



GEORGINA

**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWN OF GEORGINA
Georgina Environmental Advisory Committee Agenda**

Monday, November 23, 2020

7:00 PM

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

“We would like to begin today’s meeting by acknowledging that the Town of Georgina is located over lands originally used and occupied by the First Peoples of the Williams Treaties First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples and thank them for sharing this land. We would also like to acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our close neighbour and friend, one with which we strive to build a cooperative and respectful relationship.”

2. ROLL CALL

3. INTRODUCTION OF ADDENDUM ITEM(S)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

5. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

That the following minutes be adopted as presented:

1. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on October 21, 2020.

3

7. SPEAKERS

8. DELEGATIONS/ PETITIONS

9. PRESENTATIONS

10. REPORTS

11. GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Ontario Takes Action to Reduce Plastic Pollution in the Great Lakes

6

2. Ontario Takes Action to Reduce Electronic Waste

9

12. MOTIONS/ NOTICES OF MOTION

13. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Proposed 2021 Schedule 12

2. Potential for Employment Lands Along 400 Series Highways 13

The Georgina Agricultural Advisory Committee has requested more information on their next agenda about this for the November 26th meeting.

14. CLOSED SESSION

15. MOTION TO ADJOURN

That the meeting adjourn at



GEORGINA

**THE CORPORATION OF THE
TOWN OF GEORGINA**

Georgina Environmental Advisory Committee Minutes

Date: Monday, October 26, 2020
Time: 7:00 PM

Members of
Committee Present: Lee Canavan
Councillor, Dave Neeson
Neil Comer
Gary Heine
Kelly Mingram
Mark Payne
Rebecca Wheater

Staff Present: Sandra Dipietrantonio

1. CALL TO ORDER

“We would like to begin today’s meeting by acknowledging that the Town of Georgina is located over lands originally used and occupied by the First Peoples of the Williams Treaties First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples and thank them for sharing this land. We would also like to acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our close neighbour and friend, one with which we strive to build a cooperative and respectful relationship”.

2. ROLL CALL

As noted above

3. INTRODUCTION OF ADDENDUM ITEM(S)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESOLUTION NO. GEAC-2020-0026

Moved By Kelly Mingram
Seconded By Neil Comer

That the October 26, 2020, Committee agenda be adopted as presented.

Carried

5. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

RESOLUTION NO. C-2020- GEAC-2020-0027

Moved By Neil Comer

Seconded By Rebecca Wheeler

That the following minutes be adopted.

1. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held September 28, 2020.

Carried

7. SPEAKERS

8. DELEGATIONS/PETITIONS

9. PRESENTATIONS

10. REPORTS

11. GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS

12. MOTIONS/NOTICES OF MOTIONS

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Neeson provided a verbal update on the Pefferlaw Dam and that the report that will be going to Council be sent to this committee when available.

1. Delegation from the Canadian Hemp Farmers

RESOLUTION NO. C-2020- 0290

Moved By Councillor Harding

Seconded By Councillor Waddington

That the delegation provided by Dan Carter, CEO of Canadian Hemp Farmers Alliance, seeking support for the mandating of hemp in the Canadian Sustainable Development Goals and in Canada be received and forwarded to appropriate Development Services staff, the Georgina Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Georgina Environmental Advisory Committee.

Carried

RESOLUTION NO. C-2020- GEAC-2020-0028

Moved By Neil Comer

Seconded By Lee Canavan

That the Delegation from the Canadian Hemp Farmers be received.

Carried

2. York Region Environmental Advisory Committee Update

Kelly Mingram, Vice Chair, verbal update

- Kelly requested that the two presentations be forwarded to the GAGAC Committee and the Ontario Water Centre.
- Suggested that all members read the minutes.
- Be involved with the York Region Climate Change Plan.

RESOLUTION NO. GEAC-2020-0029

Moved By Neil Comer

Seconded By Lee Canavan

That the verbal report from Kelly Mingram be received.

Carried

15. MOTION TO ADJOURN

RESOLUTION NO. GEAC-2020-0030

Moved By Gary Heine

Seconded By Mark Payne

That the Committee meeting adjourn at 7:38 p.m.

Carried.

Councillor Dave Neeson, Chair

Sandra Dipietrantonio,
Records Coordinator

Ontario Takes Action to Reduce Plastic Pollution in the Great Lakes

October 22, 2020

Province invests in the largest initiative of its kind in the world to tackle plastic pollution

TORONTO — The Ontario government is providing Pollution Probe with \$375,000 to collect plastic waste from marinas around the province using innovative plastic-capture technology. This will be the largest initiative of its kind in the world to tackle plastic pollution in provincial lakes and waterways. Every year an estimated 22 million pounds of plastic pollution end up in the Great Lakes.

Today's announcement was made at the Toronto Zoo by Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, as part of [Waste Reduction Week](#).

"Our government is committed to protecting our water resources and Great Lakes, and that includes tackling the millions of pounds of plastic pollution that enter our province's waterways each year," said Minister Yurek. "That is why I am proud to support this important initiative with Pollution Probe, which will help safeguard our precious water resources and the ecosystems that depend on them, for future generations."

Pollution Probe is installing two types of plastic capture technologies: Seabins and LittaTraps to help capture litter and plastic pollution in up to 12 marinas throughout the province, including:

- The Harbour West Marina and Cobourg Marina on Lake Ontario
- The Eriean Marina on Lake Erie
- Mitchell's Bay Marine Park on Lake St. Clair
- The Bridgeview Marina and Sarnia Bay Marina on Lake Huron
- The South Bay Cove, Hindson Marina, Point Pleasant Marina and the Township of Georgian Bay on Georgian Bay/Lake Huron

The Seabin can collect over eight pounds of waste each day including microplastics, larger plastic items like water bottles, food wrappers and other floating debris. Littatrap are installed inside storm drains to catch waste before it enters the waterway.

As part of its funding agreement with the province, Pollution Probe will analyze the types and amounts of waste collected and publicly share the results to help increase awareness of plastic pollution and its proper disposal.

"Pollution Probe is pleased to welcome the Government of Ontario to the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup," said Christopher Hilke, CEO of Pollution Probe. "With the province's support we are creating the largest initiative of its kind in the world to tackle plastic pollution in our waters. The technologies we are deploying will clean plastic and other debris from the Great Lakes and what we collect will contribute to important research that will fill knowledge gaps and support effective policy decisions. The Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup will also play an important role in empowering people to take action in their communities."

The Toronto Zoo is also collaborating with Pollution Probe on the [Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup](#) initiative. The installation of the Seabin and Littatrap at the Toronto Zoo will help to further raise awareness of plastic pollution in waterways.

"A key role of the Toronto Zoo is helping raise awareness of the many threats to our natural world and the challenges that animals who call it home face. We are excited to participate in the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup initiative to ensure more people know about these issues and have tools to help be part of the solution," said Dolf DeJong, CEO of the Toronto Zoo.

Ontario's investment in plastics capture technology is in addition to the \$7.47 million the province [recently announced](#) to support 65 projects that address a variety of environmental challenges facing the Great Lakes, such as increased levels of pollutants, excess nutrients and rising levels of invasive species.

QUICK FACTS

- [Seabin](#) devices are trash skimmers that move up and down with the natural flow of open water to collect floating debris on the water's surface.
- Each [LittaTrap](#) can collect debris over five millimetres in size.
- Data from volunteer beach cleanups show that typically more than [80 per cent](#) of litter along the shorelines of the Great Lakes is comprised of plastics.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Learn about the Great Lakes and the 65 projects the province is funding to improve the health of the Great Lakes](#)
- [Learn how to apply for a grant from the Great Lakes Local Action Fund](#)

- [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#)

CONTACTS

Andrew Buttigieg

Minister's Office

437-224-4599

Andrew.Buttigieg@ontario.ca

Gary Wheeler

Communications Branch

416-314-6666

Gary.S.Wheeler@ontario.ca

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

<http://www.ontario.ca/mecp>

*News Release***Ontario Takes Action to Reduce Electronic Waste**

October 21, 2020

Province helping environment by encouraging innovation among electronics producers

TORONTO — The Ontario government has introduced a new regulation that will require producers to collect and safely manage the full life-cycle of their electrical and electronic equipment, such as cell phones, computers, printers and gaming equipment. The regulation, which will be enforceable on January 1, 2021, also promotes the reuse and refurbishment of products so they can be resold.

These new requirements will not only reduce the amount of waste produced by electronics but will create opportunities to enable innovative solutions for managing electronic waste and the evolving demands of the tech sector.

"Electronics are becoming an increasing challenge for our waste system and we need new solutions to keep them out of landfills," said Jeff Yurek, Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Minister Yurek was joined by representatives from Nokia and Greener Acres at a Waste Reduction Week event today at Queen's Park. The Minister congratulated the companies for joining forces to recycle electronic waste. Their innovative project uses recycled electronics like smart phones, tablets and televisions to create smart light poles, designed by Greener Acres, which enable highspeed broadband powered by Nokia to be delivered across the province.

"Our government supports innovation from the private sector and encourages the use of electronic waste for new, sustainable products like smart light poles," said Minister Yurek. "Companies like Nokia and Greener Acres are finding new and innovative ways to manage their products, make recycling simpler and put these recyclable materials back into the economy. I hope to see many other creative ideas coming forward over the coming months that will significantly reduce the amount of electronics from going to landfill."

"Nokia is proud of its strong legacy of supporting small business such as Greener Acres and we are excited to partner with another Ontario company to develop the next generation smart pole sourced

from recycled content," said Shawn Sparling, Head of Enterprise & Public Sector, Nokia Canada. "We create the technologies that connect the world, and Smart Cities powered by these Smart Green Poles will be key drivers in bringing high-speed connectivity to all Canadians."

"Today's made-in-Ontario Electronics regulation supports innovation, and the development of a circular economy," said Meni Mancini, President and Director of Greener Acres Canada. "Nokia and Greener Acres are using recycled e-waste to develop the next generation of Smart City pole infrastructure, supporting the expansion of Broadband Internet across Ontario in a more environmentally friendly way."

The new regulation will also create new collection and management obligations for lighting producers starting in 2023 and will increase the types of products Ontarians are able to recycle through producer responsibility programs - resulting in more waste being diverted from landfills. This is one of many important steps, outlined in Ontario's [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#), the government is taking to balance a healthy economy and a healthy environment.

QUICK FACTS

- Producers could save an estimated \$12 million by transitioning from the existing waste diversion program to a full producer responsibility model. It is anticipated that some of these savings could be passed on to consumers.
- Under the regulation, the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority will be responsible for oversight and enforcement, including monitoring the performance of producers to ensure they meet requirements.
- Leveraging specialized manufacturing technologies, Greener Acres can produce up to 1,000 Smart City Green poles each day. The success of the relationship with Nokia will enable Greener Acres to create a dozen full-time jobs in Ontario.
- Nokia is a global leader in Information & Communication Technologies and a pioneer of emerging connectivity technology.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan](#)
- [Blue Box news release](#)
- [Waste Reduction Week](#)
- [Waste Discussion Paper](#)
- [Special Advisor Report on Waste](#)

CONTACTS

Andrew Buttigieg
Minister's Office
437-224-4599
Andrew.Buttigieg@ontario.ca

Gary Wheeler
Communications Branch
416-314-6666
Gary.S.Wheeler@ontario.ca

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
<http://www.ontario.ca/mecp>

Questions about your subscription? Contact us.

[Edit your subscription preferences.](#)

[Unsubscribe from News on Demand.](#)



[Follow Us On Twitter.](#)

[Visit the Newsroom.](#)

[Disponible en français.](#)

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2008 - 2020

99 Wellesley Street West 4th floor, Room 4620 Toronto ON M7A 1A1

	GEAC
	4 th Monday
January	25 th
February	22 nd
March	22 nd
April	26 th
May	Civic
June	28 th
July	26 th
August	23 rd
September	27 th
October	25 th
November	22 nd
December	Civic
MAX Meetings	8
Eliminate	2
	Suggested dates to be removed

GTA

York Region asks province for process to open up protected Greenbelt — again

By **Noor Javed** Staff Reporter

Wed., Oct. 7, 2020 | ⌚ 4 min. read

[READ THE CONVERSATION \(4 \)](#)

The Region of York wants the province to create a process that allows municipalities to convert protected Greenbelt-designated lands into those used for employment purposes, a move that's being lambasted by a coalition of environmental groups as an attack on the provincially significant lands.

Regional councillors will vote Thursday to ask the province to consider the request, in a response to resolutions from four local municipalities, including Richmond Hill and the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, who say having access to those lands along the 400-series highways and near GO train stations would be a boost for the local economy.

"We're unique. Almost 95 per cent of our municipality is in the Oak Ridges Moraine or the Greenbelt, so that leaves us very little developable land to expand our commercial and industrial tax base," said Iain Lovatt, the mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"We aren't asking for them to convert all of it, we are asking for four per cent of it — and all of it is countryside land that serves as a buffer to the Greenbelt," he said, adding that opening up the land would create 23,000 jobs in Stouffville.

"The province needs to allow municipalities the opportunity to be prosperous, and when businesses that want to locate on a provincially significant artery like the 404 or 400, there should be opportunities to have discussions about it."

But environmental groups say this is merely an attempt from municipalities and developers to get access to the land that has been deemed off-limit to development since 2005.

"There is a sense out there that this is the time to push, and maybe we can completely dismantle any kind of planning system in the region, and go back to the wild west of planning," said Tim Gray, executive director of Environmental Defence.

Despite pressure from developers and the building industry, the province has reiterated on numerous occasions that it would not touch the Greenbelt.

"The government remains fully committed to protecting the Greenbelt, and is not considering proposals to remove lands from the Greenbelt," said Conrad Spezowka, a spokesperson with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "We look forward to continuing to work with York Region to accelerate opportunities that create jobs and housing, outside the Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine"

In April 2020, the Region asked staff to examine the competitive benefits of opening up the Greenbelt lands along the highway for employment use. They determined that 33 per cent of land along the 400-series highways was Greenbelt land, according to the staff report.

But the same report also states that an assessment done in 2107 determined there are 2,400 hectares of vacant employment land in the Region. But York claims in order for it to effectively plan for the next 30 years, it needs to know if the employment lands will be available to them.

“In terms of land scarcity for employment lands, there is just no basis for it. There is lots of land within the existing urban boundary that is serviced, that isn’t being built on, and the rate of using up that supply is so low that it is not at risk of being used,” said Gray, adding that speculators were to blame for the recent push.

Land “may be worth a couple of million if it’s in the Greenbelt, but it’s worth 10 times as much if it’s not, because it can be turned into a subdivision,” he said.

Gray says often employment lands become under-utilized and eventually are converted to subdivisions. “If the province caves to these demands, it sets a precedent, and then it’s pretty much open season on the Greenbelt.”

This isn’t the first time the region has made this request, asking for a similar mechanism in 2005 and 2015.

In its staff report, it says it will continue to do so:

“York Region will continue to advocate to the province for the ability to remove lands from the Greenbelt Plan for employment uses, when deemed necessary, while protecting natural heritage features. The 400-series highway corridors are significant connective infrastructure that promote and enhance the provincial, regional and local municipal economies.”

And the request made by Richmond Hill, to allow for rezoning of protected land near Gormley GO station to allow for industrial uses was sent to the province earlier this year in the form of a municipal zoning request. At the time, the province said “the Greenbelt was off the table.”

The proposal would not only affect current lands, but also lands that flank planned highways such as the GTA West corridor and Bradford bypass. In August, the province announced the GTA West Corridor would run through northern Vaughan, generally north of Kirby Road and end at Highway 400.

Gray said the highway will already cut through forests, wetlands and natural habitats, “but now they want all the land adjacent to it to be bulldozed too.”

Lovatt said he’s optimistic the province will consider the proposal — eventually.

“I believe there is a path forward that the province can regulate it. If I was the premier, and I got a request to open up the Greenbelt to build houses, I would say no. Because houses won’t solve the problem. It’s the commercial and industrial tax base that will create jobs and boost the economy,” he said.

“What makes Stouffville so unique is the Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine and we have to celebrate that,” he said. “But we also need to take care of our own house.”



Noor Javed is a Toronto-based reporter covering current affairs in the York region for the Star. Follow her on Twitter: [@njaved](https://twitter.com/njaved)

Read more about: [Richmond Hill, Vaughan](#)

More from The Star & Partners

Copyright owned or licensed by Toronto Star Newspapers Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction or distribution of this content is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Toronto Star Newspapers Limited and/or its licensors. To order copies of Toronto Star articles, please go to: www.TorontoStarReprints.com

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Planning and Economic Development
October 8, 2020

Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner

Potential For Employment Lands Along 400 Series Highways

1. Recommendations

1. Council reiterate its request to the Province to develop a process allowing municipalities to access strategically located employment lands, if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.
2. Council reiterate its request to the Province to permit the extension of Great Lake based servicing as an option to service settlement areas within the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan areas.
3. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and to the Clerks of the local municipalities.

2. Summary

York Region Council passed a resolution at its meeting on April 30, 2020, directing staff to report back on the competitive benefits to the Region if employment uses were to be permitted on lands along 400 series highways currently located within the protected countryside of the provincial Greenbelt Plan.

Key Points:

- Generally, lands adjacent to 400 series Highways are well suited for employment purposes
- Much of these lands in York Region are protected by the provincial Greenbelt Plan for environmental and agricultural uses
- While the Regional Official Plan can identify future employment lands beyond the 2051 planning horizon, it is required to conform to provincial Plans
- The Province is the appropriate agency to balance economic and environmental objectives articulated in Provincial Plans
- The Province should develop a process to allow municipalities to access strategically located employment lands over the long term if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review

- Council has previously requested the Province permit Great Lakes based servicing as an option for servicing existing communities in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan areas

3. Background

York Regional Council directed staff to report back on the competitive benefits of permitting new employment uses along 400 series highways

York Regional Council, in response to a number of local Council resolutions, requested that staff examine the competitive benefits of permitting new employment uses on lands in close proximity to 400 series highways that are currently not within the Region's urban boundary. (Please see Attachment 1) Currently, all such lands are within the provincially protected Greenbelt Plan, and amounts to approximately 33% of 400 series highway frontage in the Region.

York Region has repeatedly requested the Province to put a process in place to amend the Greenbelt Plan to accommodate employment growth along 400 series highways when deemed necessary

Prior to the approval of the Greenbelt Plan in 2005, York Region Council, at its meeting held on December 16, 2004, requested the Province, through [Report 11, Clause 7](#), to permit York Region the ability to initiate amendments to the Greenbelt Plan. Council Recommendation 2, comment #8 states:

“The Greenbelt Plan provides some means of effectively amending the Greenbelt Plan to permit strategically located employment lands in areas such as the 400 series highway corridor, for example the 404 corridor north of the Oak Ridges Moraine.”

During the latest coordinated review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, York Region Council, in a [2015 report](#), requested:

“The Province develop a process to allow municipalities to access strategically located employment lands, if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.”

A number of local municipal Councils have advocated removing lands adjacent to 400 series highways from the Greenbelt Plan for employment uses

The Township of King, City of Richmond Hill, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Town of East Gwillimbury all have Council resolutions that advocate removing lands adjacent to either Highway 400 or Highway 404 from the Greenbelt Plan for employment uses. The respective resolutions can be summarized as follows:

- A September, 2016 resolution from the Township of King supports removing lands from the Greenbelt Plan for new employment lands along Highway 400, when required
- In November 2019 and February 2020 Richmond Hill Council resolved to support the expansion of their urban boundary in the vicinity of Highway 404 and the Gormley GO Train Station, by redesignating the Protected Countryside lands to Settlement
- In August 2019 and March 2020, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Council resolved to support employment uses along the Highway 404 corridor and the expansion of the urban area around the Gormley and Bloomington GO Train Stations, by redesignating the Protected Countryside lands to Settlement
- In January 2013 and January 2019, the Town of East Gwillimbury Council resolved to support adding 600 acres east of Highway 404, between Davis Drive and Green Lane, for new employment lands

The Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan recognize the importance of planning for employment in promoting economic competitiveness and the protection of the natural environment

Section 2 of the *Planning Act* lists the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions, the adequate provision of employment opportunities, and the protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities as matters of provincial interest.

Section 1.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement states that: “*Planning authorities shall promote economic development and competitiveness by:*

- a) providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment, institutional, and broader mixed uses to meet long-term needs;*
- b) providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses;*
- c) facilitating the conditions for economic investment by identifying strategic sites for investment, monitoring the availability and suitability of employment sites, including market-ready sites, and seeking to address potential barriers to investment.”*

Policies 1.1.2 and 1.3.2.7 of the Provincial Policy Statement allow planning authorities to plan beyond 25 years for the long-term protection of employment areas, provided lands are not designated.

Section 2.0 of the Provincial Policy Statement states that: “*Ontario's long-term prosperity, environmental health, and social well-being depend on conserving biodiversity, protecting the health of the Great Lakes, and protecting natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral and*

cultural heritage and archaeological resources for their economic, environmental and social benefits.”

Section 2.2.5 of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe states that economic development and competitiveness will be promoted by ensuring the availability of sufficient land, in appropriate locations, for a variety of employment uses to accommodate forecasted employment growth.

To balance urban growth with protecting the natural environment and agricultural areas, Section 4 of the Growth Plan contains policies that protect these lands, features and resources. The Growth Plan deems these as “*essential for the long-term quality of life, economic prosperity, environmental health, and ecological integrity of the region. They collectively provide essential ecosystem services, including water storage and filtration, cleaner air and habitats, and support pollinators, carbon storage, adaptation and resilience to climate change.*”

The Greenbelt Plan was put in place to contain urban growth and create a permanent protected zone around the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Greenbelt Plan, together with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and protect the ecological and hydrological integrity of the features, areas and functions. This is particularly true of the Oak Ridges Moraine which traverses central York Region.

The Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land which:

- Protects against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base and supports agriculture as the predominant land use;
- Gives permanent protection to the natural heritage and water resource systems that sustain ecological and human health and that form the environmental framework around which major urbanization in southcentral Ontario will be organized;
- Provides for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation and resource uses; and
- Builds resilience to and mitigates climate change.

Provincial policies provide for a balanced approach to environmental protection and urban growth

The various provincial policy documents provide for a balance approach to growth management. There are policies that promote the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment and agricultural system, and policies that promote economic growth and vitality, and city building that efficiently utilizes existing and planned infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

4. Analysis

400 series highway corridors provide strategic locations for businesses and are critical to the local, Regional and provincial economies

The York Region economy is worth an estimated \$60.9-billion (CBOC, July, 2020), larger than any of the Atlantic Provinces. The Region's location in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is strategic from a goods movement perspective. York Region is within a one day drive to the United States market with over 140 million people and a one hour flight to global markets such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago and Detroit. It is located in close proximity to Toronto Pearson International Airport, is home to both the CP intermodal facility and the CN MacMillan rail yard, and has a strong network of 400 series highways which connect the Region to both the broader provincial and national markets as well as the United States border.

York Region is a top destination in the Toronto area and Canada for businesses across a number of industry clusters, many of which are visible from 400 series highways

Over 2,000 businesses in the Region rely on exporting as their primary source of revenue, collectively generating \$19 billion annually. The Region is attractive for international investment and home to major global research and development centres for some of the world's biggest companies. Many of these businesses rely on transportation access for goods movement. National and international head offices strategically situated on 400 series highways include: Aviva Insurance, Desjardins, Allstate, IBM, AMD, Celestica, GE Energy, Mazda Canada, BMW Group, and Honda. Extensive manufacturing storage and distribution facilities located in the Region include: the Royal Group, Gracious Living, VersaCold, Mars Wrigley Confectionery, UPS, FedEx, Costco Distribution, Sobey's Distribution, Home Depot Distribution, and a proposed Walmart Distribution centre.

There are a wide range of business sectors that have very specific land requirements in terms of size, configuration, transportation access and proximity to other related businesses. The characteristics of ideal employment lands, as well as the overall supply, are important considerations in planning for York Region's long-term employment needs. The Region has a limited supply of lands along 400 series corridors that provide visibility for businesses. The long-term vitality of the York Region economy demands high-profile, accessible locations for employment and in this regard the importance of the 400 series corridors to the economy is recognized by the Region, the local municipalities and the Province.

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan anticipates York Region will attract the largest volume of job growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe by 2051

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan includes changes to the population and employment forecasts, the horizon year for planning, and other policies to increase housing supply, create jobs, attract business investment and better align growth with infrastructure.

The Amendment 1 reference forecast anticipates 2.1 million people and 990,000 jobs in York Region by 2051. These provincial forecasts express confidence in York Region's ability to accommodate the largest volume of job growth in the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe. York Region needs to provide for the creation of 340,000 jobs in keeping with these provincial forecasts and this level of growth requires strategic and comprehensive planning to ensure that there will be sufficient developable land in the right locations to accommodate this growth.

Staff will undertake detailed forecasting and land needs assessment now that the final Growth Plan amendments have been approved by the Province

Despite numerous provincial reviews and amendment to the Growth Plan, Staff continue to advance the Regional Official Plan update. On August 28, 2020, the province released the final Growth Plan amendment and revised Land Needs Assessment methodology for detailed forecasting and land budgeting to distribute the York Region population and employment forecast to the nine local municipalities. The final forecast numbers are will also be used to align infrastructure and complete financial planning.

Staff's detailed forecasting and land needs work will assess the demand and supply factors in the context of the region-wide employment market, while considering local municipal needs and aspirations. Staff are obligated to undertake this work in accordance with the existing provincial planning framework, including policies of the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan which restrict new urban development. The draft forecast and land needs work by local municipality will be presented to Regional Council in Q1 of 2021.

The lands needs work will recognize that employment areas are vital to the Regional economy. As of 2019, 51 per cent of York Region jobs were located in employment areas, including 63 per cent of the Region's largest employers. Based on the Region's 2017 inventory and recent updates to employment area boundaries through the Municipal Comprehensive Review to reflect employment conversions, there are 2,400 ha of vacant employment land in the Region, and protection of these areas to 2051 and beyond will be critical to ensure that choice is available to prospective businesses.

Future demand for employment area development in York Region is anticipated to remain strong

Demand for employment areas is anticipated to remain strong and be driven by land extensive logistics and warehouse facilities as the role of e-Commerce continues to expand as well as increasing shares of service sector employment in small offices and multi-unit industrial buildings. Maintaining an appropriate supply of employment areas will be important for all types of industry to provide flexibility for employers in high quality locations over the long term.

Growth in e-Commerce has driven a surge in demand for distribution space on goods movement corridors and close to major urban centres. Manufacturing will continue to play an important role with fewer workers and more automation. Growth in employment areas will also be driven by increasing demand for large sites with superior transportation access and

evolving trends towards office uses in industrial flex space and older multi-unit industrial buildings. An appropriate land supply will be required for all types of industry to provide flexibility for employers over the long-term. The Region's strategically located employment areas, particularly along major highways and near intermodal facilities, will be important assets as these industries grow.

The Region has three key large scale employment nodes that play important distinct roles in the Regional economy

Among the Region's employment areas are three unique large scale nodes that play important distinct roles in the Regional economy. Each of these nodes is the centre of economic zones in the Region that provide for better live/work relationships in various parts of the Region. It is important that a healthy supply of vacant employment lands be made available in each of these nodes:

- Office/high tech area of Markham/Richmond Hill, which is one of only three major office nodes outside of Downtown Toronto,
- Manufacturing, transportation, distribution and logistics industrial node in central and west Vaughan, strategically located around the CP intermodal facility, the CN rail yard and a network of 400 series highways, and
- Emerging employment areas along the 404 north through Richmond Hill, Newmarket, East Gwillimbury and the Keswick area that provide attractive sites with significant vacant capacity to support employment growth moving forward.

The support for employment uses in Whitchurch-Stouffville, Richmond Hill and East Gwillimbury would provide for employment growth northward from the emerging employment areas along the 404, while Township of King's support for lands along the 400 complement the existing manufacturing, transportation, distribution and logistics industrial node in Central and West Vaughan to the south.

Planning to 2051 will consider opportunities for employment lands adjacent to the GTA West Corridor and Bradford By-pass 400 series highway expansions

The 2051 land needs assessment work will consider the new 400 series highway expansions: the GTA West Corridor and the Bradford By-pass. On August 7, 2020, the Province announced the preferred alignment of the GTA West Corridor. The east-west 400 series highway will run through northern Vaughan, generally north of Kirby Road and terminate at Highway 400.

The Bradford By-pass, connecting Highways 400 and 404, from Bradford West Gwillimbury to East Gwillimbury received provincial approval last August and is currently proceeding to engineering and detailed design. These new 400 series highways are prime locations for new employment lands.

The Provincial Policy Statement allows municipalities to plan beyond the Planning horizon for the long term protection of employment areas

As noted above, policies 1.1.2 and 1.3.2.7 of the Provincial Policy Statement allow planning authorities to plan beyond 25 years for the long-term protection of employment areas, provided lands are not designated.

From an urban growth and city building perspective employment is an appropriate land use for lands adjacent to 400 series highways, while protecting environmentally sensitive features. Since these lands are within the provincial Greenbelt Plan, they cannot be readily removed and developed with serviced urban uses without change to provincial Plans.

As the Provincial Policy Statement permits the identification of employment areas beyond the planning horizon and in order to protect these lands for long-term employment purposes, the Regional Official Plan could identify an overlay specifying that the future use of these lands are being protected for employment purposes. However, without a provincial change to the Greenbelt Plan, those lands could not be designated for urban uses.

The Region Official Plan must conform to provincial Plans and cannot change Greenbelt Plan boundaries or designations through the MCR

York Region staff will continue to advocate to the Province, in accordance with Regional Council direction, for access to new employment lands along 400 series highways, when they are required. With an expanded urban area, natural heritage and agricultural features and systems need to continue to be protected from development. The Province is the appropriate agency to balance economic and environmental objectives through future amendments to Provincial Plans to ensure core features and functions of the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan continue to be protected and the integrity of environmental policies is maintained.

Through the current MCR, the Regional Official Plan could identify these lands as appropriate for long term employment uses.

Lands adjacent to 400 series highways, in close proximity to urban areas and across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, are appropriate for long term provincial protection for employment uses. The Greater Golden Horseshoe's long term economic prosperity would benefit from this provincial leadership. Protection of these strategically located lands is not only important to York Region, but applies to the larger economic engine of southern Ontario. The Province should apply a consistent approach to protecting lands adjacent to 400 series highways for long-term employment purposes, where deemed necessary by municipalities. This approach would complement policies in both the PPS and Growth Plan that speak to promoting and enhancing the Province's economic competitiveness. As noted above, provincial direction is required to develop a process that allows municipalities to access these strategically located employment lands, if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.

New 400 series highway employment areas will require the extension of urban services

Designating new employment lands, beyond the current urban boundary, will require the extension of new Regional water and wastewater infrastructure and improvements to Regional arterial roads to service these new areas. The cost associated with these major Regional infrastructure improvements and their perpetual maintenance costs will need to be evaluated. Further, depending on the process established by the Province, servicing policies of the Provincial Plans may need to be modified.

In the past Council has requested that Great Lakes based servicing be an option for servicing existing communities in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan areas ([Recommendation #5, Attachment 2, Clause 4, Report 13, dated September 22, 2016](#)). A modification to provincial plans in this regard would provide additional options for the Region to consider if access to these lands is provided for employment purposes.

5. Financial

There are no funding sources and key budget implications associated with this report.

6. Local Impact

The Township of King, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, and the Town of East Gwillimbury Councils have resolved to pursue new employment lands along their respective segments of Highway 400 or Highway 404. The City of Richmond Hill has resolved to pursue new employment and residential land uses along Highway 404 in the vicinity of the new Gormley GO Train Station.

The competitive benefits of new employment lands adjacent to 400 series highways may benefit a local municipality, but the associated cost of municipal infrastructure required to service these new lands, and the loss of Greenbelt Plan lands still needs to be carefully evaluated and considered.

7. Conclusion

Planning for employment has a wide range of market segments that have very specific land requirements in terms of size, configuration, transportation access and proximity to other related businesses. The unique characteristics of employment lands, as well as the overall supply, are important considerations in the planning for York Region's long-term employment needs.

The role of the 400 series highway corridors, and the limited supply of land with direct exposure to them, are especially critical in York Region's long-term planning, and form the basis of this report.

York Region will continue to advocate to the Province for the ability to remove lands from the Greenbelt Plan for employment uses, when deemed necessary, while protecting natural heritage features. The 400 series highway corridors are significant connective infrastructure that promote and enhance the provincial, regional and local municipal economies.

For more information on this report, please contact Paul Bottomley, Manager, Policy, Research and Forecasting at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71530 or Sandra Malcic, Director, Long Range Planning at ext. 75274. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Recommended by: **Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP**
Chief Planner

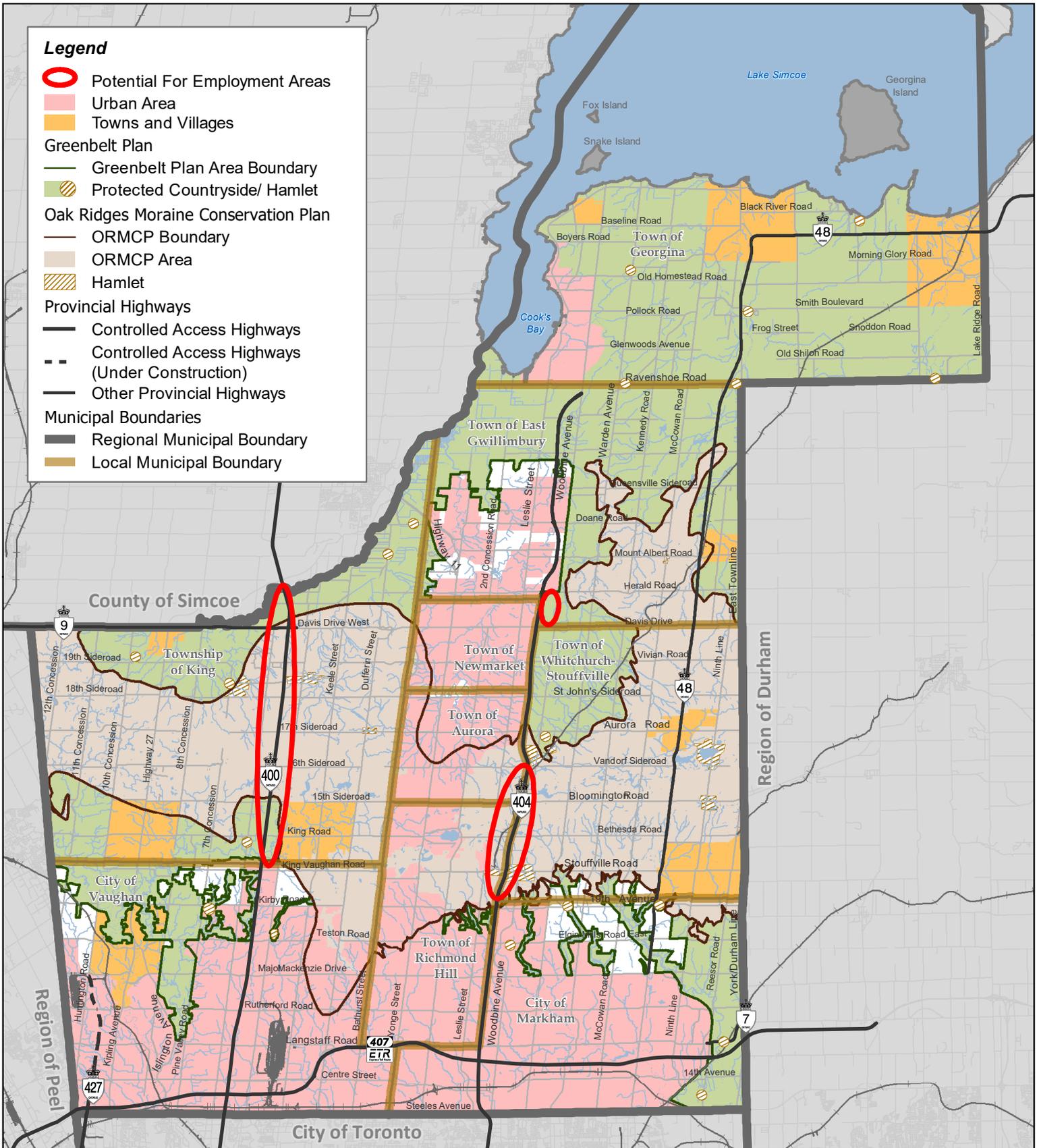
Dino Basso
Commissioner of Corporate Services

Approved for Submission: **Bruce Macgregor**
Chief Administrative Officer

September 25, 2020
Attachment (1)
#11187707

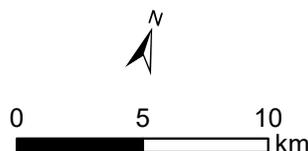
Legend

-  Potential For Employment Areas
-  Urban Area
-  Towns and Villages
- Greenbelt Plan**
-  Greenbelt Plan Area Boundary
-  Protected Countryside/ Hamlet
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan**
-  ORMCP Boundary
-  ORMCP Area
-  Hamlet
- Provincial Highways**
-  Controlled Access Highways
-  Controlled Access Highways (Under Construction)
-  Other Provincial Highways
- Municipal Boundaries**
-  Regional Municipal Boundary
-  Local Municipal Boundary



Potential For Employment Areas

September 2020



Produced by:
The Regional Municipality of York
Corporate Services Department,
Planning and Economic Development Branch
September 2020

Date: Queen's Printer for Ontario 2003-2020