

4.1 Applicable Provincial and Regional Policies

This section will establish the current and relevant policy environment that forms part of the review of the planning applications. The overview will include Provincial Plans and policies, York Region Official Plan, and the Town's current Official Plan and Secondary Plan.

4.1.1 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* guides planning in the Province of Ontario. Ontario Regulation 299/19, amended the *Planning Act* and requires that Official Plans have policies to allow additional residential units and permit up to two additional residential units in a single detached, semi-detached or townhouse dwelling and/or one additional residential unit in an ancillary building.

Section 34 Subsection 19.1 of the *Planning Act* states that there are **NO** appeal rights in respect of a by-law that gives effect to the policies, requirement or standard for creating additional residential units.

These requirements were implemented into the in-effect Official Plan and Zoning By-law in 2024.

Staff Comment: The proposed changes will maintain conformity with the *Planning Act* and support a matter of Provincial interest.

For the reasons set out above, Town Staff are of the opinion that the proposed changes maintain the intent of the *Planning Act*.

4.1.2 Provincial Planning Statement

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 ("PPS") is the Province's consolidated statement of policies related to land use planning. This document is enabled through the *Planning Act*, and outlines policy direction for all key land use matters in the province. This document was updated in 2024, and replaces the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019). All planning documents published by municipalities in the Province of Ontario must align and be consistent with the PPS, including amendments to the Town's Official Plan and ZBL.

The PPS contains policies to guide Ontario towards a future with a greater housing supply, stronger economy, and complete communities. It is a key priority of the province to increase the supply and mix of housing options, and to address the full range of housing affordability needs. Section 2.1, entitled Planning for Peoples and Homes, directs municipalities to provide an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities by maintaining a 15-year supply of lands which are designated and available for residential development and to always maintain land with servicing capacity to

provide a three-year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned (PPS, Policy 2.1.4).

Section 2.2, entitled Housing, directs municipalities to provide an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet the projected needs of current and future residents by establishing minimum targets for housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households, permitting a range of housing options and all types of residential intensification, promoting densities for new housing which efficiently use land and resources, and requiring transit-supportive development and prioritizing intensification in proximity to transit (PPS, Policy 2.2.1).

The PPS also reiterates the importance of affordable, accessible, and equitable housing in achieving complete communities (PPS, Policy 2.4.2). Notably, the PPS also provides a number of definitions to ensure clarity in the interpretation of policies. A key term for the purpose of HAF Initiatives is “housing options” which is defined in the PPS as:

“a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, ARUs, tiny homes, laneway housing, garden suites, rooming houses and multi-residential buildings, including low-and mid-rise apartments. The term can also refer to a variety of housing arrangements and forms such as, but not limited to, life lease housing, co-ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, land lease community homes, affordable housing, additional needs housing, multigenerational housing, student housing, farm worker housing, culturally appropriate housing, supportive, community and transitional housing and housing related to employment, educational, or institutional uses, such as long-term care homes.”

Staff Comment: The intent of the proposed changes is to provide more housing options in effort to spur housing supply and improve affordability.

For the reasons set out above, Town Staff are of the opinion that the proposed development is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and represents appropriate planning.

4.1.3 The Greenbelt Plan (2005) and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017)

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017 (ORMCP) establish strict environmental protections for the Oak Ridges Moraine. Most of Whitchurch-Stouffville lies within the ORMCP area, and all municipal planning decisions must conform to the Plan.

The Town contains all major ORMCP designations, including extensive Natural Core and Natural Linkage Areas that permit limited existing, agricultural, and low-impact uses. Stouffville and Ballantrae are designated Settlement Areas, and Section 18 of the

ORMCP is particularly significant as it directs that urban growth be focused and contained within these areas while minimizing ecological impacts.

Additional restrictions arise from the Greenbelt Plan, enabled by the Greenbelt Act, 2005, which extends environmental and agricultural protections across much of the Town's northwest through Protected Countryside and Natural Heritage System designations.

Combined, these Provincial Plans leave the Town with very limited land for new greenfield development, meaning that aside from small areas designated for new urban expansion at the southern boundary, most future population growth must be accommodated through residential intensification and a greater reliance on medium- and high-density housing forms within existing communities.

As such the proposed changes would only apply to identified lands within the Stouffville Urban Settlement Area as identified in the above Study Areas (See **Figures 1 and 2**).

Staff Comment: The proposed changes are limited to the fully serviced Stouffville urban area, which is a designated settlement area where growth is to be directed.

For the reasons set out above, Town Staff are of the opinion that the proposed development is generally consistent with the objectives of the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan.

4.1.4 York Region Official Plan (2024)

The York Region Official Plan (ROP) was approved as modified by the Province on November 4, 2022, and on July 1, 2024, the Region was deemed an upper-tier without planning responsibilities (Bill 185). Per Section 70.13(2) of the *Planning Act*, an Official Plan of an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities that is in effect, which applies to any area of a lower-tier municipality, is deemed to be an Official Plan of the lower-tier municipality until the lower-tier municipality revokes or amends it. Therefore, the YROP policies continue to apply as administered by the Town.

The ROP provides new guidance on planning and development to support complete communities within the region. The ROP (2022) prioritizes building compact development patterns that promote the development of complete communities and minimize land consumption and servicing costs. These complete communities shall be dense and walkable, where most amenities are in close proximity to infrastructure and services. The ROP (2022) places the subject properties within the Towns and Villages designation and identified them as being in the existing built-up area of the community of Stouffville.

Section 2.1 of the ROP identifies that Towns and Villages as one of the areas for future growth and development within the Region. The Community areas are further identified

as an area for residential, population-related employment and community services are to be located.

Section 2.2.1 of the ROP outlines the population and employment forecasts for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville from 2021 to 2051. The ROP, as updated following provincial approval, indicates that the Town is to reach a population of 103,500 people by the year 2051.

Staff Comment: Staff believe the proposed changes will support complete community initiatives and assist the Town in reaching its population targets.

For the reasons set out above, Town Staff are of the opinion that the proposed development is generally consistent with the objectives of the YROP.

4.1.5 Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan and Proposed Official Plan Amendments

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's new Official Plan, Re-Imagine Stouffville, was adopted by Council on May 15, 2024 and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on September 25, 2025. Organized into nine sections, the Plan provides a comprehensive framework for managing growth, establishing town-wide and community-specific policies, protecting natural and agricultural systems, and directing land use through designations and overlays. The OP recognizes the Town's increasingly diverse housing market and anticipates that, to 2051, housing will continue shifting toward medium- and high-density forms in response to market conditions and policy directions emphasizing intensification and complete communities.

Section 2.1 outlines the Town Structure, which organizes how growth and intensification will be directed. The OP directs the highest concentration of growth to the Stouffville Urban Area—home to the Town's two Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), other Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs), the Built-Up Area, and Designated Greenfield Areas. Most population and population-related employment growth is directed to the MTSAs in the form of higher-density housing, aligning growth with higher-order transit and supporting tools such as inclusionary zoning. The Stouffville GO and Old Elm GO stations are designated Protected MTSAs under the *Planning Act* and are planned to accommodate transit-supportive densities and a mix of uses. The Town has also identified several additional SGAs—including the Western Approach Mixed Use Area, the Gateway Mixed Use Area, and the Highway 48 Mixed Use Corridor—where higher-density and mixed-use development will be focused. These areas will also be key locations for accommodating missing middle housing, with as-of-right permissions to be introduced in local centres and corridors.

Section 3 sets out the Town's approach to planning for complete communities, emphasizing a broad mix of housing types and tenures that respond to demographics, affordability, and community needs. Historically dominated by single-detached development, the Town now supports a wider range of housing, including medium- and

higher-density forms. The OP establishes a target housing mix for new development and directs that housing needs be met through flexible built form, varied unit sizes, affordability, and tenure options. The OP also identifies priority locations along Regional arterial roads and major streets where missing middle housing can be accommodated.

Section 6 establishes the OP's land use designations and related development policies. Section 6.4 focuses on Stouffville, outlining 19 designations that provide detailed guidance for neighbourhoods, medium- and high-density residential areas, and mixed-use areas. Section 6.4.1 sets out the vision and permissions for Neighbourhood Areas, where permitted uses include low-rise residential dwellings, ARUs, small-scale commercial uses, home occupations, live/work units, and community facilities. Single-detached, semi-detached, and duplex dwellings are permitted as-of-right, while townhouses and low-rise apartments (generally up to four storeys) are conditionally permitted along major roads and neighbourhood edges near transit. These buildings are subject to a typical maximum FSI of 1.5 to ensure compatibility with surrounding low-rise areas. Overall, the Official Plan establishes the Town's long-term planning vision by defining its growth structure, promoting complete communities, and guiding land use, while the Zoning By-law provides the detailed, site-specific permissions needed to implement this vision.

See the proposed Official Plan Amendment By-law and summary of proposed changes to the Official Plan in **Attachments 1 and 3** to this report.

Staff are of the opinion the proposed changes conform with provincial direction, provincial plans and the high-level objectives of the in-effect Official Plan.

4.1.6 Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2010-001-ZO and Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment

The Town's in-effect Zoning By-law outlines Traditional Residential and New Residential zones (Section 5 and 5A of the Zoning By-Law 2010-001) housing permissions and regulations which date back to 2010, and which are now 16 years old. ARU changes were approved more recently in June of 2024. The ARU regulations as-of-right allow for up to three total dwellings on a single fully serviced lot. In other words, regulations allow for duplexes and triplexes today, but under a different name. These previously approved regulations have served as a baseline and generally maintained with the exception of the parking, where a reduction is suggested by Staff in strategic instances.

See the proposed draft Zoning By-law Amendment and summary of proposed changes to the Zoning By-law in **Attachments 2 and 3** to this report.

Staff are of the opinion the proposed Zoning By-law would conform with the Official Plan and all upper tier and Provincial policy requirements.