

Clause 1 in Report No. 3 of Committee of the Whole was adopted by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on February 18, 2016 as amended to include the following:

Whereas Amendment 2 to the provincial growth plan forecasts population and employment expectations through 2041 and requires that York Region amend its Official Plan to conform with these forecasts by 2018.

And Whereas a Regional Official Plan update is being coordinated through a Municipal Comprehensive Review which, in York Region, is integrated with infrastructure master plan updates that will inform the Development Charges necessary to fund the required infrastructure.

And Whereas the provincial growth plan includes an intensification target stipulating that by 2015, and every year thereafter, a minimum of 40% of all residential growth will be accommodated within the 2006 built boundary.

And Whereas since growth in York Region has exceeded this target over the last decade, planning scenarios with more than 40% intensification have been considered by Council.

And Whereas Regional Council has continually sought, as recently as May 2015, provincial assistance in providing the necessary infrastructure to support the targeted levels of growth and intensification – in particular, in the area of rapid transit.

And Whereas intensification within the built boundary is heavily reliant upon rapid transit investments including:

- a. the Spadina and Yonge North subway extensions
- b. bus rapid transit on Hwy 7, Yonge Street and Davis Drive
- c. improving GO rail service, to levels comparable to those currently available on the Lakeshore routes, through the Regional Express Rail project

And Whereas interregional rapid transit investments are expected to be advanced through an agency of the province, Metrolinx, created for that purpose and funded by provincial and federal levels of government through their considerably larger tax base.

And Whereas to date, the bus rapid transit projects are being advanced while only one of the critical subway projects (Spadina) has been substantially advanced, at considerable cost to York Region.

And Whereas Provincial investment in critical, inter-regional transit initiatives to support higher than minimum levels of intensification is yet to be confirmed.

And Whereas the *Planning Act* requires that the Official Plan be reviewed every 5 years – providing a future opportunity to increase targeted intensification commensurate with the availability of rapid transit options.

Therefore be it resolved:

1. For the purposes of the current Municipal Comprehensive Review, Council confirm a minimum intensification target of 40%, consistent with the provincial growth plan.

A recorded vote on the adoption of the amendment was as follows:

For: Altmann, Armstrong, Barrow, Bevilacqua, Di Biase, Ferri, Hackson, Jones, Li, Rosati, Scarpitti, Spatafora (12)

Against: Dawe, Heath, Hogg, Pellegrini, Quirk, Taylor, Van Bynen (7)

Carried

1

Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review
Work Plan Update

Committee of the Whole recommends:

1. Receipt of the presentation by Valerie Shuttleworth, Chief Planner.
2. Receipt of the communication from Ron Palmer, The Planning Partnership on behalf of Royalpark Homes and SigNature Communities, dated February 9, 2016 regarding York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario.
3. Adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated January 28, 2016 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and the Chief Planner:
 1. This report be received for information.

Report dated January 28, 2016 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner now follows:

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.

2. Purpose

This report provides Council with an update on the work plan, next steps, and timing for completion of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and Regional Official Plan (ROP) update. This report also provides additional information regarding:

- Intensification and density targets of *The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, and
- Recommendations of the Panel Report on the Provincial Plan Reviews, which may impact the ongoing MCR and ROP update work.

3. Background

The Provincial Growth Plan allocates population and job growth, and prescribes minimum densities and intensification levels

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the Growth Plan) forecasts York Region to grow to 1,790,000 people and 900,000 jobs by 2041. The Growth Plan also dictates that:

- A minimum of 40% of new residential development be directed to the built up area annually, and
- A minimum of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare be achieved within the Designated Greenfield Area.

The purpose of the Growth Plan is to reduce urban sprawl, manage growth, and create compact and complete communities which support intensification and investment in transit infrastructure. Both the intensification target and density target are minimums which have to be planned for at the upper tier municipal level.

In April 2014, Council received a work plan for the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review

In early 2014 staff initiated a MCR to address the updated Growth Plan forecasts to 2041; a report outlining the MCR work plan was received by Council in April 2014. The report detailed the work plan components and anticipated timing to update the York Region Official Plan to conform with Growth Plan policies and updated population and employment forecasts to 2041. To date, the timing outlined in the work plan has been met.

Three draft growth scenarios provided the foundation for developing a preferred growth management scenario

Three draft growth scenarios were prepared based on varying levels of intensification: a 40% intensification scenario, a 50% intensification scenario, and a 'no urban expansion' scenario. These three draft growth scenarios were endorsed in principle by Council in April 2015 (Clause 6 of Committee of the Whole Report No. 7) for further analysis, refinement and consultation to determine a preferred growth scenario. In September 2015, Council endorsed criteria to evaluate the three draft growth scenarios based on a wide range of land use planning, infrastructure master planning and financial considerations (Clause 10 of Committee of the Whole Report No. 13).

Staff recommended a preferred growth scenario of 45% intensification in November 2015

The overall evaluation of the three draft growth scenarios determined that the scenario that best achieves the goals, objectives and policies of the Region and the Province, while ensuring fiscal responsibility in the context of the market's ability to realize the forecasted growth, lay between the 40% and 50% intensification growth scenarios. Accordingly, in November 2015 Regional staff recommended a preferred growth scenario based on a 45% intensification level.

Council directed staff to conduct further analysis of the staff preferred scenario versus minimum requirements of the Growth Plan

Council received a number of deputations and submissions regarding the preferred growth scenario of 45% intensification. In response to the report and submissions, Council directed staff to undertake further analysis and assessment related to the growth management process as follows:

- analyze the provincially mandated 40% growth intensification target (as per the Growth Plan) compared to the staff recommended 45% growth

- intensification scenario, to provide a detailed analysis of the impacts and risks of both scenarios and also demonstrate where growth can be accommodated
- complete a comparative analysis of the provincially mandated 40% intensification target relative to the 45% intensification target for the four local municipalities undergoing urban expansions (Town of East Gwillimbury, Township of King, City of Markham and City of Vaughan) and this analysis shall also compare the provincially mandated 50 persons and jobs per hectare and the Region's 70 persons and jobs per hectare for the Whitebelt area
 - continue to meet with landowners within the New Communities Areas, the Highway 400 Employment Areas, and on lands identified by the Region and City of Vaughan for potential expansion of the settlement areas (Blocks 28, 42, 66) to determine options for accelerating the delivery of services for north Vaughan including partnership approaches and interim servicing arrangements, and report back on options and a preferred strategy so that this can be considered concurrently with amendments to the York Region Official Plan resulting from the Regional Comprehensive Review and reporting on the updates to the Infrastructure Master Plans
 - to study and report back on the merits of including remaining vacant lands in Northwest Vaughan outside of the Greenbelt, the proposed Natural Heritage Network, and lands required for infrastructure for employment purposes including Blocks 66 and 67 as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review.

Staff is targeting June 2016 to report back to Council on all of the above resolutions. This report provides some preliminary information regarding the first two resolutions.

4. Analysis and Options

The Growth Plan includes specific details on how intensification is to be calculated

The Growth Plan includes a minimum requirement for intensification. Although referred to as a 'target', the Growth Plan requires that 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40% of all residential development occurring annually within each upper and single tier municipality must occur within the provincially defined Built Boundary as delineated in 2008.

All municipalities within the Growth Plan area are required to develop and implement, through their official plans and other supporting documents, a strategy and policies to phase in and achieve this intensification target and

support transit-oriented, complete communities. In this regard, together with local municipal staff, Regional planning staff has analyzed historic intensification rates, worked cooperatively with infrastructure planning staff, and considered opportunities for future intensification. A fact sheet on implementing Growth Plan intensification targets is included as Attachment 1 to this report. As outlined in the fact sheet, between 2006 and 2014 York Region achieved 51% intensification based on the parameters set out in the growth plan (i.e. all unit types within the Built Boundary).

Planning New Community Areas to achieve a density of 70 residents and jobs per hectare is necessary to conform with Growth Plan density requirements

According to Provincial policy, municipalities must plan to achieve a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare in the Designated Greenfield Area. The Designated Greenfield Area is defined as the area within a settlement area, but not within the provincially defined Built Boundary. See attachment 2 for a generic depiction of the Growth Plan geographies. Within York Region, lands currently within the Designated Greenfield Area include the following:

- Community lands designated prior to approval of the Growth Plan (2006)
- Employment lands designated prior to approval of the Growth Plan (2006)
- The Vaughan 400 North Employment lands (ROPA 52 to the 1994 ROP)
- New Community Areas - those lands designated urban after 2006, to address 2031 growth forecasts through the YROP-2010 (ROPAs 1, 2 and 3), which can be further subdivided into:
 - employment land areas, and
 - community land areas (which include population based employment)

Employment areas tend to deliver lower densities than community areas. Therefore, community land areas within New Community Areas (the final subcategory noted above), must develop with densities higher than 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare to comply with the Growth Plan policy of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare for the entire Designated Greenfield Area.

It is for this reason that, in addition to the Regional Official Plan policy which requires that the Designated Greenfield Area achieve an average minimum density not less than 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare, the York Region Official Plan, 2010 (YROP-2010) also contains a density policy specific to

New Community Areas. To offset lower densities within employment areas, YROP-2010 policy requires that community lands within *New Community Areas* be designed to meet or exceed a minimum density of 20 residential units per hectare and 70 residents and jobs per hectare. A fact sheet providing additional information on calculating Designated Greenfield Area densities is included as Attachment 3 to this report.

All of the above noted factors are considered when developing the land budget to address growth to 2041. They will also be considered by staff when analyzing the 70 residents and jobs per hectare density required by the YROP-2010 for New Community Areas versus the 50 residents and jobs per hectare density referenced in the Growth Plan as directed by Council.

Most landowner and stakeholder submissions address site specific matters; one submission raised specific concerns with density and intensification targets

A number of landowner and stakeholder submissions were received as the staff preferred growth scenario was being developed. These submissions are summarized in Appendices A, B and C to Attachment 6 of the November 2015 report to Council. Additional submissions were received after the report was completed. Staff will be responding to submissions through a report back to Council prior to, or with, a recommended growth scenario.

While most submissions were site specific, one submission made in response to the November staff report was more comprehensive raising concerns with, among other things, staff's analysis leading to a preferred intensification rate of 45%, and conclusions regarding development densities (residents and jobs combined per hectare). It is worth highlighting the two areas of concern as they also relate to areas Council identified in its resolution. An initial staff response is included below. More detail will be provided in a report targeted for June.

Other Regions are also seeking higher densities within New Community Areas

The submission suggests that York Region's density target of 70 residents and jobs combined per hectare for new community areas is unique to York Region and that every other Region in the GTA has implemented the 50 residents and jobs per hectare target. Based on a preliminary assessment, it appears that some other GTA upper tier municipalities also plan for densities higher than 50 residents and jobs per hectare in their urban expansion areas to meet the Growth Plan requirements, although policies in their Official Plans may only reference the Designated Greenfield Area wide target of 50. As discussed further below, the YROP-2010 has two policies addressing density. One policy is specific to New Community Areas, the other requires that the Designated Greenfield Area

achieve an average minimum density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare, consistent with the other Regions.

All unit types within the Built Up Area contribute to intensification

The submission does not recognize intensification units can be realized by housing types other than apartment and townhouses. All units types constructed within the built boundary contribute to the intensification target. A healthy supply of potential redevelopment sites which provide opportunity for ground related housing remains inside the built boundary. Examples include golf courses, some of which are currently redeveloping, and the residential development of areas of approved employment land conversion. Further, the submission does not recognize the apartment growth that is already being observed in the Region. Specifically, there are approximately 32,000 apartment units subject to current planning applications.

A number of concerns cited in the submission discussed above may relate to current local municipal secondary plan work being undertaken within the New Community Areas. Staff will be consulting with the concerned parties and local municipal planning staff in order to inform the comparative analysis. More information in this regard will be provided as part of staff's report to Council with the results of the comparative analysis.

Additional public consultation is proposed between June and September 2016

Public consultation to date has been extensive and an added round is viewed as necessary, given Council's recent discussion and direction. Regional staff will work with staff from the local municipalities most affected by intensification and urban expansion to explore options for additional consultation on the comparative analysis.

We expect to undertake this consultation between June and September 2016. In an effort to reach more people, consideration will be given to other consultation opportunities including the potential for a live, interactive webinar, or other options which provide more flexibility to potential participants.

Recommendations of the Advisory Panel Report on the Provincial Plans Review may have implications on the Municipal Comprehensive Review timeline and directions

On December 7 2015, the Advisory Panel for the Co-ordinated Review of the Provincial Plans released a report entitled Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2015-2041 (the Panel Report). The panel report

contains 87 recommendations that fall within the six goal areas of the review. Of the 87 recommendations, 56 relate to growth management and protecting valuable resources through land use planning direction provided in the four Provincial Plans that are currently under review. An additional 31 complementary recommendations generally highlight opportunities and challenges beyond the scope of the Plans, e.g. taxation, transit, and the role of the OMB.

The panel report concludes that, while there are signs of progress towards more effective growth management in the GTA, there are signs that the current policy framework needs to be strengthened in order to ensure that the vision and goals of the plans are fully realized and achieved. Two areas where the Advisory Panel is recommending strengthening the policy framework include increasing intensification requirements and mandating higher densities in the Designated Greenfield Area to better support the goals of the Plans. These are the two areas Council has directed staff to undertake additional work.

The Panel Report is recommending that the Province assess and apply potential increases in intensification targets

Recommendation 10 of the Panel Report states:

“With a view to increasing intensification targets to better support the goals of the plans to sustain productive agricultural lands, protect natural resources, achieve compact urban form, support transit, reduce traffic congestion and lower greenhouse gas emissions:

- Assess and apply potential increases in intensification targets in conjunction with related recommendations in this report regarding higher density targets in designated greenfield areas, better support for transit-related intensification and stronger criteria for settlement boundary expansions”

Increased density targets for Designated Greenfield Areas, as recommended by the Panel Report, would affect the land budget work undertaken to date

Recommendation 14 of the Panel Report states:

“Increase density targets for designated greenfield areas in order to support increased frequency of transit, the development of low-carbon, complete communities and mitigate climate change, while reflecting the different characteristics of municipalities. Include measures to:

- Require municipalities, with guidance and support from the Province, to measure and report annually on the achievement of density targets

- Establish a more transparent process for decision-making about alternative targets in the outer ring
- Guide the process of accounting for non-developable lands when calculating development densities through policy
- Review and update the current approach of using combined density targets for residents and jobs in designated greenfield areas”

The Province is expected to consider the recommendations of the Panel Report and release proposed amendments to the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan early this year. The Panel Report and any potential policy amendments could have implications on the comparative analysis requested by Council, and further impacts on the MCR. Specifically, Provincial direction to plan for higher intensification levels, or minimum density levels in excess of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare would mean additional work for staff in developing a recommended growth scenario.

Staff is anticipating that the Province will release draft amendments for the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan in late winter, early spring 2016. In addition to reporting to Council with recommendations regarding the draft amendments, staff will report to Council on the implications of the proposed amendments on the MCR and ROP update process.

Staff is targeting June 2016 to report back with the results of the comparative analyses requested by Council

The comparative analysis of the 40% and 45% intensification scenarios requested by Council will focus on the following:

- Effect on the land budget, including urban expansion area requirements
- Effects on housing mix, distribution and affordability
- Comparison with historic trends

Additional technical work is required to update the draft 40% scenario to a state which would facilitate comparison with the staff preferred 45% intensification scenario per the requested analysis. Staff is targeting June 2016 to report back to Council with the results of the comparative analysis. The comparative analysis will address both 40% versus 45% intensification rates, and details regarding how the density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare for the Designated Greenfield Area is being met.

A Recommended Scenario, initially scheduled to be considered by Council in Q2 2016, is now targeted for Q4 2016

The initial timeline and work plan for the MCR and ROP update exercise included reporting to Council with a recommended growth scenario in April 2016. As a result of the additional analysis requested, staff anticipates a shift in the timeline by about 6 months. Table 1 identifies the timing of some of the original key deliverables, and new target dates under the revised timeline for the MCR.

**Table 1
Original and Target MCR Key Dates**

Key Deliverable	Original Work Plan Delivery Date	New Delivery Date (Target)
Preferred Growth Scenario	November 2015	NA
Comparative Analysis	NA	June 2016
Recommended Growth Scenario and Draft Regional Official Plan Amendment	April 2016	November 2016
Adoption of Final Regional Official Plan Amendment	October 2016	March/April 2017

Link to key Council-approved plans

A product of the MCR is an amendment to the YROP-2010 which includes updates to the Regional and local municipal population and employment forecasts, intensification targets and associated policies.

The amendment will also bring YROP-2010 policies into conformity with recent provincial policy updates and legislation (Provincial Policy Statement 2014 and Source Water Protection). The YROP-2010 will also be updated to reflect areas of new and emerging trends.

The MCR and ROP update support all four of the 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan Priority Areas including – Managing Environmentally Sustainable Growth, Strengthening the Region’s Economy, Supporting Community Health and Well-being and Providing Responsive and Efficient Public Service.

The MCR also supports Vision 2051’s goal area of Creating Liveable Cities and Complete Communities through the preparation of the preferred growth scenario

and proposed urban expansions that will provide the framework for future growth and the development of communities in the Region.

5. Financial Implications

The majority of the MCR work has been undertaken in-house by existing staff in the Planning and Economic Development branch with support from staff in other Regional branches and departments. Consultants continue to provide assistance in the development and finalization of the MCR work, and are funded from within the existing Planning and Economic Development branch budget.

6. Local Municipal Impact

Local municipal staff are part of the MCR Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and provided comments throughout the MCR process. The TAC has been meeting to discuss the MCR process, including background work supporting the three draft growth scenarios and the preferred growth scenario. In addition, Regional staff has been meeting with each local municipality on an individual basis throughout the process. Staff also provided an MCR update to all nine local municipal councils in the spring and summer of 2015.

Local municipalities will continue to be consulted through the review and analysis of the 40% and 45% intensification scenarios and on the development of a recommended growth scenario. The intensification target is a Region-wide target, with local municipal targets ranging significantly. Consultation on the implications of various options will continue to be discussed with local municipal staff.

7. Conclusion

Work is underway on the comparative analysis of a 40% intensification scenario in relation to the 45% intensification scenario, as requested by Council. The analysis will also compare the provincially mandated minimum Designated Greenfield Area density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare with the YROP-2010, which requires New Community Areas to be designed to meet or exceed a minimum density of 70 residents and jobs per hectare.

It is anticipated that staff will report back to Council with the results of the comparative analysis in June 2016, conduct additional consultation between June and September and report back to Council with a recommended growth management scenario in Q4 2016. Staff continues to monitor the Provincial Plans review process and will report back to Council if the results of that review have implications on the MCR workplan.

Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review Work Plan Update

For more information on this report, please contact Sandra Malcic, Manager, Policy and Environment, Long Range Planning Division, Planning and Economic Development Branch at ext. 75274.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

January 28, 2016

Attachments (3)

6574082

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request



Planning for Intensification in the Built-Up Area

What is “intensification”?

The Provincial Policy Statement, the provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), and York Region Official Plan – 2010 (YROP-2010) define “intensification” as:

The development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- a. redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
- b. the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- c. infill development; or
- d. the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

All unit types constructed within the built-up area contribute towards intensification.

What is the built-up area?

The Growth Plan defines the built-up area as all land within the Built Boundary, which identifies the limits of the developed urban area as of 2006. The Built Boundary was defined through a provincial process in consultation with affected upper and single-tier municipalities. Regional staff worked with local municipal staff throughout the process. Council endorsed the final delineation of the Built-Up Area in May 2008.¹

In April 2008 the Province issued the final [Built Boundary for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006](#).²

The final York Region built-up area includes the provincially delineated built-up area, Cornell Centre and the provincially identified undelineated built-up area (delineated by regional staff).

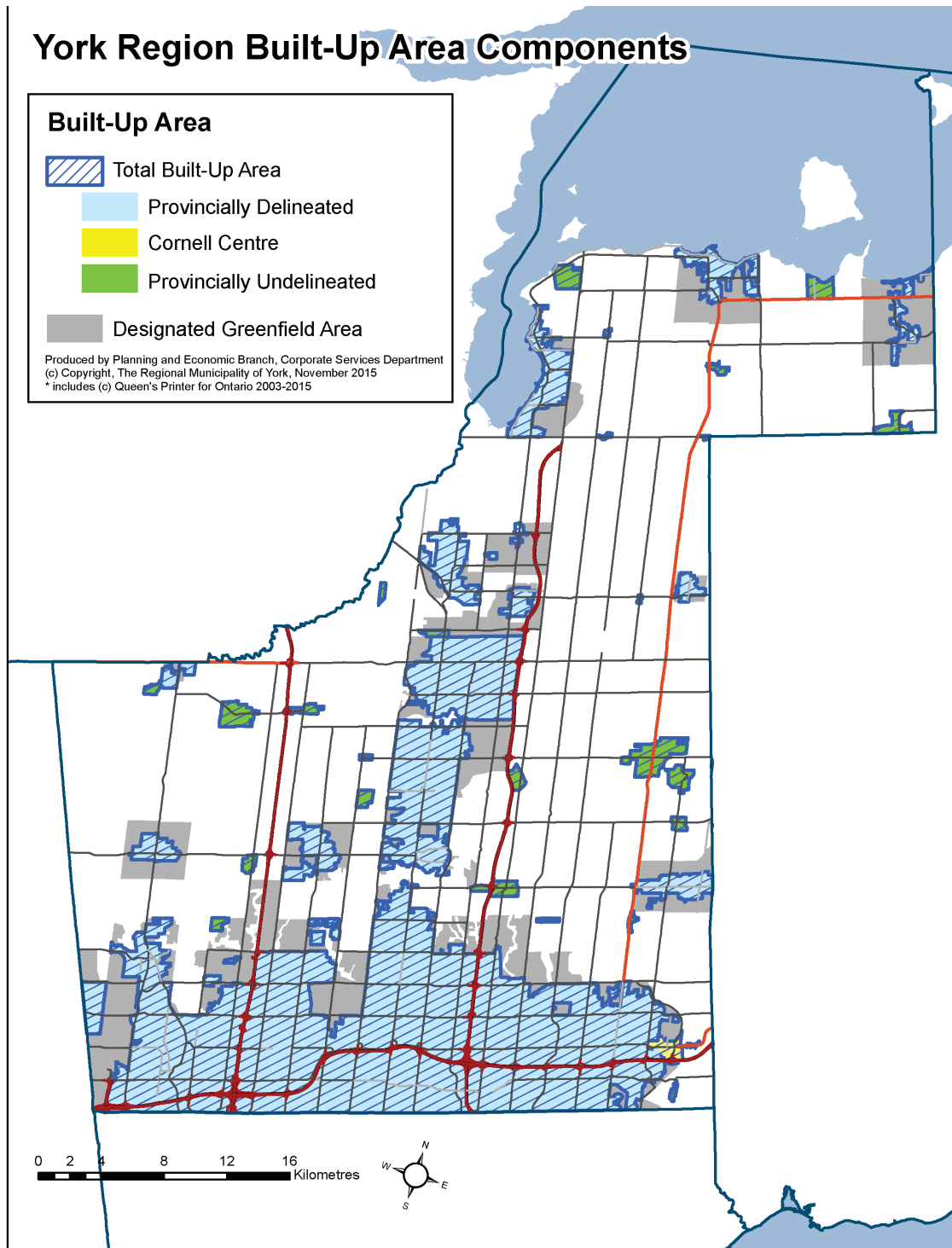
Map 1 on the following page displays the three components of the Built-Up Area.

¹Throughout the delineation process, the Region and City of Markham felt strongly that Cornell Centre should be included in the Built-up Area as this area is a key component of the Region’s planned urban structure and meets the intent of intensification policies. While, the final iteration of the Provincial built boundary did not include the majority of Cornell Centre, the intention to include Cornell Centre in all intensification calculations was communicated to Minister Caplan from Chairman Fisch in a letter dated February 25, 2008.

²It is notable that the final Built Boundary included a number of Undelineated Built-up Areas for smaller, unserved or partially-served settlement areas, which have limited capacity to accommodate significant future growth. These areas were selected by the Province without municipal consultation and are represented by dots in Provincial mapping. These Undelineated Built-up Areas have been delineated by regional staff based on local municipal plans.

Map 1 York Region Built-Up Area

This map displays the three components of the Built-Up Area Area.



What are the intensification targets for York Region?

The Growth Plan provides the following minimum intensification target:

“By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40 per cent of all residential development occurring annually within each upper- and single-tier municipality will be within the built-up area.”

How are Intensification targets for Local Municipalities established?

As the upper-tier municipality, the Region assigns intensification targets to the nine local municipalities. There are number of factors that are considered when assigning intensification targets, including:

- The Region-wide intensification target
- The geographic extent of the built boundary within a municipality (i.e. opportunities)
- Units subject to active planning applications within the built boundary
- Secondary Plan targets
- The potential for additional development within the built boundary (outside of approved planning applications and secondary plans)

The 2031 forecast and land budget assumed that the Region would achieve a 40 per cent intensification rate, which requires that 90,720 units be built within the Built-up Area between 2006 and 2031. The Regional intensification target was allocated to local municipalities based on local municipal input and the factors listed above and resulted in the distribution shown in Table 1.

Table 1: York Region Intensification Targets, 2006 to 2031¹

Local Municipalities	Units	Per cent of Total Growth
Aurora	3,140	36%
East Gwillimbury	1,030	4%
Georgina	2,690	24%
King	920	15%
Markham	31,590	51%
Newmarket	5,250	54%
Richmond Hill	15,300	51%
Vaughan	29,300	45%
Whitchurch-Stouffville	1,500	10%
York Region	90,720	39%

Source: York Region Official Plan, Table 2

¹The Growth Plan requires that intensification targets be achieved by the year 2015 and onwards. From 2006 to 2014 municipalities were required to ramp up their intensification efforts, but not to achieve 40% intensification. Therefore, the overall growth allocated to the Built-Up Area is slightly below the 40% target in order to account for the ramp-up years.

■ Planning for Intensification in the Built-Up Area

The YROP-2010 2006-2031 intensification targets assumed that only row and apartment units would be counted as “intensification”. The rationale for this was that at the time the built boundary was defined there were a significant number of unbuilt ground related units inside the built-up area, at the edges of the Built Boundary. These units, the majority of which have now been constructed, did not meet the intent of the Growth Plan intensification policies.

As part of the current forecast and land budget update process, staff are tasked with updating intensification targets by local municipality. For this updated exercise, all unit types constructed within the built boundary are counted as intensification. Staff believe that the majority of the ground related units at the periphery of the Built-up Area have been built. Going forward, it is felt that ground related development within the Built-up Area will meet the definition of intensification and the intent of the policies. Some areas where ground related intensification is expected to occur include Highland Gates Golf Course, the David Dunlop Observatory lands and the York Downs Golf Course.

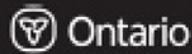
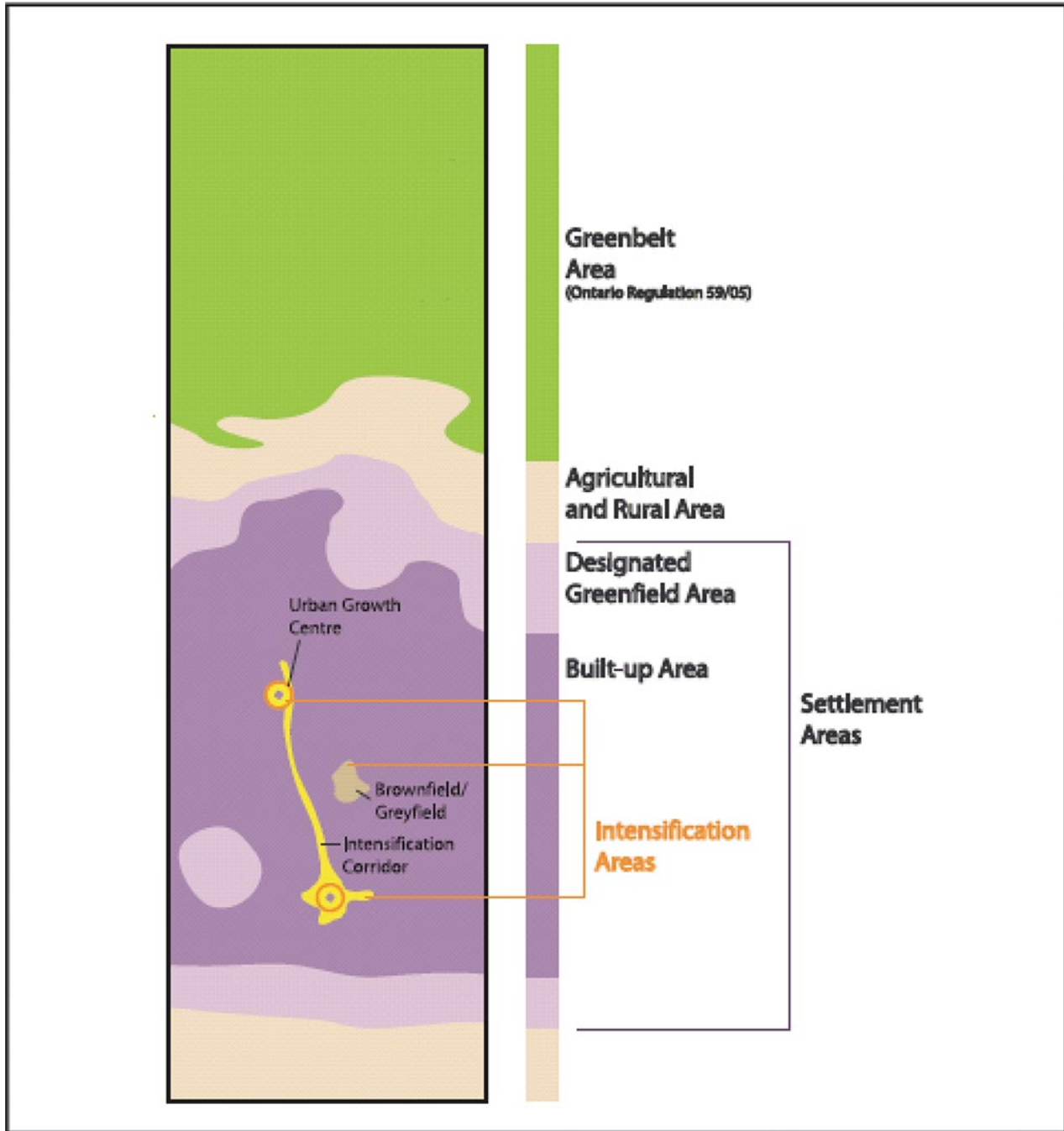
What progress has been made towards achieving Intensification?

Progress towards achieving the York Region 2006-2031 Intensification Targets is summarized in Table 2.

Table 3: York Region Residential Intensification Analysis, 2006 to 2014

Local Municipalities	YROP-2010 2006 to 2031 Intensification Targets	Total Unit Growth	Rows and Apartments in Built-Up Area		All Units in Built-Up Area	
			#	%	#	%
Aurora	3,140	1,030	293	28%	458	44%
East Gwillimbury	1,030	533	6	1%	143	27%
Georgina	2,690	951	138	15%	362	38%
King	920	1,434	156	11%	214	15%
Markham	31,590	13,965	6,568	47%	7,891	57%
Newmarket	5,250	1,442	207	14%	1,206	84%
Richmond Hill	15,300	4,967	2,383	48%	3,342	67%
Vaughan	29,300	6,842	2,448	36%	3,001	44%
Whitchurch-Stouffville	1,500	1,794	68	4%	292	16%
York Region	90,720	32,958	12,267	37%	16,909	51%

Between 2006-2014 the region achieved a 37 per cent rate of intensification for rows and apartments only and a 51 per cent rate of intensification for all units. A preliminary analysis of January to September 2015 building permit data has yielded a 51 per cent rate of intensification for rows and apartments only and a 60 per cent rate of intensification for all units.



PLACES TO GROW

GROWTH PLAN FOR
THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE ZONE

FIGURE 1

**Illustration Diagram:
Growth Plan Land-use Terminology**

The information displayed in the map above is not to scale. This figure is included for information only and should not be read as a part of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.



Planning for Density

in the Designated Greenfield Area

What is “Density”?

Density is a measure of activity (population, employment, households, floor area, units) divided by a land area base. It is used to gauge how efficiently land is being used and it can be expressed in a number of different ways, including:

- Floor Space Index (FSI) – floor area divided by land area
- Units per hectare – number of residential units divided by land area
- Population (residents) per hectare – population divided by land area
- Employees (jobs) per hectare – employees divided by land area

The Growth Plan requires that a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs/ha be applied to the Designated Greenfield Area.

What and where is the Designated Greenfield Area?

The Growth Plan defines the Designated Greenfield Area as:

“The area within a settlement area that is not built-up area. Where a settlement area does not have a built boundary, the entire settlement area is considered designated greenfield area.”

Settlement Area is defined as:

“Urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) where:

- a. development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and
- b. lands have been designated in an official plan for development over the long term planning horizon provided for in the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005. Where there are no lands that have been designated over the long-term, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated.”

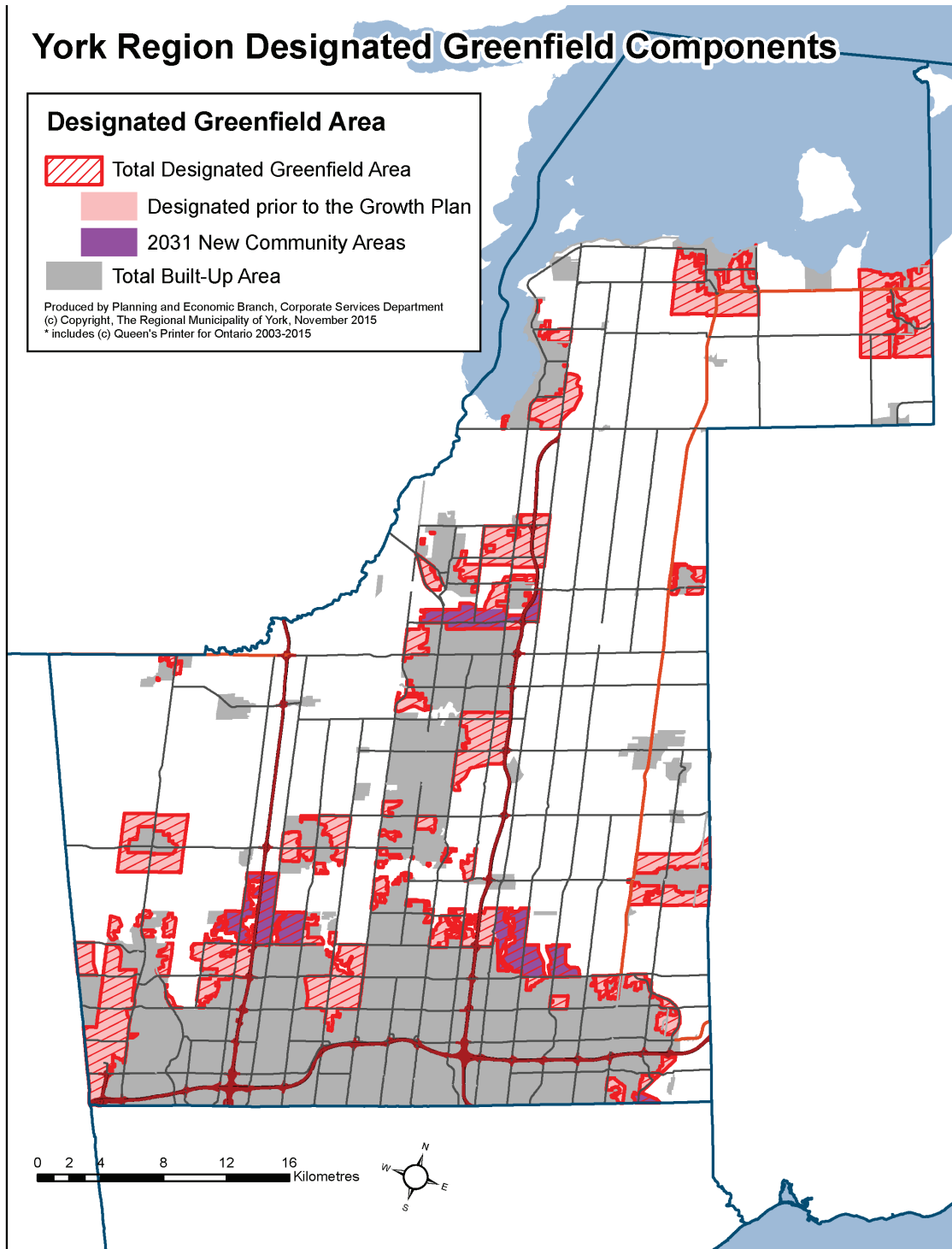
In York Region there are two components to the Designated Greenfield Area:

1. Areas designated prior to the Growth Plan
2. New Community Areas (ROPAs 52 [YROP-1994]; 1, 2, 3 [YROP-2010])

Map 1 on the following page displays the two components of the Designated Greenfield Area.

Map 1 - York Region Designated Greenfield Areas¹

This map displays the two components of the Designated Greenfield Area.



¹The areas of Nobleton, Pefferlaw and Sutton that are designated 'Rural' and/or 'Agricultural' in local plans are part of the designated greenfield area. However, no new development potential is assumed in these areas and they are not included for the purposes of calculating density.

What is the minimum Growth Plan density target for the Designated Greenfield Area?

The Growth Plan states (policy 2.2.7.2):

“The designated greenfield area of each upper- or single-tier municipality will be planned to achieve a minimum density target that is not less than 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare.”

Policy 2.2.7.3 provides direction on how to apply the density target, specifically by identifying the land area base included in the calculation:

This density target will be measured over the entire designated greenfield area of each upper- or single-tier municipality, excluding the following features where the features are both identified in any applicable official plan or provincial plan, and where the applicable provincial plan or policy statement prohibits development in the features:

- wetlands,
- coastal wetlands,
- woodlands,
- valley lands,
- areas of natural and scientific interest,
- habitat of endangered species and threatened species,
- wildlife habitat, and
- fish habitat

The area of the features will be defined in accordance with the applicable provincial plan or policy statement that prohibits development in the features.

In short, upper tier municipalities have to ensure that they are planning for at least 50 people and jobs per hectare (on average) across the developable land area of the Region’s Designated Greenfield Area.

How is the developable area determined?

The developable land area within the designated greenfield area is determined through a GIS exercise.

Features excluded from the designated greenfield area developable land area are as follows:

- Exclusions listed by the Growth Plan (see list above)
- Additional environmental exclusions – agreed to by the Province
- Components of Natural Heritage Systems that prohibit all development
- Infrastructure exclusions – agreed to by the Province
- Existing uses (estate subdivisions)

A full list of developable area exclusions applied by the Region is provided within the Land Budget (see Appendix C to [Attachment 4](#) of the November 2015 Preferred Growth Scenario staff report).

Is the developable area always the same?

The developable area is not fixed. For each new region-wide forecasting and land budget exercise (Municipal Comprehensive Review), the developable area is updated based on the most current, best available information and data.

The developable area used for the 2031 forecast and land budget exercise has been updated for the current 2041 forecast and land budget exercise, including:

- Incorporation of most up to date environmental feature data
- Exclusion of all wetlands in Lake Simcoe watershed and ORM (previously only significant wetlands excluded)
- Exclusion of the Engineered Floodplains in the Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority Area (not available for previous iteration)
- Updates to Natural Heritage exclusions based on most recent local municipal data
- Exclusion of additional existing uses (water reclamation centre in East Gwillimbury, Angus Glen Community Centre [based on OMB mediated agreement])

How are people and job inputs determined?

For the purposes of calculating density, forecasted residents and jobs are determined for the following four areas:

1. Employment Lands in areas designated prior to the Growth Plan
2. Community Lands in areas designated prior to the Growth Plan
3. Urban expansion Employment Lands (“2031 New Community Areas” from Map 1)
4. Urban expansion Community Lands

Community Lands designated prior to the Growth Plan typically have more advanced planning documentation and require fewer assumptions around the type, location and amount of growth. As some of these areas were approved for development prior to the approval of the YROP-2010, the level density approved may be below 50 residents and jobs per hectare.

The technical approach to calculating density is outlined in the [Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region](#) staff report which was endorsed by Council in March 2014 and serves as a tool for local municipalities and the building industry to use in planning to meet the density targets.

How are overall density targets determined?

As noted, there were two main components to the density exercise (areas designated prior to the Growth Plan and New Community Areas). For each of these areas, community lands and employment lands are evaluated separately, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: 2031 York Region Density Target Analysis

Density Target Areas	Area (ha)	People and Jobs	Density
Community Lands in the Designated Area¹ (Designated prior to the Growth Plan)	7,336	382,300	52
Employment Lands in the Designated Area² (Designated prior to the Growth Plan)	2,584	89,770	35
2031 New Employment Areas³	854	34,170	40
2031 New Community Areas⁴	1,619	113,960	70
York Region 2031 Designated Greenfield Area	12,394	620,200	50

Source: York Region 2031 Land Budget, Table 21

1. Based on existing residential units and jobs and planned for people and jobs, as verified by local municipal staff.
2. Based on existing jobs and assumed capacity of vacant lands based on existing and planned densities.
3. Based on a 40 jobs per developable hectare assumption, which is the highest reasonable assumption staff felt was possible for this type of development in the designated greenfield area.
4. Based on achieving provincially mandated 50 people and jobs in the Designated Greenfield Area.

Through the background work conducted for New Community lands, it was determined that 70 people and jobs per developable hectare equates to 20 residential units per developable hectare.

Staff assume that the community lands designated prior to the Growth Plan and employment lands will continue to achieve densities lower than the Provincially mandated 50 people and jobs per hectare. These lower densities will continue to have to be offset through New Community Areas.

What does YROP-2010 say about the designated greenfield area density target?

Section 5.2 (Sustainable Cities, Sustainable Communities) YROP-2010 states that it is the policy of Council:

“To require that the designated greenfield area achieve an average minimum density that is not less than 50 residents and jobs per hectare combined in the developable area.” (Policy 5.2.14)

“That approved secondary plans within the designated greenfield area that are not completely built should be re-examined to determine if 50 residents and jobs per hectare in the developable area can be achieved.” (Policy 5.2.15)

Section 5.6 sets out the policies for development in new community areas and states that it is the policy of Council:

“That new community areas shall be designed to meet or exceed a minimum density of 20 residential units per hectare and a minimum density of 70 residents and jobs per hectare in the developable area.” (Policy 5.6.3)

Regional MCR Work Plan Update

Presentation to
Committee of the Whole

Valerie Shuttleworth

February, 11, 2016



Presentation Outline

- A. Summary of November Council resolution**
- B. Considerations when Conducting the Comparative Analysis**
- C. Preliminary Comments Regarding Density and Intensification Targets**
- D. Provincial Plans Review Advisory Panel findings**
- E. Revised MCR work plan and schedule**
- F. Next steps**

How we got here...

York Region's **population** is expected to grow from

1.1 million in 2014 to **1.8** million in 2041

York Region's **employment** is expected to grow from

565 thousand in 2014 to **900** thousand in 2041

• 65% Intensification (No Urban Expansion)

• 50% Intensification

• 40% Intensification



The draft scenarios were analyzed and refined through an iterative process

How we got here...

York Region's **population** is expected to grow from

1.1 million in 2014 to **1.8** million in 2041

York Region's **employment** is expected to grow from

565 thousand in 2014 to **900** thousand in 2041

• 65% Intensification (No Urban Expansion)

• 50% Intensification

• **45% Intensification (Staff Preferred)**

• 40% Intensification



The analysis lead staff to a preferred scenario of 45% intensification

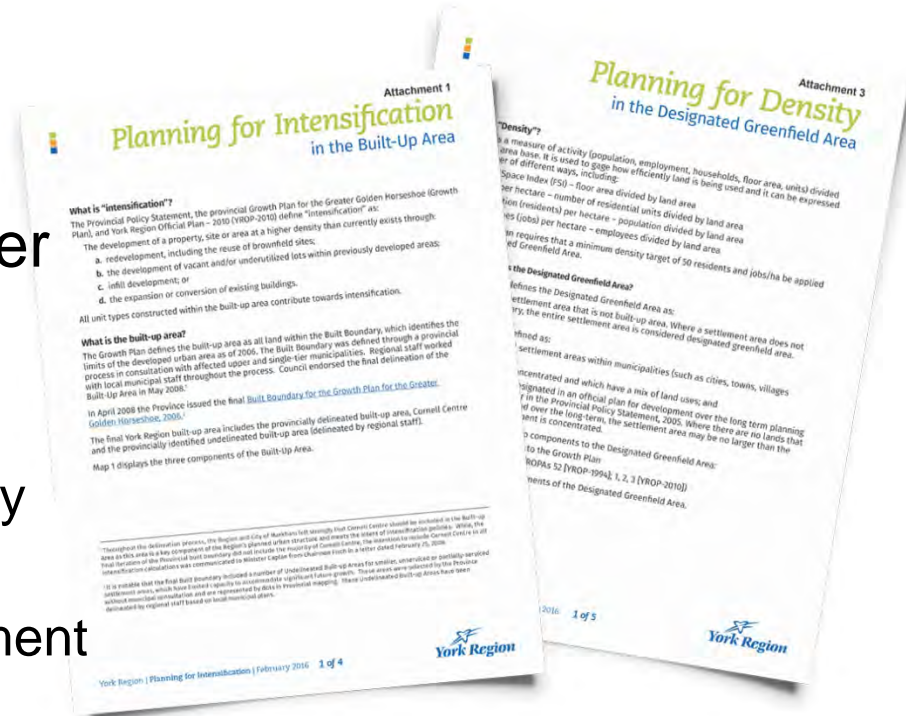
Summary of November 2015 Council Resolutions

- 40% intensification scenario compared to 45% scenario
- 50 residents and jobs per hectare density target compared to 70 people and jobs per hectare
- Options and a preferred strategy to accelerate the delivery of services for North Vaughan
- Merits of including remaining whitebelt lands in Northwest Vaughan for employment purposes

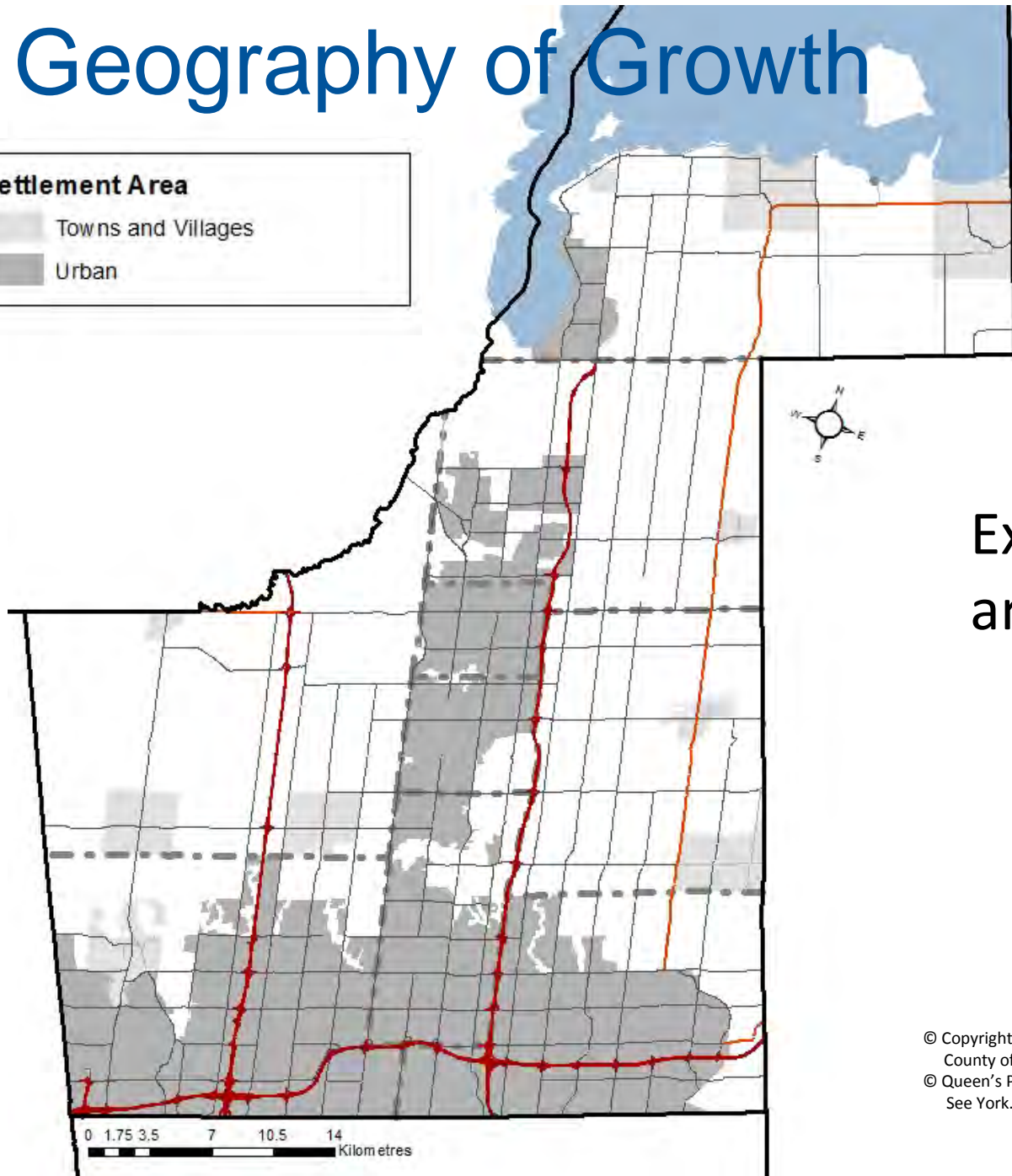
Work on these comparative analyses is underway

Considerations when Conducting a Comparative Analysis

- Updating the 40% intensification forecast
- The Region's ability to deliver **intensification** units
- Calculating **density**
 - DGA wide vs. New Community areas
 - Accounting for lower employment land densities



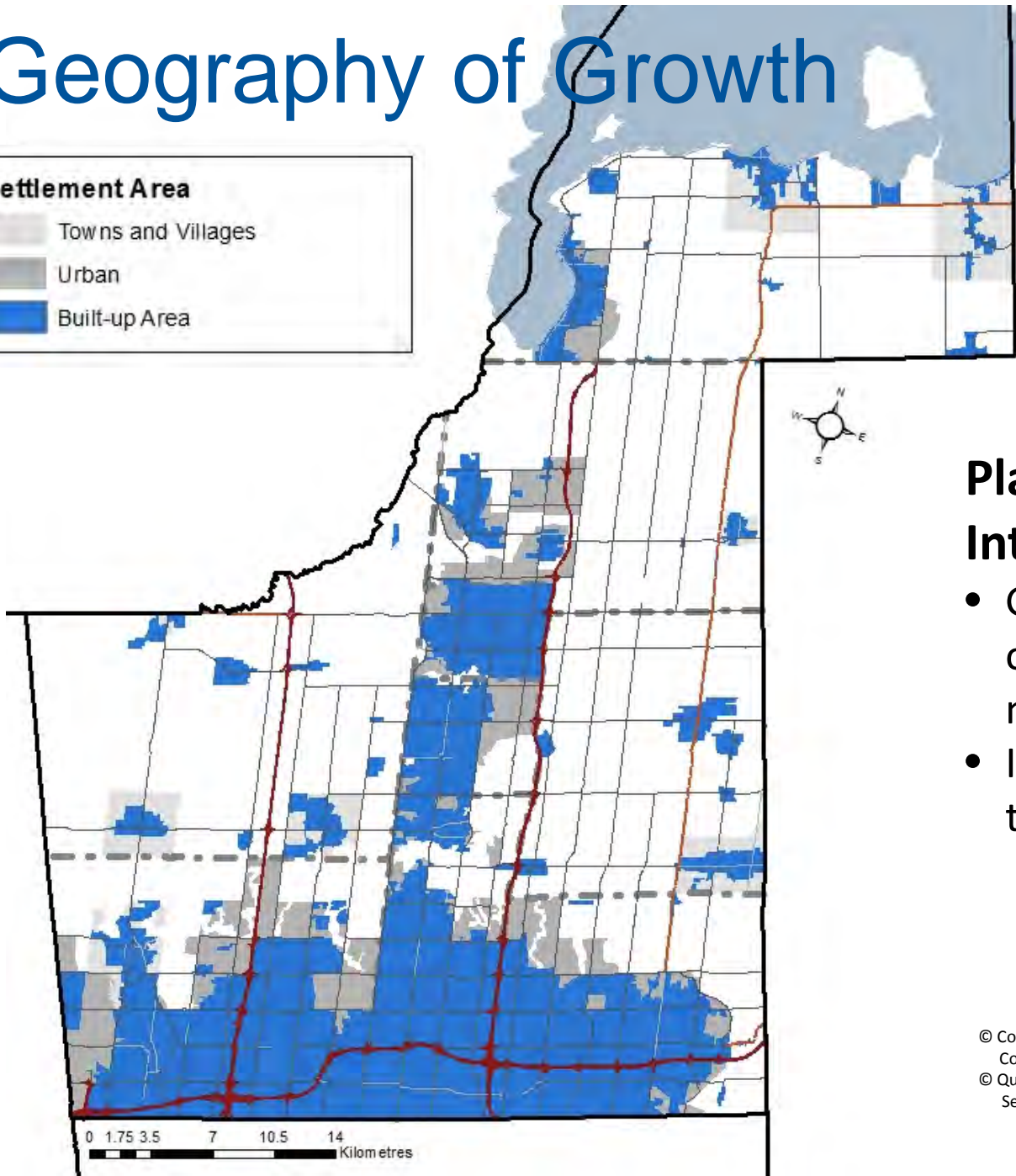
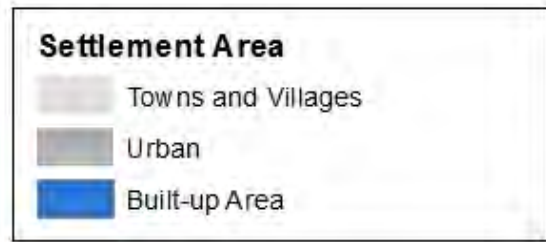
Geography of Growth



Existing urban areas

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Geography of Growth

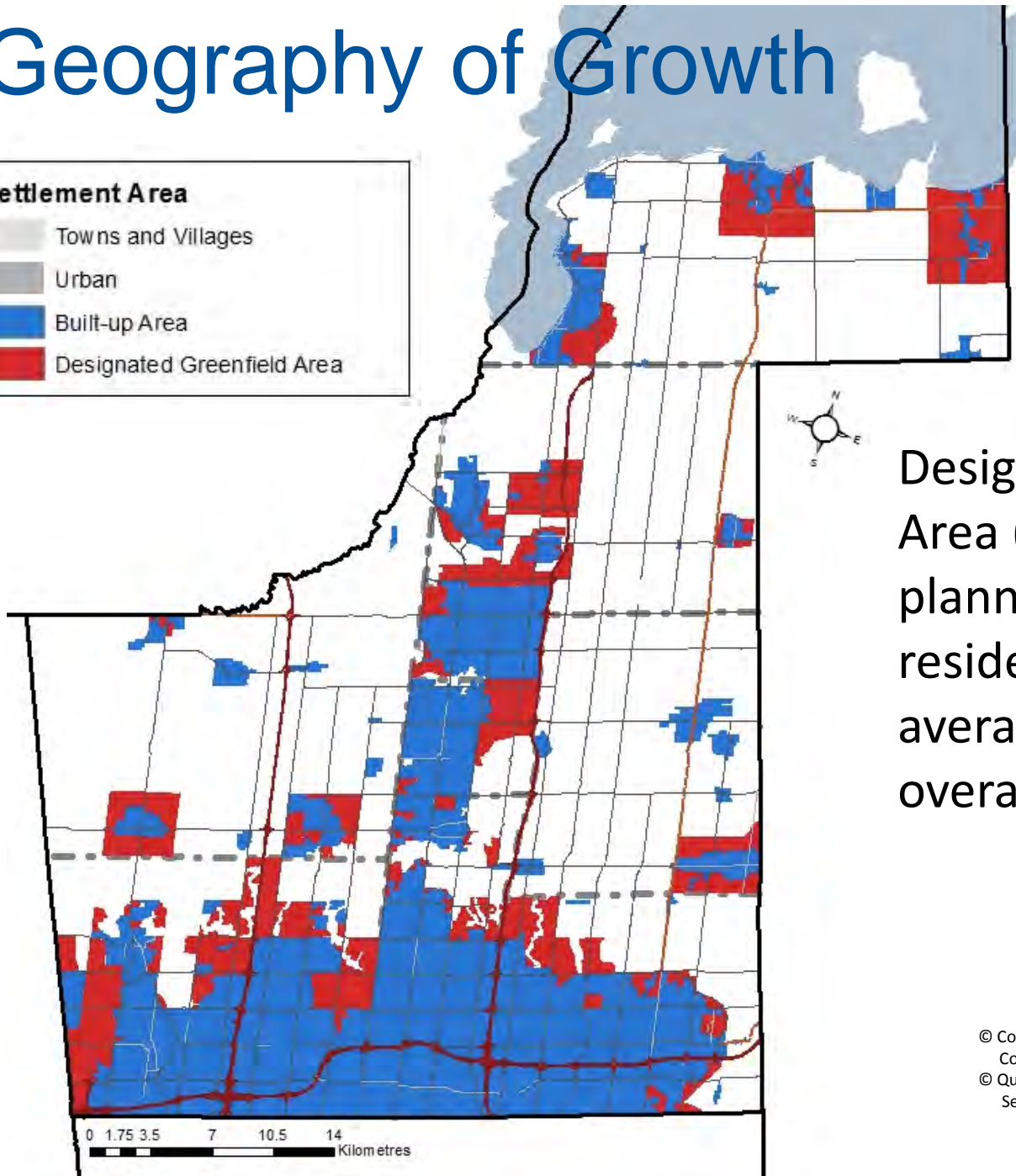
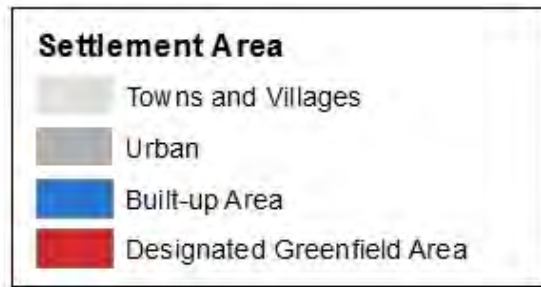


Planning for Intensification

- Growth Plan target of 40% is a minimum
- Intensification target is Regional

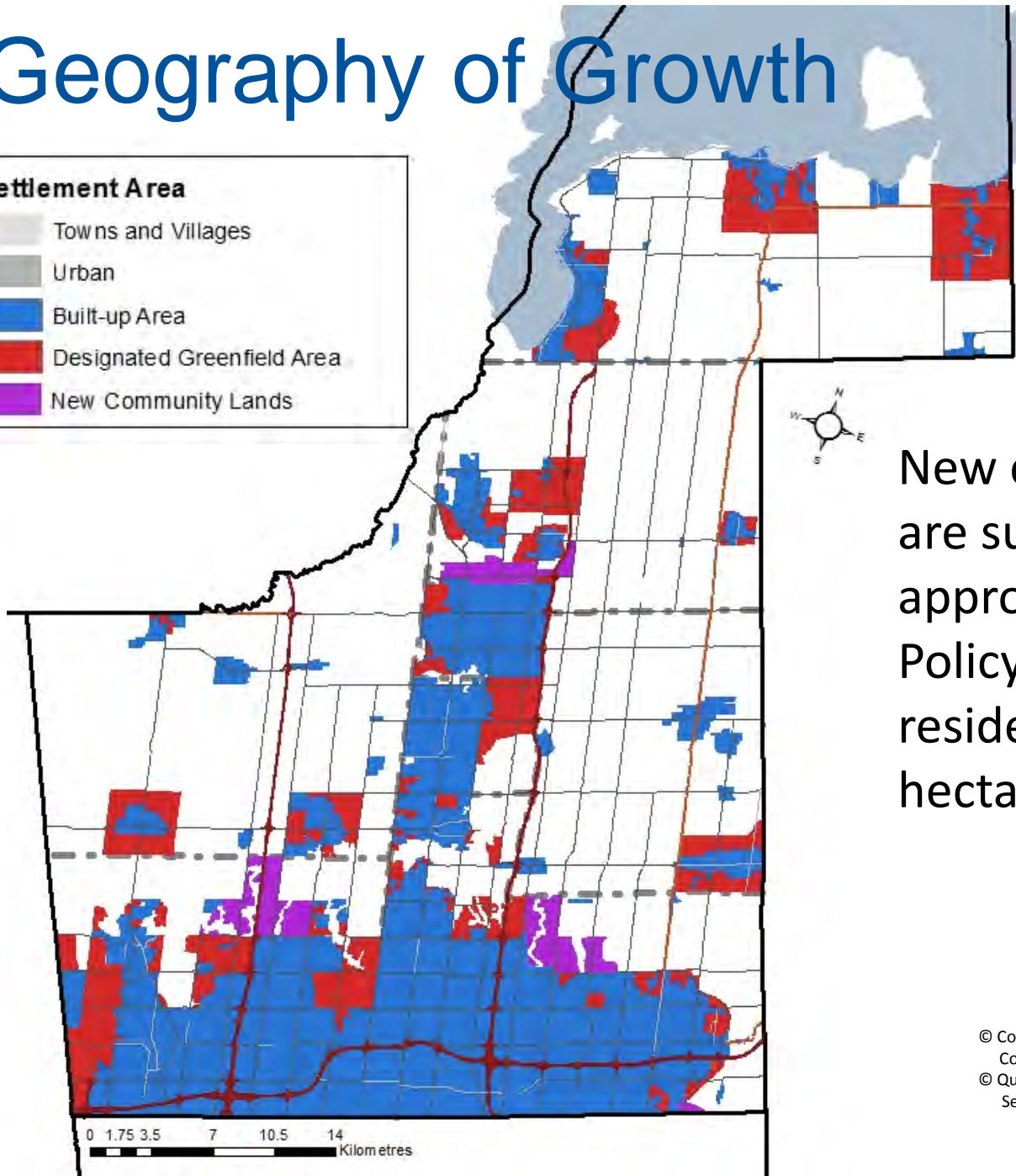
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Geography of Growth

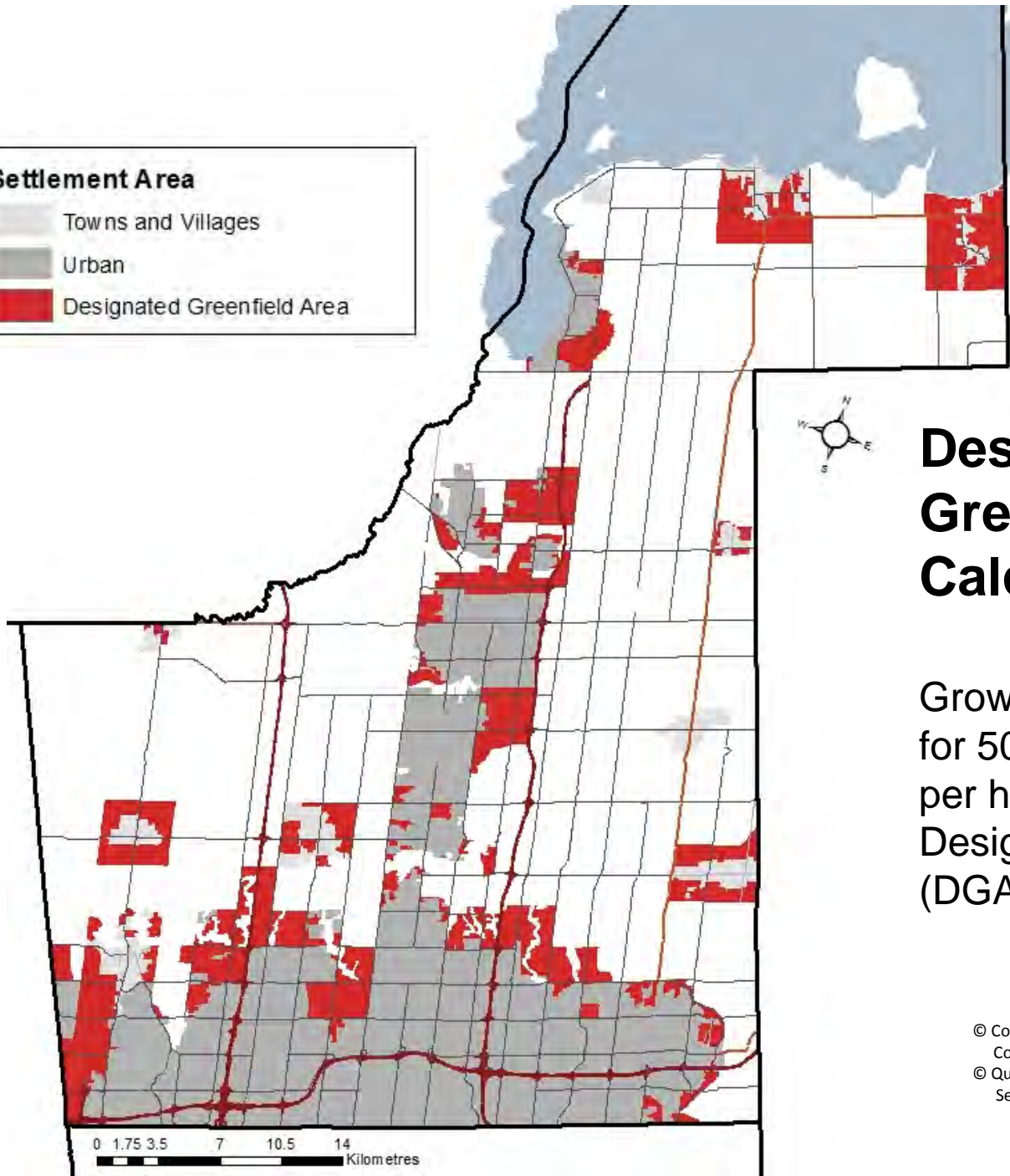
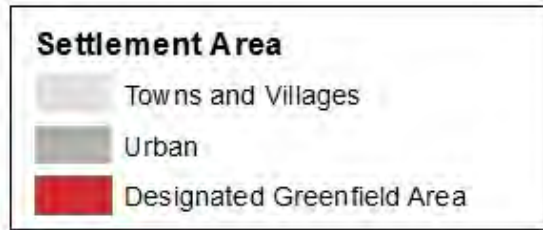


Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) must be planned to achieve 50 residents and jobs on average per hectare overall

Geography of Growth



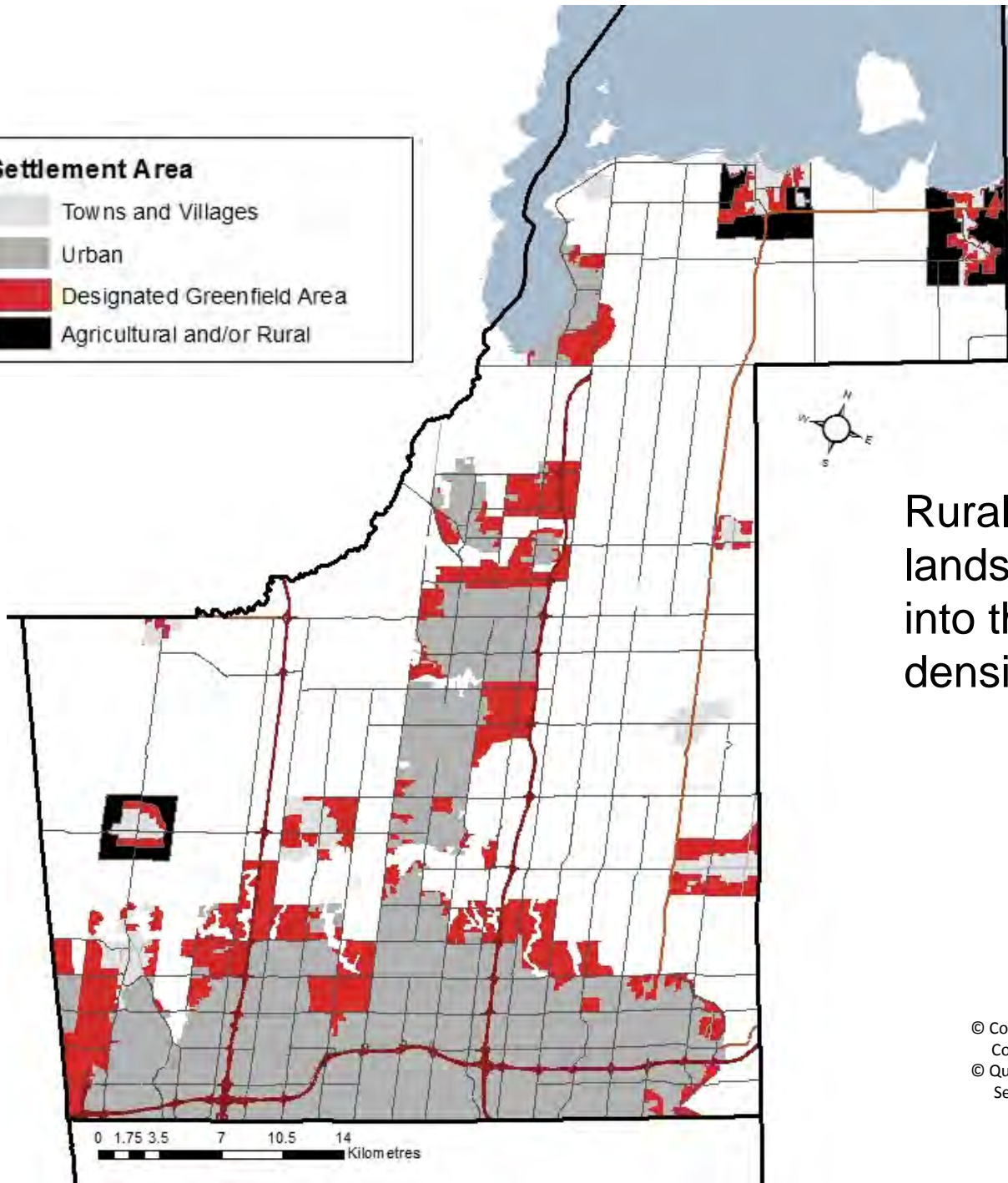
New community Areas are subject to approved YROP-2010 Policy requiring 70 residents and jobs per hectare



Designated Greenfield Density Calculation

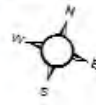
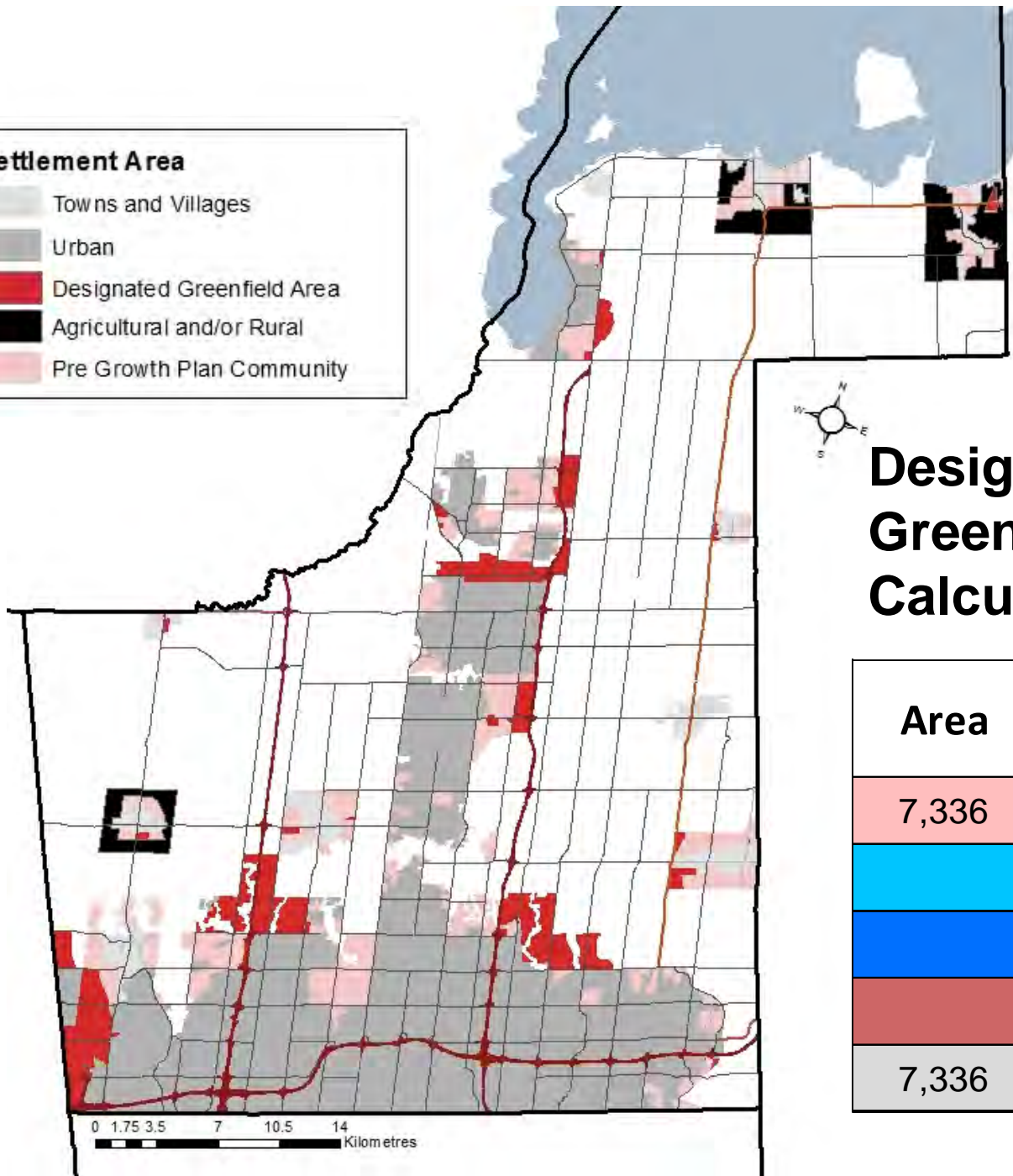
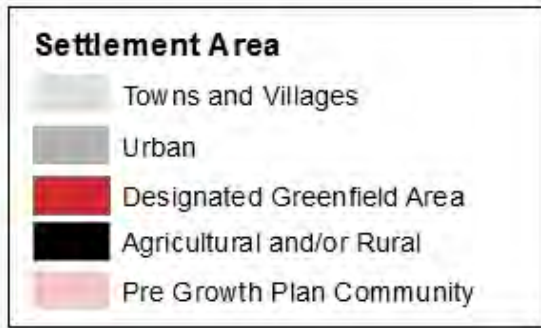
Growth Plan requirement for 50 residents and jobs per hectare applies to Designated Greenfield Area (DGA)

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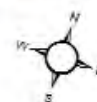
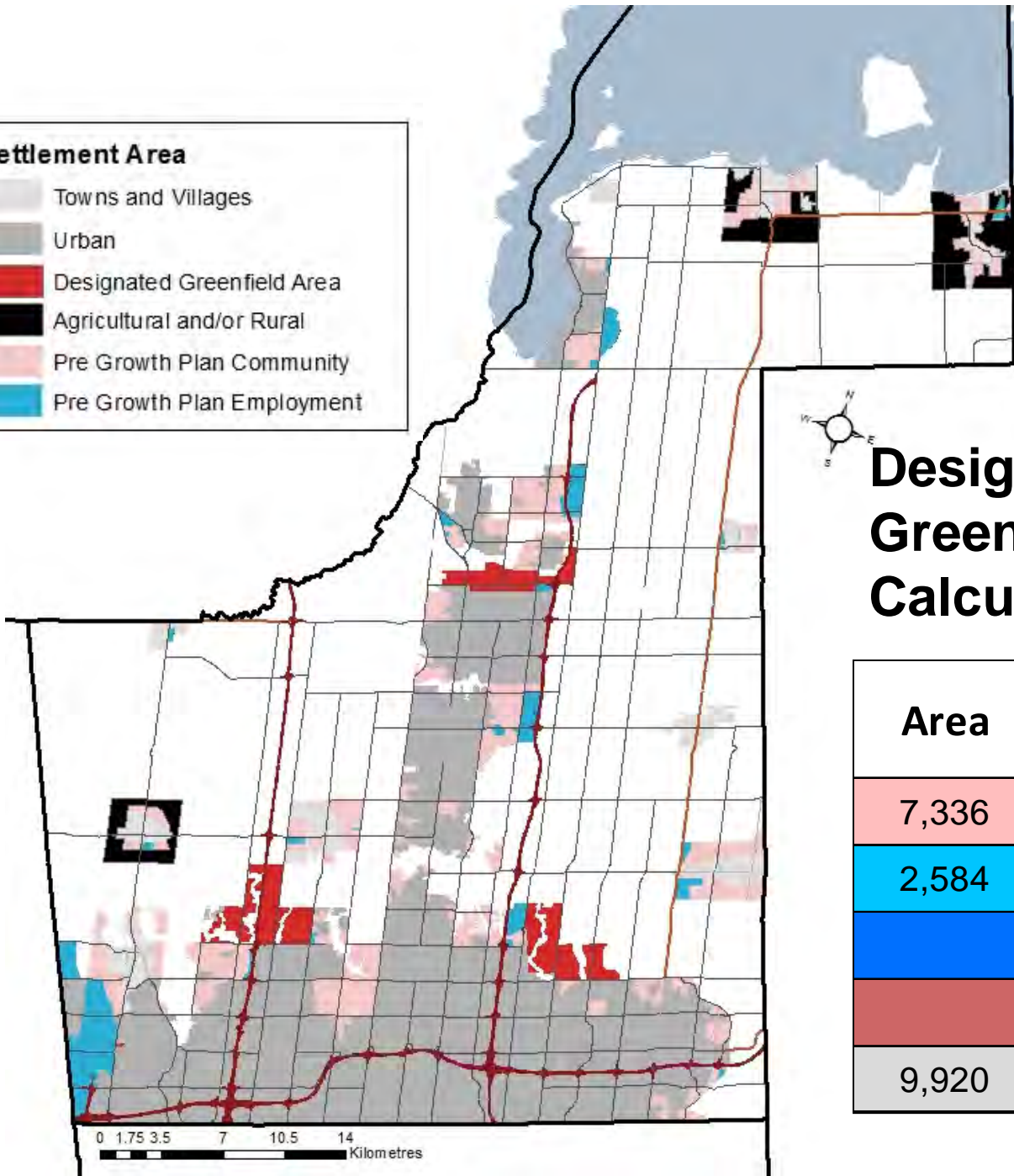
Rural and agricultural lands are not factored into the calculation of density

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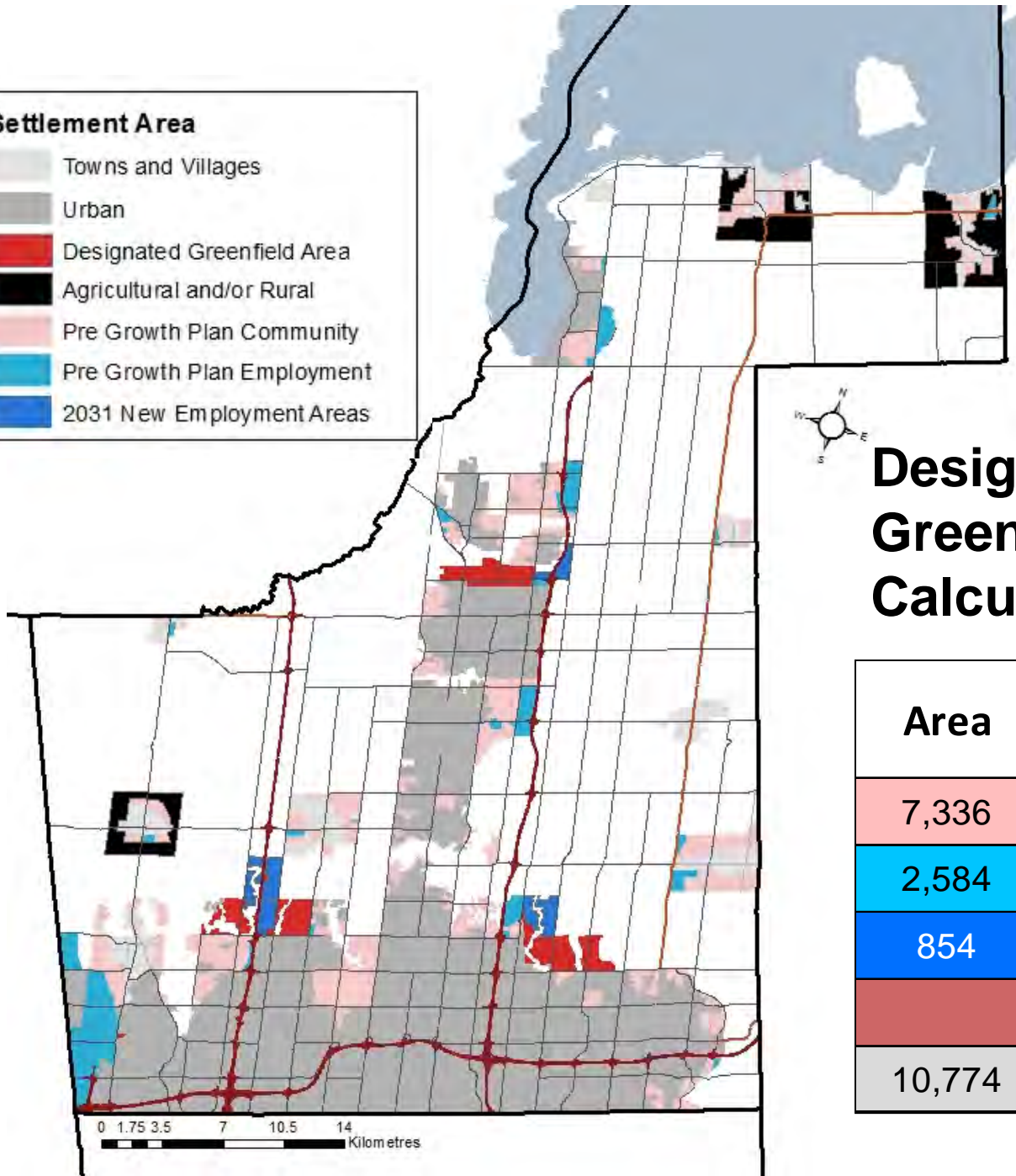
Designated Greenfield Density Calculation

Area	People and Jobs	Density
7,336	382,300	52
7,336	382,300	52



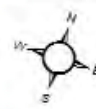
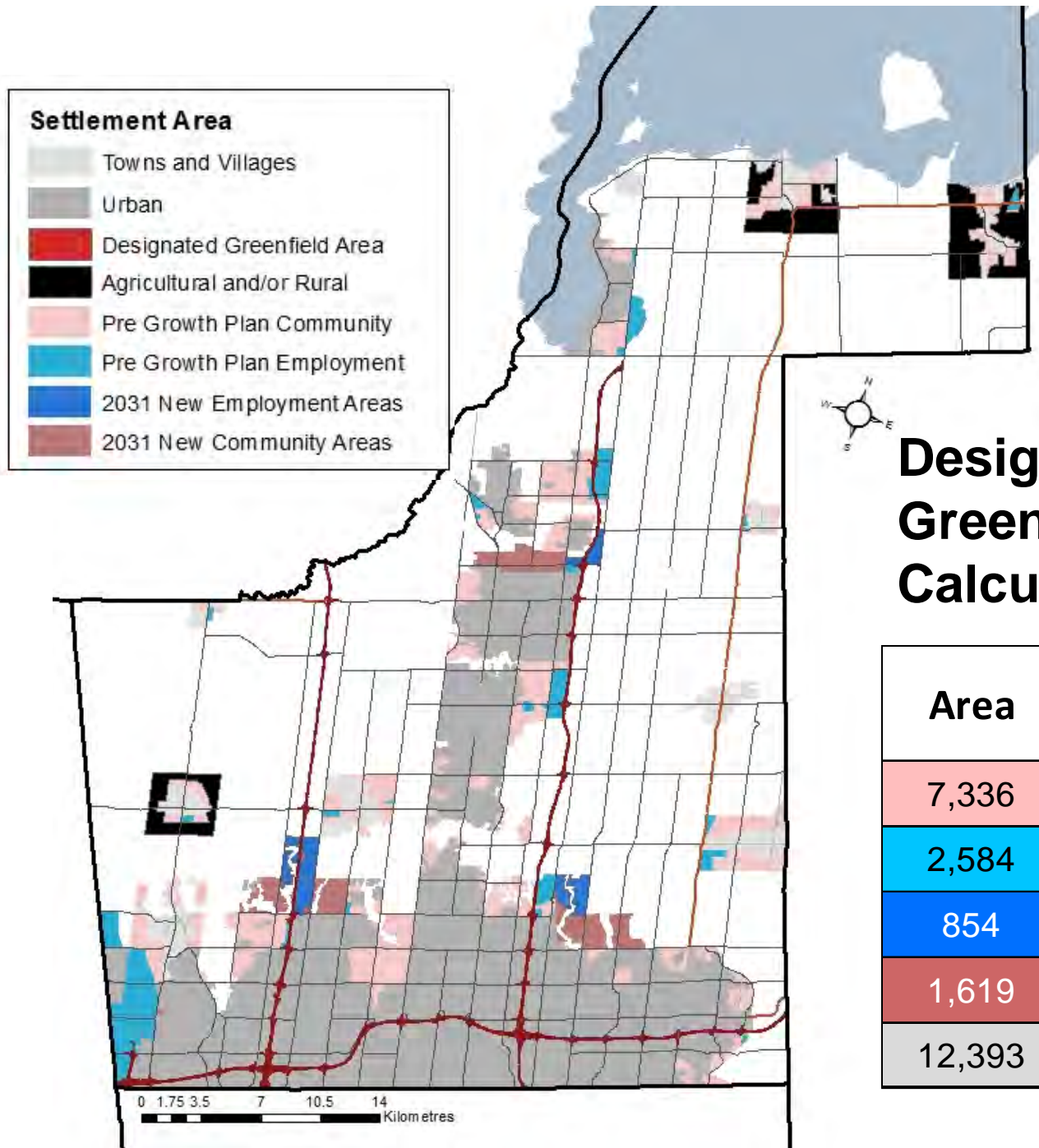
Designated Greenfield Density Calculation

Area	People and Jobs	Density
7,336	382,300	52
2,584	89,770	35
9,920	472,070	48



Designated Greenfield Density Calculation

Area	People and Jobs	Density
7,336	382,300	52
2,584	89,770	35
854	34,170	40
10,774	506,240	47



Designated Greenfield Density Calculation

Area	People and Jobs	Density
7,336	382,300	52
2,584	89,770	35
854	34,170	40
1,619	113,960	70
12,393	620,200	50

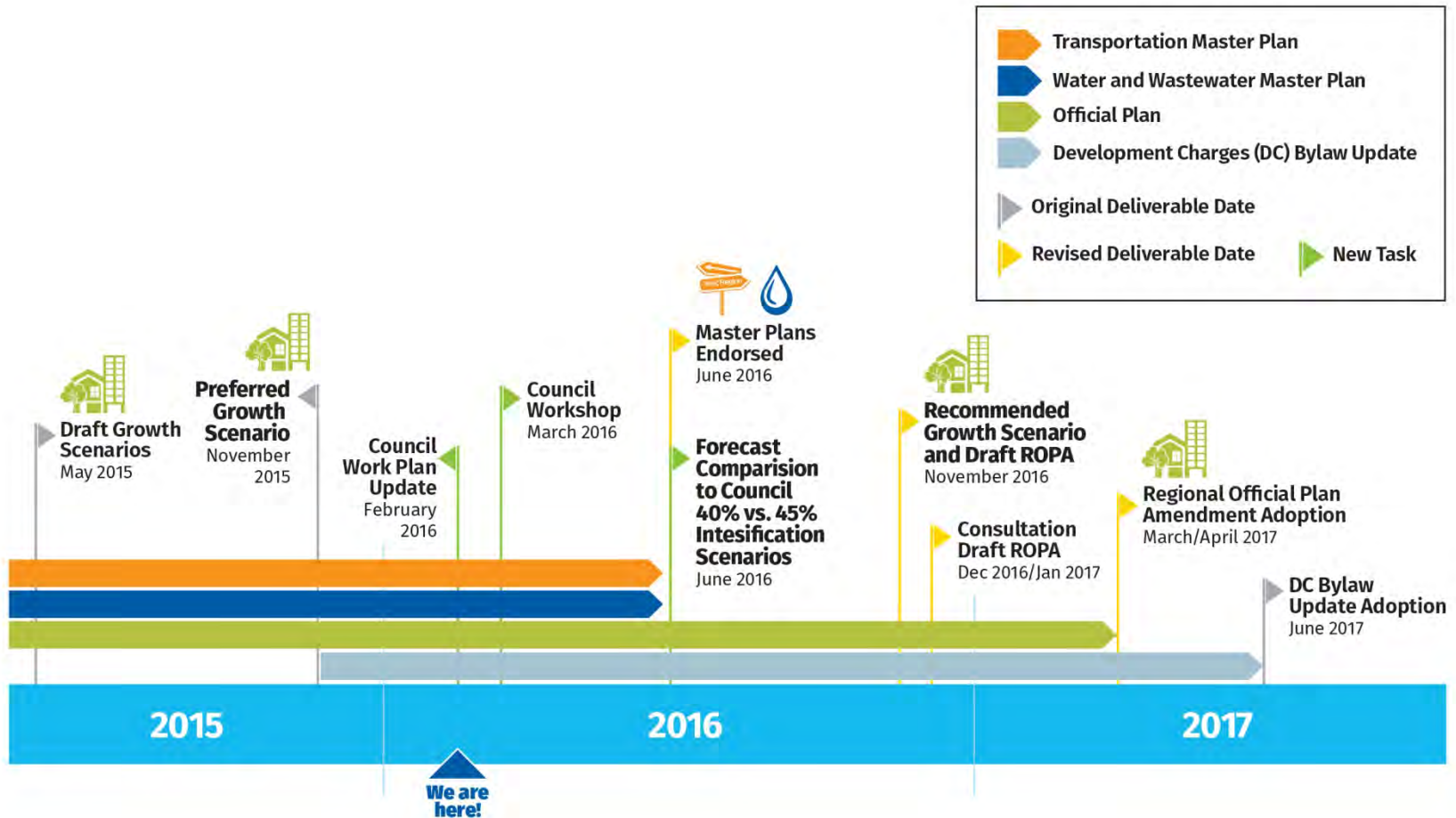
Provincial Plans Review Advisory Panel Findings

The Advisory Panel Report, released December 2015, contains 87 recommendations to the Province, including:

- A recommendation that the Province assess and apply potential increases in intensification targets
- Increased density targets for designated greenfield areas



Revised MCR Work Plan and Schedule



Next Steps

- **Update 40% intensification scenario**
- **Research intensification and density planning across GTA**
- **Monitor Provincial Plan Review process**
- **Report back to Council in June**
- **Consultation June – September 2016**

Recommendation

It is recommended that this report be received for information



February 9, 2016

Chair Emmerson and Members of Regional Council
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

Attention: Denis Kelly, Regional Clerk

RE: York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario

Dear Sirs and Madams:

We are writing on behalf of our clients, Royalpark Homes and SigNature Communities, to express our concerns with the assumptions, methodology, and conclusions of the recently released York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario, and its associated supporting documents. On review of Staff's Report, our team raises the following key concerns:

1. The Concept of "More than Conformity"

We understand that the Region of York has an obligation to conform to the Provincial Growth Plan (2013). It appears however, that the planning rationale for both the enhanced intensification target and the higher than required 'Whitebelt' greenfield density targets in the York Region Preferred Growth Scenario are based on the assumption that more intensification and higher densities better achieve Provincial policy objectives. In the Growth Plan (2013), the test is **conformity**, and not **more than conformity**. We do not see any rationale that indicates more than conformity will achieve a better planning outcome, particularly from a market acceptance perspective. The Provincial requirement of 40% intensification is a minimum target and the minimum 'Whitebelt' greenfield density target is 50 persons and jobs per gross hectare. As these are minimum targets, we are of the opinion that adopting them as they are in the Growth Plan (2013) does not preclude the achievement of higher rates of intensification, or the achievement of higher 'Whitebelt' greenfield densities based on market acceptance over time.

Overall, we believe that adopting the **more than conformity** approach significantly compromises the Region's attractiveness for development in comparison to other Regional Municipalities in the Greater

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Golden Horseshoe that adopt the minimum intensification and 'Whitebelt' greenfield density targets established by the Growth Plan (2013). Conformity can still be achieved by adopting lower targets.

2. The Intensification Assumption

The Growth Plan (2013) requires a 40% intensification target. The 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario instead is based on a 45% intensification target. At a general level, we feel that this target for intensification:

- Promotes a housing mix that is not realistic from a market perspective, and is consequently, not likely to be achieved by 2041;
- Threatens housing affordability because the 45% intensification target effectively and unnecessarily restricts the supply of designated greenfield areas; and
- Compromises the Region's attractiveness for development in comparison to other Regional Municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe that utilize a lower intensification target.

For example, to achieve the 45% intensification target, a substantial shift in built form will be required throughout the Region, with an emphasis on the development of apartment type units. It is agreed that some municipalities such as Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan will begin to accommodate a greater share of apartment units, based on their evolving urban contexts. However, it is not apparent if the Region as a whole can accommodate 94,450 new apartment units (36% of all housing growth) to 2041. There is no historic or evolving urban context that would make apartment living attractive to the market in the more rural/suburban communities in the north part of York Region.

Taking a pragmatic and market focused look at the impact of these apartment unit allocations, today in East Gwillimbury, there are 250 apartment units, primarily in low/mid-rise forms. There are no condominium apartment buildings over 5 storeys in the Town. The Region has forecasted the number of apartments in East Gwillimbury to reach 2,570 units by 2041. We question whether the market in East Gwillimbury can support that number of apartment units.

Further, and as land in York Region and other areas in the GTA becomes too expensive and/or is exhausted and housing values continue to increase, it is possible that municipalities such as East Gwillimbury could become more attractive to purchasers in search of ground-oriented housing. If increased demand for new ground-oriented housing is absorbed by East Gwillimbury, the Town could develop its designated greenfield areas and 'Whitebelt' expansion lands much earlier than projected by the Region. We suggest the 40% intensification target identified in the Growth Plan (2013) is appropriate.



3. The Greenfield Density Targets

We question the requirement for 70 persons and jobs per hectare for new community areas in the existing designated greenfield areas going forward. The Growth Plan (2013) instead requires 50 persons and jobs per hectare. Further, the proposed increase to 75 persons and jobs for new ‘Whitebelt’ designated greenfield areas raises substantial concern and seems an unprecedented approach in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Our concerns are the same as those related to the intensification target and we believe that these higher than required or typical ‘Whitebelt’ greenfield density targets:

- Promote a housing mix that is not realistic from a market perspective, and is consequently not likely to be achieved by 2041, particularly in King, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, and Whitchurch-Stouffville;
- Threaten housing affordability because they effectively and unnecessarily reduce the supply of designated greenfield areas; and
- Compromise the Region’s attractiveness for development in comparison to other Regional Municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe that utilize lower greenfield density targets.

In addition, we feel that these higher than required or typical ‘Whitebelt’ greenfield density targets will result in an urban structure where the oldest neighbourhoods are representative of the lowest densities, and the newest areas achieve the highest densities. This regional and local scale urban structure would seem counter intuitive and may lead to an urban form that is not desirable. In our opinion, it is essential that the ‘Whitebelt’ greenfield density assumptions be reviewed in terms of urban structure, built form, housing mix, housing affordability, marketability, as well as infrastructure and service delivery perspectives.

A key issue with the application of higher ‘Whitebelt’ greenfield densities is the definition of developable area. Stormwater management facilities, schools, parks and other community-supporting facilities, while necessary elements of a complete community, require substantial land areas that do not assist in achieving density targets. In some cases the development standards for schools have become even more suburban over time. The higher than required or typical ‘Whitebelt’ greenfield density targets, in combination with significant land takings for low density or no density community supporting facilities compounds the already stated issues of market acceptance, housing mix and affordability, and the competitiveness of York Region as a place to invest.

4. The Definition of “Leap Frog” Development

The York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario states that: *“Within local municipalities requiring urban expansion, fill in existing ‘Whitebelt’ gaps in the urban fabric before extending outwards from the existing urban area, avoiding ‘leap frog’ development patterns.”* This statement raises a number of concerns that require further explanation and articulation.

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To begin, and while this approach may represent a valid planning proposition with respect to overall urban structure in the Region, it has not been adequately evaluated with respect to other alternative approaches that may be more appropriate and more generally acceptable throughout York Region, and in particular, in East Gwillimbury. This approach assumes that an urban structure that fills in ‘Whitebelt’ gaps is the preferred approach to greenfield development moving forward. This approach to community building has, to date, produced the amorphous suburban pattern of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan where historic communities have been absorbed by new development, and consequently, their once distinct character and identity was virtually lost.

In York Region, the municipalities of King, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Georgina still retain an urban fabric that includes urban communities that are separated by rural/agricultural lands, as well as the Natural Heritage System. The communities within each of these municipalities retain their historic identity and character, elements that are highly valued by residents. We are concerned that a continuation of an approach to growth that focuses on filling in the ‘Whitebelt’ gaps will create an urban structure of one gigantic suburban agglomeration that ignores existing development patterns and wipes out historic community character and identity.

Further, the phrase “leap frog development patterns” is undefined, and appears to be applied in the York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario without clear criteria. It is our understanding that development that is not contiguous to existing or planned development would represent “leap frog development patterns” and would produce new communities that are not an extension of an existing community. We are unclear how the York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario defines “leap frog development patterns”, and how this term has been applied to assess the range of growth options.

The specific requirements for urban area expansion within the Region are found under YROP 2010 Policy 5.1.12. Under Section 8.1 of Attachment 4, the eleven (11) requirements of YROP 2010 Policy 5.1.12 are outlined as the policy requirements for urban boundary expansion in the Region. Under Attachment 1 2041 Draft Growth Scenario Evaluation, additional factors are also outlined that refer to the September 2015, Council adopted recommendations of the Draft Growth Scenario Evaluation report (Clause 10 of Committee of the Whole Report No.13), in which staff outlined a number of factors that would inform the municipal comprehensive review and evaluation of the three 2041 draft growth scenarios.

We understand the policies and criteria set forth under Section 5.1.12 and the Council adopted recommendations, but we are unclear how the factors and requirements were applied to each Whitebelt area, and why the lands of East Gwillimbury North do not achieve the requirements?

The *Scoped Agricultural Assessment of Preferred Growth Scenario* report, prepared by PLANSCAPE, specifically identified the East Gwillimbury North lands as agricultural operations that would be most impacted by growth. In comparison, Markham was also identified as high impact but is considered an area for expansion



and growth. Were there additional factors, other than agricultural operations, that differentiated the East Gwillimbury North lands from other Whitebelt areas?

Finally, the level of collaboration between our clients, the Town, and the Region has not been recognized or considered by the Region. We refer to the unanimous Town of East Gwillimbury Council resolution CWC2013-198, from October 2013, that stated:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Municipal Council; of the Corporation of the Town of East Gwillimbury as follows:

- 1. THAT Staff be directed to work with the proponents of Green Earth Village development to discuss innovative sustainability and Community initiatives associated with the project;*
- 2. AND THAT Staff takes active steps to ensure the Green Earth Village project is strongly considered when the next opportunity for urban boundary expansion is considered;*
- 3. AND THAT Staff continue to assist the Green Earth Village representatives in the preparation and processing of a Comprehensive Secondary Plan that would be implemented at the appropriate time in the future.*

5. The Role of the 2041 Planning Horizon

The Growth Plan (2013) came into effect in June of 2006, and it has been subsequently Amended in 2012 and 2013. It currently utilizes a planning horizon of 25 years to 2041. The Places to Grow Act requires that the Growth Plan (2013) be updated every 10 years. However, it can be amended at any time. Section 1.1.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) deals specifically with the time horizon for planning documents in Ontario. It states:

“Sufficient land shall be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected needs for a time period of up to 20 years. However, where an alternate time period has been established for specific areas of the Province as a result of a provincial planning exercise or a provincial plan, that time frame may be used for municipalities within the area.”

Based on our understanding of Provincial Policy, we agree that the York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario should utilize the same time horizon (to 2041) as the Growth Plan (2013). We also believe, however, that the Region should not differentiate any additional time frame detail (or add time frame restrictions) within the 25 year horizon, and that the local municipalities should also use the same time horizon for their land use planning purposes in their Official Plans.

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For example, the York Region 2041 Preferred Growth Scenario states: *“Urban expansion in East Gwillimbury is proposed for post 2036. There is no urban expansion prior to 2036 because of the relatively abundant existing ground-related residential supply in the Town, and the anticipated pace of development in East Gwillimbury.”* We feel that this additional time frame restriction is both unnecessary and problematic because it artificially restricts the supply of land for greenfield development in East Gwillimbury, which has implications with respect to market acceptance, housing affordability, and the Region’s and Town’s investment attractiveness.

Local municipalities should be permitted to manage their land supplies over the entire time horizon to respond to the market and ensure a competitive development environment. Phasing is appropriately a complex decision about market responsiveness and infrastructure investment rather than simply a planning policy response.

Further, development in York Region will not end in 2041. There will be ongoing adjustments to the time horizon, as well as the population and employment projections that have become so fundamental to the planning process in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. At this point in time, the Region needs to strategically consider all of the issues of urban structure, built form, housing mix, housing affordability, as well as infrastructure and service delivery in the context of market acceptance and investment attractiveness over time, including beyond 2041.

6. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

In addition to all of the other option evaluation criteria established through the Region’s process, climate change mitigation and adaptation are issues that need to be addressed. These additional criteria are necessary to manage the risks of a changing climate to our health, economy, environment, and infrastructure. Climate change programs and sustainability criteria should be at the forefront of the growth option evaluation and the consideration of these needs should be acknowledged in the Preferred Growth Scenario.

In addition to climate change and sustainability, there should also be clear linkages between public health and built form choices. We face the issues of rising greenhouse gas emissions, an ageing population, and increasing public health challenges all related to the way in which we interact with our built and natural environments. Direct intervention in order to correct these converging issues can be effectively dealt with at the local and municipal levels, and importantly, at the regional level.

The “Thinking Green Development Standards” sustainability program prepared by the Town of East Gwillimbury was approved by Council with the intent of improving sustainability and climate change outcomes through more progressive built form solutions. Opportunities to utilize this program have been thwarted to a great extent by an abundance of previously approved plans that are exempt from the “Thinking Green” review and by a lack of enforcement provisions within Provincial policy documents.



Encouragement to progressive builders who can demonstrate and achieve higher order scores within programs such as “Thinking Green” should be considered as a component within the Region’s evaluation of new growth areas as a means to leveraging meaningful improvements to current climate change levels.

Key Points

The following is a summary of the key points from the above discussion.

1. Minimum targets of 40% intensification and 50 persons and jobs per gross hectare, as targets in the Growth Plan (2013), do not preclude the achievement of higher rates of intensification. The test is **conformity**, and not **more than conformity**.
2. The 2041 intensification target of 45% rather than 40%:
 - Promotes a housing mix that is not realistic from a market perspective, and is consequently, not likely to be achieved by 2041;
 - Threatens housing affordability because the 45% intensification target effectively and unnecessarily restricts the supply of designated greenfield areas; and,
 - Compromises the Region’s attractiveness for development in comparison to other Regional Municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe that utilize a lower intensification target.
3. Higher than required or designated ‘Whitebelt’ greenfield density target of 70 persons and jobs per hectare combined may lead to an urban form that is not desirable and should be reviewed in terms of urban structure, built form, housing mix, as well as infrastructure and service delivery perspectives, all in the context of market acceptance and investment attractiveness over time.
4. The filling in of ‘Whitebelt’ gaps between communities will create a suburban agglomeration that absorbs existing development patterns and historic communities.
5. The use of the phrase “leap frog development patterns” is not clearly defined, and in our opinion, not appropriately applied in this planning exercise.
6. The Region should not differentiate additional and specific time frame details, or restrictions within the 25-year time horizon. Local municipalities should be permitted to manage their land supplies over the entire time horizon to respond to the market and ensure a competitive development environment.
7. Climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as sustainability criteria should be included in the review of growth options and acknowledged in the Preferred Growth Scenario.

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In closing, we hope that this letter proves to be helpful as the Region works toward an appropriate growth management strategy. Our team welcomes any opportunity to meet with staff to discuss our concerns and ideas and to work with them, and with Council to ensure a healthy, sustainable, and prosperous future for York Region.

Sincerely,



Ron Palmer, MCIP, RPP
Principal

c.c. Doug Skeffington, Royalpark Homes
Sebastian Mizzi, SigNature Communities
Brad Rogers, Groundswell Urban Planners Inc.
Barry Horosko, Horosko Planning Law
Mark Conway, NBLC

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