



Commercial Policy Review

Presentation to Whitchurch-Stouffville Council
May 18, 2022





PART 1:
Introduction



PART 2:
Growth Projections



PART 3:
Commercial
Supply and
Demand



PART 4:
Policy Review



PART 5:
Key Issues



INTRODUCTION

PART 1



INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- **urbanMetrics** and **The Planning Partnership** have prepared a *Commercial Policy Review* to evaluate commercial policies and designations and assess future market demand and opportunity in the Town.
- **Purpose** - to provide an understanding of the current and anticipated commercial market conditions in Whitchurch-Stouffville.
- Creates guiding direction, recommendations and policies to support growth to 2051, which will be incorporated into the Town's new Official Plan.



SCOPE OF WORK

PHASE 1

Market Analysis and Background Review

- *Commercial inventory and future space supply*
- *Market research*
- *Growth Projections*
- *Trade Area Analysis*
- *Retail Trends Analysis*
- *Commercial Needs Analysis*
- *Public surveys and workshops*
- *Supply-Demand Reconciliation*



Council Presentation

PHASE 2

Policy Review and Framework

- *Review of Current Policies*
- *Best Practices Review*
- *Development of Commercial Policy Principles*
- *Recommendations for New Policy Framework*
- *Public / Committee Meetings and Workshops*
- *Council Presentation*

PROJECT COMPLETION

DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN

WE ARE HERE



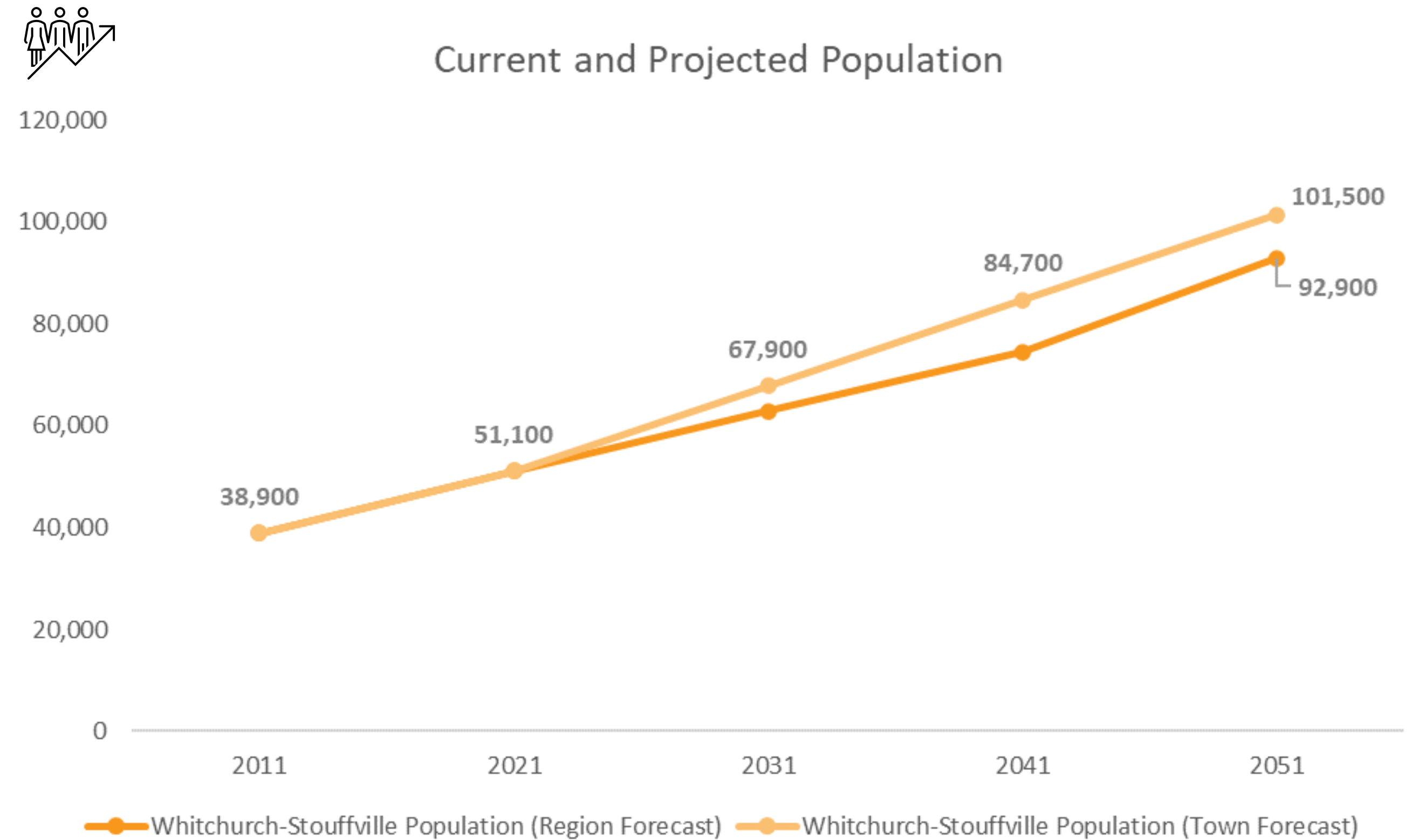
GROWTH PROJECTIONS

PART 2



POPULATION PROJECTIONS

- 2021 Population estimated to be **51,100**.
- WS projects higher growth than York Region.
- WS forecast used as the basis of commercial analysis.
- Planned 2051 population is **101,400**—almost double the current population.



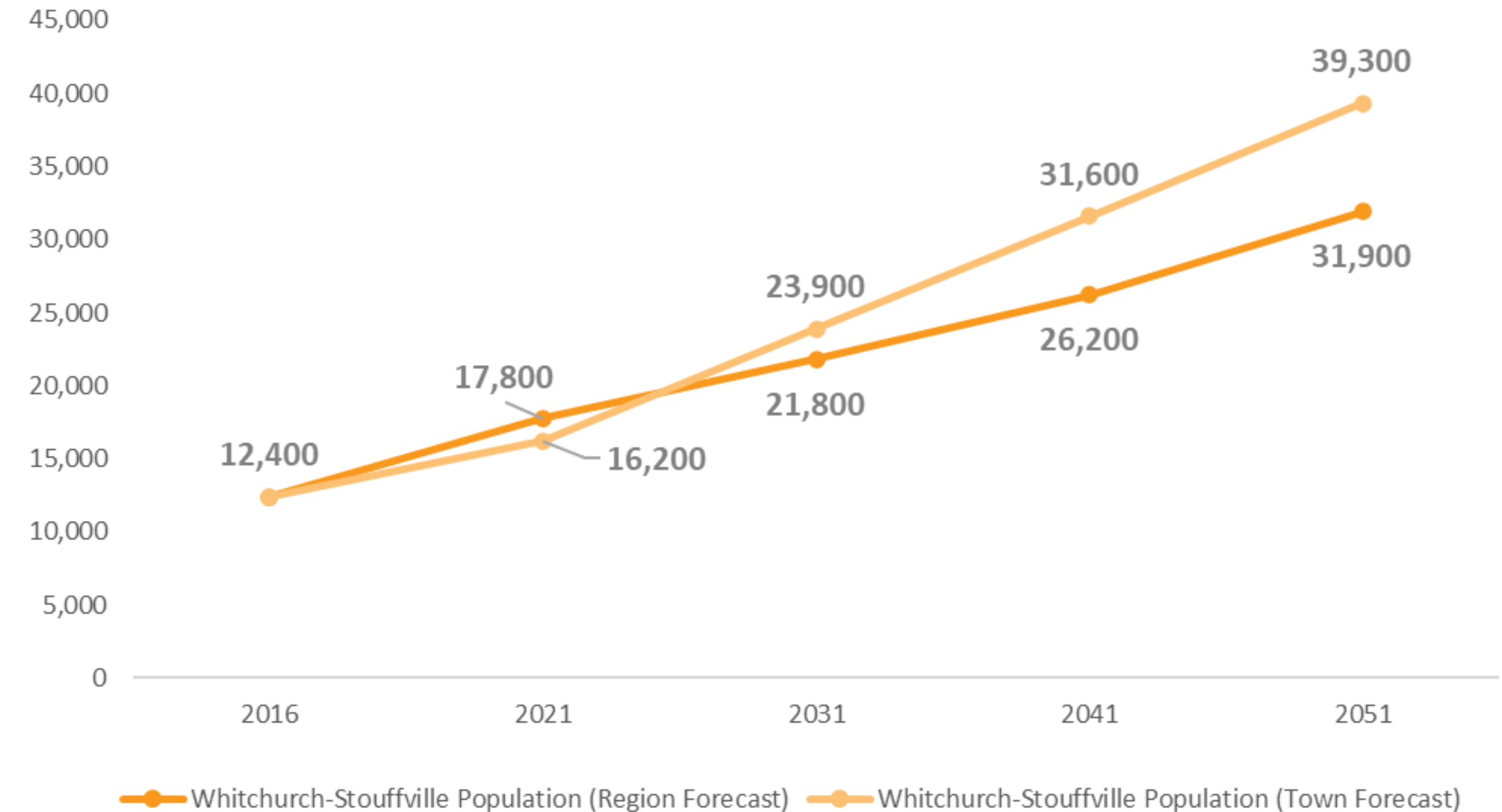
SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc., based on projections prepared by York Region and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

WS periods 2031 and 2041 estimated assuming straight-line growth.

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

- 2021 Employment estimated to be ~**17,000**.
- WS projects higher growth than York Region.
- Planned 2051 employment is **39,300**, almost triple the 2016 level.



SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc., based on projections prepared by York Region and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

WS periods 2021, 2031 and 2041 estimated assuming straight-line growth.

Figures may not sum due to rounding.



COMMERCIAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND

PART 3



FUTURE DEMAND FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE

- An analysis of future demand for commercial space has been undertaken, based on population / employment growth, commercial trends, and existing service level.

2021 - 2051 Demand	
Food Store Retail	337,800 sq. ft.
Non-Food Store Retail	1,162,200 sq. ft.
Restaurants and Fast Food	359,700 sq. ft.
Health and Personal Services	137,800 sq. ft.
Other Services	503,900 sq. ft.
Total Retail + Services Space Warranted	2,501,400 sq. ft.

urbanMetrics has estimated **demand** for **2,500,000** square feet of additional commercial space in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc.

Allocated Versus Unallocated Space

- Additional commercial space to support future need will need to be identified in a range of different formats and locations:

Distribution of Warranted Space

Location/Type of Space	Total Demand	Allocated	Unallocated
Local Serving	1,050,000	325,000	725,000
Regional	750,000	70,000	680,000
Gateway/Western Approach/Downtown	450,000	320,000	130,000
Employment Lands and Other	250,000	35,000	215,000
Total Space (Sq. Ft. GLA)	2,500,000	750,000	1,750,000

SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc.

RESIDUAL SPACE REQUIRED

- There is a **shortfall** of **1.7 – 1.8 million** square feet of designated commercial space in order to meet anticipated demand to 2051.
- Some of this need will be further met through mixed use intensification, commercial uses on industrial sites, development in rural areas and employment land conversions.
- There is a **need to identify and designate additional lands** to adequately support Whitchurch-Stouffville's needs into the future.



POLICY REVIEW

PART 4

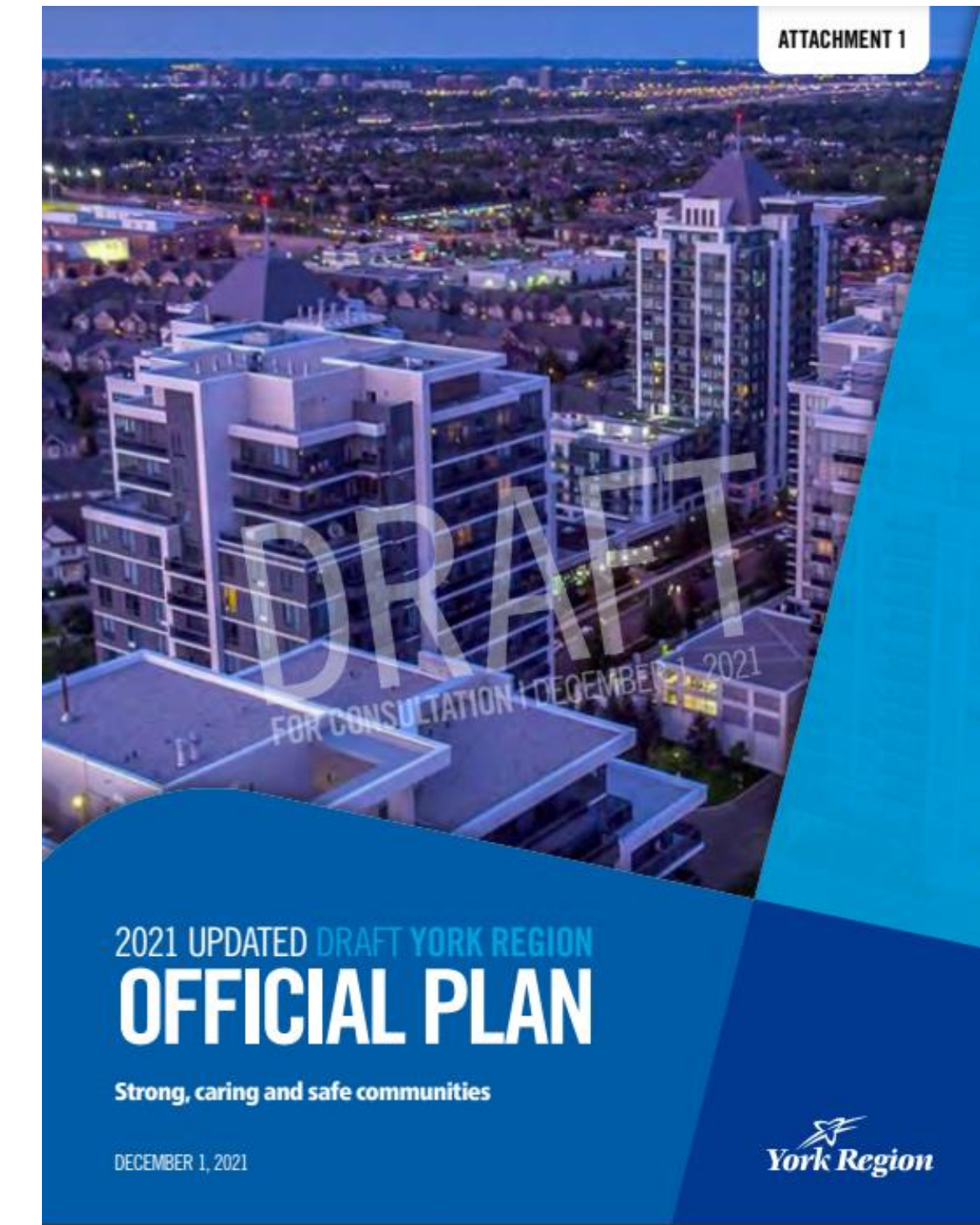


Outline

- **Review of Other Jurisdictions**
- **Policy Framework**
- **The Whitchurch-Stouffville Planning Policy Framework**
- **Key Issues**
- **Conclusions**

Policy Review

- Brantford Official Plan (2021)
- Markham Official Plan (2014)
- Richmond Hill Official Plan (2010)
- Vaughan Official Plan (2010)
- Innisfil Official Plan (2018)
- Bradford West Gwillimbury Official Plan (2000)
- The York Region Official Plan
- The 2021 Draft York Region Official Plan
- The Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan (Dec 2020 Consolidation)

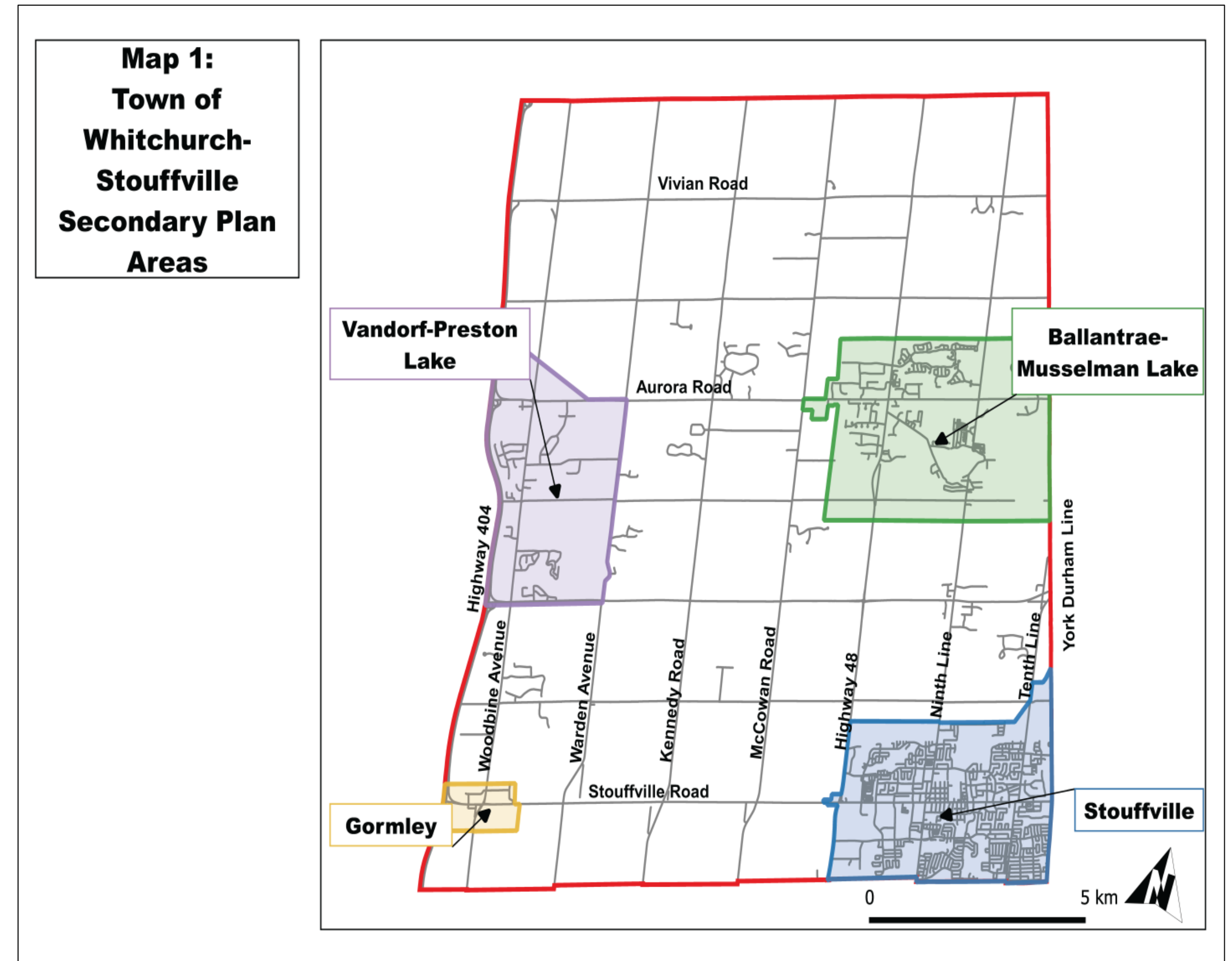


The W-S Planning Policy Framework

SECONDARY PLANS

Virtually all of urban W-S is subject to more detailed Secondary Plans that articulate permissions for an array of retail and service commercial opportunities.

- > Community of Stouffville Secondary Plan.
- > Gormley Secondary Plan.
- > Vandorf-Preston Lake Secondary Plan.
- > Ballantrae-Musselman Lake and Environs Secondary Plan.



THE COMMUNITY OF STOUFFVILLE SECONDARY PLAN

- Provides for **a range of commercial uses serving the needs of the region, local communities and promote mixed-use development.**
- Promotes the ongoing development/redevelopment of the **Core Area**, the **Western Approach** and the **Gateway Mixed-Use Area** as fully mixed-use districts.
- The Regional Retail Area (Hoover Park) is currently planned as the **primary retail centre** within the Town
 - Currently **does not permit** the introduction of **residential land uses**

GORMLEY SECONDARY PLAN

- Development is **substantially limited** due to a lack of municipal service infrastructure.
- **Allows limited opportunities for infill and new commercial development** that services Gormley employees and residents

VANDORF-PRESTON LAKE SECONDARY PLAN

- **Maintains the small-scale character** of its existing communities and protects the integrity of the ORM and supporting natural features,
- Policies **substantially limit retail and service commercial opportunities** to the local low-density residential community

The W-S Planning Policy Framework

BALLANTRAE-MUSSELMAN LAKE AND ENVIRONS SECONDARY PLAN

- Provides a strategy for the conservation and enhancement of existing natural features, while ensuring negative impacts from new development are minimized.
- Adopted OPA 136 (subject to appeal) establishes the **Highway 48 Commercial Mixed-Use Area** that provides permission for **limited convenience and service commercial uses**.
- There are a number of small and modestly scaled sites identified in the Plan.



KEY ISSUES

PART 5



KEY ISSUE 1 – LAND USE COMPETITION

- In the past, the Town has included some **"protections"** for the function of the Downtown in the form of imposing minimum floor space requirements.
- To recognize the anticipated evolution of the Downtown, Western Approach, the Gateway and in Hoover Park into mixed-use districts, **it is recommended that any "protections" for any form of retail or service commercial uses in the Downtown be removed.**
- **It is recommended that the Town only require the preparation of a retail impact analysis for new retail commercial uses that are in excess of 30,000 square metres of Gross Leasable Floor Area**, in accordance with the Region of York Official Plan.

Key Issues

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

- Whitchurch-Stouffville will grow substantially by 2051 and will generate the **need for substantially enhancing the retail and service commercial floor space throughout the Town.**
- Approximately 2.5 million square feet of space is warranted—equivalent to the space of 4-5 additional Hoover Parks
- A key question to be resolved through this study is **where will it all go?**



KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

The Role of the Community of Stouffville

The Community of Stouffville is, unquestionably, **the dominant growth centre** for the Town.

There are seven existing and/or planned primary retail and service commercial districts:

- > The Downtown – Community Core Area.
- > Western Approach Area Mixed-Use.
- > Gateway Mixed-Use Area.
- > Regional Retail Area (Hoover Park).
- > Lincolnville GO Station Area.
- > Activity Node Area.
- > Neighbourhood Retail Area.

Given the recent activity for significant development south of Stouffville Road and west of Highway 48, the **McCowan Corridor** (both on the east and west sides) is seen as a **longer term opportunity** for the accommodation of significant retail and service commercial and office uses.

Key Issues

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

Downtown Stouffville - Community Core Area

- The Downtown has **limited land supply** available to accommodate new development. **Expanding the boundaries** of the Downtown *could* alleviate pressure.
- Planning framework to consider where retail and service commercial uses are simply "**permitted**" within a mixed-use building, and where they should be "**required.**"

Commercial uses must be an at-grade requirement for all mixed-use development with frontage on Main Street. Stand-alone office or residential buildings should not be permitted for new developments with frontage on Main Street in the Downtown.



KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

The Western Approach

- Establishing the Western Approach as a mixed-use district **is appropriate**
- A comprehensive redevelopment strategy could be facilitated through a Secondary Plan/Block Plan process or update to the Main Street Urban Design Guidelines.

Allow for a multitude of complementary uses, including retail and service commercial, which are encouraged as part of new mixed-use development.

Direction for the establishment of an attractive pedestrian realm.

Any lost retail Gross Floor Area within the Western Approach be, at a minimum, replaced onsite, or on another site.

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

The Western Approach Area Mixed-Use

It is recommended that policy 12.7.18.3 be **revisited** to change the focus away from residential, with **stronger requirements for mixed-use**, with retail and service commercial uses as a priority along the Main Street frontage. It is recommended that the policy include:

- > **No permission** for stand-alone residential buildings abutting Main Street.
- > All buildings that front on to Main Street to be either **stand-alone retail**, service commercial and/or office buildings, or mixed-use buildings with **non-residential uses required at-grade**.
- > **Permit Live-work** units on lands that do not front onto Main Street.
- > **Residential uses to be limited** to apartment dwellings or live-work units. Prohibit all other forms of lower-density housing.

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

The Gateway Mixed Use Area

- Opportunity to deliver a range of retail and service commercial uses, and residential uses.
- **Require retail and service commercial uses at-grade** in mixed-use buildings to enhance the GFA potential for commercial uses.
- It is suggested that policy language be **stronger, more definitive**.

Commercial uses are permitted and "shall generally front" on to Main Street and Stouffville Road



ALL frontage on Main Street, Stouffville Road and Highway 48 SHALL have retail and service commercial uses at grade within the Mixed-Use Area designation

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

The Regional Retail Area (Hoover Park)

The Town has an important opportunity to expand the retail space through two abutting employment area conversions, as follows:

- SmartCentres- 11 hectares, in the southeast quadrant of Hoover Park Drive and Highway 48.
- Zhawd Corporation - 27 hectares, at the northeast corner of Hoover Park Drive and Highway 48.

Ensure that commercial functions can be **maintained** and **significantly expanded**. Future growth can be accommodated in mixed-use buildings where the **retail functions are at-grade**.

New proposals should have **a minimum of 37 square meters** of non-residential floor space per dwelling unit. Retail and service commercial uses, as well as office uses would be **permitted in stand-alone buildings**. Stand-alone residential buildings **should not be permitted**.

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

The McCowan Corridor Lands (South of Stouffville Road)

- Opportunity that includes **significant land areas** where **retail and service commercial land uses can be accommodated in the future**, in proximity to significant growth areas within the Town to the east.
- A significant portion of the lands fronting onto McCowan Road **should be identified as mixed-use high-rise**, where retail and service commercial land use development **must also be required**.



KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

Old Elm (Formerly Lincolnville) GO Station Area

- The proposed planning regime includes an area that is conceptually identified as a **"Required Retail Frontage Area"**.
- It is suggested, however, that the **"Required Retail Frontage Area"** approach could be improved by being much **more geographically specific** and could also be **further expanded** to include all of the frontage along 10th Line within the High-Density Mixed-Use designation.

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

Activity Node Areas

The Activity Node Area designation recognizes focal points where clusters of community uses are located. Convenience retail and service commercial uses are permitted alongside residential, institutional, office and park uses.

No changes to this policy framework are recommended.

Neighbourhood Retail Area

The Neighbourhood Retail Area designation permits a host of retail and service commercial development opportunities which can, depending upon the ultimate redevelopment plan, accommodate some of the retail and service commercial needs of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

No changes to this policy framework are recommended.

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

The Role of Other Communities

- Lands outside of Stouffville are **not expected to contribute** to the Town's overall demand for retail and service commercial GFA in any significant way.
- The role of retail and service commercial uses in those areas is to **support local populations and businesses**.
- There are lands in **South Gormley** that may have some potential to accommodate new retail and service commercial facilities,
 - These lands are within the Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside designation and would require Regional and Provincial Approvals.

KEY ISSUE 2 – SPACE TO GROW

Other Opportunities

Area	Policy Direction
Activity Node Designations	No policy change recommended
Neighbourhood Retail Areas	No policy change recommended
Residential Areas	Consider opportunities for smaller scale uses Establish performance criteria
Business Park / Industrial Areas	Consider opportunities for strategic conversions through Land Needs Assessment strategy on surplus lands



CONCLUSIONS

1. Overall, the Official Plan for Whitchurch-Stouffville is **relatively up-to-date** and appropriately **promotes** the concepts of mixed-use development within **a structure of higher density centres and corridors**.

The Plan does need to be reviewed to ensure that policy objectives are better reflected in the wording of some key policies. Generally a **strengthening** of the wording away from a **permissive** approach to a more **definitive approach - require** rather than **permit**, for example – is recommended.

2. In terms of the idea of regulating the scale, the location and the type of retail and service commercial uses that are desirable is **not overly regulated** within W-S, which is a **positive attribute** of the current planning policy regime.

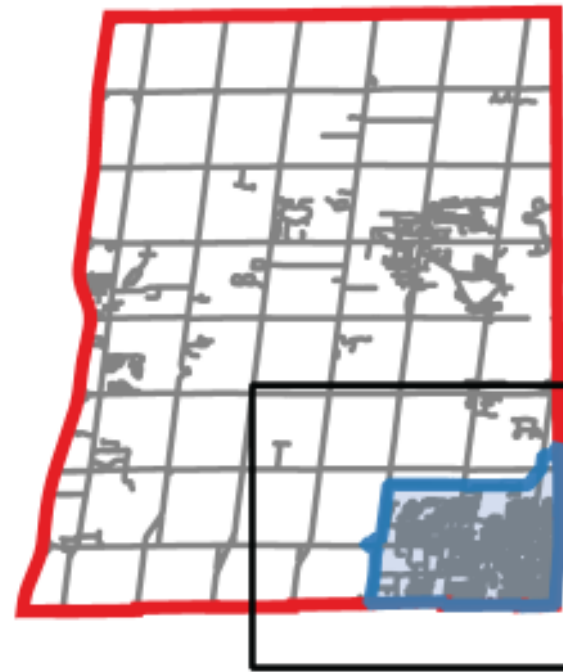
The **overall strategy** for the delivery of retail and service commercial facilities is considered **appropriate**.

3. Potential for conversion of **Employment Areas** in the Town to retail / service commercial is **currently unknown**.

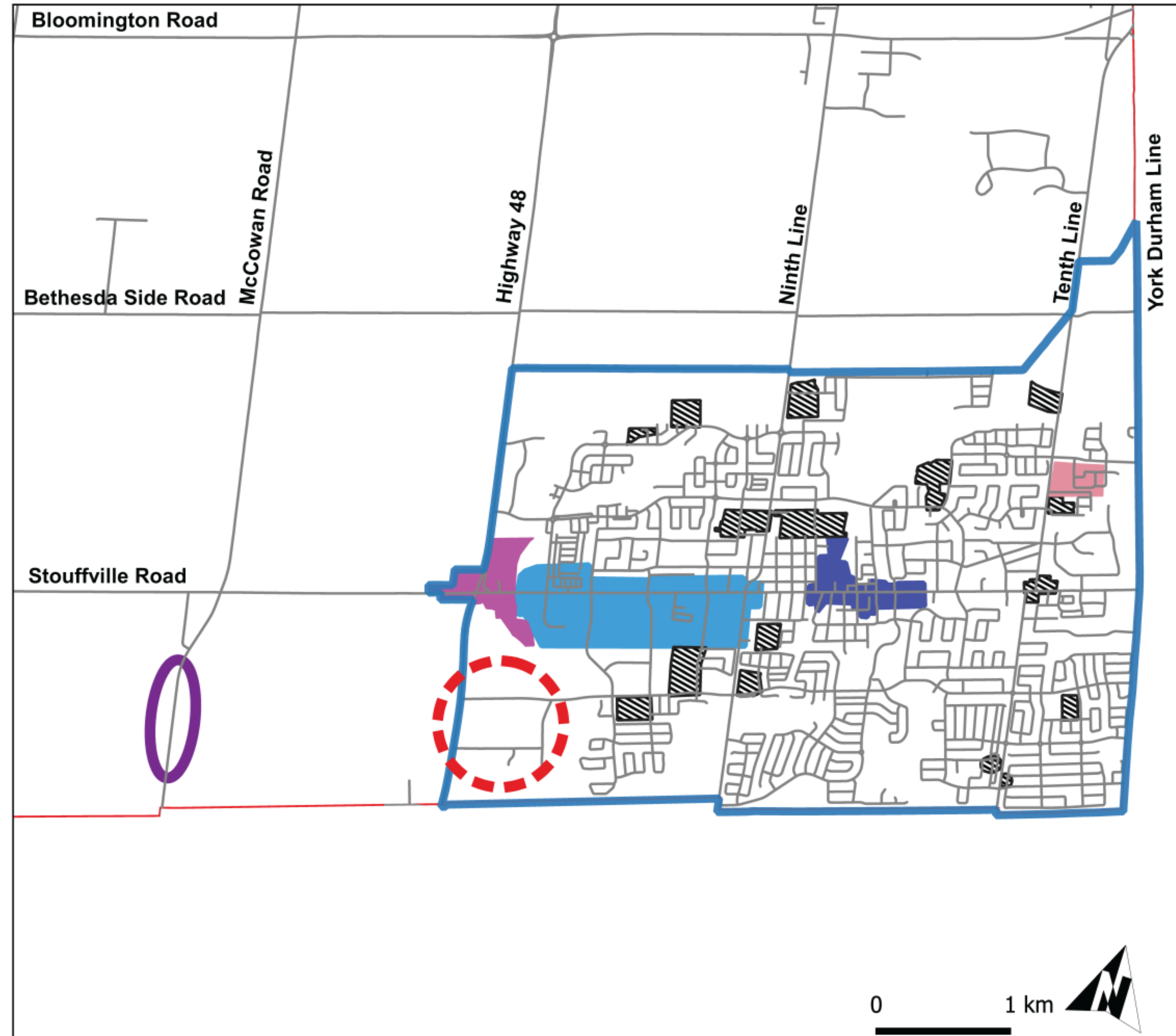
4. It is a **positive attribute** to be able to identify **multiple opportunities** within the Town - at different scales, with different levels of opportunity. Quite simply, the Town can rely upon **multiple choices, in multiple locations** to accommodate various forms and scales of retail and service commercial development to serve a growing community:

Significant Retail Opportunity	Modest Retail Opportunity	Limited Retail Opportunity
McCowan Corridor Lands	Gateway Mixed-Use Area	Downtown Stouffville
	Regional Retail Area (Hoover Park)	Western Approach
	Old Elm (Lincolnville) GO	Neighbourhood Retail Areas
		Residential Areas
		Other Secondary Plan Areas

Map 2: Community of Stouffville Secondary Plan Land Use



-  Community of Stouffville
Secondary Plan Area
-  Roads
- Land Use**
-  Activity Node Area
 -  Gateway Mixed Use Area
 -  Neighbourhood Retail Area
 -  Community Core Area
 -  Western Approach Area
 -  Regional Retail Area
(Hoover Park)
 -  McCowan Corridor



CONNECT WITH US

Commercial Policy Review

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Credit: Matthew Henry / Burst



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