



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

Development Services Committee  
September 14, 2020



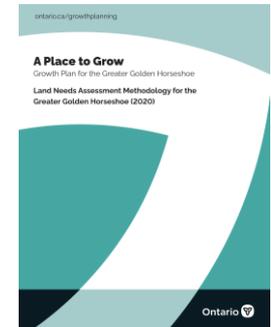
## Background

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.



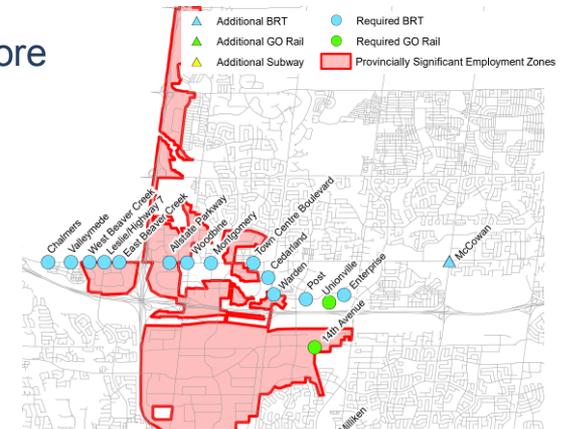
## Amendment 1 Changes to Growth Plan (cont'd)

### 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

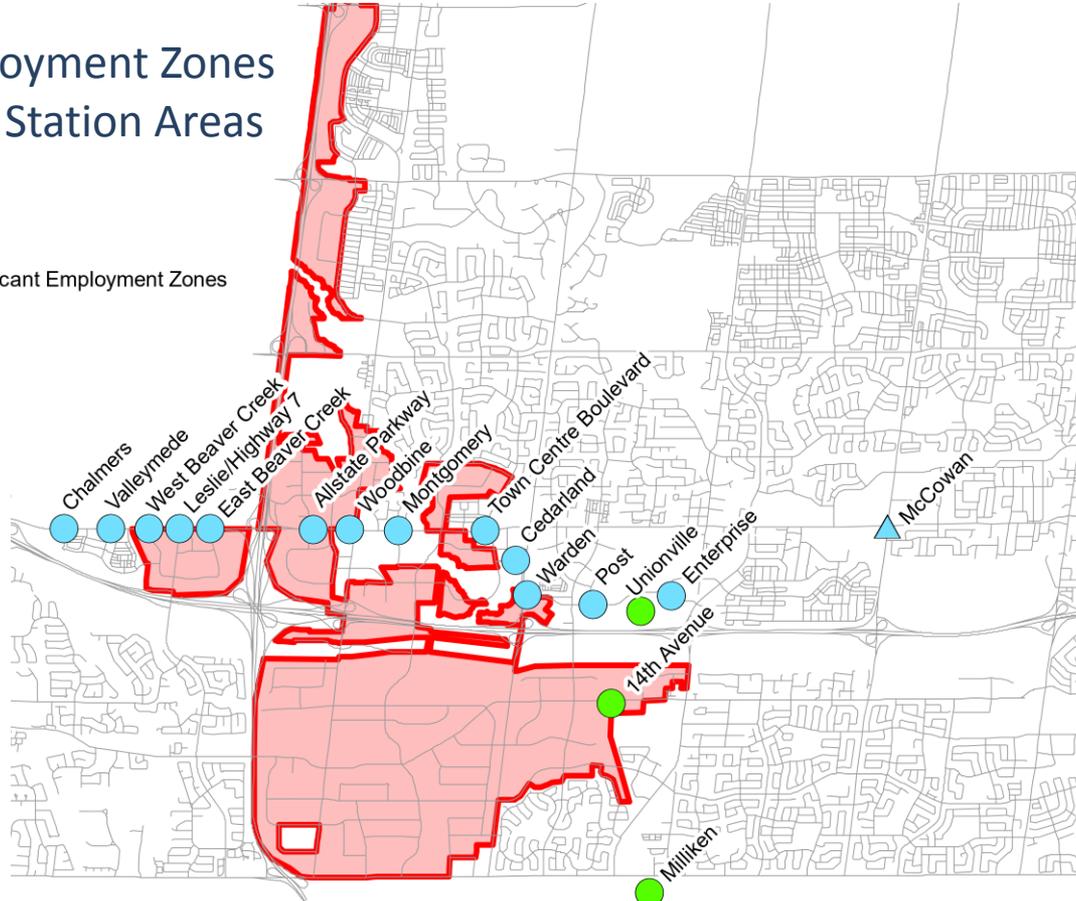


[Larger map provided in Slide 5]



### Provincially Significant Employment Zones and Proposed Major Transit Station Areas

- ▲ Additional BRT
- ▲ Additional GO Rail
- ▲ Additional Subway
- Required BRT
- Required GO Rail
- 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