



Planning for the Natural Environment Discussion Paper Summary

As part of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan Review

The Town is undertaking an Official Plan Review (OPR) and has identified key issues to be addressed with the community under key theme areas: Planning for Growth, Planning for the Natural Environment, Planning for Complete Communities, Consultation and Visioning, and General Technical and Housekeeping items.

Natural Environment in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

The natural environment within the Town is encompassed by vast natural features and areas such as wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, lakes and water courses mainly located within the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Greenbelt. The Town also features important and productive farmland that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.

Importance of Natural Environment to the new Town Official Plan

The abundance of natural areas in the Town presents a unique opportunity to balance, and integrate, a high-quality natural environment as part of the projected growth in the Town. The protection and enhancement of the natural environment, and its economic, social and health benefits, is viewed as a significant priority for residents, businesses and community organizations alike.

Planning for the Natural Environment Considerations

The OPR will identify opportunities for the Town to plan for the protection and enhancement of its natural environmental features. Key policies to be explored include the following:

- Provincial and Regional Policy Direction – Ensure consistency and conformity with Provincial and Regional Legislation including the Greenbelt Plan, Source Protection Plans, etc.
- Environmental Sustainability – Implementation of sustainable design elements and ensuring the ongoing availability of natural resources essential to the sustainability of the Town.
- Climate Change and Air Quality – Ensure mitigation efforts against greenhouse gas emissions and provide for adaptation opportunities for a changing climate, as well as increasing resiliency.
- Agriculture and Economic Vitality – Support the continuation of all forms of agriculture and related uses as an important part of the Town's rural heritage and a major economic contributor.
- Preserving Water – Protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water through identifying water resource systems and maintaining linkages.
- Accessible Nature – Ensure growth is supported by natural and open spaces that are high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant.
- Promoting Health and Wellbeing – Promote strong, liveable and healthy communities that support and enhance human health and social wellbeing.
- Environmental Stewardship – Recognize that the protection and enhancement of the natural environment is a shared responsibility among a variety of community stakeholders.

Learn More and Get Involved

To learn more about the Town Official Plan Review visit us at: www.cometogetherws.ca/opr.

Comments and feedback on the Discussion Papers can be provided through the webpage or emailed to: opreview@townofws.ca.

