



Provincial Approval of Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan and Land Needs Assessment Methodology, 2020

**Development Services Committee
September 14, 2020**



Background

June 16, 2020 – the Province released two documents for consultation:

- Proposed Amendment 1 to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (Growth Plan)
- Land Needs Assessment Methodology (LNA) – methodology by which upper-tier municipalities distribute growth forecasts to local municipalities, including identification of the need for urban expansion

Markham Council provided comments on July 27, 2020.

Amendment 1 and the new LNA came into effect on August 28, 2020.





Amendment 1 Changes to Growth Plan

1. **The planning horizon and growth forecasts are extended to 2051; forecasts can now be exceeded**

- Extension of forecasts in Schedule 3 of the Growth Plan to 2051 represents a shift from a 20-year planning horizon to a 30-year planning horizon
- 2.02 million people and 990,000 jobs are forecast for York Region by 2051 in Schedule 3
- 2031 and 2041 forecasts are no longer identified in Schedule 3
- Single and upper-tier municipalities can now choose to plan with forecasts in their municipal comprehensive reviews (MCRs) that are higher than the 2051 forecast identified in Schedule 3

Council's stated concerns (not addressed in final amendment):

- Extension of the planning horizon to 2051 without providing municipalities with the ability to phase urban expansion lands may result in pressures to over-designate lands in short term (i.e., excessive urban boundary expansions).
- Without a cap on total forecast growth for the GGH, the use of higher growth forecasts by some or all single or upper-tier municipalities may result in ad hoc rather than coordinated planning for growth in the GGH, particularly with respect to urban expansions.



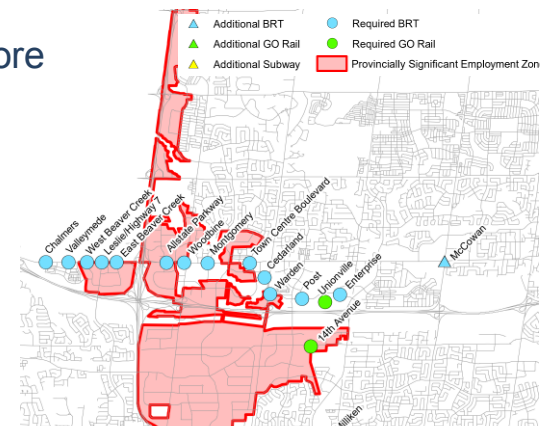
Amendment 1 Changes to Growth Plan (cont'd)

2. Until the next MCR, employment conversions can be considered in Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs) if the employment lands are also identified as Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

- PSEZs were introduced by the Province in 2019 to identify employment areas that were of provincial significance and therefore could not be considered for conversion outside of an MCR
- The amendment removes this protection for employment areas within MTSAs

Council's stated concerns (not addressed in final amendment):

- This policy will cause increased pressure for conversion of employment areas along Highway 7, and particularly in the strategic Highway 7/404 Corridor
- The language and intent of “until the next MCR” is not clear; it could be interpreted as referring to the ongoing MCR (to be completed by 2022) or all subsequent MCRs

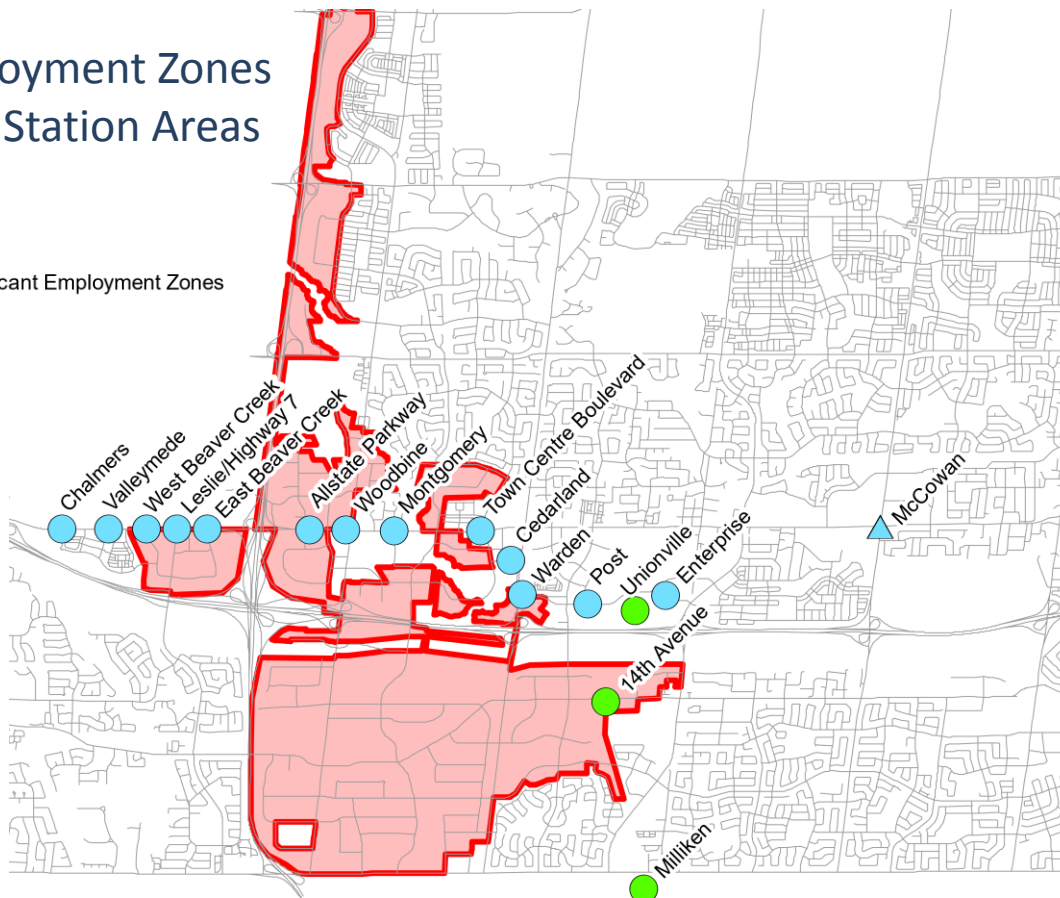


[Larger map provided in Slide 5]



Provincially Significant Employment Zones and Proposed Major Transit Station Areas

- ▲ Additional BRT
- Required BRT
- ▲ Additional GO Rail
- Required GO Rail
- ▲ Additional Subway
- Provincially Significant Employment Zones





New Land Needs Assessment Methodology (LNA)

- The Growth Plan requires the Province to establish a standard methodology for land needs assessment to be used by single and upper-tier municipalities to assess the quantity of land, including urban expansions, needed to accommodate the growth forecasts in the Growth Plan.
- A draft LNA was released by the Province in 2018 which provided a detailed and prescriptive methodology for assessing the need for the two main components of urban land: community (neighbourhood) land and employment land.
- The 2018 LNA did not include a consideration of market preferences for determining community land needs as the intent of the Growth Plan was to shift preferences away from lower density ground-oriented housing and towards more intensified higher density forms of housing.
- The new LNA provides a much more general, higher level and more subjective methodology. It includes market preferences as one of the considerations in assessing community land needs.



Implications of Amendment 1 and LNA for Markham

- The combined effect of:
 - extending the planning horizon and forecasts to 2051,
 - the ability to use higher forecasts than the Growth Plan forecasts, and
 - the emphasis on market preferences for housing in the LNA, will potentially expose the City to greater pressures for urban expansion.
- Greater pressures for urban expansion may lead to underachievement of intensification targets, and inefficient use of past infrastructure investments.



Thank you