensive stormwater management master plans for settlement areas within the LSPP;
- policies related to reducing stormwater runoff volume and pollutant loadings from major developments and settlement areas;
- water quality provisions required in subdivision agreements; and
- amended official plan policies to ensure they are consistent with the recommendations of the sub-watershed evaluations.

Consultations with the agencies, including the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) will assist in identifying the extent of the required amendments to the Town's Official Plan.

### **2.1.7. Clean Water Act, 2006 and Source Protection Plans**

The Ontario government passed the *Clean Water Act, 2006*, to protect the sources of municipal drinking water supplies throughout Ontario. The Act is implemented through Source Protection Plans, which are required to: identify the sources of drinking water, including municipal wells, river and lake intakes; outline the threats to the quality and quantity of water in source areas; and identify proposed actions needed to reduce those threats and protect source water.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is located within the CTC (Credit Valley, Toronto and Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authorities) Source Protection Plan (effective December 31, 2015) and the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Region's Source Protection Plan (effective July 1, 2015). Official plans are an important tool to implement the policies of the Source Protection Plans as they relate to land use planning matters and the protection of drinking water sources from potential contamination uses. Official plans are required to be updated within five years of the source protection plan coming into effect, or at the time of the municipality's official plan review.

The Source Protection Plans identify different types of vulnerable areas that affect drinking water quality which are applicable to the Town, and include:

- Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs) – which are areas on the land around a municipal well, the size of which is determined by how quickly water travels underground to the well, measured in years;
- Highly Vulnerable Aquifers (HVAs) – which are areas underground that are highly saturated with water – enough water that it can be drawn for human use; and
- Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas (SGRAs) – which are areas on the landscape that are characterized by porous soils, such as sand or gravel, that allows the water to seep easily into the ground and flow to an aquifer.

To ensure that decisions on planning matters meet the requirements of the *Clean Water Act*, the official plan must conform with significant threat policies and have regard to moderate and low threat policies that apply to *Planning Act* decisions. The Town's Official Plan has not yet been updated to implement the Source Protection Plans, and the OPR will need to consider the proposed policies for designated vulnerable areas in order to safeguard municipal drinking water supplies and include new mapping to identify the vulnerable areas in accordance with the Source Protection Plans.

### **2.1.8. Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act, 2011**

The *Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act, 2011* provides a wide range of actions to improve the affordable housing system, including amendments to the *Planning Act*. The amendments provide municipalities with enhanced land use planning tools to support the creation of second units and garden suites. Official plans are required to contain policies to authorize the use of a second residential unit which consists of a separate and self-contained dwelling unit accommodated within single-detached, semi-detached and row dwellings, or ancillary buildings. As previously discussed, Bill

108 amended the *Planning Act* to permit the construction of two additional residential units within the dwelling and an accessory structure.

The Town's Official Plan is required to include policies pertaining to the permission of second units, and consideration will be given for the requirements for authorizing secondary units, which may address such matters as: minimum require parking spaces; appropriate servicing; unit size; entrance requirements; restricting secondary units from locating within hazard land areas; streetscape and architectural design; and a tracking and monitoring program for the construction of second units.

### **2.1.9. Green Energy Act, 2009**

The *Green Energy Act, 2009* was created to expand Ontario's production of renewable energy, encourage energy conservation and promote the creation of clean-energy green jobs. The Act had various implications in regard to the development of Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plans, allowance of designated renewable energy projects, and amendments to various governing legislation such as the *Planning Act* and the Building Code. The *Green Energy Act* essentially limited the ability of municipalities to regulate the provision of renewable energy systems through their land use planning tools.

In December 2018, the provincial government passed legislation to repeal the *Green Energy Act*, and re-introduce conservation and energy efficiency initiatives in the *Electricity Act, 1998*; change the *Planning Act* to restore municipal authority over siting renewable energy projects; and, provide authority in the *Environmental Protection Act* to make regulations prohibiting the issue or renewal of renewable energy approvals in prescribed circumstances, which may include circumstances in which the demand for the electricity that would be generated as part of engaging in the renewable energy project has not been demonstrated in accordance with the regulations. As such, the Town's Official Plan may consider policies governing the siting of renewable energy projects.

## **2.2. York Region Official Plan**

The York Region Official Plan (YROP) was approved in September 2010, and establishes upper-tier policy direction for the entire Region. Local municipal official plans are required to conform to the YROP. The Region is currently in the process of undertaking a MCR to update the YROP to conform to the policies of the Growth Plan, 2017, as discussed in Section 2.2.1. The Town's new Official Plan will conform with the Region's updated Official Plan which is anticipated to be completed in 2020.

The current policies of the YROP guide economic growth, environmental, and community building decisions to manage growth to the year 2031. The YROP is structured under the following sections, with associated objectives and policies to guide land use planning decisions and provide direction for implementation in local municipal official plans:

- **A Sustainable Natural Environment** – establishes a Regional Greenlands System and provides policies for the protection of key natural heritage features and hydrologic features and watershed planning.
- **Healthy Communities** – provides policies related to human health and well-being, air quality and climate change, the provision of human services, the preservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources, and the provision of a mix of housing and affordability.

- **Economic Vitality** – supports the Region’s economic development strategy, planning for the protection of employment lands, retail facilities, and financial management.
- **An Urbanizing Region** – provides policies for city building and complete communities, including the forecasting and phasing of growth, intensification requirements, a centres and corridors approach for directing development, and a settlement hierarchy for building complete and vibrant communities.
- **Agricultural and Rural Areas** – provides policies for the protection of agricultural resources and the agricultural systems established in the Greenbelt Plan and the ORMCP, development within rural areas, and the management of mineral aggregate resources.
- **Servicing** – establishes policies related to transportation, transit, active transportation, goods movement, water and wastewater, waste, energy and conservation.
- **Implementation** – includes policies for community engagement, monitoring, the planning process, and how to interpret the Plan.

The YROP forecasts growth to the Town of 60,600 persons and 23,000 jobs to 2031, which provides the basis for planning for new development. Through the Region’s ongoing MCR, population forecasts and land needs to the year 2041 will be assessed. The YROP also establishes minimum intensification targets and greenfield density targets that are reflective of the Growth Plan, 2005, and will be updated through the Region’s MCR.

### ***2.2.1. Region of York Municipal Comprehensive Review***

The Region of York initiated a work program in 2018 to undertake a MCR to comprehensively implement the policies of the Growth Plan, 2017, and guide the Region’s population and employment growth. It is anticipated that the Region’s MCR and Official Plan update will be adopted by Regional Council in 2020. The Town’s Official Plan is required to be updated within one year of the approval of the Region’s Official Plan. As such, the Town is working collaboratively with the Region through the MCR process and concurrently working to update the Town’s Official Plan.

As per the Growth Plan, the Region of York is forecasted to plan to accommodate 1,790,000 persons and 900,000 jobs by the year 2041. The Region’s MCR will establish policy directions to guide the Region’s population and employment growth, land needs and infrastructure. The MCR process will identify growth forecasts and allocations to the Town, including the identification of minimum intensification targets for strategic growth areas, and identify required land needs to accommodate growth.

The following major studies and direction reports are being prepared as part of the Region’s MCR:

- Consultation, Vision, Indigenous Communities Report;
- Growth Forecasts and Land Budget Report;
- Intensification Strategy and Major Transit Station Area Report;
- Housing Strategy Report;

- Employment Strategy Report;
- Complete Communities and Healthy Built Environment Report;
- Natural Heritage System, Watershed Planning and Agriculture Direction Report;
- Infrastructure Master Plans Information Report;
- Climate Change Report; and
- Fiscal Impact Analysis Report.

### 3. Town's Official Plan

The Town's Official Plan was adopted by Council in October 1980, and approved by the Province in August 1982. The Official Plan has been subject to nearly 145 amendments since that time to address both site-specific development applications and various policy initiatives. Official Plan Amendment No. 109 (OPA 109) was the last comprehensive amendment to the Town's Official Plan which was approved in 2004. However, since that time there have been major policy updates related to: Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan conformity (OPA 112/113); Implementation of Bill 51 Amendments to the *Planning Act* (OPA 125); Town's Residential Intensification Strategy and Growth Plan, 2005 Implementation (OPA 128); Phase 2 Development Area (OPA 129); Phase 3 Development Area (OPA 137); and most recently, the Gateway Mixed Use Area Study (OPA 145).

#### 3.1. Vision and Guiding Principles

The Town's current Official Plan is based on the following vision statement:

***Whitchurch-Stouffville: Country Close to the City***

*The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is a rural community that will preserve and enhance its quiet, calm, attractive environment for residents, visitors and future generations. It will be:*

- i) a safe, healthy, friendly and intergenerational community;*
- ii) a community which focuses its development in the Community of Stouffville and other settlement areas to preserve the resources of the rural/agricultural/ environmental area;*
- iii) an environmentally aware community with a strong greenlands system;*
- iv) a community which supports the continuation of all forms of agriculture and related uses as an important part of its rural heritage and a major economic contributor;*
- v) a community which provides a wide range of public and private recreation and cultural opportunities; and,*
- vi) a community which protects its natural environment and its built cultural heritage.*

The following guiding principles support the Town's vision, which are further articulated through various objectives:

*Principle: Decisions made with respect to the future of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville should protect and enhance this safe, healthy and friendly community.*

*Principle: Any change in the Town should be undertaken in a manner which will preserve and enhance the integrity of the natural environment.*

*Principle: Decisions made with respect to the future of the Town will reflect the need to establish an economically sustainable community.*

*Principle: Any change in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville should be financially feasible both with respect to capital and operating costs.*

The policies of the Official Plan seek to implement the vision statement and principles through policies related to an Environmental Conservation Strategy, a Land Use Strategy, Functional Community Services (Parks, Roads, Trails, Waste Management, Wellhead Protection), and Social, Cultural and Design

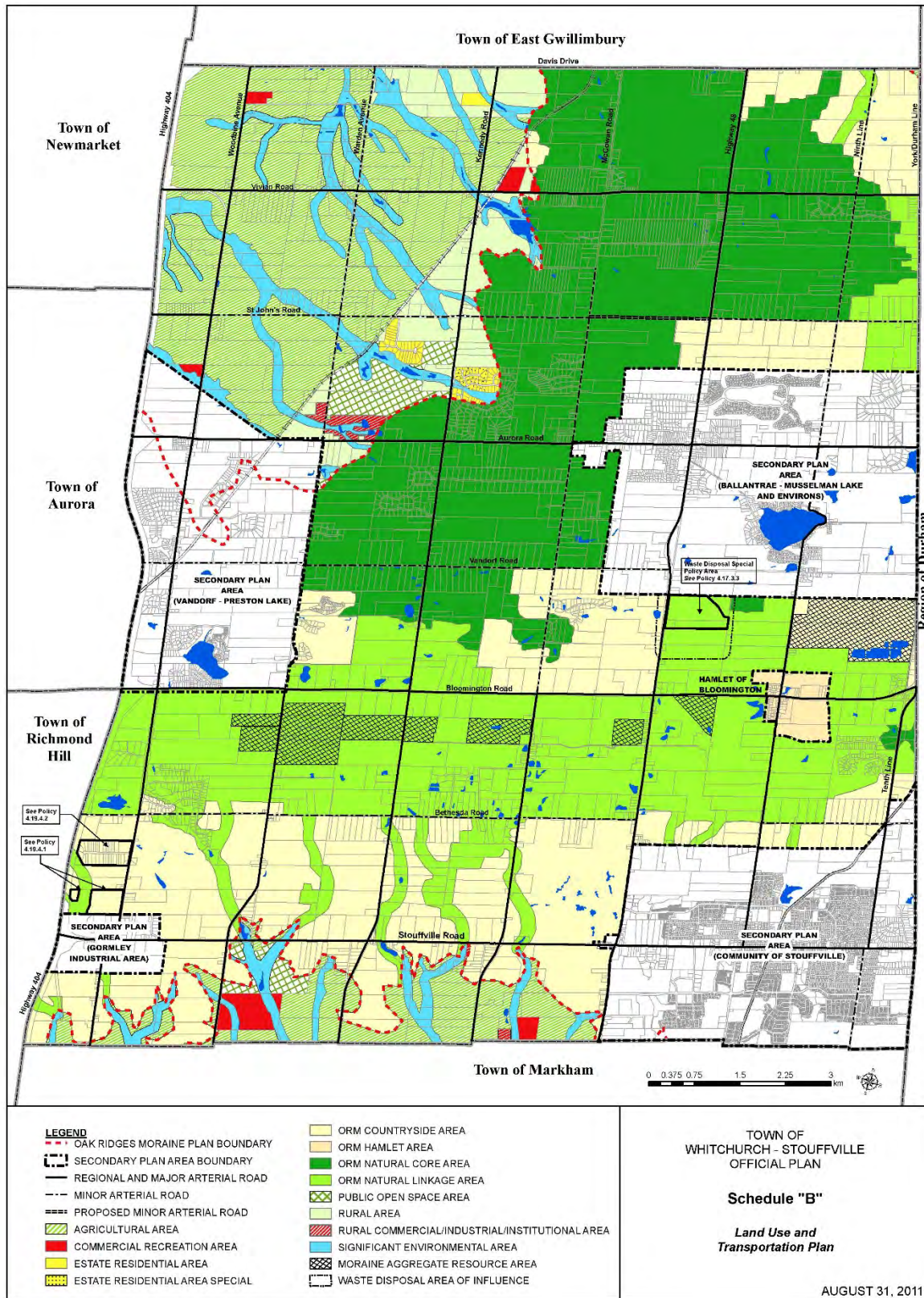
Directions (Housing, Community Improvement, Heritage, Community Design). The Official Plan further includes detailed policies on development applications, pre-consultation and submission requirements, and the implementation and interpretation of the Official Plan policies. These are typical operational Official Plan policy components, which provide direction on the manner in which the Official Plan is to be implemented through various means including development approvals e.g. subdivisions, re-zonings, site plan control agreements and Town initiated works.

### **3.2. Community Structure and Growth Management**

The Town's Official Plan recognizes the importance of agriculture as a dominant land use that is supported by large areas of prime agricultural areas as well as many significant environmental features reflective of the large geographic area of the Town that comprises the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Community of Stouffville is recognized as the primary fully serviced urban settlement area that accommodates a diverse range of residential, employment, commercial and institutional uses. In addition, there are four smaller settlement areas which include: Ballantrae-Musselman Lake, Vandorf Preston Lake, Bloomington, and the Gormley Industrial Area, as identified on Schedule B of the Town's Official Plan and shown on **Figure 3.1**.

Based on the Town's 2013 Growth Management Strategy, the Official Plan forecasts a population of 60,600 people and 23,000 jobs by 2031. The current Official Plan policies focus growth within the Community of Stouffville, with more moderate growth being directed to the Ballantrae-Musselman Lake Community. The appropriateness of directing moderate growth to the Ballantrae-Musselman Lake Community will be assessed through the OPR and in consideration of a long-term servicing solution. Additional employment growth is directed to the Gormley Industrial Area and the employment designated lands within the Vandorf Preston Lake Secondary Plan. The balance of the Town is planned to remain rural/agricultural/environmental in character and will not see significant growth.

Figure 3.1 – Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Land Use and Transportation Plan (Schedule B)



### 3.3. Secondary Plans

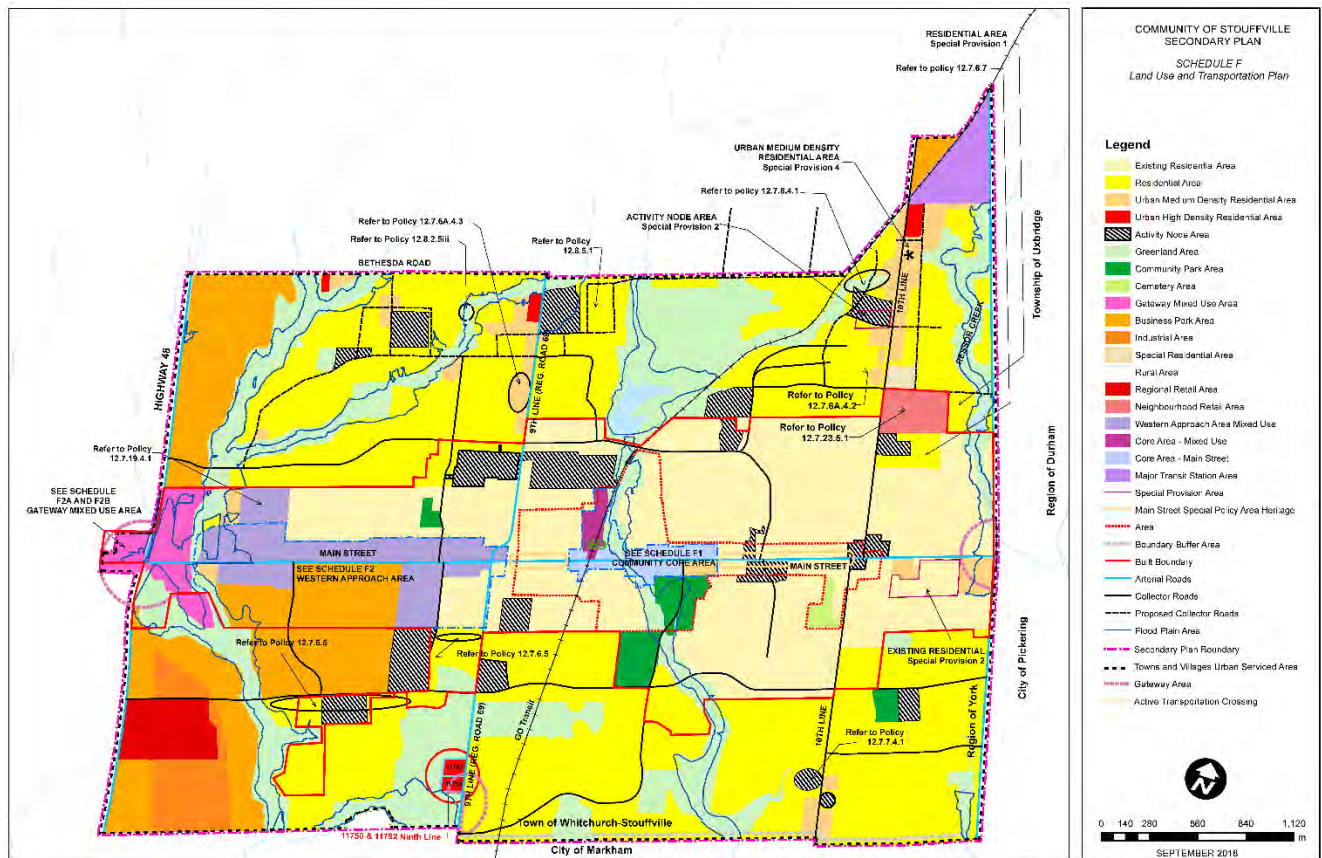
The Official Plan includes four Secondary Plans which provide more detailed land use direction for specific communities, and complements the policies of the Official Plan.

#### 3.3.1. Community of Stouffville Secondary Plan

The Community of Stouffville Secondary Plan was approved in September 1998. The Secondary Plan establishes principles, objectives and general policies as well as specific strategies with respect to community structure, community character, natural environment servicing, land use and transportation to guide the planning of the existing urban area and the community expansion areas. The Secondary Plan contains a comprehensive land use strategy to guide and direct development approvals and public infrastructure investment.

The Secondary Plan outlines a community vision and principles which serve to maintain and enhance the unique “small town” character of the Community by establishing policies to ensure that new development is respectful of the heritage of the community and housing forms and densities which are consistent with the character of the area. The policies of the Secondary Plan provide a framework for directing more intensive development to the Community Core Area, Gateway Mixed Use Area, and the Western Approach Area, while ensuring compatibility with existing residential areas. **Figure 3.2** illustrates the land use plan for the Community of Stouffville.

**Figure 3.2 – Community of Stouffville Land Use and Transportation Plan (Schedule F)**



The Community of Stouffville represents the largest urban settlement area in the Town and the area where the majority of Town's growth will be accommodated. Accordingly, the Stouffville Secondary Plan has been amended a number of times to address a variety of issues reflective of the increasing level and complexity of new developments. These amendments have introduced:

- a Regional Retail Area designation;
- the Western Approach Area - Mixed Use Area designations and policies;
- an Urban Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential land use designation;
- policies to protect existing neighbourhoods;
- revisions to the Community Improvement Area boundaries;
- a Residential Intensification Strategy;
- the Phase 2 Lands and sustainable development policies;
- updated commercial policies (OPA 135);
- the Phase 3 Lands, residential intensification and Town wide employment policies (OPA 137) and an Urban Design Guidelines Addendum; and,
- the Gateway Mixed Use Area (OPA 145) and associated Urban Design Guidelines.

The policies of the Secondary Plan are further augmented by the Community of Stouffville Residential Intensification and Urban Design Guidelines, which provide more detailed urban design and built form guidelines for evaluating development proposals.

### ***3.3.2. Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake and Environs Secondary Plan***

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Council originally adopted the Ballantrae-Musselman Lake and Environs Secondary Plan in 1994 as a basis for the planning and development of the Ballantrae-Musselman Lake area. The Plan has been amended a number of times to address various development proposals within the community and updated to address compliance with Provincial legislation.

The entire Secondary Plan area is located in the Oak Ridges Moraine, and OPA 112 brought the Secondary Plan into conformity with the ORMCP. The Ballantrae-Musselman Lake and Environs Secondary Plan includes two small existing settlement areas - Ballantrae and Musselman Lake, which are recognized as a settlement area and a hamlet respectively in the ORMCP. It also includes a significant amount of adjoining rural/environmental lands. **Figure 3.3** illustrates the land use plan for Ballantrae-Musselman Lake.

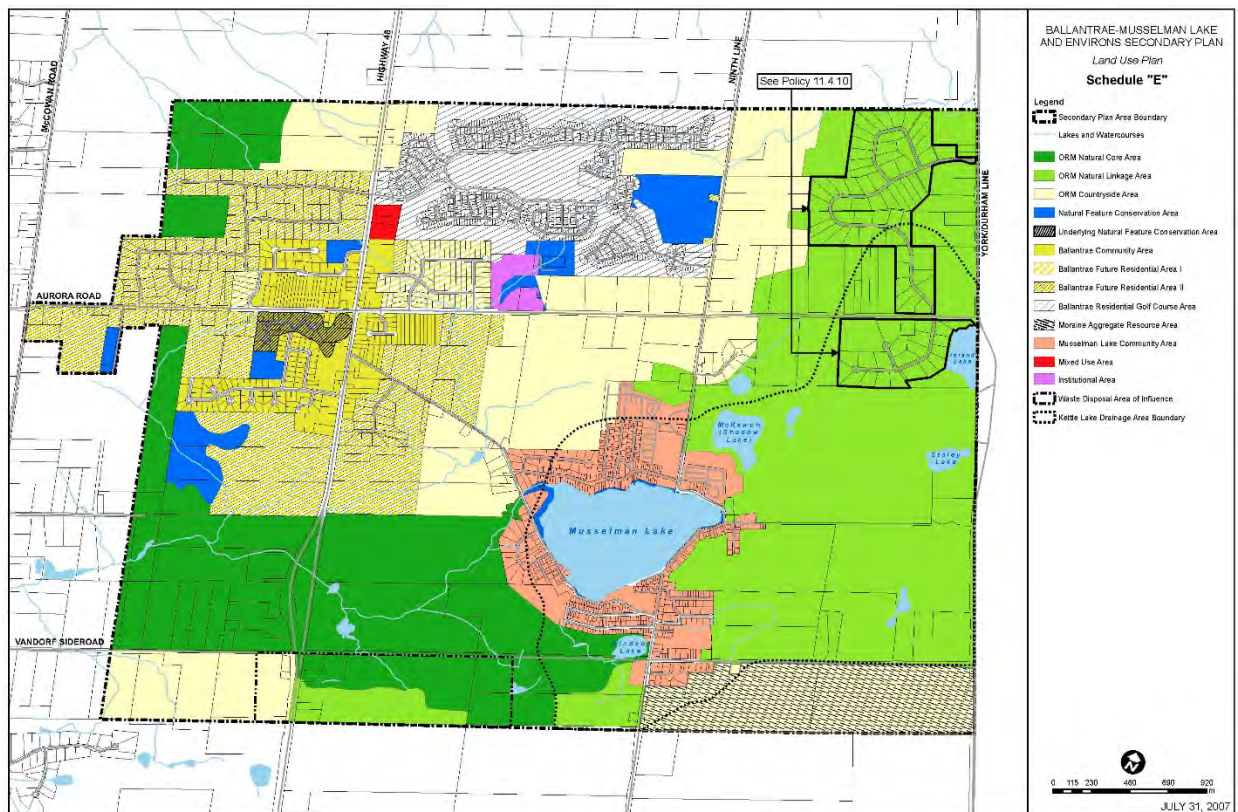
The Ballantrae-Musselman Lake area is serviced by a municipal water system, and the majority of the community is serviced by private sewage disposal systems. Lands in Ballantrae associated with the Ballantrae Golf and Country Club are serviced by a private sewage treatment facility.

In accordance with the ORMCP and the current Secondary Plan, growth is encouraged in Ballantrae. However, there are a number of issues which have restricted continued growth and development in the Ballantrae Community Area along the Highway 48 corridor. These include the lack of a Functional Servicing Plan and an Access Management Plan for land uses along the Highway 48 corridor. In addition, the existing policies and land use designations (Ballantrae Community Area and Ballantrae Future Residential Area) require revisions to establish a more progressive framework that will guide development/redevelopment opportunities, recognizing the opportunities afforded to this area because of the proximity of Highway 48 and a growing residential population. In addition, consideration needs to

be given to determining more accurate information with respect to natural heritage and hydrological features as a basis for creating a linked natural heritage system and related trails system.

OPA 136 was intended to address these matters, and was adopted by Town Council in 2014, and subsequently forwarded to the Region for approval. The OPA was appealed by a number of landowners, and is currently subject to litigation. The Region is currently in the process of completing a Water Environmental Assessment to assess future development capacity within Ballantrae-Musselman Lake. The existing Official Plan policies focus continued growth and development in the Ballantrae Community Area, along the Highway 48 Corridor in the Ballantrae Community Area designation and in the build-out of the lands in the Ballantrae Residential Golf Course Area and Ballantrae Future Residential Areas. The appropriateness of directing growth to the Ballantrae-Musselman Lake Community will need to be assessed through the OPR and in consideration of a long-term servicing solution.

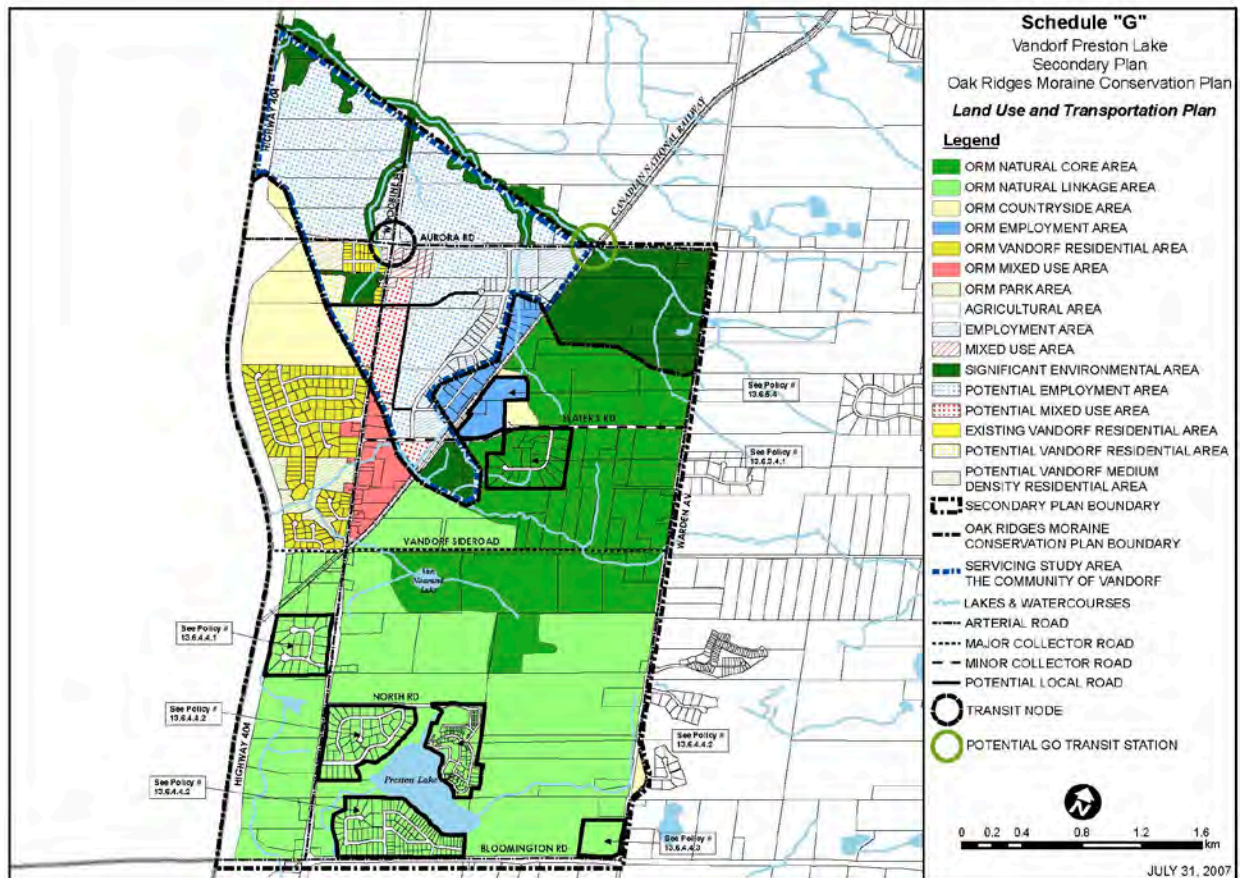
**Figure 3.3 – Ballantrae-Musselman’s Lake and Environs Secondary Plan - Land Use Plan (Schedule E)**



### 3.3.3. Vandorf-Preston Lake Secondary Plan

The Vandorf-Preston Lake Secondary Plan was enacted by two separate Official Plan Amendments, Amendment No. 113 Oak Ridges (Moraine Portion) and Amendment No. 120 Vandorf-Preston Lake (Non-Moraine Portion). The Secondary Plan is comprised of the Vandorf-Preston Lake Community existing residential areas, the Ram Forest Drive Industrial Area, existing commercial areas and significant environmental areas. The Secondary Plan provides for limited infill development opportunities within the Oak Ridges Moraine portion and Potential Employment, Potential Residential and Potential Mixed Use areas within the Non-Moraine portions of the Secondary Planning Area, which are located within the Greenbelt Plan. Future development within the Potential Employment, Potential Residential and Potential Mixed Use areas is contingent on a number of factors, particularly the completion of a Functional Servicing Study to identify a recommended servicing solution for the identified Servicing Study Area, which applies to the Non-Moraine portion. **Figure 3.4** illustrates the land use plan for Vandorf-Preston Lake.

**Figure 3.4 – Vandorf-Preston Lake Secondary Plan - Land Use and Transportation Plan (Schedule G)**

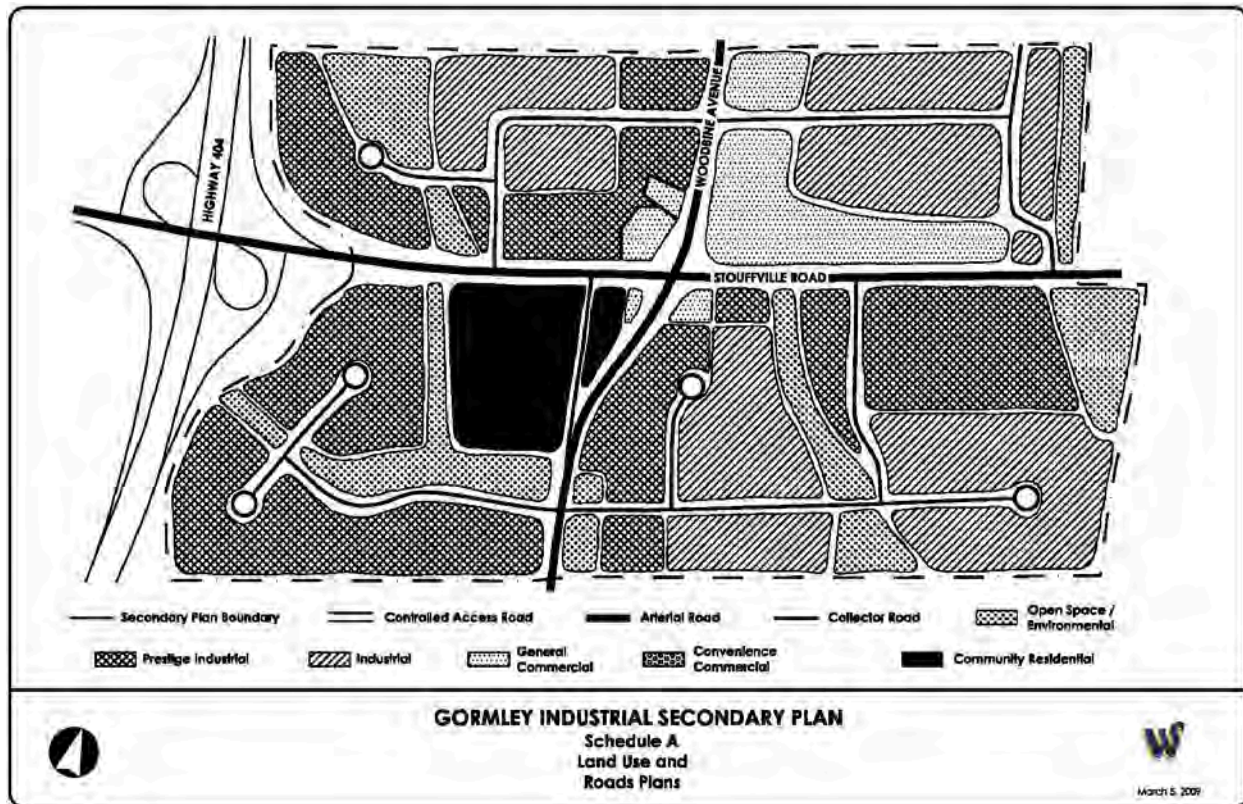


### 3.3.4. Gormley Industrial Area Secondary Plan

The Gormley Industrial Secondary Plan was approved by Town Council on December 8, 1992 and by the Ontario Municipal Board on June 26, 1995. The Gormley Industrial Secondary Plan establishes a land use strategy for the development of this predominately industrial area located on Stouffville Road, east of Highway 404. The Gormley Industrial area contains the largest supply of lands in the Town which are designated and available for employment development along the Highway 404 corridor. **Figure 3.5** illustrates the land use plan for the Gormley Industrial Area. There are currently no municipal services in the Gormley Industrial area, although non-potable water is available for emergency purposes.

The Gormley Industrial Secondary Plan has not been substantially updated since its adoption, with the exception of amendments undertaken as part of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conformity exercise (OPA 112). The Gormley Secondary Plan is fully contained within the ORMCP and accordingly its expansion is constrained by the policies of the ORMCP and the Growth Plan, which may only be considered through the Region's MCR.

**Figure 3.5 – Gormley Industrial Area Secondary Plan - Land Use and Roads Plan**

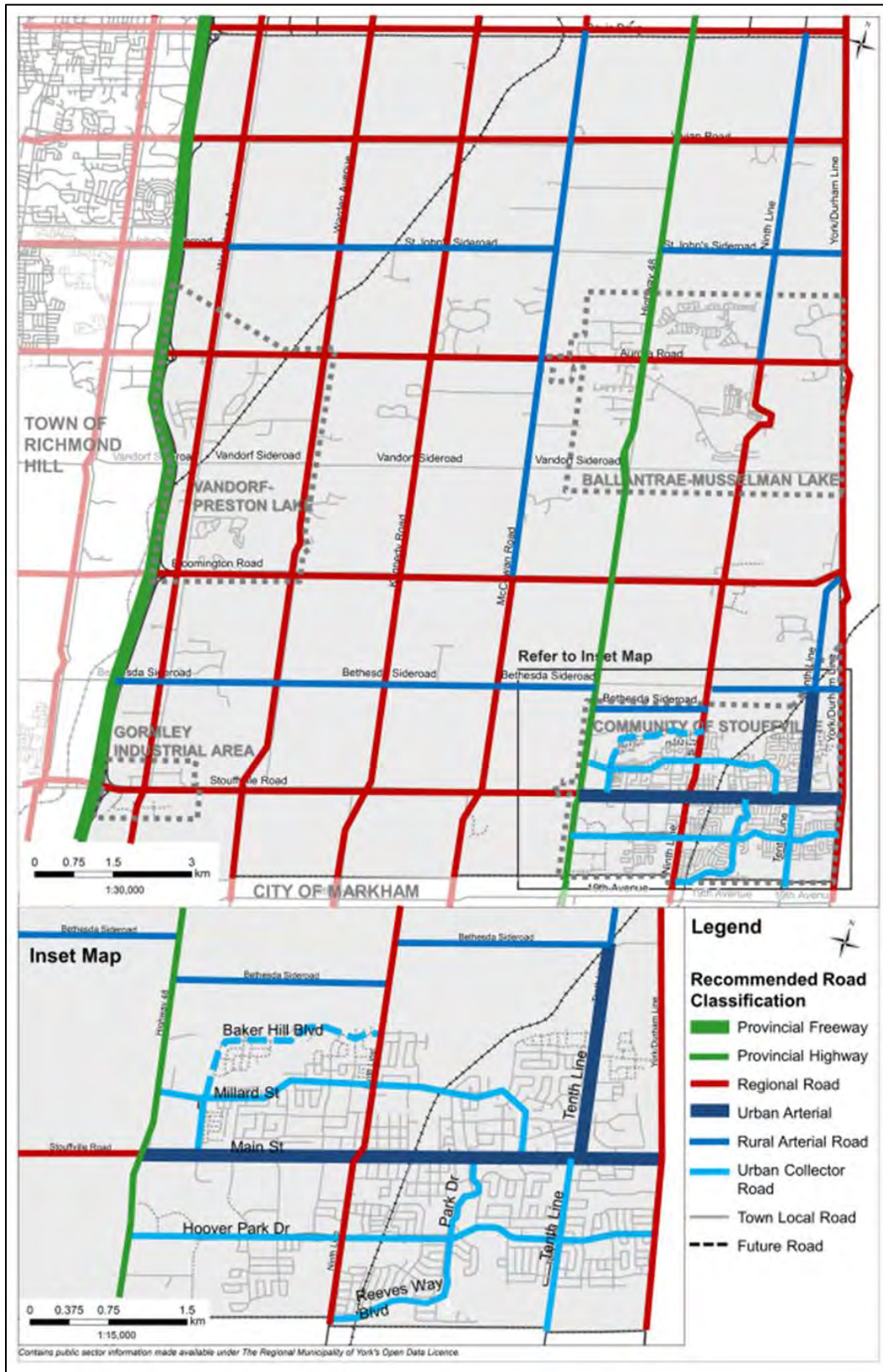




decisions on where best to implement roundabouts for both existing and future intersections.

- **Manage Travel Demand and Optimize the Network to encourage fewer, more efficient trips:**
  - Several measures that could be introduced, or existing measures that could be enhanced that will lead to improved travel demand management, such as more efficient land utilization through increased densities and a mix of land uses to support non-auto travel, walkability and cycling.
  - Given the existing capacity needs, the Town should engage York Region and the Ministry of Transportation to consider a carpool lot at Stouffville Road and Highway 404.
  - Amend the road classifications, planned function and design requirements of the Official Plan (Section 5, Table 1) to implement the recommendations of the TMP (**Figure 4.1**).
  - Continue discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and York Region about potential road jurisdiction transfers to better manage the road network.
  
- **Build a Multimodal Network to accommodate cycling and transit:**
  - Implement the cycling network plan as proposed in the TMP which is comprised of a Town-wide network of multi-use pathways in boulevard, paved shoulders, shared routes, off-road multi-use trails, and naturalized trails.
  - Advance discussions with the appropriate transit agency (YRT or GO/Metrolinx) to maintain Regional Transit connections via YRT, and expand Regional Express Rail (RER) for all-way 2-way GO Rail service to the Stouffville and Lincolnville GO stations.
  - Identify planned road improvements, including: the new connection between Lakeshore Road and Aurora Road within Ballantrae-Musselman Lake; and improvements to 10<sup>th</sup> Line and the 10<sup>th</sup> Line jog elimination at Main Street. Planned road improvements may be identified on a Schedule in the Official Plan.
  
- **Provide a Safe and Accessible Network:**
  - Support transportation policies to improve Town-wide accessibility, including the Town's 2013-2017 Accessibility Plan.
  - Various operational safety improvements, and road and sidewalk improvements.

Figure 4.1 – Recommended Road Classifications



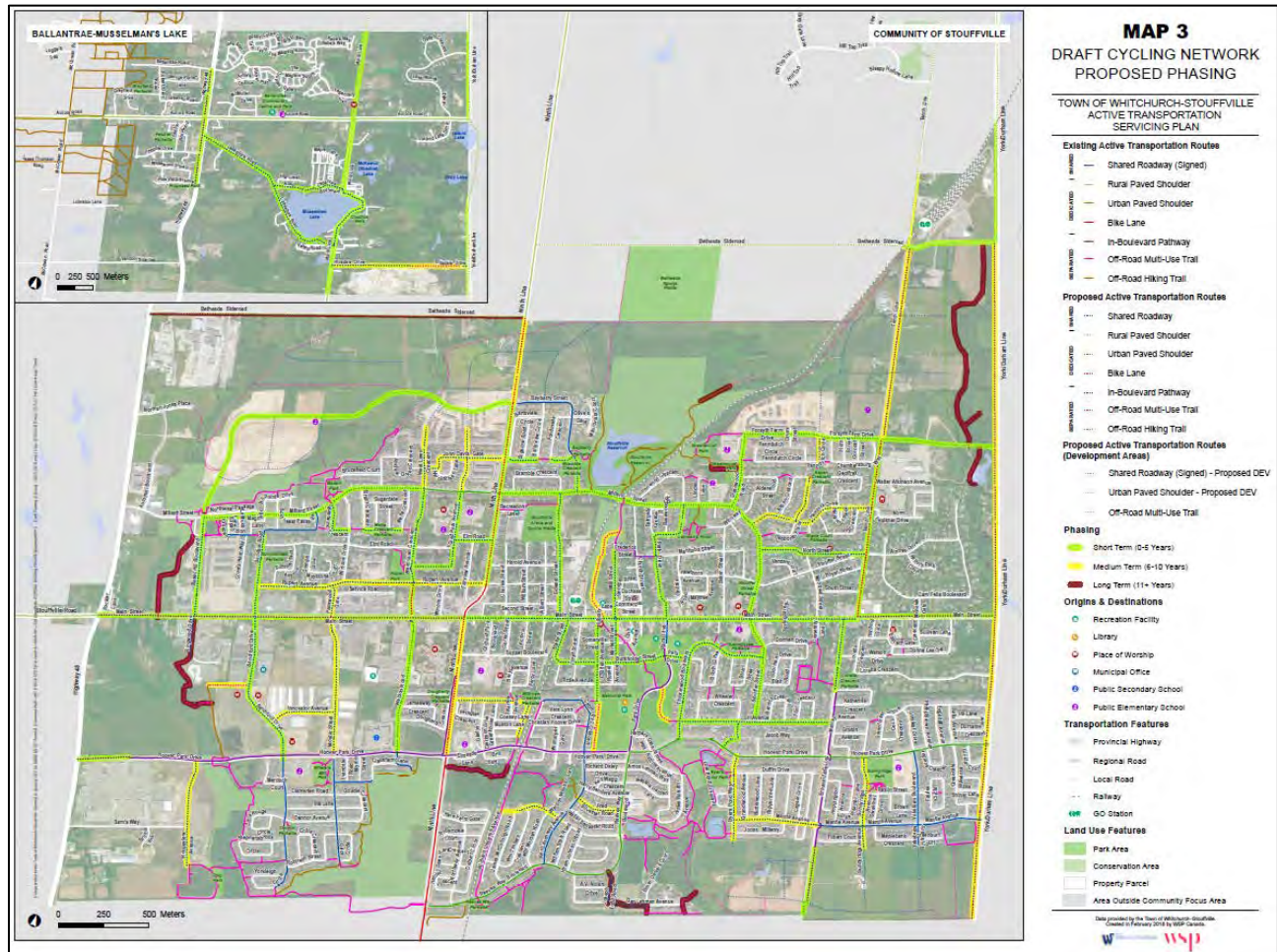
## 4.2. Active Transportation Servicing Plan

The Town's Active Transportation Servicing Plan (ATSP), February 2018, identifies infrastructure requirements for the development of an integrated pedestrian and cycling network in the communities of Stouffville, Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake. Through the guidance of the ATSP, the Town has a comprehensive multi-year strategy to develop and implement active transportation (walking and cycling) infrastructure and create a healthier, safer and more connected active transportation network.

The ATSP identifies a recommended Cycling and Walking Network by various facility types as well as a proposed phasing plan for implementation to develop a more comprehensive and accessible transportation network. The ATSP recommendations applicable to the Town's OPR include:

- The ATSP Cycling and Walking Network should be used as a guide for the future expansion of the active transportation network. There may be opportunities for additional or alternative connections based on new developments or partnerships. Consideration may be given to mapping the active transportation network in the Official Plan.
- The Town should adopt design guidelines for cycling, shared and pedestrian facilities based on the ATSP and provincial guidelines.
- The Town should develop a by-law to guide and support the development of bike lanes.
- The Town should look for opportunities when and where appropriate to design enhancements that would encourage walking and cycling and improve comfort and safety.
- When installing new or replacement sidewalks, the sidewalk must be designed to ensure pedestrian accessibility consistent with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act – Built Environment Standards*.

**Figure 4.2 – Cycling Network**



**4.3. Water and Wastewater Master Plan**

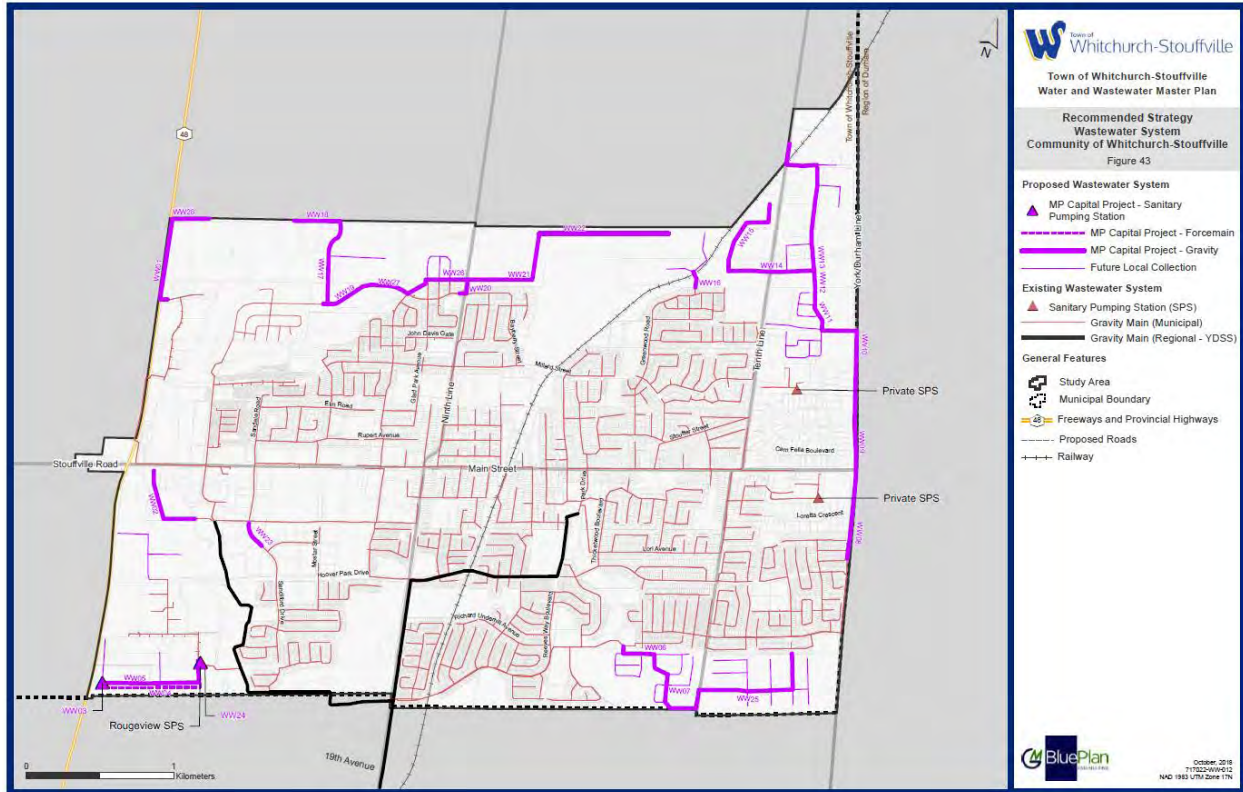
The Town’s Water and Wastewater Master Plan (WWWMP), November 2018, outlines the preferred water and wastewater servicing strategies for the Town to meet the servicing needs of existing and future growth to 2041. The Study Area for the WWWWMP Plan focuses on the existing municipal water and wastewater service areas within the Communities of Stouffville and Ballantrae-Muskelman’s Lake, but also provides comment on municipal water and sanitary servicing potential for the Town’s communities that currently do not have municipal servicing.

The WWWWMP identifies an overall servicing strategy and various water and wastewater improvements for the Community of Stouffville and Ballantrae and Muskelman's Lake. The WWWWMP seeks to align with the Town’s Intensification Strategy and ongoing improvements to support the continuation of upgrades to Stouffville Main Street, and includes a number of capital projects to achieve this. The Plan further recommends a joint study with the Region be undertaken to develop a water servicing strategy for servicing Highway 48 in Ballantrae.

The Region’s MCR will identify growth forecasts and allocations to the Town to 2041, in addition to establishing intensification targets in the Community of Stouffville and identified strategic growth areas.

The Town’s intensification analysis will further assist in directing intensification which will need to align with the recommended servicing strategies. As such, the Town’s WWWWMP may require updating to reflect the Town’s growth forecasts and intensification strategy to be developed through the OPR.

**Figure 4.3 – Recommended Wastewater Strategy**

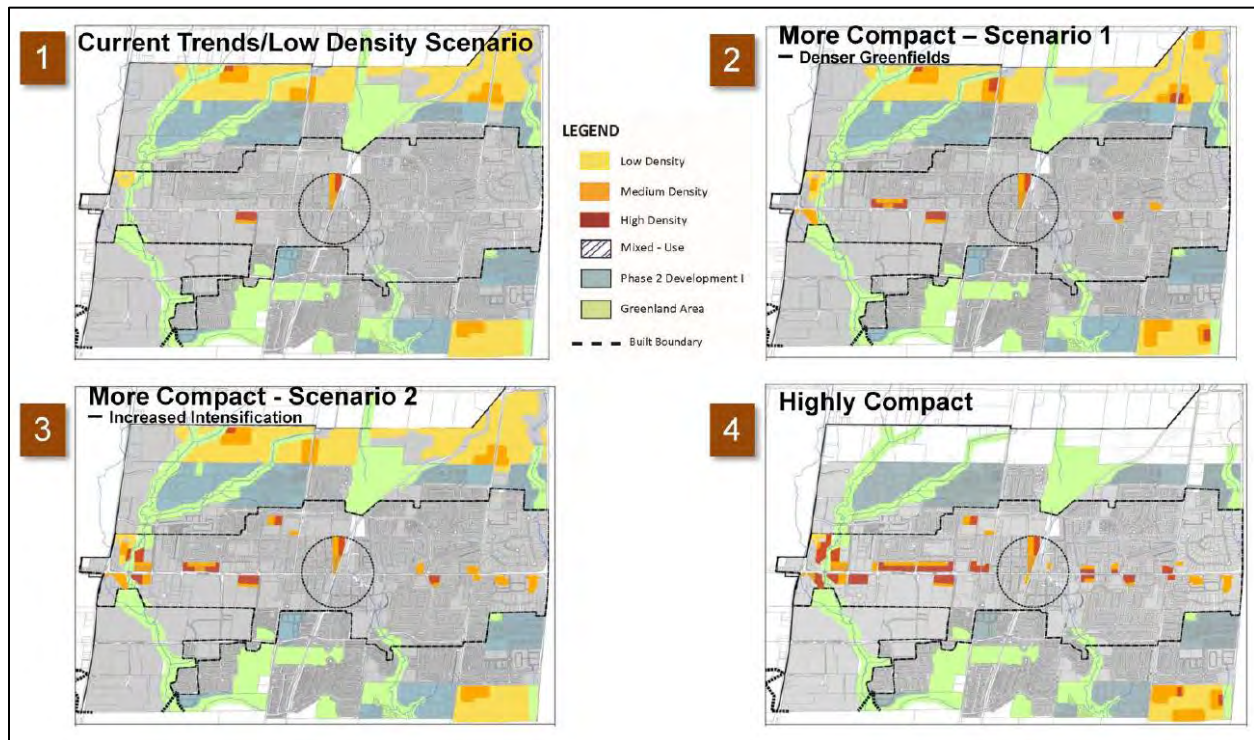


#### 4.4. Growth Management Strategy

The Town’s Growth Management Strategy (GMS) was undertaken in 2014, and involved a two-step process. Step 1 involved the preparation of a Growth Management Strategy/Land Inventory and Capacity Analysis for the Town. Step 2 proceeded once it was determined that there was a demonstrated need for additional residential and non-residential lands within the next 10 years to accommodate growth in the Community of Stouffville. Step 2 resulted in the preparation of an Official Plan Amendment (OPA 137) for the Phase 3 lands in the Community of Stouffville.

The majority of forecasted residential growth was anticipated to be accommodated within the Community of Stouffville. Four alternative Urban Growth Options were developed which provided a range of options on how the forecasted growth could be accommodated. The growth options considered varying assumptions regarding the future allocation, form and density of residential development within the Stouffville built-up area and remaining greenfield areas. The Preferred Growth Option proposed a moderate shift towards higher density housing with a greater share of residential intensification in comparison to existing trends. Under this scenario, all greenfield residential growth to 2031 is accommodated within the Phase 2 and Phase 3 lands without need for further urban expansion.

**Figure 4.4 – Assessment of Various Growth Options**



As part of the Town GMS, a review of the Town’s employment lands was also undertaken to create a long-term vision and plan for designating future employment lands within the Town, in keeping with provincial policy direction. Based on forecast employment land demand and identified supply, there is an insufficient supply of serviced vacant employment land to accommodate growth to 2031. By 2031, there is an identified deficit of 66 net hectares (163 net acres) of serviced employment land. To meet forecast demand over the planning horizon, the GMS identified the need to designate an additional 82 gross hectares (203 gross acres) of serviced employment land.

The GMS identified that the options for employment lands expansion in the Town are limited due to the Oak Ridges Moraine. A preliminary assessment in Step 1 of the GMS determined that it may be possible to designate and service additional employment lands in Vandorf-Preston Lake, subject to further servicing analysis.

As part of the Town’s OPR, opportunities for the designation of additional employment lands will need to be evaluated based on the forecasted employment growth and land needs to the 2041 planning horizon. It is a priority of Town Council to designate and service additional employment lands along the Highway 404 Corridor, particularly, through the potential employment area expansion of the Gormley Industrial Area.

**4.5. Development Charges Study Background Report**

The Town’s Development Charges Study Background Report was recently prepared in July 2018, which resulted in an updated Development Charges By-law in compliance with the *Development Charges Act*. The Development Charges Study informed the updated development charges with respect to

population, housing and non-residential development forecasts, capital works and service levels, and long term capital and operating costs for infrastructure to 2031.

The population and employment growth projections from the Town's Development Charge Study Update, were based on the Town's Growth Management Strategy, 2014, and updated to reflect recent development trends, which include:

#### *Residential Growth Forecast*

The Town's population is anticipated to reach approximately 58,770 persons by 2031 (excluding census undercount estimated to be 3.1%) or 60,600 persons to 2031 (including census undercount), which represents an increase of 10,750 persons from Mid 2018 (48,010 persons) (excluding census undercount), or 11,090 persons from Mid 2018 (49,510 persons) (including census undercount).

The 2018-2031 household growth forecast is comprised of a housing mix of approximately 49% low density (single detached and semi-detached), 28% medium density (multiples except apartments), and 24% high density (apartments) housing units. The Town is anticipated to average 420 housing units annually over the 2018-2031 period, equivalent to an additional 5,465 new housing units to 2031.

#### *Employment Growth Forecast*

The Town's 2016 employment base by place of work is comprised of the following key sectors:

- 275 primary (approx. 2%) (agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining and oil and gas extraction);
- 2,275 work at home employment (approx. 18%);
- 3,070 industrial (approx. 25%);
- 4,720 commercial/population-related (approx. 38%); and
- 2,090 institutional (approx. 17%).

The Town's employment is anticipated to reach approximately 16,435 jobs by 2031 (excluding work at home and no fixed place of work (NFPOW)), which represents an increase of 5,840 additional jobs from Mid 2018 (10,600 jobs). The Town's total employment is anticipated to reach approximately 23,000 jobs by 2031 (including NFPOW), which represents an increase of 7,625 additional jobs from Mid 2018 (15,375 jobs).

The Development Charges By-law is important in ensuring that the costs associated with growth are appropriately addressed when planning and servicing new growth and development in the Town.

#### **4.6. Economic Development Strategy 2015-2020**

The Town's Economic Development Strategy, 2015 to 2020, dated February 2016, outlines a strategy to create and support economic growth within the Town and work with the Town's regional partners and neighbouring municipalities to encourage future economic prosperity.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville’s Economic Vision is:

*“Building upon the Town’s regional and community partnerships, Whitchurch-Stouffville will be a premier investment location within the Greater Toronto Area. It will be a community where people and business can capitalize on both urban and rural economic opportunities, within an urban living and rural lifestyle environment.”*

The Economic Development Strategy identifies specific themes and actions to advance the Town’s economic development objectives. The Town’s Investment Readiness, Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction Actions speak to being prepared and ready to meet the needs of existing, expanding and new businesses or investors. Furthermore, The Town’s Economic Development Strategy serves to develop and implement sector investment attraction strategies for: knowledge-based industries; green industries/eco/rural; and tourism, arts culture and heritage.

The Town’s Official Plan is an important tool in advancing the Town’s economic development strategies by planning for an appropriate amount of employment lands, designating suitable areas to attract economic development, and identifying specific policies and actions to support economic development.

#### **4.7. Leisure and Community Services Master Plan Update**

The Leisure and Community Services Master Plan (LCSMP), July 2018, outlines directions for the planning and provision of the Town’s parks, recreation and cultural facilities and the evolution of services over the next ten years (to 2028). The LCSMP is intended to provide residents with equitable access to programs/events and facilities that enhance and promote healthy and active living. It assists in guiding the location and creation of new facilities, outlines strategies for the optimal use of existing facilities and the development of parks services, and the effective delivery of services.

Updates to the Town’s Official Plan to implement the LCSMP will address such matters as: the parkland classification system and design guidelines to support a range of active and passive park uses; parkland acquisition and dedication requirements, including policies to guide the consideration of cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication, and alternative dedication rates, and policies to support active and healthy communities and lifestyles.

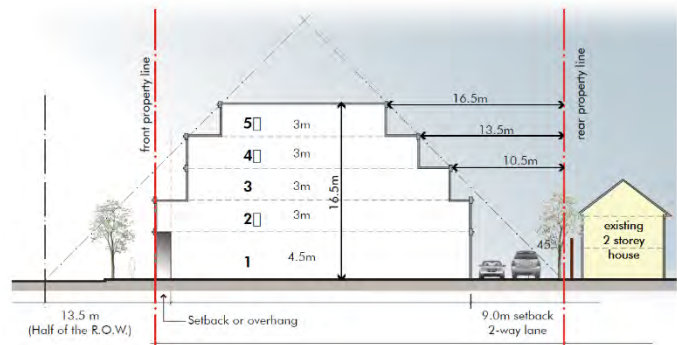


#### 4.8. Community of Stouffville Residential Intensification and Urban Design Guidelines

The Community of Stouffville Residential Intensification and Urban Design Guidelines (UDG's) were adopted in 2009, and subsequently updated in 2015 to provide supplementary urban design guidelines for the development of the Phase 3 lands in the Community of Stouffville. The Guidelines provide a tool for the assessment of applications for development and residential intensification. The UDG's also establish a framework for directing residential intensification in the Community to ensure land use compatibility and contribute to the overall character of the Town. Residential intensification is largely directed to the Main Street, including the Community Core Area, the Western Approach and Gateway Mixed Use Area, and Eastern Main Street.

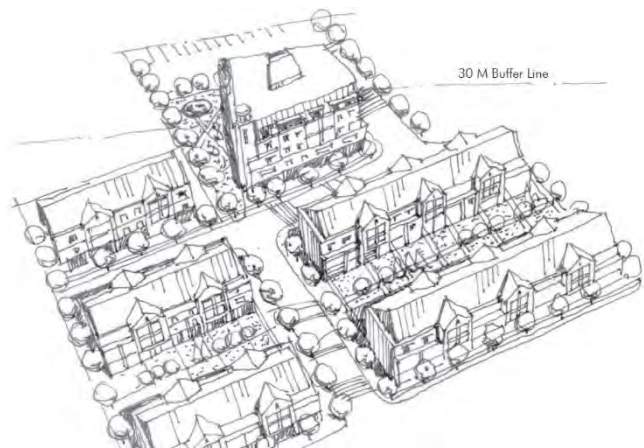
The UDG's establish objectives related to intensification which include:

- protect and extend the unique character of Stouffville;
- create compact, attractive main streets with an intensified and diverse mix of activities;
- obtain a high level of quality in architecture and urban design;
- strengthen active transportation networks for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and vehicles; and
- promote intensification that is context sensitive.



To implement these objectives, the Guidelines provide urban design and built form guidance related to:

- building orientation and layout;
- building height and massing;
- building setbacks and stepbacks;
- visual angular planes and shadow impact analysis;
- building façade articulation (entrances, projections, and window treatments, weather protection);
- building materials and details;
- specific guidelines for townhouse development;
- consideration for infill development adjacent to heritage properties; and
- vehicular movement, parking and access.



The UDG's are an important tool in providing more detailed urban design and built form guidance to assess development applications, and augment the urban design policies of the Town's Official Plan. Updates to the Official Plan policies and the Community of Stouffville UDG's will be undertaken concurrently with the Town's OPR, including a review of the Town's intensification strategy.

#### **4.9. Lincolnville GO Major Transit Station Area Land Use Study**

The Stouffville GO line which traverses through the Community of Stouffville includes two transit stations, the Downtown GO station and the Lincolnville GO station which is to be relocated further south within an area designated for more intensive residential development. Metrolinx has initiated its Regional Express Rail program that will include two-way, all-day GO rail services between Union Station and Unionville as well as improved peak-hour services between Union Station and the Lincolnville GO station by 2025. Furthermore, the entire Stouffville rail corridor is planned to be electrified, which will require improvements at the existing Lincolnville layover and GO station facility, and the planned relocation of the Lincolnville GO station, which Metrolinx initiated in 2017.

In early 2019, the Town initiated the Lincolnville GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Land Use Study. The Lincolnville GO MTSA is identified as a strategic growth area in the Town and will be the focus of more intensive, transit supportive development, in accordance with the Growth Plan. The Study will assist in defining a boundary for the MTSA and establishing minimum intensification targets which will be identified in the Region's updated Official Plan. The Lincolnville Study will assess various land use concepts for the MTSA to identify a preferred land use framework and urban design guidelines to direct future development in the MTSA. Furthermore, the Study will assess the re-allocation of growth originally assigned by OPA 137 (Phase 3 Lands) to the new GO Station Area and additional growth required to achieve the Study's recommended minimum density targets. It is anticipated that the Study will be completed by the end of 2019.

#### **4.10. Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Resources**

Comprehensive amendments were made to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, in 2005, which were intended to strengthen and improve heritage protection. Changes included new municipal and provincial powers to prevent demolition of designated heritage sites, enhanced protections for heritage conservation districts, improvements to the municipal designation process, and strengthened provisions for archaeological resources. The PPS and Growth Plan also provides policies for the conservation of significant built and cultural heritage resources and landscapes, and archaeological resources.

Municipalities are required to keep a Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. Municipal Registers include properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* as well as non-designated properties of value or interest. In the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, the existing Municipal Register (known as the Built Heritage Inventory (BHI)) contains eight (8) properties designated under Part IV of the Act and seven hundred and thirty (730) non-designated listed properties. Non-designated properties listed on the BHI, have been identified as having potential or recognized cultural heritage value or interest and are afforded temporary protection from demolition under Section 27(1.2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The Town recently undertook a review and update to the Town's cultural heritage planning process and procedures, as endorsed by Council on March 5, 2019. The improvements sought to streamline the process and recommend a number of new approaches in order to better manage cultural heritage resources in the Town. Council also endorsed a revised Terms of Reference for the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) and formalized processes for dealing with designation proposals/recommendations, demolition permits for properties listed on the Town's BHI, amendments to the BHI, Heritage Permits, and cultural heritage studies. Staff also recommended that further work be

conducted in order to better situate the municipality with respect to managing cultural heritage resources within land use planning and development processes in the Town.

The OPR will consider opportunities for strengthening the Town’s cultural heritage and archaeological resource policies with respect to protection and conservation of these resources, and ensuring that development is compatible with cultural heritage resources. Furthermore, Bill 108 includes numerous changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, which will need to be considered through the Town’s OPR.

## 5. Official Plan Review Process

The Town's OPR will be undertaken through a phased approach, concurrently with the Region's MCR, to bring it into conformity with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014, and applicable Provincial Plans. Community and stakeholder consultation and engagement will form an integral component of the Town's OPR to develop a community vision and guiding principles to inform future planning decisions for the Town.

### 5.1. Preliminary Growth Management Assessment

The Town will undertake a Preliminary Growth Management Assessment to assess the Town's population and employment growth forecasts and land needs to the year 2041, including intensification opportunities within strategic growth areas and an analysis of built heritage resources within the delineated built-up area of the Community of Stouffville.

The objectives of the Preliminary Growth Management Assessment are to:

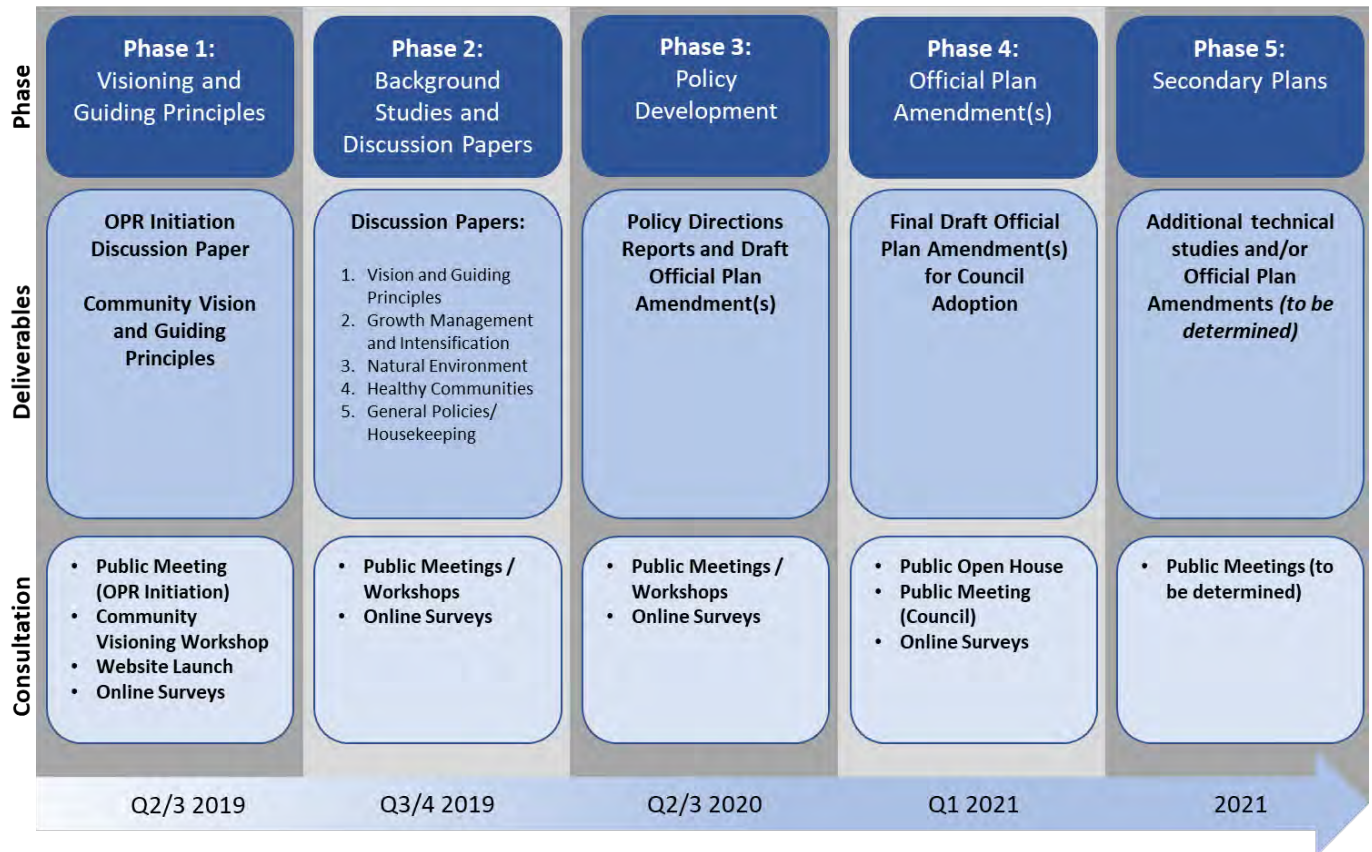
- Prepare preliminary population and employment growth forecasts to determine the Town's residential and employment land needs to the year 2041, including employment growth along the Highway 404 corridor;
- Assess possible areas of intensification and associated development capacity within the Town's delineated built boundary and strategic growth areas in the Community of Stouffville, and in consideration of cultural heritage resources which may require conservation;
- Coordinate with the Town's on-going Lincolnville GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Land Use Study regarding the re-allocation of growth originally assigned by OPA 137 to the new GO Station Area and additional growth required to achieve the Study's recommended minimum density targets; and
- Prepare recommendations for Council approval regarding the allocation of additional population and employment forecasts and land needs, employment area density targets, potential employment area conversions and areas of intensification.

The Preliminary Growth Management Assessment will assist in establishing a basis for the allocation of future growth to the Town to the year 2041 and inform the Region's MCR.

### 5.2. Comprehensive Official Plan Review

The overall OPR work program is anticipated to consist of five phases which are summarized below and will result in a comprehensive review and the preparation of a new Official Plan. **Figure 5.1** provides a preliminary overview of the Town's anticipated OPR work program. As required by the Growth Plan, the Town's Official Plan is to be updated to conform with the Region's Official Plan within one year of the approval of the Region's new Official Plan.

**Figure 5.1 – Town’s Official Plan Review Work Plan**



The OPR work program includes the following phases:

***Phase 1: Visioning and Consultation***

Phase 1 involves the preparation of the Introductory Discussion Paper and the Communications Plan, which establishes the policy context and consultation strategy for undertaking the OPR. Throughout the duration of the project there will be a number of consultation activities at key milestones with the community, stakeholders and First Nations, designed to raise awareness and engagement throughout the OPR.

The focus of Phase 1 is to consult with the community and stakeholders on developing a community vision and guiding principles that will inform the future planning directions for the Town, by establishing what the community values and how the Town is envisioned to evolve over the planning horizon. The Communications Plan outlines a variety of consultation and engagement approaches will be used to consult with the community and stakeholders to establish a cohesive and unified vision to direct the Town’s future.

***Phase 2: Background Studies and Discussion Papers***

Phase 2 involves the preparation of various background studies which will be used to inform the identification of preferred planning policy directions for the Town. These background studies will be informed by the existing studies and Master Plans that the Town has recently undertaken, in addition to

further technical work and analysis. A series of Discussions Papers will address the following key themes:

- 1. Vision and Guiding Principles** – based on the community visioning and consultations undertaken in Phase 1, this Report will serve to identify a community vision and guiding principles that will provide the basis for establishing the policy directions to achieve the vision.
- 2. Growth Management and Intensification Strategy** – the Strategy will provide policy directions related to the Town’s growth forecasts and allocations to the year 2041 and land need requirements, informed by the Town’s Preliminary Growth Management Assessment and the Region’s ongoing MCR work. The Report will outline the Town’s intensification strategy with respect to development within the delineated built-up area and strategic growth areas in the Community of Stouffville, including the Downtown GO and Lincolnville GO MTSA’s and other key intensification areas such as the Gateway Mixed Use Area, Western Approach and Highway 48 Corridor. The intensification component will be supported by updated policy directions with respect to urban design and the built environment and considerations related to the conservation of cultural heritage resources.

The Growth Management Strategy will provide policy directions related to the settlement hierarchy of the Town and areas to accommodate forecasted growth through a nodes and corridors framework. The Strategy will assess opportunities for employment growth, planning for employment lands (employment land employment and population related employment (commercial/retail and institutional uses)), the intensification of employment areas, and potential employment area conversions. An integral component of this Strategy will be policy directions related to the identification and designation of additional employment areas within the Town, with a focus on the Highway 404 Corridor.

The Growth Management Strategy will be supported by planning for the required infrastructure and public services and facilities to support growth, including transportation, active transportation, water and wastewater servicing and the provision of community facilities, and a fiscal analysis.

- 3. Natural Environment** – the Natural Environment component will address matters related to permitted uses within prime agricultural areas and rural areas, and the designation of prime agricultural areas as refined through the Region’s MCR. Planning policies related to conformity with the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, implementation of Source Protection Plans, and establishing the Region’s Greenlands system will be addressed. Other matters to be considered include: watershed planning, the protection of natural heritage features, hazard land policies, and the management of mineral aggregate resources.
- 4. Healthy Communities** – the Healthy Communities component will address issues related to the creation of complete and healthy communities through a housing strategy that supports a mix of housing types/tenures and densities, including affordable housing, rental housing, and seniors housing, and the accommodation of secondary units. The Report will address affordable housing targets and policies, in keeping with the Region’s Housing Strategy. Policy options

related to sustainability (i.e., community and building design, green infrastructure), cultural heritage and archaeological resources, economic development, urban design, and energy and climate change adaptation (i.e., strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions) will also be addressed.

5. **General Policies/Housekeeping Amendments** – this Discussion Paper will identify updated policy directions related to the implementation and interpretation of the Official Plan policies, which may address such matters as: a comprehensive set of definitions, pre-consultation requirements, community engagement, development approvals and supporting study requirements, in addition to general housekeeping amendments.

These Discussion Papers will form the basis for preparing the Policy Directions Reports and updated Official Plan policies in Phase 3.

### ***Phase 3: Policy Development***

Phase 3 involves the preparation of Policy Directions Reports and the development of new and updated Official Plan policies based on the background studies and Discussion Papers prepared and public input received in Phase 2, through consultation with the community and stakeholders, including Indigenous communities. It is anticipated that the OPR process will result in the preparation of an entirely new and comprehensive Official Plan. With the completion of the Region's MCR, Phase 3 will culminate in the preparation of Draft Official Plan Amendment(s).

### ***Phase 4: Official Plan Amendment(s)***

Phase 4 involves the statutory approvals process, under the *Planning Act*, for bringing forward the new Official Plan (Official Plan Amendment(s)) to Council for consideration for adoption, including a statutory Public Open House and Public Meeting. Once the new Official Plan has been adopted by Town Council, it will be forwarded to the Region of York for final approval. It is anticipated that the Town's Official Plan will be updated within one-year of approval of the Region's Official Plan update.

### ***Phase 5: Secondary Plans***

Phase 4 will culminate in a comprehensive update to the Town's Official Plan and Secondary Plans, to ensure conformity with the Region's Official Plan and the Growth Plan. However, Phase 5 may include additional work or detailed studies to assist in implementing or refining the policies of the Town's Secondary Plans.

## **5.3. Communications Plan**

A Communications plan has been developed to guide the OPR process. Community and stakeholder consultation will form an integral component throughout the Town's OPR work program, which will establish a community vision for managing future growth and change in the Town to the year 2041. An important component of this work will include community visioning workshops at the outset of the

project to identify the community values and principles that should guide planning decisions in the Town.

The goals of the Communications Plan are:

1. To achieve broad-based community support for the updated Official Plan.
2. To involve the community in the process.
3. To consult with landowners, business owners, service providers/community organizations, the First Nations, homebuilders/developers and residents of all ages.
4. To build awareness of the Official Plan and its role in guiding development and in enhancing Whitchurch-Stouffville as a great place to live, work and play.

As part of the Official Plan Review process, the Town will establish a Technical Advisory Committee and a Stakeholder Advisory Committee to consult with and receive input throughout the Official Plan Review. The Technical Advisory Committee will consist primarily of representatives from the Province, York Region, Conservation Authorities, transit agencies, and school boards. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will consist of various stakeholder groups with a vested interest in the Town, and may include: the Accessibility Committee, Heritage Committee, Downtown Stouffville Working Group, Environmental Stewardship Working Group, Chamber of Commerce, environmental and agricultural organizations, and various demographic and multicultural groups, among others. Furthermore, the Town will be consulting directly with Indigenous Communities.

## 6. Conclusion & Next Steps

The purpose of this Introductory Discussion Paper is to:

- introduce the Town’s OPR process and provide an overview of the current planning policy framework and context in which the review is being undertaken;
- summarize the current Provincial, Regional and local planning framework and identify preliminary issues that should be addressed in the Town’s new Official Plan;
- initiate dialogue with the community, stakeholders, and Council on the issues that should be considered through the OPR; and
- provide an overview of the Town’s work program and schedule to undertake the OPR.

The Provincial policy framework has significantly evolved since the last comprehensive review of the Town’s Official Plan, as such updates to the Town’s Official Plan are required to bring it into conformity with the Provincial Plans and the policy directions of the Region’s ongoing MCR. The OPR represents a significant, multi-year study for the Town, which will be closely coordinated with the Region’s MCR to provide input to the Region’s work and inform policy directions applicable to the Town. The Town’s Official Plan is required to be updated within one year of the approval of the Region’s Official Plan update. Furthermore, the Town’s OPR will reflect on the Town’s recent master plan studies as they relate to planning and the provision of municipal infrastructure and public services and facilities, and inform subsequent updates to the Master Plans.

The Official Plan Review process is a significant opportunity to engage the community and stakeholders to develop ideas to help shape the future of the Town. The Official Plan is a primary tool to assist in guiding land use decisions. The new Official Plan will seek to direct growth in a sustainable manner, promote a more complete and healthy community, and continue to protect and enhance our natural environment, agricultural and rural resources. The Official Plan will establish a unified community vision and policy directions for managing growth and development in the Town to the year 2041.