



Corporation of the Township of Brock

Staff Report to the Mayor and Members of Council

From: Robin Prentice, MCIP, RPP

Position: Director of Development Services

Title / Subject: Envision Durham – Draft Regional Official Plan

Date of Report: April 3, 2023

Date of Meeting: April 11, 2023

Report No: 2023-DS-008

1.0 Issue / Origin

In February 2023 as part of the Envision Durham process, Durham Region released the draft new [Regional Official Plan](#) which is the culmination of work completed through Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of Durham's existing Regional Official Plan. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the draft Regional Official Plan and highlight key proposed changes as they pertain to the Township of Brock.

2.0 Background

In May 2018, Durham Region initiated Envision Durham, representing a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) of the Region's Official Plan, where it is intended that the existing plan is to be revoked and replaced with a new Regional Official Plan (ROP).

The Planning Act requires the Region to undertake an MCR as part of a Provincial Plan conformity exercise to review and amend the ROP to ensure that it:

- conforms with Provincial Plans or does not conflict with them;
- has regard to matters of Provincial interest; and
- is consistent with Provincial Policy Statements.

The Envision Durham MCR process has been the subject of numerous opportunities for public input and engagement. Regional staff, with the assistance of consultants, prepared and consulted on a series of discussion papers, proposed policy directions reports, technical studies, and draft mapping at various intervals throughout the exercise.

A list of Regional reports and decisions related to the Envision Durham MCR is available on the Region's project web page within the [document library](#).

3.0 Analysis

Overview of Draft Regional Official Plan (ROP)

The draft new ROP provides a blueprint for supporting a long-term regional vision to 2051. The draft new ROP provides policies and strategic directions to guide future growth, infrastructure and service delivery, land use planning, and development related matters.

By 2051, Durham Region is forecast to grow to 1.3 million people and 460,000 jobs. This represents an increase of approximately 577,000 residents and 218,400 jobs between 2021 and 2051. The Township of Brock is forecast to grow to 20,900 people and 7,400 jobs by 2051.

The draft ROP is organized based on the following chapters:

1. Regional Structure
2. A Prosperous Region;
3. Healthy Communities;
4. Supportive Infrastructure & Services;
5. Vibrant Urban System;
6. Thriving Rural System;
7. Protected Greenlands System; and
8. Connected Transportation System
9. Site Specific Policies
10. Policy Exceptions
11. Implementing the Plan
12. Interpreting the Plan

Regional Structure

The region's land use structure is comprised of four systems: Urban System, Rural System, Greenlands System, and Transportation System.

South Durham has more compact built form, while more modest densities predominate in north Durham (including the Township), reflective in the historic downtowns that support the surrounding traditional rural character. The Urban System accommodates the majority of the region's existing population and employment and is where most of the future growth is directed.

Outside of the Urban System is the Rural System. This is where Prime Agricultural Areas, Rural Settlements, Shoreline Residential, and Hamlets are located. While, agriculture is the dominant land use, the Rural System also houses a small rural population, aggregate extraction, cemeteries, businesses, recreation uses and major open space and natural heritage areas.

The Urban and Rural Systems are intertwined with the Greenlands System. Lands within the Greenlands System are generally meant to be preserved for their ecological and environmental benefits, while providing opportunities for recreational activities where appropriate. The Greenlands System encompasses waterfronts, and key natural heritage and key hydrological features. A large portion of the Greenlands System is also designated as part of the Provincial Natural Heritage System within Provincial Plans.

The Transportation System provides access and connections across the region – through and between the Urban and Rural Systems. The Transportation System is comprised of roads, active

transportation networks (including pedestrian paths, cycle paths and trails), transit priority networks, strategic goods networks, and other transportation related infrastructure such as airport, railways and ports.

Urban System

The Urban System is comprised of Community Areas (formerly referred to as Living Areas) and Employment Areas, where residential uses and other sensitive land uses are not permitted (See Attachment 1 for Map 1 – Regional Structure: Urban and Rural Systems).

The Region's Growth Management Study has identified that Brock has sufficient Community Area within the existing Urban Area Boundary to accommodate population related growth to 2051 but has identified a need for a settlement area boundary expansion to accommodate employment growth because there are not enough lands designated Employment Area. An expansion of 17 ha (42 acres) has been proposed for Employment Area within Beaverton and Sunderland.

Durham's Urban System is where the majority of future growth is directed. The draft ROP requires:

- a minimum 15-year supply of land within designated Settlement Areas;
- a minimum of 50% of all new residential units across the region to be provided through intensification within the Built Boundary on an annual basis; and
- a target job to population ratio of 50% (one job for every two residents).

The draft ROP includes policies to direct how Rural Regional Centres, like Beaverton, Cannington and Sunderland, are to be developed. As part of the Township's Official Plan Review process, the Township will need to refine the boundaries of the Rural Regional Centres in these communities and set appropriate minimum density targets for these areas.

Staff are generally supportive of the proposed policies. Staff would request confirmation from the Region that there are no Strategic Growth Areas (outlined in Section 5.2) within the Township of Brock.

Housing

Several policies are included in the draft new ROP to align with Provincial direction to support a range of housing options, including affordable housing.

The draft ROP continues to encourage affordable housing options, both rental and home ownership options and requires at least 25% of all new residential units produced throughout the region, to be affordable to low and moderate income households.

While affordable housing targets are established at the Provincial level and implemented at the Regional and local levels, Township staff recognize that it is difficult to implement these targets at the local level from a land use perspective as the municipality cannot regulate house prices or rental fees. Area municipalities should be able to determine the appropriateness and implementation of targets at the local level that support the region-wide target(s). Affordable home ownership typically translates to housing options that are smaller in size, which can be promoted through intensification and infill developments.

Secondary units are an important tool in contributing to the supply of affordable housing choices and are widely recognized as one of the most affordable forms of rental housing. This housing form contributes to affordability by optimizing the use of the existing housing stock and infrastructure, while also providing an income stream for homeowners. The Township’s Official Plan review process will need to incorporate the recent changes to the Planning Act through Bill 23 and the draft ROP policies regarding secondary units, which will contribute to intensification and affordable housing targets within the Township.

Tiny homes (referred to as microhomes in the draft ROP) are encouraged in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and municipal Zoning By-laws. The draft ROP defines a microhome as a small, self-contained dwelling unit intended for year-round use, which cannot move and is not designed to be moved under its own power. Township staff support this policy approach for microhomes and the proposed definition, which helps to distinguish them from motorhomes/travel trailers.

Staff are generally supportive of the proposed policies, but offer the following comments:

Draft ROP Policy	Township Staff Comment
<p>3.1.14. Require area municipalities to adopt policies and zoning by-law provisions that authorize additional residential units in new and existing residential development, redevelopment and intensification, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the use of 3 residential units in a detached house, semidetached house or townhouse, where feasible; b) the use of an additional residential unit in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached house or townhouse, including properties where the primary dwelling may already contain an additional residential unit; c) allowing more opportunities for additional residential units by not applying minimum unit sizes and not requiring more than 1 parking space per unit; and d) encourage municipalities to remove parking space requirements for additional residential units in areas intended to support existing and planned higher order transit service, including Major Transit Station Areas and other Strategic Growth Areas. 	<p>Support a policy approach that conforms with Provincial legislation. Policies for additional residential units should focus on Urban Areas (i.e. “urban residential land” as defined by Bill 23) and parking requirements should be clarified.</p> <p>Request clarification that the provisions regarding parking relate to the additional residential units and not the primary unit itself. Municipalities should be able to establish parking rates for the primary unit to account for local context (especially in smaller rural communities that lack transit).</p>

Employment Areas and Economic Development

Policies are included in the draft ROP to support general economic development objectives related to job creation and local economic spin offs.

The draft ROP now includes a suite of policies to guide land use compatibility to protect Employment Areas from encroachment by non-employment users and sensitive land uses, such as residential uses, schools, and daycares. The draft ROP prohibits residential uses, nursing and retirement homes, elementary and secondary schools from locating within Employment Areas. The Township supports the inclusion of land use compatibility policies in the draft ROP to help protect these areas for the development of future industrial uses.

Staff note that the draft ROP does not include a policy that prohibits places of worship within Employment Areas and allows municipalities to regulate the location of these uses.

Policies in the draft ROP that provide for the timely servicing of employment areas are supported. Investment in the servicing of employment areas is critical to expanding the inventory of serviced employment lands to cultivate an innovative land use framework to continue to build the economic capacity of the Township.

Staff are generally supportive of the proposed policies, but offer the following comments:

Draft ROP Policy	Township Staff Comment
3.1.8) Support the conversion and adaptive reuse, where feasible, of industrial or commercial buildings, or portions thereof, into residential units.	While providing more housing is an important goal, it should not come at the expense of building complete communities that also offer industrial and commercial uses that provide important jobs, goods and services.
5.7.4. Permit, notwithstanding Policy 5.7.3, the planning and development of lands within the 2051 Urban Expansion Areas located wholly within the Greenbelt Plan Boundary to proceed in the absence of a secondary plan, provided the relevant provisions of Policy 5.7.3 have been met	Request confirmation in staff's understanding that the proposed urban expansion areas in Beaverton and Sunderland would not be required to complete secondary plans in accordance with proposed policy 5.7.4.

Climate Change and Sustainability

Staff are pleased to see, and are generally supportive of, the draft ROP policies for sustainability and climate change related to encouraging more green infrastructure, energy efficiency and low impact development.

The draft ROP includes a suite of policies to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate including reducing greenhouse gases, improving air quality, encouraging sustainability through development, redevelopment and infrastructure projects. The draft ROP encourages area municipalities to develop and implement greenhouse gas monitoring programs, policies and standards and targets as well as air quality. The draft ROP also encourages municipalities to support and include sustainable design elements during site plan approval, as well as incorporate passive building design policies in their municipal official plans. These policies will be considered as part of the Township's OP review process.

Rural System

The Rural System is located outside of settlement areas. While agriculture is the predominant land use, the Rural System also houses a small rural population, aggregate extraction, cemeteries, large and small businesses, recreational uses, major open space and natural heritage areas. In the Rural System, limited growth is permitted, including within Rural Settlements and Hamlets.

Policies are included in the draft ROP regarding agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses, rural lot creation and severances, Rural Settlements (i.e., Hamlets) and Aggregate Resources, consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. The intent is to protect prime agricultural areas over the long-term, allow minor infilling of existing hamlets, support thriving and diverse agricultural uses in the rural area, and restrict non-agricultural uses and fragmentation of the agricultural land base (e.g., severances not permitted for agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses).

The draft new ROP provides updates to the regional Rural System mapping. Staff are generally supportive of the Rural System policies that would protect the agricultural land base over the long term, including consideration of criteria for establishing agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses.

The following comments are offered.

Draft ROP Policy	Township Staff Comment
6.4.5 and 6.4.6 permit the severance of a farm dwelling rendered surplus as a result of a farm consolidation of both abutting and non-abutting lands, subject to criteria.	Severances associated with the consolidation of non-abutting farm parcels currently require an amendment to the ROP. The draft ROP outlines a set of criteria that such severances would have to meet. Township staff request confirmation that 6.4.6 would allow for the consideration of severances associated with the consolidated of non-abutting farms without the need for an amendment to the ROP and if so, the wording “may be granted” should be added to the preamble of policy 6.4.6.
6.5.19 Require that development in Shoreline Residential Areas be limited to infill development, redevelopment and resort development, provided that: a) opportunities for public access to shorelines are provided;	It is suggested “where feasible” or “where requested” be added to subsection (a) to acknowledge that public access to shorelines cannot always be provided or may not always be sought.
6.7.3. Discourage the establishment of land uses within 300m of high potential aggregate resource areas which could hinder existing or future aggregate extraction in such areas.	How are high potential aggregate resource areas defined? Does this include the primary and secondary resource areas, as well as the bedrock resources areas outlined on Map 4? The Township needs to understand the impacts of this policy given the large extent of aggregate resource areas within the Township.

Greenlands System

The Region's Greenlands System is comprised of the Major Open Space Areas, Oak Ridges Moraine Areas and Waterfront Areas, and links the region's waterfronts through the connecting valley systems.

The retention of the Major Open Space approach results in confusion about how several policies will be implemented as the policies contemplate overlap between the Greenlands System and Rural System, whereas the mapping indicates the two Systems, and the designations within, are mutually exclusive. The Region's Proposed Policy Directions Report had indicated that the new ROP would provide more clarity regarding permitted uses in the Rural System by developing a Rural Lands designation. Staff had hoped to see the Draft ROP move away from the Major Open Space designation in favour of a separate Rural Area designation and a more straightforward Greenlands System that reflects the Regional Natural Heritage System and focused on natural heritage cores, linkages and corridors. Separate designations for rural lands and environmental areas would help direct non-agricultural uses that are more appropriate in rural locations away from Prime Agricultural Areas and environmentally sensitive areas consistent with the Greenbelt Plan and would help to emphasize the importance of protecting significant environmental areas.

The draft ROP policies continue to protect natural heritage and hydrological features. The policies allow for further refinements of natural features mapping through supporting natural heritage evaluations. The Township is supportive of the Greenlands System policies which provides flexibility for refinements by area municipalities based on local circumstances and further study. Staff will continue to work with Regional staff to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Draft ROP policies 7.1.14 - 7.1.17 provide direction for landscape industry uses. Township staff would request a definition be included for "landscape industry uses" and that policy 7.1.16 be reconsidered to provide more flexibility for municipalities to consider where such uses may be permitted at the local level. While Township staff are supportive of including criteria for these types of uses, the Township would like to be able to direct where these uses will be permitted, which may or may not include lands within the Major Open Space Area designation.

Transportation System

The Transportation System in Durham includes roads, railways, sidewalks, trails, public transit, commuter and other parking lots, harbours, marinas and airports.

The Map 3 series in the draft ROP includes the following: Transit Priority Network, (major) Road Network, Strategic Goods Movements, Active Transportation Network and Regional Right of Way requirements.

The new ROP policies focus on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and transit supportive design, as well as active transportation networks, and prioritizing investments that advance active transportation, transit, goods movement and overall safety.

The following comment is offered:

Draft ROP Policy	Township Staff Comment
8.5.7 Require, in consideration of development applications adjacent to railways, a landscape buffer of a size to be determined by the provincial government and/or the council of the respective area municipality, in consultation with the appropriate railway authority.	Policy is quite prescriptive with respect to the landscape buffer and doesn't seem to allow for consideration of other types of noise attenuation measures. Suggest revising the policy to refer to noise mitigation measures to be established in consultation with the area municipality and appropriate railway authority.
Table 6 – Regional Right-of-Way Width Requirements for Arterial Roads	<p>Appropriate for the Region to establish an arterial right of way protection policy that will assist in the preparation and review of development applications under the Planning Act and Municipal Class EA studies and help to establish greater certainty in identifying ultimate right-of-way needs on regional arterial roads.</p> <p>Want to ensure that, provided the intent of the ROP is maintained, the Region has flexibility to deviate from the standard provisions/ requirements for regional roads in accordance with accepted up-to-date planning, urban design and engineering standards without the need for an amendment to the ROP to address unique locational/contextual circumstances and/or conditions.</p>

Infrastructure

Township staff support the proposed infrastructure policies in the draft ROP that encourage green infrastructure and low impact development from a stormwater management perspective to address a changing climate, as well as renewable energy systems.

The draft ROP acknowledges that growth within Beaverton, Sunderland, and Cannington may be constrained by existing municipal servicing capacity. There are policies that permit development on partial or private servicing within specific areas in the Urban Area (as outlined in Figure 4 of the draft ROP), subject to a set of criteria and study requirements.

Proposed policy 4.1.38 outlines the potential to investigate an alternative means of providing additional servicing capacity for the Urban Areas located in the Townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge for the purpose of servicing the existing areas developed on private or partial water and/or sewage services and in order to support long-term development of the Urban Areas to accommodate the population and employment forecasts.

Staff are generally supportive of the proposed policies, but offer the following comments:

Draft ROP Policy	Township Staff Comment
<p>4.1.2. Prioritize the provision of municipal water and sewage services within Urban Areas to development and redevelopment applications which produce an intensive and compact form of development to optimize the use of the services. This includes prioritizing the provision of municipal services and infrastructure to Strategic Growth Areas.</p>	<p>While prioritizing investment in Strategic Growth Areas in the south end of Durham is an important goal, the Township of Brock hopes there will continue to be investment in servicing for the north end communities as well.</p>
<p>4.1.39. Investigate the long-term servicing of Urban Areas identified in Policy 4.1.38. Further expansions to these Urban Areas shall only be considered if there is a long-term plan in place to provide full municipal services. The applicable sewage and water infrastructure policies of the Greenbelt Plan also apply.</p>	<p>Acknowledge servicing constraints may limit any future urban expansions but hope the Township and Region can work together to review and consider future servicing options for the communities within the Township.</p>
<p>4.1.42. Refuse new private sewage disposal systems within 100 metres of the Lake Simcoe Shoreline, other lakes or any permanent streams within the Lake Simcoe watershed, in accordance with the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.</p>	<p>This policy should reflect the exceptions that are permitted in accordance with the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, such as for a single dwelling on an existing lot of record.</p>
<p>Figure 4 – Areas developable on private and/or partial municipal services.</p> <p>The community of Cannington has been included in Figure 4, permitting certain areas of Cannington to be developed on private or partial water and/or sewage services.</p>	<p>Figure 4 should be revised to clearly identify and label the communities (i.e. Cannington) to make it clear where private and/or partial municipal services are permitted.</p> <p>There is some existing commercial development in Beaverton on Hwy 12 on private servicing (ie. McDonald's, Fisher's Independent). Request confirmation that additional commercial development is permitted on private servicing in the Community Area on Hwy 12 (as part of the Beaverton Commons site plan).</p>

Excess Soil

The draft ROP introduces new policies regarding the management of excess soil. The Township, through its Official Plan update, will be required to develop excess soil reuse strategies, locations, and policies that incorporate best practices for the management of excess soil generated and fill received during development or site alteration, including infrastructure development. Area municipalities are also encouraged to regulate excess soil through their fill and site alteration by-laws.

Site Specific Policy Exception

Policies 10.1.2 and 10.1.3 were carried over from the existing ROP to address the establishment of the Sunderland paramedic station within the Prime Agricultural Area on full municipal services. The Sunderland paramedic station property is located on lands that are proposed to be brought into the Urban Area through the Settlement Area Boundary expansion for the Sunderland community as part of the new ROP. Therefore, Township staff would suggest that these policies are no longer needed and can be removed from the new ROP.

Policy 10.3.1 pertains to the lands east of Laidlaw Street South, south of the Beaver River Wetland Trail in the south end of Cannington (owned by Darmar Farms Inc. and D. McFeeters), that are proposed to be converted from Employment Area to Community Area through the Region's MCR. The policy directs that these lands are to be developed on the basis of private sewage disposal systems and require appropriately sized lots to accommodate such systems in accordance with the Region's lot sizing policy and the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan. The policy also requires the existing vacant lots to be merged and/or the submission of a new plan of subdivision.

There are a number of other site specific exceptions that pertain to lands within the Township of Brock, which reflect already approved Official Plan Amendments that are currently in effect, including site specific exceptions associated with applications for severance of surplus farm dwellings.

Mapping

Mapping for the draft ROP has been organized accordingly:

- a. Regional Structure – Urban & Rural Systems;
- b. Greenlands System;
- c. Transportation System; and
- d. Aggregate Resources.

Some of the key changes to the mapping include:

- Delineation of the hamlet boundaries consistent with Township's hamlet boundaries.
- Delineation of the Rural Regional Centre boundaries within Beaverton, Cannington and Sunderland.
- "Living Areas" now referred to as "Community Areas" to be consistent with Provincial policy documents.
- Inclusion of the proposed settlement area boundary expansion areas (including areas within Beaverton and Sunderland).
- Conversion of 2 areas in Cannington and Beaverton from Employment Area to Community Area as endorsed by the Township and Region.
- New Regional Natural Heritage System mapping.
- Implementation of the Provincial Agricultural System.
- Removal of the tourist activity/recreational node symbols.
- Revised aggregate resource mapping that includes bedrock and primary/secondary aggregate resource mapping.

Next Steps

After consultation on the draft ROP, a final ROP document will be presented to Regional Council for a decision before the end of June 2023. Once a new ROP is adopted by Regional Council, it will then be sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for final approval, and the Minister of MMAH is the approval authority for the ROP.

4.0 Related Policies / Procedures

The draft ROP needs to conform with a number of Provincial policy planning documents, including, but not limited to the Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Plan, and Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.

Once the new ROP is approved, the Township of Brock will need to finalize its own OP review process, to update and bring the Township's OP into conformity with Provincial and Regional planning documents.

5.0 Financial / Budget Assessment

The only anticipated financial impacts associated with this report would be associated with future growth and development.

6.0 Climate Change Impacts

Long-term, comprehensive planning being done as part of the Envision Durham process helps to address climate change impacts. Planning compact urban areas supports the development of healthy and complete, sustainable communities, while efficiently using land and resources.

The draft ROP minimize land consumption through compact built form by focusing growth and development within the existing communities and preserving the natural environment. Balancing jobs and housing reduces automobile dependency, and the need for long distance commuting.

7.0 Communications

The Region has undertaken a comprehensive community consultation program as part of the Envision Durham process, which includes the use of digital engagement tools, social media, and the holding of community events. The Region has a web page dedicated to the [Envision Durham project](#), which is used to assist with public engagement and the appropriate notices were included in the local paper. A public open house was hosted on March 6, 2023 and the statutory public meeting was held on March 7, 2023.

No further public engagement is required on the Township's behalf at this time.

8.0 Conclusion

This report provides an overview of the Region's Draft ROP which have been released as part of the Envision Durham exercise. Staff are seeking Council's authorization to submit this report as the Township's comments.

Staff will continue to participate in and monitor the Envision Durham process and provide information and recommendations to Council with respect to Township of Brock related matters.

9.0 Recommendation

That staff report 2023-DS-008 regarding Envision Durham – Draft Regional Official Plan, be received;

That a copy of this report be provided to the Region of Durham as the Township of Brock's input as part of the Region's Envision Durham process.