



The Corporation of the Town of Ajax Community Affairs and Planning Committee Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, September 2, 2025, 1:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting / Council Chambers, Town Hall – 65 Harwood
Avenue South, Ajax

Alternative formats are available upon request.

Please contact: accessibility@ajax.ca or 905-619-2529, extension 3347.

Hybrid Meeting: This meeting occurs in person and will be live streamed for viewing at www.ajax.ca/live. Electronic participation is permitted pursuant to Council's Procedure By-law and may be arranged by e-mailing clerks@ajax.ca.

**S. Lee, Chair
N. Henry, Vice-Chair**

- 1. Call to Order & Acknowledgement of Traditional Treaty Lands**
- 2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**
- 3. Adoption of Minutes**
 - 3.1. **Regular Meeting – June 2, 2025**2
- 4. Public Meeting**
 - 4.1. **PDS-2025-20: Ajax Official Plan Review Project Launch**
G. Romanowski, Director of Planning & Development Services / S. McCullough,
Supervisor, Planning Policy & Research5
- 5. Presentations/Reports**

None.
- 6. Adjournment**



**Draft Minutes of the Community Affairs and Planning Committee Meeting
Held in the Council Chambers, Ajax Town Hall and Electronically
at 1:00 p.m. on June 2, 2025**

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Present:	Chair – Regional Councillor	-	M. Crawford
	Regional Councillors	-	S. Lee
		-	J. Dies
	Councillors	-	R. Tyler Morin
		-	N. Henry
		-	L. Bower
Regrets:	Mayor	-	S. Collier

1. Call to Order & Acknowledgement of Traditional Treaty Lands

Chair Crawford called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and acknowledged traditional treaty lands.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by: R. Tyler Morin
Seconded by: L. Bower

That the Minutes of the Community Affairs and Planning Committee Meeting held on May 5, 2025, be adopted.

In Favour: Regional Councillor Crawford, Councillor Tyler Morin, Regional Councillor Lee, Councillor Henry, Regional Councillor Dies, Councillor Bower

Opposed: None

CARRIED

4. Public Meetings

**4.1. PDS-2025-16: Draft Plan of Subdivision Application S-A-2025-01
2322244 Ontario Inc.
Southeast Corner of Kerrison Drive East and Salem Road North**

Lauren Taylor, Senior Planner, delivered a presentation reviewing the contents of the written report and recommendations contained therein.

Committee Members asked questions related to the presentation. L. Taylor, Eric Simpson, Supervisor of Development and Committee of Adjustment, and Geoff Romanowski, Director of Planning & Development Services, responded to questions from Committee Members.

Chair Crawford declared the meeting to be a public meeting and invited comments and questions from the public.

There being no questions or comments from the public, Chair Crawford closed the public meeting.

Committee Members asked questions related to the proposed development. Michael Testaguzza, Partner, The Biglieri Group Ltd. and E. Simpson, responded to questions from Committee Members.

Moved by: N. Henry
Seconded by: J. Dies

1. That Draft Plan of Subdivision Application S-A-2025-01 be approved subject to the conditions of draft approval, substantially provided in Attachment 1 to this report; and
2. That the Director of Planning and Development Services or their designate be authorized to grant draft approval of any future Draft Plan of Condominium Application that may be required to facilitate the future development of a portion of the subject lands.

In Favour: Regional Councillor Crawford, Councillor Tyler Morin, Regional Councillor Lee, Councillor Henry, Regional Councillor Dies, Councillor Bower

Opposed: None

CARRIED

5. Presentations / Reports

None.

6. Adjournment

Moved by: R. Tyler Morin
Seconded by: S. Lee

That the June 2, 2025 meeting of the Community Affairs and Planning Committee be adjourned (1:35 p.m.)

In Favour: Regional Councillor Crawford, Councillor Tyler Morin, Regional Councillor Lee, Councillor Henry, Regional Councillor Dies, Councillor Bower

Opposed: None

CARRIED



Town of Ajax Report Open Session

Report To: Community Affairs and Planning Committee

Prepared By: Sean McCullough, RPP, MCIP
Supervisor, Planning Policy and Research

Report #: PDS-2025-20

Subject: Ajax Official Plan Review Project Launch

Ward(s): All

Date of Meeting: September 2, 2025

Reference: 2024 Capital Budget Project No. 23090101

Recommendations:

1. That the Report entitled "Ajax Official Plan Review Project Launch" be received for information.
2. That any comments received during the Special Meeting and the Official Plan Review process be referred to staff for consideration.
3. That staff be authorized to launch the Consultation Strategy, such as the release of surveys, scheduling consultation meetings, and the creation of an Indigenous Advisory Group specifically for the Official Plan Review.
4. That a copy of this Report be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Region of Durham, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, School Boards and other public agencies.

Background:

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to:

- Launch the Ajax Official Plan Review and introduce Council to the preliminary workplan and consultation strategy, and provide an overview of known topics, issues and matters to be examined in the Official Plan Review that have been identified by staff, Council, residents, agencies, and other sources.

- Host a Statutory Public Meeting (Special Meeting) under Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, which is required at the start of an Official Plan Review.
- Receive feedback from members of the Council, the public, and other key stakeholders on the existing Official Plan policies, emerging issues and opportunities, and the preliminary consultation strategy.

What is an Official Plan?

The Official Plan is a Municipality's primary document that guides long range planning and establishes a framework for land use decision making. It identifies the principles, goals, and policies that guide the vision of a municipality for the next 25-30 years, while implementing matters of Provincial and Regional interest.

The Official Plan provides land use policies for residential uses, employment areas, strategic growth areas, environmental protection, climate change resiliency and adaptation, cultural heritage protection, transportation systems and parking, and many other strategic objectives. The Official Plan can also set strategic long-term goals and objectives, and strategies to achieve them.

The current Ajax Official Plan was first approved in 2000, and the last Official Plan Review, which resulted in a series of individual amendments (Official Plan Amendments 28, 31, 40, 41, and 42) were adopted by the Town in 2010 and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in 2014 with modifications. There are several deferrals that remain and are briefly discussed in Attachment 1 of this report.

Why review the Official Plan?

The *Planning Act* requires that Official Plans be reviewed every 5 years, or every 10 years following approval of a new Official Plan. The review is intended to align the Official Plan with updated Provincial and Regional planning documents, update best practices, and identify and resolve issues, among many other objectives.

The last Official Plan Review concluded in 2014; over the last 10 years there has been significant change in the planning policy and legislative environment. New Provincial Policy Statements were released in 2014 and 2020; and an updated Growth Plan in 2017, followed by another update in 2020. The Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan were both replaced by the Provincial Planning Statement in 2024. A new Greenbelt Plan was also released in 2017.

On September 3, 2024, the Province approved Envision Durham (with some deferrals approved in December 2024), the new Region of Durham Official Plan. This was the culmination of the Municipal Comprehensive Review that started in 2018.

Since 2017, there have also been many amendments to the *Planning Act*. Most notably, on January 1, 2025, the Region of Durham became an 'upper-tier municipality without planning authority', with most planning responsibilities being transferred to the area municipalities, including Ajax. As a result, the new Region of Durham Official Plan was also transferred to the area municipalities.

While more than 5 years have elapsed since the last Official Plan Review was approved, given the significant uncertainty in the Provincial policy and legislative environment, staff felt that it was prudent to wait for the conclusion of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review prior to initiating work on the Town's Official Plan Review.

During this Official Plan Review, the Ajax Official Plan will be brought into conformity with Provincial Plans and legislation. Both the Regional Official Plan and the Ajax Official Plan will also be merged into a single document.

Who Approves the Official Plan?

Prior to January 1, 2025, the Region of Durham was the approval authority for certain area municipal Official Plan Amendments. When the Region became an 'upper-tier municipality without planning authority', the Province of Ontario through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) became the approval authority for the Town. Ontario Regulation 525/97 exempts most Official Plan Amendments from requiring provincial approval, with the exception of amendments completed under Section 26 of the Planning Act, amendments in a Protected Major Transit Station Area, and new Official Plans. As a result, the Ministry will be consulted throughout this exercise as their approval will be required.

Housing Accelerator Fund

On January 19, 2024, the Government of Canada announced that Ajax was the successful recipient of \$22 million in funding from the Housing Accelerator Fund. The goal of the fund is to remove barriers to aid in the delivery of housing. As part of this program, the Town agreed to a series of initiatives including completion of the Ajax GO Station Secondary Plan and the Ajax Official Plan Review, specifically the Growth Management component which deals with housing policy and growth management. The Town is required to complete the GO Station Secondary Plan by the end of 2026, and the Official Plan Review (Growth Management OPA) by the end of 2027.

Discussion:

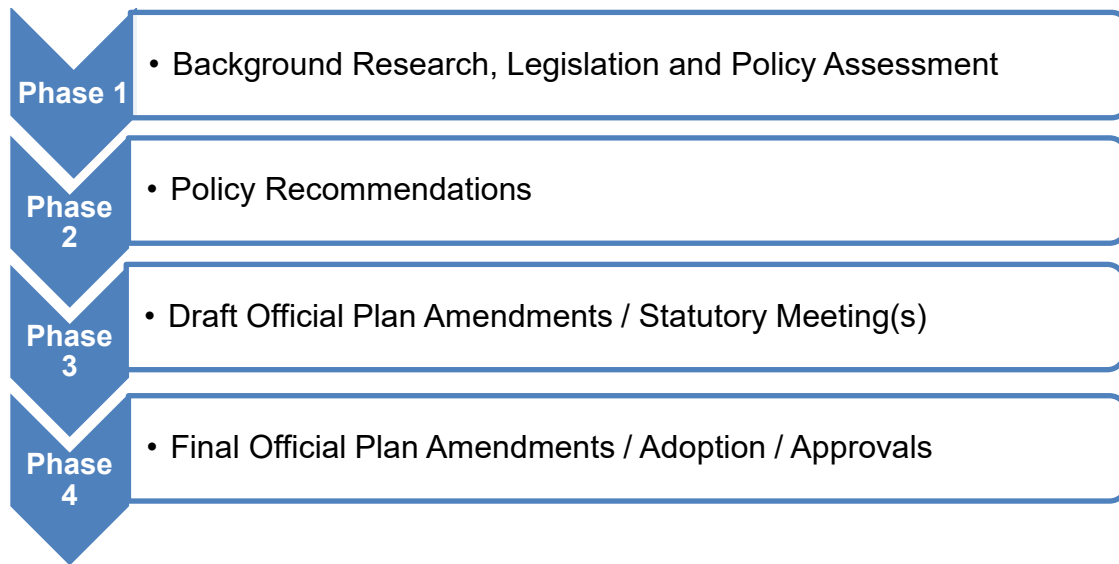
Official Plan Review Branding

To launch the project, Planning staff worked with Public and Strategic Affairs to create a brand that will be utilized throughout the project. The Official Plan Review is being branded as 'Ajax: Our Future in Focus'.



Project Workplan

The Official Plan Review will be advanced in the following phases:



During Phase 1: Background Research, Legislation and Policy Assessment, a review of the many recent legislative changes will be completed, as well as a comparison of the existing Ajax Official Plan policy against the new Regional Official Plan to determine what updates are needed. This phase will also include a review of the best practices and innovative approaches to address desired outcomes and emerging issues. In some of the secondary plans, technical background reports may also be required to support the development of policies in the later phases.

During Phase 2: Policy Recommendations, policies will be presented based on the findings of Phase 1, as well as the results of consultation completed prior to the phase. For the secondary plans (see next section), this will also include the preparation of visual land use options and associated policy alternatives for consultation. A final land use option for the secondary plans will need to be determined prior to moving on to Phase 3.

Phase 3 will include preparation of the draft Official Plan Amendment(s) for each theme area (see next section) and the required statutory public meeting to receive feedback prior to finalizing the Official Plan Amendment(s). Consultation with the Ministry is also planned during this phase to meet minimum review timelines.

Finally, Phase 4 will include presenting the final Official Plan Amendment(s) for adoption and/or approval. Some of the amendments will be required to be submitted to the Ministry for final approval.

As each theme area is being completed separately, and certain components are being prioritized, phases for each theme area may not perfectly align with one another. However, staff will strategically plan the release of certain documents in each phase to build and maintain momentum and excitement throughout the project.

Project Themes

The Official Plan Review has been divided into six (6) major themes:



Each theme is expected to be completed as an individual amendment to the Official Plan such that each can be brought forward for approval when ready. This is also to provide the information in a concise manner to enable thorough discussion and understanding on each topic area.

The Growth Management Policy Review and the Commercial and Employment Land Strategy are planned to be completed by a consultant and will include a review of the population and employment forecasts. The process to select a consultant and execute the agreement is currently underway and is planned to be finalized shortly. The General and Cultural Heritage Policy Review, and the Climate Resilience and Natural Heritage Policy Review are planned to be completed internally by Town staff.

The Transportation Policy Review will be examined through the Integrated Transportation Master Plan scheduled to begin this Fall. This project is to be led by the Town's Transportation Team and a consultant and will follow a separate consultation process. Findings from the study will be integrated into an Official Plan Amendment following completion of the study.

Work on the GO Station Secondary Plan is currently underway and is discussed further below. The Uptown Ajax Secondary Plan, Harwood North Planning Area, and the Downtown Ajax Block Plans are planned to be completed by consultants in the later phases of the overall project and are subject to budget approval. Selection of a consultant is currently underway together with the Growth Management Study and Commercial and Employment Lands Strategy.

GO Station Secondary Plan

The GO Station Secondary Plan is a Housing Accelerator Fund initiative that is required to be completed by the end of 2026. The scope of the GO Station Secondary Plan is more comprehensive and, in addition to the completion of an Official Plan Amendment, will also result in the completion of a Zoning By-law Amendment, Placemaking Plan, and Urban Design Guideline. Implementing 'as-of-right' zoning permission will enable

developments to move straight to the site plan process, streamlining the development process. In March 2025, the Town hired SGL Planning and Design Inc. to complete the project. To date, significant work has been completed including a Background Report, six (6) supporting technical reports, and a visioning survey is currently underway. Proposed land use options are also currently being prepared for consultation. All this information will be presented at an upcoming Committee meeting as this project continues to quickly move forward.

Preliminary Consultation Strategy

Consultation is one of the most important components of an Official Plan Review. Engagement with residents, landowners, businesses, Indigenous Communities, and external agencies is needed to ensure that the Official Plan responds to the challenges and opportunities for all existing and future residents within the Town.

Staff have prepared a Preliminary Consultation Strategy that identifies the high-level approaches that staff hope to utilize to reach as many people as possible. This strategy will be refined as we finalize workplans with all consultants and work to employ innovative consultation approaches. The following are some of the consultation approaches and activities that will be integrated into the overall project:

- Dedicated 'IMO' webpage(s) including visioning surveys
- Social media, newsletter, and video promotions
- Postings at Ajax facilities and/or portable signs
- Mix of virtual and in-person Open House Events, and Pop-up Events
- Meetings with targeted groups such as external agencies, the development industry, various Ajax committees, schools, etc.
- One-on-one meetings with Ajax Council members
- Concise Discussion Briefs (1-3 page documents on a specific topic)
- Presentations at Ward Meetings

The preliminary Consultation Strategy is included as Attachment 2.

Indigenous Advisory Group

The Official Plan Review is an excellent opportunity to build and expand the partnerships between the Town and all Indigenous Communities, including: Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island, Chippewas of Rama, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, and Mississauga's of Scugog Island First Nation. To facilitate engagement, staff plan to create an Indigenous Advisory Group to assist in the identification of their priorities and interests, and schedule meetings at key milestones. To date, staff have entered into a capacity funding agreement with the Mississauga's of Scugog Island First Nation (MSIFN) to assist on the Official Plan Review and other Town projects. MSIFN have also expressed interest in joining an Indigenous Advisory Group. Staff will continue to follow up with the other First Nations and work to build the relationship.

Identified Topics, Issues, and Matters

As identified earlier, this report and Statutory Public Meeting is an opportunity for Council, the public, agencies, and other key stakeholders to identify potential topics, issues and matters that should be examined through this review of the Official Plan. Over the years, there have been several Council motions, resident and landowner inquiries, implementation issues identified by staff and other agencies, all of which will be examined through this process. Attachment 1 outlines the early topics, issues and matters identified to date that will be examined via the Official Plan Review.

At a high level, these include:

- Provincial legislation and plan conformity.
- Regional Official Plan integration.
- Council Strategic Plan items (e.g. Ajax Plaza Master Plan) and motions (e.g. Public Storage, Gas Stations, and Washing Establishments).
- Integration of other plans (e.g. Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan) and strategies (e.g. Ajax Housing Action Plan) prepared by the Town and other agencies.
- Built form and urban design policies (i.e. height, density, and 45-degree angular plane).
- Updates to environmental and climate change policies.
- Planning for new residential areas (e.g. North Harwood Planning Study Area) and Strategic Growth Areas (e.g. Uptown Ajax).
- Transportation policy review.

Additional information and feedback are encouraged through the public meeting and throughout the project.

Early Questions

The following are a list of early questions to ignite discussion:

1. What do you want the Town look like in 2051?
2. What technology or emerging trends will influence how the Town is shaped between now and 2051?
3. How can the Town maximize good employment opportunities?
4. How can the Town provide housing opportunities for everyone?
5. How does the Town protect and restore the environment? How does the Town create a community that responds to the climate crisis?
6. What does successful consultation look like? Who will the Town need to talk too to create a plan that everyone can be excited about?
7. Beyond the legislative requirements, what topics, issues or matters need to be considered during this Official Plan Review?
8. How do we create a community where everyone can live, work and play?
9. How do we create a community that we are proud of?
10. What other Plans, Strategies, Studies, should be reviewed?

Financial Implications:

The Official Plan Review was approved in the 2024 Capital Budget with an approved budget of \$501,400. Both the Official Plan Review and the Ajax GO Station Secondary Plan are Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) initiatives and funding from HAF is being utilized to advance these projects.

There are no other financial implications associated with this report.

Communication Issues:

Communication is a critical component to the success of this project. An IMO page has been created and can be found here: <https://imo.ajax.ca/opreview> . A dedicated email address (OPReview@Ajax.ca) has also been created for the project. Interested parties are encouraged to sign up for notifications on the [IMO Page](#), and can also submit early feedback via the IMO page or through email.

To advance the GO Station Secondary Plan, another IMO page was launched in mid-August 2025 with a Visioning Survey which will be available until September 5, 2025. The project page and survey can be viewed here: <https://imo.ajax.ca/GOStationPlan>.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

This report aligns with the following section of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan – Action26:

Pillar: Growing Our Community

Priority: 1.1 Advance our vision for community growth

Action: Official Plan Review

Conclusion:

This report launches a multi-year Official Plan Review that will create a land use vision for the Town to 2051. The Official Plan Review will be completed across four (4) phases following a series of themes including Growth Management Policy Review; Commercial and Employment Lands Strategy; Environment, Climate Change, and Greenlands System Policy Review; and, Built Form, Cultural Heritage, and General Policy Review. A series of Secondary Plans and planning study areas are also planned or are currently underway. Concurrent with the Official Plan review, Transportation policies will be examined through the Integrated Transportation Master Plan. Extensive consultation is planned and members of Council, residents, agencies, and interested parties are encouraged to provide feedback and register for updates by visiting <https://imo.ajax.ca/opreview> or emailing OPReview@Ajax.ca .

Attachment(s):

ATT-1: List of Topics, Issues, and Matters to be Considered in the OP Review

ATT-2: Preliminary Consultation Strategy

Prepared by:

Sean McCullough, RPP, MCIP – Supervisor, Planning Policy and Research

Submitted by:

Geoff Romanowski – Director of Planning & Development Services

Approved by:

Shane Baker – Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment 1: List of topics, issues, and matters to be considered during the Official Plan Review

The following is a preliminary list of topics, issues, and matters identified by staff, members of Council, and other sources, that will be examined through the Official Plan Review. Additional issues and topics are expected to emerge during the background work and consultation activities that will require a fulsome analysis and recommendations.

1. Existing Ajax OP Policy Deferrals

When the Region of Durham approved Official Plan Amendments No. 40 (Transportation) and 42 (Employment), decisions on several items were deferred and were planned to be examined later through various mechanisms. As of the date of preparation of this report, there are 4 outstanding deferrals:

- DOP-3 – The designation of a Clements Road extension westerly from Green Court as a Type ‘C’ Arterial Road pending the outcome of an Environmental Assessment (This deferral is from when the Official Plan first came into effect).
- D40-1 – Deferral of Schedule C-2 (Transit Priority System) pending an updated to Schedule C in the Region’s Official Plan.
- D40-2 – Similar to D40-1, references to the Transit Priority System have been deferred pending approval of Schedule C-2 mentioned above.
- D42-1 – Section 6.18 is deferred in its entirety pending further discussions regarding the amount of retail space permitted in employment areas.

Through the Integrated Transportation Master Plan update, it is expected that deferrals related to DOP-3, D40-1 and D40-2 will be examined. Issues related to D42-1 have been partially addressed through the conversion of lands designated Employment Area to Community Area along Harwood Avenue North. The balance will be examined through the Commercial and Employment Areas Strategy.

2. Existing Official Plan Amendments

Existing Official Plan Amendments to both the Town’s and Region’s Official Plan will be examined to determine if they can be addressed through updates to the Town’s Official Plan. For example, ROPA 2005-009 and OPA05-A5 propose to delete the extension of Shoal Point Road between Bayly Street East and Achilles Road. The applications were deferred pending the outcome of updates to the Region’s Transportation Master Plan. This application will be examined through the update of the Town’s Integrated Transportation Master Plan and associated Official Plan.

3. Provincial Plan and Legislation Conformity

a. Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 Conformity

On October 20, 2024, the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS, 2024) came into effect. This document replaces the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020. Policies in the PPS, 2024

represent minimum standards, and all decisions on a planning matter, including Official Plan Amendments completed as part of the Official Plan Review, must be consistent with the PPS, 2024. Through the Official Plan Review, existing and proposed policies will be examined against the PPS, 2024, to ensure consistency.

b. Definition of ‘Employment Area’ Update

Bill 97: Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023, amended the definition of ‘area of employment’ in the Planning Act to severely limit permitted uses. An ‘area of employment’ is generally land designated to permit manufacturing, research and development related to manufacturing, warehousing uses, retail and office uses associated with manufacturing or warehousing, and ancillary uses. Institutional and commercial uses are specifically not permitted. The Official Plan Review will examine Employment Areas and create a strategy and policy framework to bring the Town’s core employment areas into conformity with the new definition.

c. Greenbelt Plan, 2017 Conformity

The Greenbelt Plan, 2017 came into effect on July 1, 2017. A review of the Town’s Official Plan policy will be required to ensure conformity with the new Greenbelt Plan, and any associated policy amendments implemented through the new Regional Official Plan.

4. Envision Durham Integration

The new Regional Official Plan was substantially approved in September 2024, with several deferrals approved in December 2024. The new Regional Official Plan was transferred to the area municipalities on January 1, 2025. Through this Official Plan Review the new Region of Durham Official Plan will be integrated with the Town’s Official Plan into a single document.

a. Growth Management

The new Region of Durham Official Plan allocated growth to the area municipalities and assigned intensification targets. The new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, requires Planning Authorities to base population and employment forecasts on projections from the Ministry of Finance. The new Regional Official Plan was based on projections created for the Growth Plan, 2020. Therefore, the growth projections will need to be examined to ensure that the projections are aligned with one another. Information from the 2021 Census is also now available and will also be utilized.

a. Ajax GO Station Secondary Plan

Through Envision Durham, the boundaries of the Ajax GO Station Protected Major Transit Station Area were delineated and a new policy framework was approved by the Province. The Town will need to update the boundaries of the Ajax GO Station Mixed Use Area designation and associated policy framework. This work is currently underway and is being advanced as a standalone project. This project is a Housing Accelerator

Fund initiative and is expected to be completed by the end of 2026, ahead of the remaining Official Plan Review processes. The Zoning By-law will also be updated at the same time to streamline the development process within the GO Station Area.

b. Employment Area Conversions

Through Envision Durham, there were over 110 hectares of land converted from Employment Area to Community Area in Ajax. While there have been several Minister Zoning Orders or Official Plan Amendments within these areas, amendments to the land use structure will be required to align these areas with the new Regional Official Plan. Area specific studies and Secondary Plans are planned for the Uptown Ajax Secondary Plan and the North Harwood Planning Area that was converted from Employment Area. These tasks are intended to examine the areas and create a cohesive vision.

c. Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit Station Areas

In the new Regional Official Plan, a new Rapid Transit Corridor designation was implemented along Kingston Road (Highway 2) and requires a minimum density of 150 people and jobs per hectare. Other opportunities to encourage intensification within and surrounding the future Bus Rapid Transit Stations will be explored.

5. Urban Design and Built Form Policies

a. Review of Height and Density Permissions Town-wide

Over the last 10 years, there have been many Official Plan Amendments to increase the maximum permitted height and density in many of the Town's Strategic Growth Areas and on other key intensification sites. Several members of Council have expressed a desire to have staff examine and update the maximum permitted heights and densities throughout the Town. This work has been incorporated into the Growth Management review and will examine approvals, best practices and recommend new maximum heights and densities, where appropriate.

b. Built Form (45-degree angular plane, tower floor plate)

The Town's Official Plan currently requires tall buildings, those that are more than 8 storeys in height, to have a maximum tower floor plate of 800 square metres, and a minimum tower separation of 25 metres. There are also several land use designations that require new development to be set below a 45-degree angular plane measured from the lot line of adjacent low rise/density areas. This policy has presented both opportunities and challenges over the years. Throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), different compatibility approaches have also been explored. Best practices are planned to be examined through the Growth Management study component of the project.

6. Employment Areas

A component of the project will be the completion of an Employment and Commercial Land Strategy.

a. New 'Area of Employment' Definition

The Planning Act and the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 has a new definition of 'area of employment' that limits the types of uses permitted in employment areas. This creates both challenges and opportunities for the Town's Employment Areas. As the Town has a finite amount of designated employment land, a complete evaluation of the Town's employment areas, identifying non-complying uses and creating a comprehensive strategy to buffer existing employment areas from encroaching sensitive land uses is required.

b. Job Intensification

Several areas in Town require minimum job density targets. This has been a helpful tool to promote job creation while achieving other objectives such as mixed-use development. However, there have been challenges, such as translating jobs into minimum non-residential floor area requirements or ensuring that major employment development is not slowed by additional policy requirements. Existing and planned employment densities are planned to be examined and policy options developed to maximize employment opportunities on the small amount of employment land that remains in Ajax.

c. Commercial Land Review

The retail and commercial environment is constantly evolving with increasing utilization of e-commerce, shifting work from home trends, and macroeconomic forces impacting resident's disposable income. A review of existing and projected commercial land (and space) will be examined to help ensure that the Town's Official Plan has a policy framework that supports commercial uses, and ensures that the right amount of commercial and retail opportunities and unit sizes are provided in the Town's emerging mixed-use areas to support residents.

7. Ajax Strategies and Initiatives

a. 2023 Ajax Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan

In 2023 the Town completed the Ajax Housing Strategy and Housing Action Plan. The Housing Action Plan identified 30 actions designed to improve housing outcomes in Ajax. Several of the actions target policy updates or amendments to the Official Plan such as updating/adding housing related definitions, introducing a rental housing demolition and conversion policy framework, and increasing the affordable housing target in Strategic Growth Areas. Housing remains a core issue to be examined through this review and will be an overarching theme throughout most discussions and reports.

b. 2021 Recreation and Parks Master Plan

Recommendations from the 2021 Recreation and Parks Master Plan will be examined. New parkland and related policies may be needed, especially in new strategic growth areas.

c. 2023 Ajax Arts and Culture Master Plan

Recommendations from the Arts and Culture Master Plan will be examined. Tools available to the Town to acquire public art through the Town's planning processes will be examined, and other placemaking opportunities and policies will also be explored and encouraged.

d. 2025 Integrated Transportation Master Plan Update

In 2025, the Town will be initiating the Integrated Transportation Master Plan. This will include a detailed technical review of the Town's transportation system, as well as a review of the policies and tools available to the Town to promote active transportation and improve the overall network. A separate Official Plan Amendment will be implemented to integrate new policies and amendments to the Official Plan Schedules resulting from the findings of the Integrated Transportation Master Plan.

8. Ajax Council Motions and Strategic Plan Items

a. Ajax Plaza Master Plan (2022-2026 Council Strategic Plan)

Council's Strategic Plan directs staff to update the master plan for Ajax Plaza, located across the street from Town Hall. The Town has had several development applications proposed and the entire plaza has been the target for long-term redevelopment. The updated block plan is also planned to consider updates to the maximum permitted heights, as well as a vision for the Harwood Plaza located to the south.

b. Public Storage, Gas Stations and Car Washes

In February 2023, Council passed a motion directing staff to prohibit new public storage facilities, motor vehicle gas bars and washing establishments throughout the Town. Another motion subsequently directed staff to examine the issue and complete the work through the Official Plan Review. This work will require the examination of the existing inventory of these uses and the related policy framework to ensure that the prohibition will not negatively impact the Town in any unforeseen circumstances.

c. Home-based Businesses, Day Cares, and Short-term Rentals

Home-based businesses, day care facilities, and short-term rentals were topics of discussion that emerged during the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. It is expected that these and other emerging topics will be examined during the Official Plan Review.

9. Environmental and Climate Change

Official Plan Amendment No. 38 implemented a strong ecosystem-based and leading climate change policy framework. These policies have served the Town well through the review of development applications, helping the Town to deliver on its goal of creating a sustainable community. As environmental and climate change policies are rapidly evolving, a thorough review of the existing policies will be completed. This will include a review of which policies are working well, which are not, and new policies to aid the Town in delivering a sustainable and resilient community, improving the urban heat island, conserving energy and water, promoting renewable energy and urban agriculture, and restoring the nature heritage system.

a. Ajax Green Standard

In 2022, the Town introduced the Ajax Green Standard, a development-oriented tool designed to evaluate applications through a sustainability and climate change mitigation lens. The guidelines provide a suite of mandatory and optional standards that align with the Town's Official Plan policy and other strategies. An evaluation of the metrics will be important to gauge which Official Plan policies are working well, where improvements can be made, and which emerging best practices should be promoted throughout the Town.

b. Ajax Climate Risk & Resiliency Plan Implementation Strategy 5-year Update

The Town undertook a five-year update of the Ajax Climate Risk & Resiliency Plan (ACRRP) Implementation Strategy that was approved in 2019. The update incorporated new data, insights, and a legislative framework that has changed over the past five years. The primary purpose of this update was to support the Ajax community's resiliency by understanding the shifts in climate change impacts, the needs of the residents and community stakeholders, and by identifying new and emerging climate change-related challenges. The recommendations from the 5-year update will be examined to identify updates to the Town's Official Plan policy.

c. Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program and Neighbourhood Resiliency Strategy

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) is a collaborative, neighbourhood-based approach to advancing urban renewal and climate action in older urban areas. SNAPs help municipalities and other community collaborators improve efficiencies, draw strong local support, and build innovative partnerships for the implementation of a broad range of initiatives in the public and private realms. The Neighbourhood Resiliency Strategy was completed in May 2025, actions and lessons learned from this program will be examined to find ways to improve neighbourhood resiliency in all the Town's neighbourhoods.

d. Urban Forestry Technical Study

In March 2023, the TRCA and Town completed the Ajax Urban Forest Study: Technical Report. This study identified that the canopy cover in Ajax is 24%, with an estimated structural value of \$363 million. This study will be examined to determine what policy improvements can be implemented to continue to protect, restore, and enhance the Town's tree canopy.

e. Conservation Authority Initiatives

In addition to the strategies identified above where the TRCA assisted in their development, a number of other initiatives and strategies implemented by both the Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority and the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority have been completed over the last 10 years. These include the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan, and Lake Ontario Shoreline Management Plan. There are several policy recommendations from the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan that will be required to be integrated into the new Ajax Official Plan. The conservation authorities will also be consulted on updates to floodplain and natural heritage system mapping.

Town of Ajax Official Plan Review Consultation Strategy

Context

Municipalities are required to update their Official Plans every five years in accordance with Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. The Town last completed a comprehensive review of the Official Plan in 2014. Further updates to the Official Plan in keeping with the five-year timeframe were postponed due to external factors. The Town is now in a position to undertake such a review in keeping with *Planning Act* requirements and will be planning for the Town to 2051.

The objectives of this Official Plan Review are to:

- Align the Official Plan with Provincial Plans, policies and regulations;
- Combine the Region's and Town's Official Plans into a single document;
- Allocate assigned growth to Strategic Growth Areas, corridors and nodes;
- Assess and protect Employment Areas;
- Promote sustainable development and update environmental policies;
- Promote the protection of and update policies related to Cultural Heritage Resources;
- Update the implementation policies, address identified issues, and general housekeeping; and
- Explore Council motions and direction.

The Official Plan Review will be undertaken through a series of discrete but related projects which will result in several Official Plan Amendments. Some consultation activities will be led by Town staff and others led by consultants under the direction of Town staff.

What is Consultation?

Broadly speaking, consultation in the context of this project includes outreach to individuals, stakeholder groups and Indigenous Communities and receiving their input, and the actions associated with meeting *Planning Act* requirements for providing notice and receiving comments. Consultants and/or Town staff receiving input from other Town staff and/or elected officials is also considered as consultation and is included in workplans, but external outreach is the primary focus of the Consultation Strategy. It is important to carefully document all input and be transparent with respect to responding action.

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Objectives of the Consultation Strategy

The objective of the Consultation Strategy, at a high-level, is to set out an outline of goals, objectives, and activities that can be incorporated into the various discrete components of the project. The Consultation Strategy is a resource that can be used in project planning for the Amendments.

More specific objectives include the following:

- To raise awareness among the public of the importance of the Official Plan in terms of setting the future direction of the Town.
- To facilitate meaningful input from all interested parties throughout the process within the context of a transparent process where individuals and groups can see how their input was considered. Transparency and responsiveness should help build trust in the process.
- To use traditional and non-traditional methods to broadcast information about the Official Plan Review as widely as possible and reach as many people and groups. To gather input from as diverse a cross-section of the Town as is possible. Particular effort is to be made to reach out to individuals and stakeholder groups who do not typically provide input into planning initiatives. Ensure that language, economic circumstances, the digital divide, and/or culture do not present a barrier to participation.
- Ensure that participation in the consultation process is accessible and barrier free for all parties. Factors such as limitations due to disabilities should be addressed.
- To have respectful and meaningful dialogue with Indigenous Communities that have an interest in the land, that goes beyond the minimums required by the *Planning Act* or “Duty to Consult” and allows for Indigenous Peoples to state what they would like to see in an Official Plan. (Moving from minimizing legal risk to achieving meaningful input.). The goal is to build lasting partnerships through this process.
- Foster collaboration between stakeholders to forge alliance and shared goals, as opposed to conflict that is sometimes seen in this type of initiative.
- Build consensus around long-term planning goals and objectives, as well as implementation methodologies.
- Meet the statutory requirements of the *Planning Act* and any other applicable legislation. This includes meeting the requirements of section 3 of the *Planning Act*, which requires that all decisions affecting planning matters shall be consistent with the minimum standards set in the *Provincial Planning Statement* and notice requirements.

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Who Are We Going to Consult With?

In short, the Town and/or the Town's consultants should reach out to anyone that may have an interest in any aspect of planning and development in the Town. The more extensive the outreach, the more likely it is the process can capture and consider the wide range of views that may exist in the broadly defined community.

A non-exhaustive list of individuals and groups is set out below:

- Elected officials in the Town of Ajax;
- Applicable Town of Ajax Departments, Committees, and staff;
- Region of Durham;
- Surrounding municipalities;
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority;
- Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority;
- Agencies and Utilities (e.g. school boards);
- Indigenous Communities (see below);
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Approval Authority and One-Window Planning lead);
- Building and development industry stakeholders (e.g. BILD, Durham Region Home Builders Association);
- Special interest groups (e.g. environmental groups);
- Residents including, among others: individuals, neighbourhood groups, community groups, cultural and religious groups, youth and seniors' groups, sports and other activity groups, service clubs, etc.;
- Business Owners and business associations;
- Major Landowners; and
- Other Specified Persons as defined in the *Planning Act*.

Outreach Toolkit

Innovative consultation approaches are being included in this Strategy based on their merits to deliver a positive project outcome. In particular, there is an interest in how social media and web-based consultation can be effectively utilized in cost effective and creative ways and also how outreach can be designed to be as inclusive as possible and to reach/engage people who would typically not participate in an Official Plan initiative. All outreach activities should have an accessibility lens applied to them to ensure they are either accessible to all, or alternatives are provided.

Methods of outreach may include:

- Dedicated webpage on Ajax.ca (e.g. IMO) with background information, relevant reports, information videos, video from public meetings, interactive tools, webinars etc.;

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- Town podcast on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Buzzsprout Player and the Town YouTube channel;
- Town free social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube);
- Town “Inside Ajax” community page on the Town website and the e-news newsletter which is circulated to subscribers;
- Targeted ads via paid social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok);
- Online “local news” - durhamregion.com (Ajax News Advertiser);
- Offers to meet with targeted groups;
- Individually addressed letters to certain residents and/or landowners as circumstances warrant;
- Inserts in mailings from Town (e.g. tax bills);
- Offers to schools for student information and education sessions;
- Video signs at Town Hall and on other permanent or portable signs on roadsides;
- Postings at Town sites (Town Hall, Libraries, Community Centres, Parks etc.);
- Pop-up events and booths at public gatherings, or shopping and transit locations;
- Posters at public gatherings, shopping locations or transit stops with QR codes to connect with web materials;
- Mayor and Councilor newsletters, MPP newsletter; and
- Specialized targeted outreach to identified Indigenous Communities (see below for details).

Methods to Receive Input from the Public:

- In-person and online public meetings with comment opportunities;
- Dedicated Official Plan Review email address (OPReview@ajax.ca);
- Surveys and other interactive tools on websites;
- Workshops or design charrettes;
- Meetings with targeted groups with comment opportunities;
- School meetings with students with comment opportunities;
- One-on-one meetings with Town Planners, online or in-person;
- Presentations at Ward Meetings;
- Polling by professional pollsters;
- Stakeholder interviews;
- Comment cards available at OP Booth; and
- See below for Indigenous Communities.

Indigenous Communities

Indigenous Communities should not be considered as stakeholders in a *Planning Act* consultation process. They have a different type of status based on traditional and treaty

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rights and should be treated as partners. The process should consider not only their particular rights, but also cultural and economic factors. A starting point for correspondence and discussions should be “what would you like to see in an Official Plan” to safeguard and protect Indigenous interests.

The area now known as the Town of Ajax is situated within the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas, more specifically the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. The Town has an agreement with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island to facilitate engagement and comments on several planning projects (e.g. Official Plan Review).

The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation are one of seven First Nations covered by the Williams Treaties. The others are Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Chippewas of Rama First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, and Hiawatha First Nation. All seven of these First Nations should be included in circulations of Official Plan Review materials.

Staff will work to identify any other Indigenous Community that should be consulted in this process, and others may be added throughout the process. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is to be consulted to confirm which Indigenous Communities they consider appropriate to consult with given that their criteria may not always be obvious to people outside of the Ministry.

It is planned that an Indigenous Advisory Group will be created by the Town for the Official Plan Review. Planning staff, with assistance from the Town’s the Equity, Diversity and the Inclusion Coordinators, will lead the creation of the Advisory Group. Planning staff, with consultants as appropriate, will be responsible for identifying recommended engagement milestones and the preparation of materials/presentations, as needed. The Town will be responsible for capacity funding required to support Indigenous Consultation.

The development and launch of the Indigenous Advisory Group should be used to establish lines of communications with the various Indigenous Communities that want to be involved in the Official Plan Review process. As part of this process, the Communities should be asked to set out how and when they would like to provide input.

Methods to reach out to Indigenous Communities should go beyond emails and letters that meet the requirements of the *Planning Act*. Personal contact initiated by staff or a consultant with experience in Indigenous consultation would be the ideal method of establishing a dialogue. Where staff have not had sessions to learn about the history

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and land use interests of Indigenous Communities, this will be considered as part of the relationship building exercise.

Material to be Consulted On

It is intended that material to be consulted on will be set out in the workplan for each of the various components of the Official Plan Review and that the scope of the consultation will be tailored to reflect the material.

If possible, input from interested parties should be invited prior to preparing even draft technical documents or policy reports to allow interested parties to express their views on the issues to be addressed. This may not always be possible if the issues to be addressed have been determined through Provincial policy requirements or other priorities prior to the opportunity to undertake consultation.

Consultation should generally take place whenever a draft technical document or policy recommendation report has been prepared so that interested parties can have an opportunity to provide input at an early stage. This input should be recorded and how it has been addressed should be clear in the final version of these materials. Consultation should also take place on the final versions of the materials.

In addition, should there be any major milestones that do not have a technical document or policy report associated with it, this would also be an opportunity for consultation.

To help avoid, or at a minimum reduce, consultation fatigue, the use of short discussion briefs are planned in lieu of traditional discussion papers where possible. Discussion briefs are planned to be short 2–4-page documents that discuss a particular topic of interest.

Timing/Phasing of Consultation

The timing and phasing for consultation will be determined individually for each of the various components of the Official Plan Review. The intent of this Strategy is that the concepts can be built into each individual workplan for components that the Town staff will be leading and used in the evaluation and implementation of workplans from consultants.

Measuring Success

Throughout all the components of the Official Plan Review, it is important that detailed records be kept of all aspects of the implementation of the Consultation Strategy, by Town staff and consultants.

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Both quantitative and qualitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be used to measure success.

- Quantitative Metrics:
 - Participation Rates - Number of stakeholders engaged in the various types of outreach activities (e.g. number of people attending in-person meetings and number of people attending online).
 - Diversity of Input – Representation across demographic groups and stakeholder groups.
 - Engagement Levels: Number of comments, submissions, survey completions.
 - Electronic Outreach:
 - The Town tracks social media and web analytics that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of social media and website posts.
Such as:
 - Social media:
 - Reach – the number of unique users that have seen social media content.
 - Impressions – social media impressions are the total number of times content was displayed.
 - Engagements - engagement on social media is a measure of how the audience is interacting with social media accounts and content, such as likes, comments, direct messages, replies, shares, saves and link clicks.
 - YouTube - total views and hours of watch time.
 - Podcasts - total users and usage time.
 - Ajax.ca - traffic metrics:
 - Number of views.
 - Engaged sessions - number of sessions that lasted longer than 10 seconds, or had a conversion event, or had 2 or more screen or page views.
 - Average engagement time.
- Qualitative Metrics:
 - Satisfaction from individuals and stakeholders - Feedback on the consultation process via surveys, interviews and discussions with staff.
 - Applicability of feedback – how useful is the input to policy making and mapping or has the input achieved from the Consultation process affected outcomes.

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As the Official Plan Review is rolled out, quantitative and qualitative metrics can be used to improve the process going forward. Questions to be addressed should include the following:

- Are the right individuals and groups being reached?
- Was the material accessible and easy to understand?
- Is the information being generated useful to the process?

Statutory Requirements

There are requirements under the *Planning Act* with respect to consultation that must be adhered to in any Official Plan Review process:

- Section 26 of the *Planning Act* requires a Council, before revising the Official Plan to:
 - consult with the approval authority (Ministry of Municipal and Housing) and with the prescribed public bodies with respect to the revisions that may be required; and
 - hold a special meeting of council, open to the public, to discuss the revisions that may be required.

The meeting is open to the public to discuss the revisions that may be required to the Official Plan and may be examined during the project. This meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2025, during the Community Affairs & Planning Committee Meeting.

- Section 17 of the *Planning Act* requires that during the preparation of a plan, the council shall ensure that, among other things,
 - adequate information and material, including a copy of the current proposed plan, is made available to the public, in the prescribed manner, if any; and
 - at least one public meeting is held for the purpose of giving the public an opportunity to make representations in respect of the current proposed plan.

Reporting on Consultation

As a fundamental principle, it is Important that there is two-way communication in a consultation process. This must be fully documented so people can see how their comments were considered and responded to. This builds trust and demonstrates transparency. Reports should use phrases like “you said”, “we did” to demonstrate that meaningful listening to comments has resulted in their serious consideration.

Consultation reports will be included in the workplans for the various components of the Official Plan Review. Such reports should set out the:

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- The objectives of the consultation initiatives in each component of the Official Plan Review;
- Methodology;
- Participation metrics in terms of numbers of participants for each method of outreach;
- Metrics in terms of demographics of participants to address the success of consultation methodology to promote inclusiveness;
- What was heard from participants during the consultation process and how it is addressed in recommendations or why it cannot be addressed; and
- Next steps.

Risk Management

A project such as the Official Plan Review has certain inherent risks associated with it that should be anticipated and addressed.

Risk	Mitigation
• Low interest/participation	• Increase promotion through all methods, including social media. • Revisit nature of promotional material.
• Participation is not inclusive	• Determine groups that are not being reached successfully. • Tailor further outreach to groups that are proportionally underrepresented.
• Misinformation	• Planning exercises can sometimes attract people/groups with a specific agenda that may not be fact based. • Continue to focus on a fact based, policy driven agenda. • Continue to document and respond to comments.
• Digital Divide	• Ensure paper copies of material posted on the Town's website are available upon request. • Promotion of initiative will be primarily via the Town's website and social media but ensure more traditional methods such as posters in public spaces are used as well.
• Comments that are contrary to Provincial legislation and/or policy	• Explain that in Ontario's planning system municipalities are required to

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	address Provincial legislation and/or policy.
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Consultation Strategy Updates

This consultation is planned to be a living document that may evolve throughout the entire Official Plan Review process. More information will be detailed in the individual workplans, and staff will work with the Consultant's working on the project to identify and encourage innovative consultation practices.