

## **The Town of Aurora Official Plan**

### **2.0 THE VISION**

The long-term vision guiding this Plan is to develop the Town of Aurora into a healthy, strong and complete community that provides a range of places and opportunities to live, work, shop, be educated and play, in a manner that promotes sustainability in all its forms and protects the Town's natural environment and historic character.

A healthy, strong and complete community is designed for all stages of life and includes an array of jobs and investment opportunities, a full range of community services and amenities, opportunities for active and public transportation, and a broad mix of building and housing types. It also includes places to meet and build social connections and supports active and healthy lifestyle choices, while ensuring accessibility to all residents.

#### **2.1 Fundamental Principles**

- a) Principles are statements of intent that will guide the implementation of the policies of this Plan. They are considered crucial to the achievement of the long-term vision for Aurora. As such, this Plan is based on the following fundamental and interconnected principles:
  - i. **Promoting Responsible Growth Management** - It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that Aurora's growth is well planned and responsibly managed, consistent with Provincial and Regional growth management directives. Aurora must be planned to accommodate a *significant* amount of population and employment growth to the year 2031. Ultimately, the achievement of Aurora's long-term vision will be dependent on directing this projected population and employment growth to appropriate locations. This requires a deliberate, but balanced shift from an emphasis on lower density greenfield *development* to increased promotion of higher density forms of *development* and *intensification* in appropriate areas. Developing policies for directing and accommodating this growth is a key principle of this Plan.
  - ii. **Ensuring Design Excellence** - It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that Aurora promotes design excellence in all its land use and development decisions. High quality buildings, well-designed and functioning streetscapes, appropriate transitions between defined areas, integration between old and new *development* and connected open

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spaces are the elements that define a place. This Plan emphasizes the important link between managing growth, high quality design and Aurora's continued evolution as a memorable and beautiful place.

- iii. **Building a Greener Community** - It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that Aurora's communities are designed to be sustainable by incorporating green building technologies and energy-efficient development approaches. With a growing collective awareness concerning environmental sustainability and its interrelationship with the way our communities develop and function, sustainability must be recognized as a key consideration in the way we plan, design and build our communities now and in the future.

The policies of this Plan recognize that sustainability must be applied to all aspects of the built and natural environment to ensure that objectives for economic vitality, social vibrancy and the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment are integrated into all aspects of planning and design.

- iv. **Providing a Range and Mix of Housing** - It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that Aurora's *development* includes a broad range of housing types, sizes, densities, designs, tenures and prices to meet the needs of the Town's current and future residents. Providing a range and mix of housing is one of the essential elements required to support a diverse population and a complete community.

- v. **Providing Appropriate Community Facilities** - It is the intent of this Plan to ensure the provision of appropriate community facilities and services. Community facilities serve as a community's foundation, providing essential support to its successful operation, ongoing *development* and vibrancy. The policies of this Plan seek to ensure Aurora's community services and facilities are developed to meet the needs of all residents and are consistent with the Town's objectives for becoming a healthy, strong and complete community.

- vi. **Protecting Stable Neighbourhoods** - It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that Aurora's stable neighbourhoods are protected. Aurora's *existing* neighbourhoods, both older and newer, are not only a defining element of Aurora's character and urban structure, but also a tremendous asset

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and attractor for new residents and investment interests. This Plan seeks to ensure that the stability and vibrancy of these *existing* neighbourhoods is protected from the negative impacts of potential incompatible *development* and growth pressures. Any infill that occurs must be compatible with the established community character.

- vii. **Developing Vibrant New Neighbourhoods** - It is the intent of this Plan to create well-designed, attractive and sustainable residential neighbourhoods within the greenfield areas that are integrated with the *existing* community in a logical, *compatible*, efficient and cost-effective manner. With the need to accommodate a *significant* number of new residents to the year 2031, the *development* of new greenfield residential neighbourhoods in Aurora is essential.
- viii. **Advancing the Economy** - It is the intent of this Plan to ensure the continued advancement of Aurora's economy. At a community level, economic development is a process that influences and shapes the growth of an economy and attempts to improve economic well-being through job creation, job retention, tax base enhancements and overall improvements to the quality of life of residents. This Plan seeks to promote economic *development* efforts to support a diversified economic base and well-defined commercial hierarchy, encourage a competitive business environment and ultimately advance and sustain Aurora's long-term economic prosperity.
- ix. **Building a Successful Downtown** - It is the intent of this Plan to build a successful, functioning and vibrant 'Aurora Promenade' as a vital component of the Town's economic health and identity. Successful downtowns function as civic and cultural amenities, tourist destinations, investment attractors and can contribute to the community's overall prosperity. Downtowns that are distinct and beautiful can be a tremendous source of civic pride and can shape the image of a community.
- x. **Establishing a Linked Greenlands System** - It is the intent of this Plan to protect and enhance the natural environment for current and future generations. Straddling the Oak Ridges Moraine and three large *watersheds*, Aurora's character is intrinsically linked to its diverse natural features and systems. This Plan seeks to protect

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### **3.0 PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

The proper phasing of growth is as important as growth itself. Urban sprawl, leap-frogging or scattered growth with inadequate services, inappropriate densities or land uses makes inefficient use of land and municipal resources. It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that Aurora's growth is well planned and responsibly managed.

#### **3.1 Objectives**

- a) Direct the Town's projected population and employment growth to appropriate locations to support the efficient use of land, resources and *infrastructure*;
- b) Promote higher density forms of *development* and *intensification* in appropriate areas; and,
- c) Ensure that *development* results in vibrant and complete communities.

#### **3.2 Community Structure**

- a) Schedule 'A' – Community Structure, establishes a comprehensive framework for guiding growth in Aurora. Specifically, it delineates the principle components of the planned community structure and the key areas that will play a *significant* role in directing and managing Aurora's growth to the year 2031. These structural elements form the basis of the land use designations and the policies of this Plan:
  - i. Greenlands System – areas consisting of environmental and open space areas that will be protected from the encroachment of urban *development*. The Greenlands System includes an array of *significant* natural heritage features and parks and open space systems within three main land use designations including Private Parkland, Public Parkland and Environmental Protection Areas;
  - ii. Rural/Oak Ridges Moraine – consists of the *existing* rural/agricultural area of the Town. These lands are expected to remain as integral components of the *existing* rural/agricultural community, and it is not anticipated that these *existing* uses will be converted to other uses during the 2031 planning horizon;

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- iii. Stable Neighbourhoods – consists of *existing* residential neighbourhoods that, through the policies of this Plan, will be largely protected from the impacts of new *development*. Infill *development* and other forms of *intensification* will be restricted within Stable Neighbourhoods;
- iv. *Existing* Commercial Areas - consists of *existing* commercial *development* areas that, through the policies of this Plan, are not expected to accommodate *significant* expansion through *intensification*. Further, it is not anticipated that these *existing* uses will be converted to other non-commercial uses during the 2031 planning horizon;
- v. *Existing* Employment Areas - consists of *existing* business parks and industrial areas that are designated 'Existing Employment – General Industrial' and 'Existing Employment – Light Industrial/Service and, through the policies of this Plan, are expected to hold out vacant lands but are not expected to accommodate *significant* job-expansion through *intensification*. Further, it is not anticipated that these *existing* areas will be converted to other non-employment generating uses during the 2010 to 2031 planning horizon;
- vi. *Existing* Major Institutional Areas - consists of *existing* *institutional uses* that, through the policies of this Plan, are not expected to accommodate *significant* expansion through *intensification*. Further, it is not anticipated that these *existing* uses will be converted to other non-*institutional uses* during the 2031 planning horizon;
- vii. The Aurora Promenade - consists of the Yonge Street and Wellington Street Corridors and the GO Rail Station, all of which have been identified as strategic areas planned to accommodate new growth through *intensification*;
- viii. Greenfield Residential Areas - consist of primarily vacant lands that will be planned to accommodate new residential growth during the 2031 planning horizon. Some of these lands are subject to *existing*, approved Secondary Plans;
- ix. Greenfield Employment Areas - consist of primarily vacant lands that will be planned to accommodate new employment lands employment growth during the 2031 planning horizon. Some of these lands are subject to

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*existing*, approved Secondary Plans. Further, it is not anticipated that these lands will be converted to other uses during the 2031 planning horizon; and,

- x. Suburban and Estate Residential Areas are low density residential areas.
- b) Schedule 'A' – Community Structure, also identifies several boundary lines that will play *significant* roles in managing growth within Aurora to the year 2031. They include:
  - i. The *Built Boundary* – this boundary line identifies the primary areas of *existing development*, or *built-up area*, as of June 16, 2006. All new rows and apartments within this line is regarded as *intensification*, while *development* outside of this line is considered *greenfield development*; and,
  - ii. Oak Ridges Moraine Boundary – this boundary line delineates the limits of the Oak Ridges Moraine, a major Provincial landform containing *significant* ecological and *hydrological features* and functions. All planning and development decisions for lands within this boundary must conform to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

### 3.3 Accommodating Growth Projections

- a) Over the next 20 years, the Town of Aurora is expected to experience a *significant* amount of population and employment growth. By 2031, the Town's population is expected to grow to 70,200 people, with the number of jobs projected to reach 34,200. Table 1 illustrates the projected population and employment growth in 5-year increments. These growth forecasts serve as the basis for the Town's growth management strategy and corresponding policies in this Plan.

**Table 1: Town of Aurora Population and Employment Forecasts**

	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
<i>Population:</i>	49,700	57,300	63,700	68,100	69,600	70,200
<i>Employment:</i>	20,300	24,200	29,000	32,400	33,500	34,200

- b) Proper planning and management of future growth must seek to ensure that ongoing change results in positive physical, social, public health, economic and environmental benefits to the community. In this regard, this Plan will promote a more

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### **8.0 PROTECTING STABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS**

The Town of Aurora contains a number of older, distinct residential neighbourhoods that have been designated Stable Neighbourhoods on Schedule 'A'. This Plan recognizes the importance of protecting and enhancing these stable residential neighbourhoods.

#### **8.1 Stable Neighbourhoods Designation**

##### **8.1.1 Intent**

It is the intent of this Plan to ensure that the areas designated 'Stable Neighbourhoods', as identified on Schedule 'A', are protected from incompatible forms of *development* and, at the same time, are permitted to evolve and be enhanced over time. All new *development* shall be *compatible* with its surrounding context and shall conform with all other applicable policies of this Plan.

##### **8.1.2 Permitted Uses**

- a) The permitted uses within the Stable Neighbourhoods designation shall be:
  - i. Ground-Related Residential Uses;
  - ii. *Existing* Multiple-Unit Buildings;
  - iii. *Secondary Suites*;
  - iv. Communal Housing;
  - v. *Special Needs Housing*;
  - vi. Home Occupations;
  - vii. *Bed And Breakfast Establishments*;
  - viii. Elementary Schools;
  - ix. Places Of Worship;
  - x. Child Care Facilities;
  - xi. Local Convenience/Service Retail;
  - xii. Office uses;

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- xiii. Parks And *Recreation* Facilities; and,
  - xiv. Public Uses And Public And Private Utilities.
- b) Council reserves the right through the implementing Zoning By-law, to further refine the list of permitted uses to ensure that new *development* is appropriate in the context of the adjacent and surrounding community.

### 8.1.3 Development Policies

- a) *New development and site alteration* abutting *existing residential development* shall be sympathetic to the form and character of the *existing development* and shall be *compatible* with regard to building scale and urban design.
- b) Through the implementing Zoning By-law, the range and density of permitted uses may be refined or restricted on a particular *site* or location to ensure that new *development* or *site alteration* is appropriate and *compatible* with adjacent uses and buildings.
- c) Through the implementing Zoning By-law and/or through site plan control, specific measures including, but not limited to, building setbacks, landscaping and fencing, may be required in order to ensure that new *development* is appropriate in the context of the adjacent uses and the surrounding neighbourhood.
- d) All *development* within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation may be subject to Site Plan Control. Council may utilize all of the provisions of Site Plan Control permitted by the Planning Act, including, without limitation, the control of building materials, colour and architectural detail.
- e) No new apartment buildings shall be permitted within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation. All *existing* apartment building *development* and development *applications* for apartment buildings approved prior to the adoption of this Plan shall be deemed to be in conformity with this Plan.
- f) All new *development* within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation shall have a maximum height of 3 storeys or 9 metres, whichever is less.



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The implementing Zoning By-law may provide more restrictive height limits based on the specific context of a neighbourhood or area within the Town.

- g) All new townhouses, multiple-unit buildings, communal housing and *special needs housing* may only be permitted within the 'Stable Neighbourhood' designation subject to achieving the following criteria to the satisfaction of Council:
  - i. the *development* shall respect the *existing* character of the surrounding neighbourhood through *compatible* and complementary building siting, massing, height and scale; and,
  - ii. the exterior design of the proposed building or buildings, including materials, colours, architectural detail, landscaping, and streetscape elements shall be *compatible* with the proposal's immediate neighbours.
- h) Home occupations may be permitted within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation subject to the policies of Sections 6.13 and 8.1.4 of this Plan and provided that the use is of an accessory and subordinate nature and does not substantially alter the residential nature of the property.
- i) *Bed and Breakfast establishments* may be permitted within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation subject to achieving the following criteria to the satisfaction of Council:
  - i. the use shall not have a negative impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties;
  - ii. adequate parking facilities are available on the *lot* for the proposed use and parking should not be located in the front yard of any buildings; and,
  - iii. the building shall be *compatible* with the character of the surrounding community.
- j) Elementary Schools may be permitted within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation provided that the impact on adjacent developments is minimized through the provision of adequate parking, landscaping, setback and buffering provisions to be determined in the Zoning By-law.

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- k) Places of Worship may be permitted within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation provided that:
  - i. the impact on adjacent developments is minimized through the provision of adequate parking, landscaping, setback and buffering provisions to be determined in the Zoning By-law; and,
  - ii. traffic and parking studies which demonstrate that the use will not have an adverse impact on the *existing* or proposed traffic network to the satisfaction of Council.
- l) Child care facilities may be permitted within the 'Stable Neighbourhood' designation provided that the impact on adjacent developments is minimized through the provision of adequate parking, landscaping, setback and buffering provisions to be determined in the Zoning By-law; and,
- m) Local convenience/service retail and office uses may be permitted in close proximity to existing commercial areas within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation provided that:
  - i. the impact on adjacent developments is minimized through the provision of adequate parking, landscaping, setback and buffering provisions to be determined in the Zoning By-law; and,
  - ii. traffic and parking studies which demonstrate that the use will not have an adverse impact on the *existing* or proposed traffic network to the satisfaction of Council.

### 8.1.4 Design Policies

- a) All new *development* within the 'Stable Neighbourhoods' designation shall respect and reinforce the *existing* physical character and uses of the surrounding area, with particular attention to the following elements:
  - i. the pattern of *lots*, streets and blocks;
  - ii. the size and configuration of nearby *lots*;
  - iii. the building type of nearby residential properties;
  - iv. the heights and scale of nearby residential properties;
  - v. the setback of buildings from the street;

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- vi. the pattern of rear and side-yard setbacks; and,
- vii. conservation and enhancement of *cultural heritage resources*.

### 8.2 Suburban And Estate Residential Policies

- a) Permitted uses in suburban and estate residential areas shall be limited to detached dwellings, an accessory dwelling and *compatible* home occupations.
- b) To ensure highest standards of *development* for these extremely low density residential uses, the same policies shall apply to both suburban and estate residential densities with the exception that:
  - i. suburban residential density requires:
    - a minimum *lot* area of 0.2 net residential hectare (or 0.5 acres) per unit; or,
    - clusters of at least 10 units may be permitted provided that a minimum of 25% of the overall *lot* area is designated as common or public open space;
    - full municipal water and sanitary services;
  - ii. estate residential density requires:
    - a minimum *lot* area of 0.8 net residential hectare (or 2 acres) per unit; or,
    - clusters of at least 10 units may be permitted, provided a minimum 40% of the overall *lot* area is designated as common or public open space;
    - the ultimate density of *development* proposed on subsurface sewage disposal systems shall be determined through a hydrogeological study;
- c) Suburban and Estate Residential *development* will be encouraged in clusters of at least 10 units, which allow for:
  - i. more efficient utilization of road, water and waste disposal systems,

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- ii. potential municipal maintenance or ownership of such systems,
  - iii. more substantial and meaningful open spaces,
  - iv. reduced environmental impact or maintenance of environmentally important features, and
  - v. compliance with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- d) Private water and sewer services on individual *lots* shall only be permitted where evidence is provided to the satisfaction of the relevant authority that such development will not have any adverse effect on the environment.
- e) Notwithstanding Section d (above), all Suburban and Estate Residential *development* shall conform with the policies of Section 12.0 of this Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Rural Area policies of the York Region Official Plan.
- f) Proposed Suburban and Estate Residential Density *development* shall only occur by amendment to this Plan, a registered Plan of Subdivision under Section 49 of the Planning Act and in compliance with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and associated policies in this Plan. In considering such amendments, Council shall require the submission of:
- i. mapping at a minimum scale of 1:1000 showing *existing* grades, vegetation cover, watercourses, soil characteristics and ground water levels;
  - ii. indication of measures mitigating any negative environmental impacts, including the methods of *tree* preservation, sediment and erosion control, slope stabilization and a storm water management plan which addresses water quality and quantity affected;
  - iii. an engineering report indicating the locations of sewage disposal or septic tank, tile fields, storm drainage, wells, water quality and quantity facilities, and methods of ensuring their proper functioning;
  - iv. exact locations of buildings and driveways;

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- v. detailed landscape analysis of the *site* and adjacent property, including a topographic survey at minimum 1.0 metre intervals, undertaken by a professionally qualified person;
  - vi. detailed proposed alterations to grades and vegetation cover; and,
  - vii. a heritage resource assessment of the *site*.
- g) Council shall consult the Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of the Environment, the appropriate Conservation Authorities and the Regional Medical Officer of Health when evaluating development proposals.
- h) Estate Residential *development* shall display high standards of urban design as outlined in Section 4 of this Plan.
- i) Access to individual *lots* shall be from internal roads and not from *existing* or unopened concession roads, regional roads or provincial highways, unless topography renders this impossible.
- j) Internal roads:
- i. shall be designed to discourage through traffic;
  - ii. shall be paved and built to municipal standards;
  - iii. may require shoulders, drainage ditches and storm sewers to prevent difficulties with access or drainage during inclement weather or problems with soil erosion; and,
  - iv. shall provide adequate access to an assumed and maintained town or regional road, or provincial highway to ensure access for school buses, ambulances, fire or other essential service vehicles.
- k) Notwithstanding any policies of this Plan to the contrary, this Plan does not envision and will not permit further estate residential *development* on individual private water and wastewater systems within the Town, but shall continue to recognize all *existing* and approved designations.
- l) Notwithstanding the policies of this Plan to the contrary, lands located on the Oak Ridges Moraine, as shown on Schedule 'A'

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shall be subject to the relevant policies of the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Act* and the applicable policies of this Plan.