



## Corporation of the Township of Brock

### Staff Report to the Members of Council

**From:** Robin Prentice, MCIP, RPP

**Position:** Director of Development Services

**Title / Subject:** Regional Official Plan Amendment Application (ROPA-2022-005), 23801 Thorah Park Boulevard – Recommendation Report

**Date of Report:** June 11, 2025

**Date of Meeting:** June 23, 2025

**Report No:** 2025-DS-005

#### 1.0 Issue / Origin

In September 2022, an application for an Official Plan Amendment to the Regional Official Plan was received by the Region of Durham from Fotenn Consultants Inc. (the Agent) on behalf of 264887 Ontario Inc. (the Owner). The application is requesting to permit a resort development on the subject property in the Hamlet of Port Bolster. The application was deemed complete by the Region on October 28, 2022.

As of January 1, 2025, the upper-tier planning responsibilities have been removed from the Region of Durham. As a result, the Envision Durham Official Plan became the Township's Official Plan and the Township of Brock is now the approval authority for this Regional Official Plan Amendment applications. The Region is a commenting agency only.

The purpose of this report is to review and provide recommendations regarding the Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA-2022-005) application.

#### 2.0 Background

##### 2.1 Proposal

The subject property is located at 23801 Thorah Park Boulevard in the Hamlet of Port Bolster (see location map below). The site is described as Part of Lot 1, Concession 14 in the Township of Brock. The Township of Georgina is across from the Thorah Park Boulevard on the south side. The entire property is approximately 3.6 ha (8.9 acres) in size with 401.84 metres of frontage on Thorah Park Boulevard on two sides of the property.

The purpose of the proposed application is to facilitate a resort development. The current concept plan is proposing a 46-unit resort with a restaurant and commercial uses that will be serviced by private services. The proposed development includes a water parcel to facilitate a private water supply from Lake Simcoe for the resort development. The proposed concept plan is attached to this report as Attachment 1.

The purpose of the proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment is to introduce a site-specific exception to permit a resort development on the subject property. The proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment is attached to this report as Attachment 2.

## 2.2 Location and Context



<b>Location:</b>	23801 Thorah Park Boulevard (Port Bolster) Part of Lot 1, Concession 14
<b>Envision Durham Official Plan:</b>	Hamlet
<b>Township Official Plan:</b>	Hamlet
<b>Zoning:</b>	Community Facility (CF)
<b>Present Use:</b>	Vacant/accessory structures and environmental
<b>Adjacent Uses:</b>	Residential, Lake Simcoe, Port Bolster soccer park, environmental, CN railway
<b>Lot Area:</b>	±3.63 ha (±8.98 acres)

### 2.3 Reports and Plans Submitted

The following plans and report were submitted with the application:

- Topographic Survey prepared by IBW Surveyors.
- Planning Justification Report prepared by Fotenn Consultants;
- Stage 1 – 2 Archaeological Assessment prepared by AMICK Consultants Limited.
- Cleanup and Remediation of Petroleum Impact prepared by Comco Canada Ltd.;
- Natural Heritage Evaluation prepared by Beacon Environmental;
- Arborist Report prepared by Beacon Environmental;
- Transportation Impact Study prepared by LEA Consulting Ltd.;
- Functional Design Review prepared by LEA Consulting Ltd.;
- Preliminary Hydrogeological Assessment prepared by Wilson Associates;
- Preliminary Analysis of Dewatering Requirements by Wilson Associates;
- Transportation Noise & Vibration Assessment prepared by Gradient Wind;
- Functional Servicing & Stormwater Management Report prepared by Urban Watershed Group Ltd.;
- Preliminary Engineering Drawings prepared by Urban Watershed Group Ltd.;
- Flood Hazard Assessment prepared by Urban Watershed Group Ltd.;
- Geotechnical Investigation prepared by Soil Engineers Ltd.;
- Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment Reports prepared by Comco Canda Ltd.; and
- Preliminary Sewage System Design prepared by Gunnell Engineering Ltd.

## 3.0 Planning Policy Analysis

### 3.1 Provincial Policy Statement (2020)/Provincial Planning Statement (2024)/Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

On October 20, 2024, the new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 came into effect, replacing both the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. However, the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and Growth Plan continue to apply where specified in the Greenbelt Plan. Development must be consistent with the PPS and conform with the Growth Plan.

The relevant policies of the PPS and the Growth Plan direct development to settlement areas, including hamlets, with consideration to rural characteristics, the scale of the development and the provision of appropriate services. The PPS also provides direction for healthy, liveable and safe communities by avoiding development and land use patterns that may cause environmental or public health and safety concerns.

The proposed development is within the Hamlet of Port Bolster and reflects the directions outlined in the PPS as more specifically established in the Envision Durham Official Plan and the Township Official Plan.

The proposed development represents use of vacant land within the hamlet area. Ample buffers are proposed to mitigate potential impacts from the proposed development on the nearby environmental features.

Municipal services are not available at this location to service the subject lands. Private water and wastewater services are proposed to accommodate the proposed development and will require provincial approval. The Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report submitted confirms that there is sufficient water supply to support the proposed resort in a sustainable manner, without negative impact on surrounding water users and the natural environment.

The proposed development will introduce a range of new economic opportunities that will serve the needs of nearby residents and promote synergies with nearby businesses and farms. The proposal includes a mix of accommodation, restaurant, and commercial spaces which will contribute positively towards a range of economic activities in the area. While resort accommodations will be primarily geared towards tourism, many of the on-site amenities will be open to the public, including local residents.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the PPS and conforms with the Growth Plan.

### **3.2 Greenbelt Plan (2017)**

The Greenbelt Plan identifies where urbanization should occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and the ecological features and functions that occur in the rural landscape. While providing permanent agricultural and environmental protection, the Greenbelt also contains important natural resources and supports a wide range of recreational and tourism uses, areas and opportunities together with a vibrant and evolving agricultural and rural economy.

The subject lands are located within the Hamlet of Port Bolster, which is identified as a "Hamlet" in the Greenbelt Plan. Hamlets within the Greenbelt Protected Countryside are subject to the policies of the Growth Plan, the Envision Durham Official Plan and the Township of Brock's Official Plan. Limited growth is permitted subject to appropriate water and sewage services. Private water and wastewater services are proposed to accommodate the proposed development and will require provincial approval.

One of the goals of the Greenbelt Plan is to enable continued opportunities for sustainable tourism development.

The proposed amendment conforms to the Greenbelt Plan.

### **3.3 Lake Simcoe Protection Plan**

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (LSPP) is a comprehensive plan designed to protect and restore the ecological health of Lake Simcoe and its watershed. It applies to the Lake Simcoe watershed which includes the subject lands.

As the subject property is located within a settlement area, the following natural heritage policies are applicable “An application for development or site alteration shall, where applicable:

- a. increase or improve fish habitat in streams, lakes and wetlands, and any adjacent riparian areas;
- b. include landscaping and habitat restoration that increase the ability of native plants and animals to use valleylands or riparian areas as wildlife habitat and movement corridors;
- c. seek to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts associated with the quality and quantity of urban run-off into receiving streams, lakes and wetlands; and
- d. establish or increase the extent and width of a vegetation protection zone adjacent to Lake Simcoe to a minimum of 30 metres where feasible.”

Within settlement areas, such as hamlets, the LSPP defers to the PPS with respect to natural heritage protection and buffers. As per the findings outlined in the Natural Heritage Evaluation, the proposed development is not anticipated to have significant impacts on the natural environment and ample buffers are proposed to mitigate potential impacts from the proposed development on the nearby environmental features.

A Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report has been submitted, which demonstrates the proposed development will maintain hydrological functions and will minimize direction alterations to groundwater flows. The proposal includes various low-impact development (LID) elements.

In accordance with the LSPP, a minimum 100 metre setback is proposed between the septic system and any watercourses or waterbodies to ensure the health of the surrounding environment is maintained.

It should be noted that the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) reviewed the application and indicated that they have no objection to the approval of the proposed amendment. Any outstanding comments can be addressed through the subsequent applications and detailed design stage.

The proposed amendment conforms to the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.

### **3.4 Envision Durham Official Plan**

The Envision Durham Official Plan was approved by the Province on September 3, 2024. As of January 1, 2025, the upper-tier planning responsibilities have been removed from the Region of Durham. As a result, the Envision Durham Official Plan was deemed an official plan of the Township of Brock and remains in force and effect until revoked or amended by the Township.

The subject property is located within the Hamlet of Port Bolster and designated “Hamlet” in the Envision Durham Official Plan. Hamlets are the focus of modest growth and development in the rural system.

The Envision Durham Official Plan supports the continued growth of the rural economy, including tourism and recreational uses.

On-site sewage and water services can be used where municipal sewage and water services or communal sewage and water services are not available, planned or feasible, and provided that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no negative impacts. Private water and wastewater services are proposed to accommodate the proposed development as there are no municipal or communal services available or planned for this area.

The proposed resort will primarily be intended for use of tourists and visitors to the Hamlet of Port Bolster. As such, it does not directly serve the immediate need of the surrounding area. Based on the foregoing, an amendment to the Region of Durham Official Plan is required to permit the proposed resort.

While resort accommodations will be primarily geared towards tourism, many of the on-site amenities will be open to the public, including local residents. The public will have access to both the proposed commercial space and restaurant, which will feature local foods and products delivered through potential future partnerships with local area businesses, farms, and organizations.

It is staff’s opinion that the proposed amendment to the Envision Durham Official Plan is appropriate. The subject lands are well-situated to accommodate the proposed development and generally meet the overall intent of the Plan. Although the proposed development consists of a tourism-oriented business, there will be opportunities to provide services and establish local business partnerships which will help to meet the needs of residents of the Hamlet and surrounding area.

The proposed amendment will have the effect of permitting the proposed resort development on the subject lands, municipally known as 23801 Thorah Park Boulevard, notwithstanding any other provision of the Regional Official Plan to the contrary. Should the proposed amendment be approved, it is anticipated that various conditions may be implemented as deemed necessary which must be cleared to the satisfaction of the relevant approval authorities prior to any construction activities.

At a minimum, applications for a local Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, and Site Plan Control would be required to the satisfaction of the Township of Brock.

The recommended amendment can be found in Attachment 2.

### **3.5 Township of Brock Official Plan**

The subject lands are designated “Hamlet” on Map 6-D of the Township’s Official Plan.

Section 5.9 of the Official Plan provides the policies for the Hamlets designation. The general framework, established in the Objectives for the Hamlets designation, is for Hamlets to be a focus of limited development outside of the Urban Areas.

“Development in Hamlets is to be compatible with the surrounding land uses and may consist of a variety of uses including residential uses; community facilities; employment uses and commercial uses that meet the immediate needs of the residents of the hamlets and the surrounding rural area.” (Section 5.9.2.2)

The proposed development is intended to be designed in a manner that is compatible with the character of the Port Bolster Hamlet.

One of the objectives of the Township’s Official Plan is to support and enhance tourism in a manner that is compatible with the rural and scenic character of the Township. Brock Township’s natural setting on Lake Simcoe is an important asset enhancing the quality of community life and supporting economic and tourism development.

One of the strategic directions of the Official Plan is to develop the Lake Simcoe waterfront to support tourism development and improve recreational and cultural opportunities.

Section 3.2.3 of the Official Plan outlines policies geared towards promoting tourism.

“Development, in a location that is not serviced with municipal water and sewage facilities, will require an amendment to the Official Plan and will be subject to zoning and site plan control. For sites that will be developed on private wells and septic systems, an assessment of water and wastewater needs and demonstration of ability to provide these services will be required.” (Section 3.2.3.6)

The subject lands are accessible from Thorah Park Boulevard, a local two-lane rural road. The findings of the Traffic Impact Study demonstrate that the proposed development will have an acceptable impact on the surrounding road network.

Should the Regional Official Plan Amendment be approved by Council, an application for an Official Plan Amendment to the Township’s Official Plan would be required to facilitate the development, which is proposed on private services.

### **3.6 Township of Brock Zoning By-law 287-78-PL**

The subject lands are currently zoned “Community Facility (CF)” in the Township’s Zoning By-law 287-78-PL (as amended), which permits a range of community uses, such as an arena, assembly hall, community centre, institution, school and recreation centre, among other uses.

Should the Regional Official Plan Amendment be approved by Council, a Zoning By-law Amendment application would be required to permit and facilitate the development.

## 4.0 Agency Circulation Comments

The application was circulated to the required agencies by the Region in accordance with the Planning Act. Through this process a detailed review of the technical background studies was carried out by the Region of Durham, as well as the Township and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA), among other agencies. The following provides a summary of agency comments and other draft plan conditions.

### **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

- No comments.

### **Region of Durham:**

- Regional interests have been addressed and the Region has no concerns with application.
- The Region undertook a peer review of the Natural Heritage Evaluation and all matters related to natural heritage have been addressed.
- **Health Department**
  - The proposed sewage system will require approval from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) as the daily sewage flow exceeds 10,000 litres/day.
- **Works and Transportation**
  - No objection to the proposed amendment.
  - The proposed development is located outside of an urban area boundary. Therefore, municipal services are not available to service the subject property. The applicant shall utilize private water and sewage systems to service the proposed development.
  - Support the Transportation Demand Management measures being recommended, and these measures should be included as conditions of site plan approval.
  - The Region of Durham's municipal waste collection program does not service commercial uses. Therefore, the applicant shall utilize private waste collection services.
  - The proposed development is subject to commercial development charges that are due prior to the issuance of a building permit.
  - Additional comments will be provided upon a site plan application submission.

- **Durham Region Transit.**
- **Source Water Protection**
- No comments. Site is within DRT's rural on-demand service area.
- Due to the site's proximity to Lake Simcoe and location within a highly vulnerable aquifer a couple things that could be encouraged: salt management and the reduction of impervious surfaces. This means encouraging the site be designed to reduce impervious surfaces and ponding and that runoff be directed outside of the vulnerable area, where possible.
- Risk Management Official had no comments.

**Lake Simcoe Region  
Conservation Authority  
(LSRCA)**

- No objection to approval of the regional official plan amendment. The application demonstrates consistency with Section 3.1 (Natural Hazards) of the PPS.
- Any outstanding technical comments pertaining to stormwater management and hydrogeology can be addressed as part of the subsequent applications and detailed design.

**York Region (YR)**

- No comments.
- A water lot associated with the proposed development is located in YR. Currently a pump house is on site which will be upgraded with new pipes under Thorah Park Blvd.
- The site is within the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe (SGBLS) Source Protection Region.
- The site is within a highly vulnerable aquifer (HVA). Should the proposed development include bulk fuel ( $\geq 2500L$ ) (i.e. back up fuel generator, etc.) or bulk chemicals ( $\geq 500L$ ) within the HVA, a Contaminant Management Plan (CMP) will be required prior to application approval, for Water Resources review and approval. If a CMP is not required, a letter prepared by a qualified professional will be required in its place stating that the above noted activities will not be occurring.

<b>Town of Georgina</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requested Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan, which was submitted by the applicant. No trees on the Town of Georgina land are anticipated to be impacted.</li> </ul>
<b>CN Railway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Noise Report and response letter are satisfactory for CN.</li> <li>• The owner entered into a CN development agreement with CN in April 2025.</li> </ul>
<b>Township of Brock Engineering Consultant (AECOM)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No objection to approval of the regional official plan amendment. Any outstanding technical comments can be addressed as part of the subsequent applications and detailed design. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The developer has indicated a pump house easement on the Conceptual Site Plan. A legal plan and easement agreement will be required at the detailed design stage to ensure that maintenance and liability concerns of the Township are met.</li> <li>• During detailed design a construction monitoring plan will be required to identify any potential mitigation requirements during construction.</li> <li>• Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment reports were submitted to identify the testing, monitoring and clean up activities completed on site to address the previous contamination issues. The site has been remediated and results from the sampling obtained from the excavation and monitoring wells meet the MECP table 2 SCS level.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Enbridge Gas Inc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No objection.</li> </ul>
<b>Durham District School Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments. As this is a resort development, no students are anticipated to be generated.</li> </ul>
<b>Conseil scolaire Viamonde</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments.</li> </ul>
<b>Canada Post (CP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No comments.</li> </ul>

## **5.0 Financial / Budget Assessment**

The required application fees have been received by the Township. Additional fees would be required to process the subsequent applications that would be needed to facilitate this development.

### **5.1 Asset Management**

N/A

## **6.0 Climate Change Impacts**

The proposed amendment will focus development within an existing hamlet area. Environmental features on site have been identified through a Natural Heritage Evaluation, along with corresponding buffers to protect the features from future development.

## **7.0 Communications**

A statutory public meeting was held by the Region on January 10, 2023 in accordance with the Planning Act. Notice for the statutory public meeting was provided by the Region in accordance with the Planning Act.

A copy of the minutes from the statutory public meeting can be found in Attachment 3 and a summary of all public comments and responses can be found in Attachment 4.

Additional public consultation will be required to take place as part of the application process for a local official plan amendment and zoning by-law amendment, which are required to facilitate the resort development.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

Provincial, Regional and Township planning policy documents direct modest development to settlement areas such as the Hamlet of Port Bolster and support tourism in a manner that is compatible with the rural and scenic character of the Township.

At the same time, Provincial, Regional and Township planning policy make it clear that planning decisions must balance all the Province's, Region's and Township's competing objectives. Careful consideration must be given to the proposed resort development while minimizing social, economic and environmental impacts including the protection of ecological and hydrological features and functions and the conservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources. The protection of ecological and hydrological features and functions is particularly important given the location of the subject lands in the Lake Simcoe Watershed.

Staff recommend approval of the proposed amendment found in Attachment 2, to permit a resort development on the subject lands at 23801 Thorah Park Blvd in the Envision Durham Official Plan. Additional applications and approvals will still be required to work through the site-specific details of the proposed development on this site.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

Be it resolved that report 2025-DS-005 regarding Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA-2022-005) Application, 23801 Thorah Park Boulevard, Part of Lot 1, Concession 14, Township of Brock – Recommendation Report, be received;

That the application to amend the Envision Durham Official Plan (ROPA-2022-005) to permit a resort development be approved; and

That Amendment No. B1 to the Envision Durham Official Plan (appended to this report as Attachment 2) be adopted by Council.

### **Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – Proposed Concept Plan

Attachment 2 – Proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment

Attachment 3 – Public Meeting Minutes (January 10, 2023)

Attachment 4 – Summary of Public Comments and Responses