



Discussion Paper

April 2024

Economic and Development Services Department



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Land Acknowledgement

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands within the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg and the signatories of the Williams Treaties, which include the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Hiawatha, Curve Lake, and Alderville First Nations, and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, Rama and Beausoleil First Nations.

We are grateful for the Anishinaabeg who have cared for the land and waters within this territory since time immemorial. We recognize that Oshawa is steeped in rich Indigenous history and is now present day home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. We express gratitude for this diverse group of Indigenous Peoples who continue to care for the land and shape and strengthen our community.

'Oshawa' stems from an Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language) word meaning "a crossing place" and has further translation as "the point at the crossing of the stream where the canoe was exchanged for the trail". When the word Oshawa was chosen as the name of our City, it reflected and recognized the importance of water and land to our community. Our City's name is a reminder of this important and powerful connection between people and place in the past but also of the present and for the future.

As a municipality, we are crossing over. We are committed to understanding the truth of our shared history, acknowledging our role in addressing the negative impacts that colonization continues to have on Indigenous Peoples, developing reciprocal relationships, and taking meaningful action toward reconciliation.

We are all Treaty people.



Executive Summary

The Oshawa Official Plan is a document that sets out policies and land use designations to guide long-term growth and development in the City of Oshawa.

We are updating the Oshawa Official Plan for the following reasons:

- Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Durham Regional Official Plan, was recently adopted by Regional Council in 2023 and Oshawa's Official Plan must conform to the newly adopted Durham Regional Official Plan, once it is approved by the Province.
- There have been many significant changes to Provincial legislation, policies and plans since 2016 and the Oshawa Official Plan must conform to them.

This Discussion Paper provides background information on the City of Oshawa, the Oshawa Official Plan, and the land use planning system in Ontario, as well as outlines details of the Official Plan Review process.

A number of themes will be explored as part of the Official Plan Review, including:

- Growth Management
- Housing
- Transportation
- Cultural Heritage Resources
- Agriculture and the Rural System
- Environment
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Economic Development

We want your feedback on the Official Plan Review! Please share your feedback in one of the following ways:

- Attend a Special Meeting of Council on April 30, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber at Oshawa City Hall located at 50 Centre St. S.; or,
- Complete a feedback form on Connect Oshawa ([ConnectOshawa.ca/OPReview](https://connectoshowa.ca/OPReview)) or on paper at Service Oshawa, located at City Hall (50 Centre St. S.).

You can also visit [ConnectOshawa.ca/OPReview](https://connectoshowa.ca/OPReview) to register and stay up-to-date on the Official Plan Review.

1.0 Introduction

The City of Oshawa is undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Oshawa Official Plan (the “Official Plan Review”). The Oshawa Official Plan (“Official Plan”) is a document that sets out policies and land use designations to guide long-term growth and development in Oshawa and was last comprehensively updated in 2016 through Official Plan Amendment 179 (“O.P.A. 179”).

Now that Envision Durham, the Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review of the Durham Regional Official Plan (“D.R.O.P.”), has been adopted by Regional Council, it is appropriate to initiate an Official Plan Review in order to:

- Conform to the newly adopted D.R.O.P, subject to any additional amendments that may be introduced by the Province as the approval authority; and,
- Conform to updated Provincial legislation, policies and plans.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to:

- Provide background information on the City of Oshawa, the Official Plan, and the land use planning system in Ontario;
- Outline details of the Official Plan Review process;
- Discuss key themes that staff will explore to assist with updating the Official Plan; and,
- Outline ways to get involved and provide input into the Official Plan Review process.

We want to hear your ideas! Please share your feedback in one of the following ways:

- Attend a Special Meeting of Council on April 30, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber at Oshawa City Hall located at 50 Centre St. S.; or,
- Complete a feedback form on Connect Oshawa ([ConnectOshawa.ca/OPReview](https://connectoshowa.ca/OPReview)) or on paper at Service Oshawa, located at City Hall (50 Centre St. S.).



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2.0 City of Oshawa: Background Information

The City of Oshawa is the largest urban municipality in Durham Region and is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, with an estimated 2023 population of 185,000 and 87,000 jobs. By the year 2051, the City's population is expected to grow to 298,540 people and 107,280 jobs.

Oshawa contains a mix of urban and rural landscapes and is home to many diverse residents and businesses. Oshawa contains a number of unique features, including:

- The Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre (one of only two designated Urban Growth Centres in all of Durham Region);
- Proud home of leading post-secondary institutions - Ontario Tech University, Durham College, Trent University Durham GTA and Queen's University's Family Medicine satellite campus at Lakeridge Health Oshawa;
- The Northwood Business Park, the City's newest prime employment development opportunity, containing approximately 500 acres of developable employment land minutes away from Highway 407 East;
- Prime Lake Ontario waterfront featuring the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail, the McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve, Lakeview Park Beach and Ed Broadbent Waterfront Park;
- The Oshawa Executive Airport and the Port of Oshawa, Durham Region's two international gateways;
- Approximately 1,490 hectares of provincially protected lands in the Greenbelt;
- One of Canada's finest and last remaining grand estates, the Parkwood Estate National Historic Site;
- Over 320 hectares of parkland, distributed across 155 parks throughout the City; and
- The future Bowmanville GO Extension, which will include two new GO Train stations in Oshawa.



Oshawa has transitioned from an economy primarily driven by manufacturing to a technology-driven, knowledge economy. More specifically, the City has recently seen growth in other sectors such as healthcare and academia, warehousing and distribution, food and agriculture, and energy.

Oshawa’s dynamic and diverse economy consists of:

- Healthcare **18%**
- Accommodations & Food Services **8%**
- Educational Services **11%**
- Professional Services **3%**
- Retail Trade **15%**
- Finance & Insurance **3%**
- Manufacturing **6%**
- Information & Cultural **2%**
- Admin & Support **8%**
- Other **18%**
- Public Administration **8%**



Source: City of Oshawa’s 2022 Development Insider

Over the last few years, certain trends have impacted and continue to impact the City, leading to an increased demand for more diverse and affordable housing options, employment opportunities, City programming, recreational opportunities and various services.

Trends Affecting Oshawa

Trend	Summary
Growing population and population density	Rapid population growth in the City, driven by in-migration and development projects featuring increased density, particularly in the urban and near urban core.
Increasing diversity	Increased diversity rooted in the growth of the City’s immigrant communities.
Shifting age profile	A dynamic population age profile that includes both a growing population of seniors, but also growth in working age adults.
Rising incomes, cost of living and income distribution	Overall increases in the incomes of residents interacting with a growing cost of living in the City and Region of Durham.
Housing cost and tenure	Increases in the cost of home ownership and rental housing are a key issue, which has a growing impact on lower income residents.
Shift to a technology-driven knowledge economy	There has been a positive growth in the knowledge economy, leading to a dynamic workforce.

It is important that these trends are considered as part of the Official Plan Review, in order to ensure that we appropriately plan for the future of Oshawa’s residents and community members.

3.0 The Oshawa Official Plan

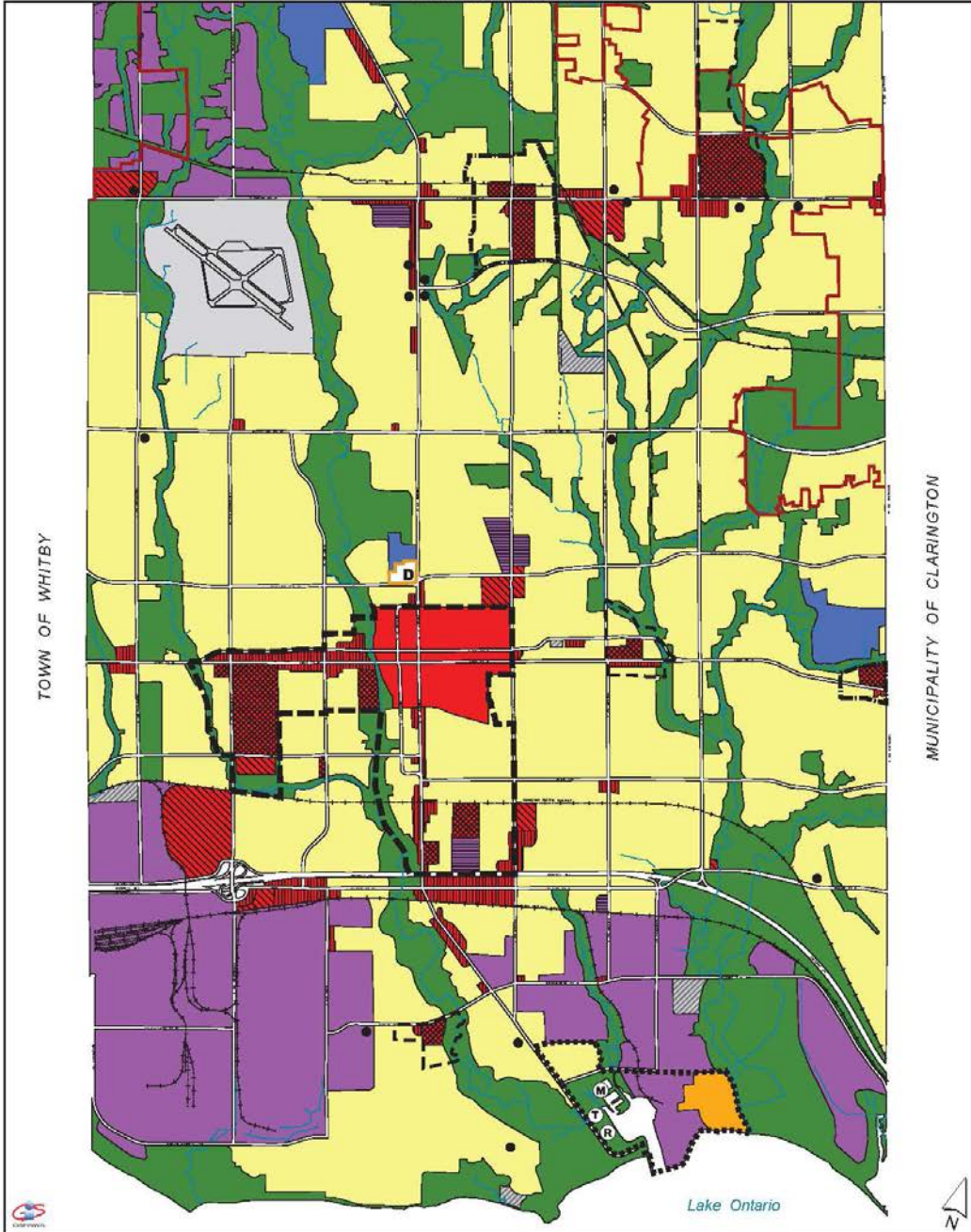
The Official Plan is the highest order land use planning document for Oshawa and it identifies where new housing, industry, offices and retail will be located. It also identifies what services will be needed, when they will be needed, and the order in which parts of the community will grow. It is the primary tool available to manage and guide growth and development, and in terms of scope, applies to the entire geographical limits of the City. The Official Plan ensures that growth is coordinated, meets the needs of the community, and provides a framework for establishing zoning by-law regulations and standards.

The Official Plan also contains a number of Part II Plans, which are land use plans for specific areas of the City. A Part II Plan provides more detailed policies for the area it covers. The Official Plan currently contains seven Part II Plans, the most recent being the Columbus Part II Plan which was adopted by City Council on October 2, 2023.

The most recent City-initiated comprehensive review of the Official Plan was completed in 2016, through O.P.A. 179. O.P.A. 179 was undertaken to implement a wide variety of policy changes and updates to ensure conformity with A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the "Growth Plan"), the Provincial Greenbelt Plan ("Greenbelt Plan"), the D.R.O.P., and environmental policies based on the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority's Natural Heritage System mapping and watershed plans. O.P.A. 179 was adopted by City Council and approved by the Region of Durham in 2016.

The current Official Plan contains population, housing, and employment forecasts that are used to plan and manage growth and guide land use decision-making to 2031, which now need to be updated. It is estimated that Oshawa's current population as of 2023 is 185,000, and the City is anticipated to experience significant growth over the next 20+ years, with an estimated 2051 population of 298,540.

The Official Plan Review process provides an opportunity to set out a vision, goals and objectives for the City to address local priorities and changing community needs, as well as to plan for future growth accordingly.



Schedule 'A' Land Use
 City of Oshawa
 Official Plan
 South Half
 March 2021
 Development Services Department

Notes:
 1. This Schedule should be read in conjunction with the text

Legend	
Residential	Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre
Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre	Planned Commercial Centre
Planned Commercial Centre	Planned Commercial Strip
Planned Commercial Strip	Special Purpose Commercial
Institutional	Industrial
Industrial	Regeneration Area
Regeneration Area	Airport
Airport	Special Waterfront Area
Special Waterfront Area	Utilities
Utilities	Deferred by Regional Council
Deferred by Regional Council	Local Central Area
Local Central Area	Boundary of Major Urban Area
Boundary of Major Urban Area	Built Boundary
Built Boundary	Special Development Area
Special Development Area	Main Central Area Boundary
Main Central Area Boundary	Sub-Central Area Boundary
Sub-Central Area Boundary	Community Central Area Boundary
Community Central Area Boundary	Marina Node
Marina Node	Recreational Node
Recreational Node	Tourist Node
Tourist Node	Estate Residential (refer to section 2.7.3.1)
Estate Residential (refer to section 2.7.3.1)	Prime Agricultural
Prime Agricultural	Oak Ridges Moraine
Oak Ridges Moraine	Limits of Approved Highway 407 Corridor
Limits of Approved Highway 407 Corridor	Greenbelt Protected Countryside Area Boundary
Greenbelt Protected Countryside Area Boundary	Greenland Areas
Greenland Areas	Open Space and Recreation

4.0 Ontario's Land Use Planning System

Ontario has a policy-led land use planning system, governed by the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13 (the “Planning Act”) which is provincial legislation that sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario. It describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them.

Two additional important Provincial planning documents are the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (the “P.P.S.”) and the Growth Plan. These two documents provide comprehensive, integrated policy direction on land use planning matters across Ontario including:

- Growth management, housing and economic development;
- Infrastructure planning, including sewage, water and stormwater management services, transportation, transit, energy supply and corridor protection;
- Protection and management of resources, including prime agricultural areas, aggregates, natural heritage, water, and cultural heritage; and,
- Protection of public health and safety, such as mitigating potential risks due to natural and human-made hazards.

The P.P.S. is issued under the Planning Act and is the primary Province-wide land use planning policy document. The Growth Plan is issued under the Places to Grow Act, 2005 and provides a more detailed framework for where and how growth should be accommodated in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan also mandates specific density targets for key growth areas within municipalities.

There are two additional Provincial plans, the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, that also apply to lands within Oshawa. These two plans identify where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection for the agricultural land base as well as for ecological and hydrological features, areas and functions occurring on this landscape.

It is important to note that the Province is currently proposing to combine and replace the existing P.P.S. and Growth Plan with a new Provincial policy document identified as the “Provincial Planning Statement.” Should the Province adopt a new Provincial Planning Statement, the Official Plan will have to conform to it.

Provincial land use policies and plans are implemented by upper-tier municipalities (e.g. Durham Region) through regional official plans (see Section 5, “Envision Durham”, for more information on the D.R.O.P.). Accordingly, the D.R.O.P must conform to the P.P.S., Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. The Official Plan must in turn conform to the D.R.O.P.

5.0 Envision Durham

The Planning Act requires that a lower-tier municipality amend its official plan to conform to upper-tier official plans within one year of the upper-tier official plan coming into effect.

The D.R.O.P. guides decisions on long-term growth and development in Durham Region, providing policies to ensure an improved quality of life and securing the health, safety, convenience and well-being of present and future residents of the Region.

In 2019, the Region of Durham launched Envision Durham – the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the D.R.O.P. In May 2023, Durham Regional Council adopted the new D.R.O.P. which includes, among other matters, updated population and job growth projections, density targets and the comprehensive delineation of Regional Corridors and Protected Major Transit Station Areas (M.T.S.A.s). The D.R.O.P. is currently under review by the Province and waiting approval from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (M.M.A.H.).

As part of Envision Durham, the Region of Durham has estimated that Oshawa’s population will increase to 298,540 persons by 2051. The newly adopted D.R.O.P. allocates the following population, employment, and household growth targets for the City of Oshawa to 2051:

City of Oshawa’s Population, Employment and Household Forecasts

Oshawa	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051
Urban	199,230	218,930	238,320	256,880	276,800	297,450
Rural	1,050	1,060	1,070	1,070	1,080	1,090
Total Population	200,280	219,991	239,390	257,950	277,880	298,540
Households	73,800	81,450	89,060	96,680	104,710	112,970
Employment	70,600	78,070	85,250	92,110	99,670	107,280

Envision Durham also provides updated intensification targets for Oshawa. The City of Oshawa’s current intensification target is to accommodate 39% of all new residential units within the Built Boundary. The Built Boundary is defined as the limit of the developed urban area in Oshawa and is identified on Schedule ‘A’, Land Use, of the Official Plan. In the event that Envision Durham is approved by the Province, Oshawa’s intensification target will increase to 50%, which will be reflected in the updated Official Plan through the Official Plan Review.

As previously mentioned, the Official Plan must be updated to conform to the approved D.R.O.P. This approval is currently pending from the Province, but is anticipated shortly.

6.0 Why Are We Updating The Official Plan?

There are a number of reasons why the City is initiating the process to update the Official Plan, as discussed in the following subsections.

6.1 The Planning Act

The Planning Act requires that a lower-tier municipality amend its official plan to conform to upper-tier official plans within one year of the upper-tier official plan coming into effect.

6.2 Envision Durham

Envision Durham, the Municipal Comprehensive Review of the D.R.O.P., has been adopted by Regional Council and the Official Plan must conform to the newly adopted D.R.O.P. once it is approved by M.M.A.H.

6.3 Provincial Legislation, Policies and Plans

In addition to conforming to the D.R.O.P., the Official Plan must conform to Provincial legislation, policies and plans, including the Planning Act, the P.P.S., the Growth Plan and other legislation.

There have been many significant changes to Provincial legislation, policies and plans since O.P.A. 179 was adopted in 2016, including updates to the P.P.S. in 2020 and updates to the Growth Plan in 2017 and 2020. In addition, new legislation has been introduced by the Province in recent years which has had a significant impact on land use planning across Ontario and in Oshawa. Any changes to legislation must be reflected in the Official Plan and are further described below.

In 2022, the Province announced More Homes Built Faster: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan 2022-23

(the "Action Plan"). This Action Plan includes a suite of legislative and non-legislative changes introduced by the Provincial government intended to help unlock more housing, streamline development approvals, remove barriers, accelerate planning and further protect homebuyers and owners. As part of the Action Plan, the Province identified a goal of building 1.5 million homes across Ontario by 2032. To achieve the goal of building 1.5 million homes, large and fast-growing municipalities across Ontario, including Oshawa, have been assigned a Municipal Housing Target. The City of Oshawa has been assigned a target of constructing 23,000 new homes by the end of 2031.

To support the Action Plan, the Provincial government passed Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 ("Bill 23") on November 28, 2022. Bill 23 was implemented to assist the Province in achieving its goal of constructing 1.5 million homes by the end of 2031 and aims to ensure that cities, towns, and rural communities grow with a mix of ownership and rental housing types that meet the needs of all Ontarians. Bill 23 made fundamental changes to the land use planning system in Ontario through amendments to the Planning Act, Ontario Heritage Act, Development Charges Act, Municipal Act and other statutes.



Some of the legislative changes made under Bill 23 that will need to be considered as part of the Official Plan Review include, but are not limited to:

- Updating land use permissions to permit increased residential densities, including encouraging the development of the “missing middle” (e.g. townhouses, stacked townhouses, triplexes, fourplexes, etc.) and supporting higher density development around transit stations;
- Updating parkland requirements; and,
- Updating the role of Conservation Authorities.

Staff note that some of the considerations listed above have already been implemented, in part, through recent City-initiated amendments to the Official Plan. Nonetheless, they will need to be assessed comprehensively on a City-wide basis as part of the Official Plan Review process.

The Provincial government also passed Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 (“Bill 109”) on April 14, 2022. Bill 109 implemented amendments to various Provincial statutes, including the Planning Act, to address housing, development and certain other matters, all of which were intended to streamline and speed up the approval process for the delivery of new housing. While many of the legislative changes made under Bill 109 have already been implemented through City-initiated amendments to the Official Plan, these amendments will need to be carried forward in the Official Plan Review process.

More recently, on August 21, 2023, the Province announced the Building Faster Fund (“Fund”), a new three-year, \$1.2 billion program intended to provide funding to municipalities that meet or exceed their annual housing targets. As one of the identified fastest-growing municipalities in Ontario, the City of Oshawa was assigned specific targets for the first three years of the Fund (see the table below). Oshawa’s target for 2026-2031 will exceed 2,300 units annually for the remaining years. However, a specific number has not yet been provided to the City.

City of Oshawa’s Housing Targets under the Building Faster Fund

Year	2023	2024	2025
Oshawa’s Target (number of units)	1,687* *The 2023 actual number of units achieved was 1,204	1,917	2,300

As a result of the Planning Act requirements, the newly adopted D.R.O.P., updated Provincial legislation, policies and plans, as well as the various accelerated housing and population targets that the City has been assigned, it is appropriate to initiate the Official Plan Review in order to address all of these changes and plan for the appropriate future growth of the City accordingly.

7.0 Themes for Review

The following subsections outline various themes that will be explored as part of the Official Plan Review.

7.1 Growth Management

Almost all development in Oshawa is located within the Major Urban Area boundary, which is a defined boundary shown on Schedule 'A', Land Use, of the Official Plan. The Major Urban Area is the area of the City intended for development of urban land uses. The Major Urban Area is divided into two distinct land areas: the Built Boundary and Greenfield areas. Greenfield areas are urban areas that are located outside of the Built Boundary but within the Major Urban Area boundary. Inside of the Major Urban Area boundary are certain key growth areas, including the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre, M.T.S.A.s, various Central Areas and other intensification areas that are all intended to accommodate significant growth and development. Land beyond the Major Urban Area boundary is intended to remain rural in nature with limited development.

Envision Durham has introduced new terminology relating to growth management, including "Strategic Growth Areas" (optimal locations for prioritizing intensification and high density mixed use development), "Transit-oriented Development" (the clustering of high density, compact development in proximity to transit infrastructure), and "M.T.S.A.s" (the area including and around any existing or planned higher order transit station or stop within a settlement area, or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core). All of this new terminology will be reflected in the updated Official Plan.



There are a number of various density targets prescribed by the Province that Oshawa is expected to meet. The Growth Plan specifies the following density targets that are applicable to Oshawa:

- A minimum of 50% of all residential development occurring annually in Durham Region is to be within the Built Boundary. Oshawa's allocation of Durham's total intensification is currently 39%. However, in the event that the D.R.O.P. is approved by the Province, Oshawa's intensification target will increase to 50%;
- 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare applied to the Downtown Oshawa Urban Growth Centre; and,
- 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare applied to designated Greenfield areas (e.g. the Kedron Part II Planning Area and Columbus Part II Planning Area).



The Growth Plan continues to set the direction for accommodating growth and development and requires municipalities to grow in ways that use land and resources more efficiently, including development that can achieve or succeed the above noted density targets. The Growth Plan encourages growth through intensification and promotes optimization of new and existing infrastructure. As Oshawa's population continues to increase, it will be important to use land more efficiently and direct development to key growth areas, as well as encourage infill development, the use of vacant or underutilized sites, the redevelopment of brownfield sites and modest intensification through the addition of accessory apartments. Strengthening policies to encourage complete communities characterized by a mix of uses, a range of housing options and various transit / active transportation options will also be important.

In 2023, approximately 26% of the City's new residential units were located within the Built Boundary. This percentage has increased from 2022 when the City achieved only 19%, but still falls short of the City's intensification target of 39%. Consideration will need to be given to strengthening policies in order to encourage more intensification and development within the Built Boundary.

Part of the Official Plan Review will include determining whether or not Oshawa has a sufficient amount of land to sustain its future population. The Columbus Part II Planning Area was the City's most recent Greenfield area to be planned for growth and development. Now that the Columbus Part II Plan has been adopted by City Council, there are no other large planning areas in north Oshawa that can be developed through a Part II Plan, unless the Major Urban Area boundary is expanded. Envision Durham identifies "2051 Urban Expansion Areas", which include lands outside of Oshawa's Major Urban Area boundary. Further study will be undertaken to determine the City's land needs to 2051 and whether or not an expansion of the Major Urban Area boundary is necessary to accommodate future growth.

Future growth in Oshawa will not be limited to just residential growth. Employment growth will also be necessary to ensure that there is a more balanced rate of employment growth relative to population growth. Ensuring that Oshawa has a sufficient supply of employment lands, and in appropriate locations, will also be considered as part of the Official Plan Review.



7.2 Housing

A housing crisis has been declared in Ontario. Specifically, over the last decade the cost of housing has increased significantly. The price of a home has risen at more than double the rate of household income and rents have continued to rise, making housing unaffordable for many. As well, housing construction has not kept pace with the growing population. Oshawa's housing stock has to both catch up and keep up with population growth forecasts.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the development of higher density dwellings such as townhouses and apartment buildings in Oshawa. There have also been widespread legislative changes to encourage the development of the "missing middle", which includes accessory apartments, duplexes, triplexes and laneway housing. These housing options are generally less expensive than a traditional single detached dwelling and provides a more affordable housing option for many in the community.

Although some of the Provincial legislative changes to encourage more housing have already been implemented, in part, through recent City-initiated amendments to the Official Plan, they will still need to be assessed comprehensively on a City-wide basis as part of the Official Plan Review process. A component of the Official Plan Review will be to examine the existing housing policies and ensure that the policies encourage greater housing diversity and tenure, including addressing the missing middle, the promotion of more affordable housing options, and directing land to be used more efficiently for housing.



7.3 Transportation

The City of Oshawa's population is growing, which means that more people will be travelling to, from and within the City. A well-planned transportation system contributes to creating a healthy, complete and sustainable community. The City should strive to achieve an integrated, balanced, and sustainable multi-modal transportation system.

Oshawa is one of the few cities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and the only municipality in Durham, that can boast an airport, rail lines, deep-sea port and 400 series-highway all in proximity to one another. More specifically, Oshawa is home to:

- An extensive grid-based road network, including at a fine-grained level in key intensification areas;
- An extensive transit network comprised of numerous bus routes (served by Durham Region Transit and GO Transit);
- An inter-regional commuter rail line served by GO Transit via the GO Train;
- An extensive active transportation network consisting of bicycle lanes, bicycle routes, trails and pathways;
- The Oshawa Executive Airport, which serves executive and private air traffic and offers aircraft charters, flight training and the services of other aviation-related businesses; and
- The Port of Oshawa, which handles approximately \$23 million worth of cargo annually and is anticipated to grow as capacity expands.

Oshawa's growing population has resulted in increased travel demand, which puts pressure on the transportation system, leading to increased congestion and delays. As a result, public transportation and active transportation will need to take on a greater role in meeting travel demand. Fortunately, there are some exciting transportation related projects and studies currently underway in Oshawa, including Metrolinx's Oshawa to Bowmanville GO Rail Extension, the City's Integrated M.T.S.A. Study for Central Oshawa and the Region of Durham's Simcoe Street Rapid Transit Visioning Study, all of which will have a positive impact on Oshawa's transportation system.





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7.3.1 Oshawa to Bowmanville GO Rail Extension

In June 2016, the Provincial government announced the extension of GO Rail Service along the Lakeshore East Corridor, which currently ends in south Oshawa at the Durham College Oshawa GO Station on the Canadian National Railway mainline. The extension would cross to the north side of Highway 401 and run through central Oshawa along the Canadian Pacific Railway mainline to Bowmanville in Clarington. The current terminus, i.e. the Durham College Oshawa GO station is located south of Bloor Street West and west of Stevenson Road South. The extension would result in the addition of two more stations in Oshawa, one located east of Thornton Road South, north of Champlain Avenue (“Thornton’s Corners GO Station”), and the other located midway between Simcoe Street South and Ritson Road South, between Olive Avenue East and First Avenue (the “Central Oshawa GO Station”). These new stations will each be a hub for multiple modes of transportation, will spur revitalization of the surrounding neighbourhoods, and will help to accommodate the needs of Oshawa’s residents and the workforce of the future who need access to regional and local transit.

7.3.2 Integrated M.T.S.A. Study for Central Oshawa

The Integrated M.T.S.A. Study for Central Oshawa was initiated in response to the announced Bowmanville GO Extension and the planned Central Oshawa GO Station. The purpose of the study is to undertake a Master Land Use and Urban Design Plan to advance appropriate development and intensification in the M.T.S.A, as well as to undertake an area specific Transportation Master Plan and recommend a preferred transportation option that accommodates future development. Staff are currently completing Stage 3 of this 4-Stage study and it is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2024.

7.3.3 Simcoe Street Rapid Transit Visioning Study

The Region of Durham's Simcoe Street Rapid Transit Visioning Study is investigating opportunities to realistically assess rapid transit investments based on evolving best practices in areas of diversity, equity and inclusion. The primary objective of this study is to develop a concept plan, including preferred stations and connections, and a supportive rapid transit service strategy for Simcoe Street North and South. It will also consider future transit planning initiatives by Metrolinx, transit agencies and regional and municipal authorities.

The current transportation projects and studies being undertaken will help to inform existing or new transportation policies for the Official Plan Review. Strengthening Oshawa’s transportation policies will help to accommodate the transportation needs of Oshawa’s growing population, offer and promote more active transportation opportunities, encourage more transit-oriented development, and reduce the demand for automobiles.

7.4 Cultural Heritage Resources

Oshawa's cultural heritage resources contribute to the unique character of the City, reflecting its history and the cultural diversity of its community members. Oshawa has a rich and dynamic history and features extensive archival collections and significant landmarks, including many historic sites and one National Historic Site (Parkwood Estate National Historic Site). There are many properties with cultural heritage value in Oshawa, including 40 properties that are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

An official plan provides a municipality with the legal authority to plan and protect its cultural heritage resources and may have specific requirements beyond the heritage conservation tools available in the Ontario Heritage Act. However, there have been numerous changes to Provincial legislation over the last several years which have resulted in updates to the Ontario Heritage Act, specifically through the introduction of Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 ("Bill 108") and Bill 23.

Some of the changes to the Ontario Heritage Act introduced under Bill 108 include:

- Changes to the inclusion of non-designated properties on a municipal heritage register;
- Changes to the heritage designation process;
- Changes to the alteration and demolition process; and,
- Changes to the appeals process.

The changes to the Ontario Heritage Act issued under Bill 23 include:

- Updating how municipalities manage and update listed heritage properties;
- Revising when municipalities can issue a Notice of Intention to Designate a property;
- Raising the threshold for designating a heritage property; and,
- Prescribing how municipalities create and manage Heritage Conservation Districts.

Recent changes made to the Ontario Heritage Act as a result of Bill 108 and Bill 23 will be reviewed and applied to future Official Plan policies, where applicable. Part of the Official Plan Review will also consider:

- Strengthening cultural heritage resources polices;
- Promoting built and cultural heritage awareness;
- Encouraging the adaptive reuse and promotion of cultural heritage resources;
- Defining cultural heritage landscapes;
- Ways to incorporate Indigenous cultural heritage;
- Engagement with Indigenous Communities to consider their interests when identifying, protecting and conserving Indigenous cultural heritage resources; and,
- The protection and management of archaeological resources.





7.5 Agriculture and the Rural System

While Oshawa may be more urbanized compared to other Durham Region municipalities, there is still a robust agricultural and rural component to the City. Oshawa's rural area, which is generally contained in the north half of the City, supports:

- Blocks of land for agriculture and food production;
- A system of open spaces which support recreational opportunities, tourism and environmental conservation;
- Rural settlements; and,
- Agri-tourism.

Some key issues facing the agricultural and rural sector today in Durham Region include loss of productive agricultural land, fragmentation of agricultural land, rural severance policies and potential land use conflicts between rural and urban uses. There is also a growing shift of modernization and diversification of farming, including the demand for on-farm diversified uses. The Official Plan Review provides an opportunity to examine ways in which we can further support local food infrastructure, encourage on-farm diversified uses and value-added agricultural or rural-related activities.

There is also a growing interest in urban agriculture, which is the practice of growing, processing and distribution of food within urban centres in accordance with local policies, by-laws and regulations. Oshawa has a number of volunteer-led community gardens located throughout the City and as its population continues to grow, there will be more need and/or interest for community gardens and other innovative ways to grow food and feed the community. Increasing opportunities for urban agriculture through updated policies will be important, as eating locally grown food reduces our environmental footprint, decreases wasteful packaging, and eases food safety and security concerns. Local food is also often fresher, nutritious, and better tasting.



7.6 Environment

Oshawa is home to many natural areas, from the Lake Ontario shoreline to the rolling hills of the rural areas to the north, including open spaces/green spaces, trails and parks.

7.6.1 Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine

A portion of the City lies within the provincially designated Greenbelt, which includes the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Greenbelt is permanently protected greenspace and farmland in Ontario. The Oak Ridges Moraine is one of Ontario's most significant landforms and contains a unique concentration of environmental, geological and hydrological features including clean and abundant water resources, healthy and diverse plant and animal habitat, an attractive and distinct landscape, and prime agricultural areas. Policies in the Official Plan must conform to both the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

7.6.2 Environmental Pressures

There are a number of issues currently facing Oshawa's natural environment, including impacts to water resources, environmental degradation (e.g. loss of tree cover and wildlife habitat), an increase in invasive species and climate change. Proper management, protection and conservation of Oshawa's natural environment is essential to ensure that Oshawa's natural features and water resources continue to be protected for the long term, to allow for a thriving environmental system. Creating specific environmental goals and strengthening environmental policies will be considered as part of the Official Plan Review.



7.6.3 Open Space and Parkland

A specific review of parkland policies will also be an important part of the Official Plan Review. Recent updates to Provincial legislation through Bill 23 have impacted the way in which the City can acquire parkland. Specifically, the Province has updated the maximum alternative parkland dedication rate, which means that the City will be acquiring less parkland and less cash-in-lieu of parkland. However, as Oshawa continues to grow, more parkland will be required to accommodate more residents. Oshawa's parks system provides many recreational, cultural and social opportunities, and access to parkland and open spaces can improve mental health and wellbeing. As a result

of Bill 23 and the City's ability to acquire less parkland than in previous years, it is now, more than ever, vital to ensure that Oshawa's existing and future parks system is properly managed, conserved and protected.

7.7 Climate Change and Sustainability

Climate change is defined as a significant change in long-term weather patterns, and can apply to any major change in temperature, wind pattern or precipitation that occurs over time. These changes are significantly impacting communities across the world and are having a detrimental effect on the natural environment. Oshawa residents will continue to experience more frequent extreme weather events, potential flooding, and temperature fluctuations. Air and water quality is a growing concern, as is the strain that climate change is placing on power generation through increased demand for electricity. Climate change has also led to new insect-borne diseases and increased invasive species and pests.

As Oshawa continues to grow, consideration will need to be given to more sustainable development options (e.g. low impact development, green buildings, promoting sustainable energy, building more active transportation infrastructure, etc.). Currently, there are limited references to climate change in the Official Plan. Through the Official Plan Review, there is opportunity to both enhance existing policies and develop new policies that promote resilient and sustainable communities that support climate change adaption and mitigation and encourage sustainable and climate resilient development.



7.8 Economic Development

Oshawa's economy is diversifying and growing. As previously mentioned, Oshawa has transitioned from an economy primarily driven by manufacturing to a technology-driven, knowledge economy. In a report released by CBRE, Oshawa was ranked as one of the top five markets for tech talent growth across Canada. However, industrial growth, which has accounted for over \$250 million in building permit activity over the past five years, is still growing and bringing new companies and thousands of new jobs to Oshawa's economy.

The City is committed to economic growth through strategic activities that enhance job growth and create investment opportunities. The Official Plan Review provides an opportunity to strengthen economic development policies in order to support:

- Downtown revitalization;
- Commercial and industrial investment;
- The growth of the City's post-secondary educational institutions;
- Oshawa's arts and culture sector; and
- City infrastructure assets for investment attraction (e.g. the Oshawa Executive Airport and Port of Oshawa).



What other themes do you think should be explored as part of the Official Plan Review?

We want to hear your thoughts!

Visit [ConnectOshawa.ca/OPReview](https://connectoshowa.ca/OPReview) to fill out a feedback form or complete a paper feedback form at Service Oshawa.

8.0 Other City Initiatives

There are a number of City initiatives that are recently completed, are currently being undertaken, or are anticipated to commence this year that will help to inform the Official Plan Review. The table below provides a description and status update of each initiative.

Initiative	Description	Status
2024 – 2027 Oshawa Strategic Plan	The Oshawa Strategic Plan is a road map for how Council and City staff deliver on community priorities through the delivery of services and program. The current Oshawa Strategic Plan timeframe is 2020-2023. A new Strategic Plan is being developed with an updated timeframe (2024-2027).	Staff are in the process of developing a new draft Oshawa Strategic Plan, which will be presented to Council in 2024.
Parks, Recreation, Library and Culture Facility Needs Assessment (P.R.L.C.)	The first P.R.L.C. was endorsed by City Council in 2015, which was used to plan parks, recreation, library and culture related facilities in a fiscally sustainable manner and respond to the needs of people living in Oshawa. Many of the initial recommendations have been successfully implemented. The P.R.L.C. is now being revisited to provide an updated strategy that builds on recent achievements and reflects changes in the City.	Final revisions are underway. The final document is anticipated to be endorsed by Council in 2024.
2024-2028 Corporate Energy Management Plan	The City recently approved a new Corporate Energy Management Plan, which highlights the City’s current energy conservation measures and actions, identifies areas of opportunity, outlines actions to assist in achieving the City’s goals and objectives for conserving energy, reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and sets corporate targets.	Completed.
Oshawa Economic Development Strategy	The City recently launched its new Economic Development Strategy that aims to drive job growth and further investment in Oshawa. The Strategy focuses on enhanced trade, diversification and quality of life, and positions Oshawa for future economies, opportunities and overall growth.	Completed.



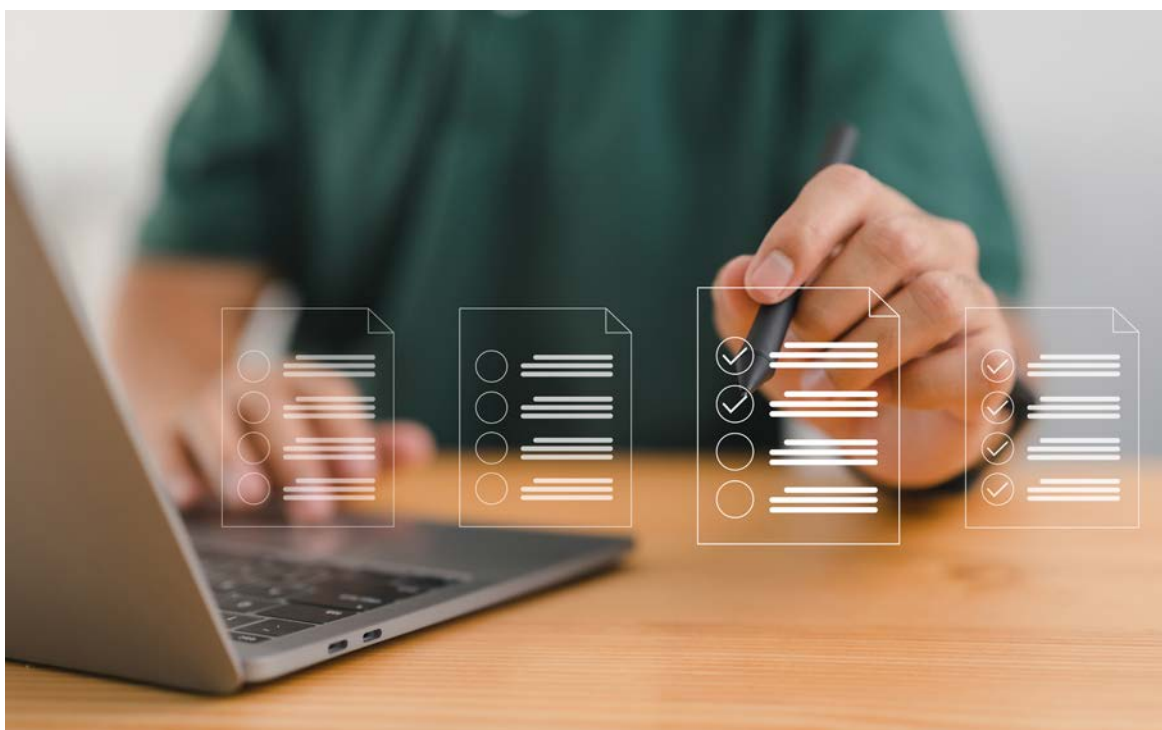
Initiative	Description	Status
Integrated M.T.S.A. Study for Central Oshawa	The purpose of the Integrated M.T.S.A. Study is to undertake a Master Land Use and Urban Design Plan to advance appropriate development and intensification in the Central Oshawa M.T.S.A, as well as to undertake an area specific Transportation Master Plan and recommend a preferred transportation option that accommodates future development.	Currently in Stage 3 of the Study and anticipated to be completed in 2024.
Bloor-Simcoe Intensification Study	The City is undertaking a Bloor-Simcoe Intensification Study in order to develop an intensification policy framework to guide future development in suitable locations and at appropriate densities within the Study Area. The Study will include a review of the existing land use policy framework and current conditions in the Study Area, and identify opportunities to accommodate future growth.	Currently in process and anticipated to be completed in 2024.
The Oshawa Integrated Transportation Master Plan (I.T.M.P.) and the City of Oshawa Active Transportation Master Plan (A.T.M.P.)	There is an existing I.T.M.P. and A.T.M.P. that were both prepared in 2015 but will be updated over the next few years. The purpose of the I.T.M.P. is to guide the City with respect to transportation-related decisions in the coming years, whereas the A.T.M.P. sets out the means for improving and expanding Oshawa’s active transportation network.	Anticipated to commence in 2024.


9.0 Timeline/Schedule

In order to initiate the Official Plan Review process, Section 26(3) of the Planning Act directs any Council to consult with the approval authority (in this case, the Region of Durham) and other prescribed public bodies, as well as hold a Special Meeting of Council open to the public to generally discuss the revisions that may be required as part of the Official Plan Review.

The Official Plan Review process was initiated in January 2024. A staff report (Report [CNCL-24-05](#)) was presented to Council to obtain authorization to initiate the Official Plan Review. This is anticipated to be a multi-year study and will generally advance as shown on the next page.

It should be noted that the scope of work is subject to change. A more detailed work program will be prepared following the Special Meeting of Council.



 We are here.

Phase 1
Visioning/Background
Research and Review

This phase includes a review of relevant policies, legislation and various “themes” (such as growth management, cultural heritage resources, housing, the environment, etc.). This phase will also include public engagement, including the Special Meeting of Council taking place on April 30, 2024.



Phase 2
Initial Findings/Policy
Development

This phase includes Official Plan policy development, public engagement and preliminary drafting of the Official Plan Amendment.



Phase 3
Statutory Phase

This phase includes the introduction of the draft Official Plan Amendment, as well as the statutory open house and public meeting(s) required under the Planning Act.



Phase 4
Adoption

This phase includes Council adoption of the Official Plan Amendment.

10.0 Consultation and Engagement

An important part of the Official Plan Review process will be extensive consultation and engagement with residents, community members, Indigenous Communities, advisory committees and stakeholders, in order to ensure that the future Official Plan appropriately addresses local needs, emerging trends and ongoing growth of the City.

The Special Meeting of Council scheduled for April 30, 2024 will be the first of many opportunities for community engagement. The Planning Act requires at least one statutory public open house and separately, one statutory public meeting. However, staff will be offering additional engagement opportunities beyond the legislative minimum requirements, including, but not limited to, public information centres, feedback forms and more.

A more detailed consultation and engagement plan will be prepared following the Special Meeting of Council.



If at any point you have questions or comments related to the Official Plan Review, please email OPReview@oshawa.ca or visit www.ConnectOshawa.ca/OPReview for more information.



11.0 Conclusion

This Discussion Paper is meant to:

- Provide background information on the City of Oshawa, the Official Plan, and the land use planning system in Ontario;
- Outline details of the Official Plan Review process;
- Discuss key themes that staff will explore to assist with updating the Official Plan; and,
- Outline ways to get involved in the Official Plan Review process.

We want your feedback! Please feel free to share your ideas and advise if there is anything else you think should be considered as part of the Official Plan Review. We appreciate your input and encourage your participation throughout the Official Plan Review process.

Share your feedback in one of the following ways:

- Attend a Special Meeting of Council on April 30, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber at Oshawa City Hall located at 50 Centre St. S.; or
- Complete a feedback form on Connect Oshawa ([ConnectOshawa.ca/OPReview](https://connectoshowa.ca/OPReview)) or on paper at Service Oshawa, located at City Hall (50 Centre St. S.).

Feedback will be received until 12 p.m. on Friday, May 10, 2024 and will be considered in a future staff report to be presented to the Economic and Development Services Committee.

You can also visit [ConnectOshawa.ca/OPReview](https://connectoshowa.ca/OPReview) to register and stay up-to-date on the Official Plan Review and/or email OPReview@oshowa.ca at any time with questions or comments.

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If this information is required in an accessible format, please contact Service Oshawa.

Telephone: 905-436-3311 Email: service@oshawa.ca