



Town of Whitby Staff Report

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Report Title: Town-Initiated Official Plan Review – Part I Official Plan General Updates: (File: OPA-2023-W/02). Final Recommended Amendment #146

Report to: Committee of the Whole

Date of meeting: December 1, 2025

Report Number: PDP 58-25

Department(s) Responsible:

Planning and Development Department
(Planning Services)

Submitted by:

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and Development

Acknowledged by M. Gaskell, Chief Administrative Officer

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1. Recommendation:

1. That Council adopt Amendment #146 to the Whitby Official Plan as Shown on Attachment #1, regarding general updates to Part I of the Official Plan, as part of the Town-Initiated Official Plan Review (File: OPA-2023-W/02), as outlined in this Report, PDP 58-25;
2. That the Clerk forward the necessary documentation for Official Plan Amendment #146 to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as the approval authority in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act; and,
3. That the Clerk send a Notice of Council's adoption of Amendment #146 to those persons and agencies who have requested further notification regarding general updates to Part I of the Official Plan, as part of the Town-Initiated Official Plan Review (File: OPA-2023-W/02).

2. Highlights:

- As part of the Town-initiated Official Plan Review, the purpose of final recommended Official Plan Amendment #146 (refer to Attachment #1), is to:
 - make general policy (text) and schedule (map) updates to Part I of the Official Plan for consistency and conformity with Provincial legislation and policy;
 - incorporate into the Town of Whitby Official Plan, policies that are relevant to Whitby from Envision Durham, the former Regional Official Plan;
 - rescind Envision Durham as it relates to the Town of Whitby due to the removal of Regional Planning authority by Provincial Bill 23; and,
 - streamline and improve the overall Official Plan to prepare for population and job growth in a sustainable manner to a new planning horizon of 2051.
- The final recommended amendment introduces the following key changes:
 - New expansion areas within Whitby to 2051, as identified in Envision Durham.
 - A streamlined hierarchy of Central Areas, now called Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), which includes the Whitby GO Protected Major Transit Station Area. SGAs remain the focus for intensification and the greatest mix of uses to support increased housing and transit-oriented development across Whitby.
 - A streamlined hierarchy of Commercial Mixed-Use designations to clarify requirements and plan and protect for non-residential uses that will serve surrounding neighbourhoods and the broader municipality.
 - Increased flexibility to provide for a range of housing options, while maintaining the overall municipal structure of mature neighbourhoods, balanced with other low, medium, and high-density development.
 - New Industrial Employment and Prestige Employment Areas identified within the 2051 Expansion Area, and a new Business designation that supports continued economic development and provides transition areas between Employment Area and Residential designations.
 - A new Rural designation to recognize and protect Rural Areas as a component of the broader Agricultural System, permitting recreation, tourism and other small-scale agriculture-related uses, where appropriate, subject to required studies.
 - Updated Map Schedules that include data from Envision Durham where relevant to Whitby, and new or updated data such as trail maps, active transportation routes and floodplain mapping.

- The final recommended amendment has been informed by background studies and analysis, in addition to public and stakeholder feedback provided at Community Open Houses, Statutory Public Meetings and/or by online engagement surveys.
- **Draft Proposed Amendment #146** was presented at a Statutory Public meeting on October 01, 2025. Comments received during the Public Meeting, and from external commenting agencies, internal departments, the project Technical Advisory Committee and public written submissions, were taken into consideration to inform the final recommended amendment.
- The final recommended amendment implements both the Provincial interest, and the Town's overall goals and objectives, related to increasing housing supply, planning for a range and mix of housing options, supporting business and economic development, protecting the natural environment and providing sustainable urban environments.
- Changes made to the Official Plan by the final recommended amendment will assist the Town in achieving the Municipal Housing Target assigned by the Province of 18,000 homes by 2031, as well as commitments related to the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund.

3. Background:

Overview

Municipalities are required to review and update their Official Plans every five years in accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act.

The Town of Whitby's Official Plan underwent a comprehensive review and update in 2018. Since then, there have been numerous changes in Planning legislation, Provincial policy, and a new Regional Official Plan, Envision Durham, approved by the Province on September 03, 2024 that sets a new planning horizon to 2051.

Envision Durham provides forecasts population and employment growth for Whitby to the year 2051 of approximately 244,000 people and over 95,000 jobs. Envision Durham further identifies existing, as well as approximately 500 hectares of new Community Area lands (residential/commercial) and Employment Area lands (industrial, warehousing), within a new 2051 Urban Area Boundary. Refer to Attachment #2: Whitby Excerpt of Envision Durham Map 1. Regional Structure – Urban & Rural Systems.

On January 01, 2025, land use planning authority was removed from the Region of Durham by the Province. Through this legislative change, lower-tier municipalities, like Whitby, have now inherited Envision Durham and are responsible for incorporating relevant policies through their Official Plan Reviews.

The Province has also amended the Planning Act several times and introduced a new Provincial Planning Statement in 2024. Official Plans must conform to and be consistent with the Provincial land use planning legislation and policy framework.

Official Plan Review Focus Areas

The Official Plan Review has been led by retained consultants, SGL Planning and Design and partner Dillon Consulting.

While the Review is being undertaken as one comprehensive project, updates are implemented through a series of Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), as outlined below:

Amendment	Status
OPA #138 Whitby GO Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) Increased height and density permissions in appropriate locations within the PMTSA to accommodate greater housing options and support transit-oriented development adjacent to a major transit station.	Adopted by Council on Feb. 03, 2025 Awaiting approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs
OPA #139 Strategic Growth Areas, Nodes and Corridors (SGAs) Increased height and density permissions in several SGAs already identified in the Whitby Official Plan and further refined by Envision Durham, to support and manage population and employment intensification within the existing built-up area.	Adopted by Council on Feb. 03, 2025 Awaiting approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs
OPA #146 Part I Official Plan – General Policy Updates to Prepare for Growth to 2051 General policy updates to Part 1 of the Official Plan to: - conform with recent Provincial legislation and policy changes; - incorporate policies from Envision Durham that are relevant to Whitby, including updated population and employment forecasts and new expansion areas that support a 2051 planning horizon; - streamline and clarify existing policies; and - provide other technical and housekeeping amendments as needed. Refer to this report PDP 58-25	Draft Proposed OPA Presented at Statutory Public Meeting, Oct. 01, 2025. Council Adoption: Target - Dec. 2025
OPA #147 Part II Secondary Plans – Technical Update Subsequent technical amendment to update relevant Part 2 Secondary Plans with related changes made by OPA #146. OPA 147 will not take effect until OPA #146 is approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Refer to Report PDP 59-25 for information on OPA 147.	Draft Proposed OPA Presented at Statutory Public Meeting, Oct. 01, 2025. Council Adoption: Target – Dec. 2025

OPA #148 Brooklin Urban Expansion Area 2051 Updates to the existing Brooklin Community Secondary Plan to incorporate the new Urban Expansion Area to 2051 as identified in Envision Durham and OPA #146, and detailed land use planning for the expansion area. OPA 148 will not take effect until OPA #146 is approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Refer to PDP 60-25 for information on OPA 148.	Draft Proposed OPA Presented at Statutory Public Meeting, Oct. 01, Council Adoption: Target – Dec. 2025
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Information on each OPA component of the Official Plan Review, as well as related Study Area Maps, are available online at: <https://connectwhitby.ca/OPreview>.

The focus of this **Report PDP 58-25** is the **Final Recommended OPA #146**, regarding general policy updates to Part I of the Official Plan to prepare for growth to 2051.

Background Summary and Analysis Reports

The final recommended amendment has been informed by a Background Summary and Analysis Report on General Policy Updates (August 2024). The report explains the basis for the Official Plan Review and provides background information on Provincial legislation and policy changes, as well as relevant policies from Envision Durham, which require review and consideration for incorporating into Part I of the updated Whitby Official Plan to plan for growth to 2051.

An Addendum to the Background Summary and Analysis Report was released in April 2025 that included recommended policy changes. Refer to Attachment #3 Background Summary and Analysis Report with addendum Section 6.

Consultation and Engagement

A kick-off Community Open House and Special Meeting of Council was held on May 29, 2024 to introduce the Official Plan Review project and gather initial ideas and feedback. An accompanying online engagement survey was provided on the project web-page.

A Community Open House specifically focused on General Updates to Part I of the Official Plan took place in person and virtually on April 23, 2025, attracting over 25 participants. Supplemental online surveys were also provided on the project web page. Over 150 respondents provided feedback through two surveys that were open over the months of June and July 2024, and August and November 2024, respectively. Refer to Attachment #4 for the full Engagement Summary.

Draft Proposed Amendment #146 was presented at a Statutory Public meeting on October 01, 2025. Comments were received at the Public Meeting, as well as by external commenting agencies, internal departments, the project Technical Advisory Committee and public written submissions.

Attachment #5 provides a Comment-Response Matrix that summarizes comments received and changes made, where appropriate, based on feedback received on Draft Recommended OPA #146. While comments have been paraphrased for the purposes of the attached Matrix, all comments have been reviewed and taken into consideration in preparation of the final recommended amendment.

Indigenous communities were circulated copies of the draft amendment, supporting background studies and an invitation was made to meet with Whitby Planning staff to discuss any questions or feedback. Minogi, representing the Mississaugas of the Scugog Island First Nation requested a meeting with staff to discuss the amendment and provide insightful feedback. No specific changes to the final amendment were requested.

Additional details on engagement methods are outlined in Section 6 of this report. A summary of what we heard is provided in Section 4 below.

4. Discussion:

Policy Framework

Since the previous Official Plan Review, changes have been made to Provincial legislation and policy, and Regional planning, requiring conformity and alignment of the Whitby Official Plan through the final recommended amendment. Changes are summarized as follows:

- **Planning Act:** Several Omnibus Bills over the past five years have revised the Planning Act with the intent to fast-track development application approvals and increase housing supply. Changes include increased permissions for additional dwelling units, reduced parkland dedication provisions, reduced site plan control for smaller development proposals, the removal of upper tier Planning authorities, and the removal of third-party appeal rights.
- **Provincial Planning Statement (PPS):** Per the same Provincial policy objectives, a new PPS was released in October 2024 and now supersedes the previous Provincial Policy Statement, as well as the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). The new PPS focuses on increasing housing supply/providing a range of housing options near transit, restricting a range of previously permitted uses from Employment Areas (e.g. offices, hotels), and emphasizes engagement with Indigenous communities as part of the land use planning process.
- The new PPS has removed the requirement for upper-tier municipal comprehensive reviews. Changes also allow municipalities to now consider Employment Area Conversion requests, as well as Settlement Area Boundary Expansions provided that they are outside of the Greenbelt Plan Area and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan Area, at any time, subject to high level tests. Such Conversion requests and Settlement Area Boundary Expansion requests were previously considered and approved by the Region through the Envision Durham Regional Official Plan process.

- Envision Durham: Envision Durham was the former Durham Region Official Plan, adopted by Regional Council on May 17, 2023, and approved by the Province on September 03, 2024. Envision Durham forecasts the Town of Whitby to grow to 244,890 people and 95,210 jobs to a new planning horizon in 2051.
- On January 01, 2025, land use planning authority was removed from the Region of Durham. Through this change, Whitby has inherited Envision Durham, as it relates to Whitby, and is incorporating its relevant policies through the Official Plan Review, particularly Amendment #146.
- Examples of policies incorporated into the final recommended amendment from Envision Durham that are relevant to Whitby include, but are not limited to:
 - population and employment forecast updates to 2051;
 - continuing to direct intensification to Strategic Growth Areas and corridors located near transit routes and mixed use nodes;
 - reflecting new expansion areas for population and job growth;
 - updated policies to encourage a range of housing options, including more affordable options; and,
 - updates to environmental management policies such as Drinking Water Source Protection, agricultural uses and on-farm diversified uses, and natural heritage protection and restoration.

Revised Whitby Official Plan map schedules have been updated based on the Envision Durham 2051 Urban Area Boundary, as well as new Employment Area lands and Community Area lands, and lands converted from Employment Areas to Community Areas through the Envision Durham process. Refer to Attachment #1: Draft Proposed Official Plan Amendment #146 - Schedule 'A-1 – Land Use.'

What We Heard

Community and stakeholder engagement has played a central role in the Official Plan Review process. Engagement themes that emerged from initial Community Open Houses and online surveys are summarized as follows:

- Growth Management: Consider how new growth will align with existing and planned development and mitigate negative impacts such as traffic and parking challenges.
- Employment: Support more opportunities for jobs and mixed uses including support for the new Business designation.
- Housing: Address the need for more affordable housing options, particularly for seniors and assisted housing. Consider Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) and integrating more density/height to assist in achieving housing objectives.

- Environment and Climate Change: Better protect the natural environment, integrate more natural spaces into development and redevelopment, and focus new development in areas where there is infrastructure to support it.
- Infrastructure: Plan development related to the cost of providing infrastructure to support new growth including water, wastewater, electricity, and roads.
- Complete Communities: Improve access to adequate hospital/medical facilities to support a growing population, and plan for other community assets like active transportation routes, schools, grocery stores and other uses that can support existing and new families closer to where they live.
- Other comments were related to increasing and/or improving amenities such as Whitby's waterfront, parks and recreational spaces/facilities, natural spaces like local forests and trails, downtowns and historic properties.
- Refer to Attachment #4 for the full Engagement Summary.

Public Meeting – October 01, 2025

The abovementioned feedback informed Draft Proposed Amendment #146 that was presented at a Statutory Public Meeting on October 01, 2025. Refer to Public Meeting Report PDP 51-25. The draft proposed amendment provided the following changes to the Official Plan:

- **Growth Management:** Major Central Areas, Intensification Areas and Intensification Corridors in the current Official Plan have been consolidated into one category called Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) to streamline overlapping boundaries and repetitive policies. The change reflects Whitby Official Plan Amendment 139 that updated policies, boundaries and terminology, as identified in Envision Durham. The common policy intent has been retained for SGA's to:
 - be the focus for population and job intensification within the Municipality;
 - provide the greatest heights and densities and mix of uses; and,
 - be located along major transit routes to support transit-oriented development.
- **Employment Areas and new Business Designation:** A new "Business" land use designation is proposed for uses that are no longer permitted within Employment Areas per the new 2024 Planning Statement (PPS).

Examples of uses no longer permitted include offices, hotel and banquet spaces, and personal services. Residential uses would still be prohibited in both Employment Area and Business designations. The Business designation provides a transition between residential and employment area uses, while also continuing to protect for appropriate locations for these types of business uses that provide long-term jobs.

- **Commercial Mixed-Use Designations:** The proposed changes streamline, reduce redundancy and clarify the range of designations currently within the Official Plan. The common policy intention is retained, to plan and protect for non-residential uses at varying scales across the municipality to serve the needs of existing and future residents.
- **Housing and Affordability:** The proposed changes retain and clarify policies to encourage a range of housing options, such as conforming to Provincial legislation; a policy for ADU's; and clarifying that townhouses can be permitted within Low Density Residential designations, provided maximum permitted density is not exceeded.
- **Parks Planning:** Parks policies have been updated to reflect information from the new Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- **Environmental Management:** Select updates have been made to align with Envision Durham, add policies on Drinking Water Source Protection, update policies on agricultural uses and on-farm diversified uses, and update policies on Natural Heritage restoration.
- **Rural Designation:** This new land use designation has been created to recognize and protect Rural Areas as a component of the Agricultural System and may permit recreation, tourism and other small-scale agriculture-related uses, where appropriate.
- **Transportation and Active Transportation:** Updates have been made to clarify reduced parking strategies in certain areas, transportation demand management, and active transportation policies to refer to more broader modes of active transportation.
- **Definitions:** Certain definitions have been deleted or revised as required to be consistent with the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement, and/or to reflect policy updates.
- **Map Schedules and Technical Appendices:** Mapping has been updated to reflect the proposed changes to incorporate Envision Durham where relevant, and to add new or updated data such as cultural heritage resources, trail maps, active transportation routes, urban river valleys, and updated flood hazards.
- **Technical and housekeeping:** These amendments are made as necessary to update and improve the Official Plan (e.g. cross-referencing and renumbering policies).

A total of six (6) delegations were made at the October 01 Public Meeting. Staff are also in receipt of over 25 written submissions to date on the draft amendment, as well as feedback from internal departments and external commenting agencies circulated on the amendment in accordance with the Planning Act.

The majority of feedback focused on:

- Clarification related to various land use designation permissions, policies and requirements.
- Requests for lands to be re-designated from Prestige Industrial, Business or Commercial Mixed Use to another designation, such as Business or Residential;
- Support for the new Rural designation and requests to expand it to more lands;
- Support for increased flexibility where appropriate, streamlining of the overall policy framework and removal of outdated policies;
- Proposed corrections and updates to Active Transportation, Road and Floodplain mapping; and,
- Proposed improvements to Transportation and infrastructure related policies made by the Region of Durham.

Attachment #4 provides a Comment-Response Matrix regarding feedback on the draft proposed OPA #146. While comments have been paraphrased for the purposes of the attached Matrix, all comments have been reviewed and taken into consideration for the final recommended amendment. External agencies who do not appear in the Comment-Response Matrix, did not provide a written response to the circulation.

Final Recommended Amendment

In consideration of the feedback on the draft proposed amendment, revisions that have been incorporated into the final recommended amendment (refer to Attachment #1) are summarized as follows:

Requests for Re-designation

- Requests for redesignation from Employment Area lands to a Residential designation, or from the Business designation to a Residential designation, have not been supported.

The location and integrity of Employment Area and Business designations must be protected in appropriate locations for the long-term viability of these areas needed to support economic development and job growth. A substantial amount of land across the municipality is already planned for residential growth and intensification in more appropriate locations, such as within Strategic Growth Areas (including the Protected Major Transit Station Area).

- Requests for redesignation from a Commercial Mixed-Use designation to a Residential designation have not been supported.

The location and integrity of Commercial Mixed-Use lands must be protected to provide for non-residential uses that will serve the growing residential population. A substantial amount of land across the municipality is already planned for residential growth and intensification in more appropriate locations, such as within Strategic Growth Areas (including the Protected Major Transit Station Area).

- Some requests to re-designate portions of Prestige Industrial lands to a Business designation have been supported, as shown on Schedule A-1, for lands fronting an arterial road and/or providing transition to other non-employment uses.

Clarification

- The Policy Section for Industrial Employment and Prestige Employment is now separated from the new Business designation Policy Section for greater clarity. The Industrial and Prestige Employment designations are included within Employment Areas, while the Business designation is presented as a separate section. The new Business Designation would prohibit residential uses to provide a buffer between Employment Areas and more sensitive uses within Community Living Areas.
- Related to the above, policies regarding sensitive uses have been revised to clarify the need to mitigate negative impacts on existing and future Employment Area uses.
- The specific forms of street and block townhouses have been clarified to be permitted within the Low-Density Residential designation.
- Revisions have been made to the requirements and uses permitted within the various Commercial Mixed-Use designations and Residential Mixed-Use designations. The Residential Mixed-Use designation has been revised to clarify that the requirement for non-residential uses is related to ground floor space fronting an arterial or collector road.
- Revisions have been made to parks policies to better reflect changes provided in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, such as the revised District Park size of generally 2 hectares applying to 2051 Expansion Area lands.
- Updates have been made to Schedule B - Environmental floodplain mapping.
- Updates have been made to Schedule C - Transit and Roads, to correct minor errors.
- Other technical and housekeeping revisions, such as corrections to policy numbering, and ensuring consistent terminology.

Refer to Attachment #6 for a more detailed summary of the Town-initiated Draft Proposed Amendment #146.

A full copy of the Draft Proposed Official Plan Amendment #146 is provided in Attachment #1 and generally includes:

1. Schedule (map) changes, including:

- Updates to the Urban Area Boundary to 2051;
- Select technical updates to land use designations, and growth management boundaries and terminology;

- Adding new Schedules and revising certain existing Schedules, to streamline information and add updated information, including information from Envision Durham;
 - Legend updates to reflect the above changes; and,
 - Technical revisions to remove outdated information.
2. Policy (text) changes to the Official Plan, including:
- Clarification and streamlining of policies;
 - Consistency and alignment of Whitby Official Plan policy language, terminology, land use permissions, including consistency and alignment with Envision Durham, where appropriate;
 - Changes to land use designations and policies; (e.g. renaming; reclassifications; provisions;) where appropriate, to streamline the Whitby Official Plan, and to be consistent with Envision Durham and Provincial policies and plans; and,
 - Technical revisions to remove outdated information.

The final recommended amendment is consistent with the Planning Act and Provincial Planning Statement 2024, incorporates the Envision Durham Regional Official Plan, where relevant to Whitby, and meets the overall goals and intent of the Whitby Official Plan as it relates to increasing housing supply and planning for future population growth to 2051.

5. Financial Considerations:

The Whitby Official Plan Review is approved as part of the 2022-2026 budget and is a priority item in the Corporate Business Plan. Components of the Whitby Official Plan Review are further supported by the Housing Accelerator Fund.

6. Communication and Public Engagement:

The applicable agencies and departments have been circulated the draft proposed amendment and copies of the associated supporting materials for their review and comment.

As outlined in Section 4 of this report, both in-person and virtual consultation opportunities were offered and provided access to project information, including how to stay informed, as well as platforms for submitting feedback. Examples include:

- A dedicated Official Plan Review project page on Connect Whitby: connectwhitby.ca/OPreview;
- Community Open Houses and related online engagement surveys;
- Outreach to Indigenous Communities;
- Meetings with stakeholders and the public as requested;

- Consultation with relevant Town Departments, commenting agencies, Regional staff, and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority;
- A Statutory Public Meeting held October 01, 2025; and,
- Presentations and updates to Committees of Council and Council Members.

An Interested Party list has been maintained by Town Planning and Development staff. Interested Parties receive notifications at key project milestones. The Official Plan Review was also promoted more broadly through the Town's various communication channels.

The Town of Whitby hosted a Special Meeting of Council required under Section 26(3) of the Planning Act on May 29, 2024 to kick off the Official Plan Review.

7. Input from Departments/Sources:

A Core Staff Team from the Planning and Development Department, Strategic Initiatives, Community Services (Parks Planning) and Communications has guided and provided input into the Whitby Official Plan Review. A Technical Advisory Committee was established, including staff the Region of Durham, and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority. Input from various commenting Town departments and external agencies have informed the final recommended amendment.

8. Strategic Priorities:

The Whitby Official Plan Review and final recommended amendment support and advance the Town's strategic pillars of the Community Strategic Plan, by providing policy updates that manage growth and development of the Town in a sustainable manner, resulting in safely designed and inclusive neighbourhoods that support a range of housing options, as well as protecting space for important community amenities.

The process informing the final recommended amendment has involved community and stakeholder consultation to ensure Whitby's government is accountable and responsive to the community's needs as the Municipality grows over time. It also supports the Town's efforts to improve Accessibility and Sustainability.

9. Attachments:

- Attachment #1: Final Recommended Official Plan Amendment #146
- Attachment #2: Whitby Excerpt - Envision Durham Map 1. Regional Structure – Urban & Rural Systems
- Attachment #3: Background Summary and Analysis Report
- Attachment #4: Engagement Summary
- Attachment #5: Comment - Response Matrix OPA #146
- Attachment #6: Summary of Changes OPA #146