



The Corporation of the Township of King Report to Council

From: Growth Management Services – Planning Division

Report Number: GMS-PL-2024-025

Date: Monday, September 23, 2024

Title: **Phase 1 of the Growth Management and Employment Lands Strategies - Policy Planning File No. PP-2023-05**

Recommendation

1. That Council receive Report GMS-PL-2024-025; and
2. That Council direct Staff to prepare final population, housing and employment forecasts, by Village, to 2051 upon receipt of all Council and public comments, and report back in Q4 2024.
3. That Council direct Staff to explore higher Employment Area target and report back in Q4 2024.
4. That Council direct Staff to prepare final density and intensification targets for each Village, Employment Area, Designated Greenfield Area (DGA), and Built-Up Area (BUA) upon receipt of all Council and Public comments, and report back in Q4 2024.
5. That Council direct Staff to review opportunities for urban area boundary expansions, and report back in Q4 2024.

1. Report Highlights

- The Township retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. to prepare Growth Management and Employment Land Strategies to inform the Official Plan Review and the Township's land needs to 2051.
- The Report attached in **Appendix A** provides the Phase 1 findings for both the Growth Management and Employment Land Strategies, identifying that by 2051 the Township is expected to grow to 51,000 people, 17,400 households, and 17,700 jobs.
- The Phase 1 Report concludes that Schomberg and King City are expected to build out by 2051, and that Nobleton will have a deficit of 8 hectares (ha) of residential land, and a 21 net hectares (ha) deficit of employment lands by 2051.
- The Employment Area forecast set out for the Township in the Phase 1 Report is not intended to be a constraint, and King has the ability to exceed this target.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to present the Phase 1 Growth Management (GMS) and Employment Land (ELS) Strategies, prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (Watson) and to seek direction from Council as to how the anticipated growth in King to 2051 should be accommodated.

3. Background

In early 2024, the Township retained Watson to prepare the Growth Management (GMS) and Employment Land (ELS) Strategies. The Strategies are intended to support and inform the Township's Official Plan Review, which will guide growth in King to 2051. They provide an assessment of existing conditions and King's long-term potential for growth, as well as population, housing, and employment forecasts for each of the Township's Villages and, land needs analyses.

The Official Plan Review was initiated following a [Special Meeting of Council](#) on September 26, 2023. In accordance with Section 26 of the *Planning Act*, Municipalities are required to update their Official Plans no later than ten (10) years after coming into effect and every five (5) years thereafter. Municipalities are also required to bring their Official Plans into conformity with the Official Plan of their upper-tier municipality within one (1) year of approval. The York Region Official Plan 2022 was approved, subject to modifications, by the Province in November 2022 and further modified by Provincial Bills 150 and 162 in December 2023 and February 2024, respectively. When King's Official Plan Review was initiated in 2023, the Township was required to conform to the York Region Official Plan within one year. However, Provincial legislative changes rendered York Region as an upper-tier without planning responsibilities and established that relevant sections of the York Region Official Plan that apply to King now constitute an official plan of the Township. This plan remains in effect until King revokes it or amends.

The Township's current Official Plan, 'Our King', was adopted in September 2019, approved by York Region in September 2020, and is now due for an update to conform to and integrate the relevant policies of the York Region Official Plan, 2022. Our King establishes a comprehensive set of policies to provide direction and set the framework for managing growth, land use and infrastructure decisions within the Township to the 2031 planning horizon. Through this Official Plan Review, the updated Our King will contemplate a planning horizon of 2051.

Since Our King was adopted, a number of changes have occurred at the Provincial and Regional levels that impact how the Township should plan for its future. Updates have been made to the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2020), A Place to Growth – The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), and the Region's Official Plan (YROP). Further, as of July 1, 2024, York Region became an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities under the *Planning Act*, and as of October 20, 2024, additional changes will come into effect for Ontario's planning framework, including:

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- The Growth Plan and PPS, 2020, will both be repealed and replaced by the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024);
- A consequential administrative amendment to the Greenbelt Plan will come into effect so that the policies of the PPS 2020 and Growth Plan will continue to apply where the Greenbelt Plan refers to them; and
- The new definition of “area of employment” in the *Planning Act* will come into effect.

These changes in Ontario’s planning framework have implications for the Growth Management and Employment Land Strategies, which have been assessed and considered through the Phase 1 Report prepared by Watson, attached to this Report as **Appendix A**. The conclusions of the Phase 1 Report will be explored further in Section 4: Analysis of this Report.

Public Consultation

To support the development of the Phase 1 Report by Watson, a virtual public open house was held on the Growth Management Strategy in May 2024 which had over 60 attendees. In addition, targeted consultation in the form of one-on-one meetings were held with business owners and employment landowners to inform the Employment Land Strategy. A Public Open House was recently held on September 16, 2024, to present the findings of the Phase 1 Report and seek community feedback on its conclusions. A consultation summary detailing what was heard through all the consultation sessions will be prepared and included in the next Report to Council in October 2024.

4. Analysis

The Phase 1 Report from Watson, **Appendix A**, is comprised of two parts; the Growth Management Strategy (GMS) and the Employment Land Strategy (ELS). Each Strategy has been prepared independently and are based on the updated 2051 targets from the York Region Official Plan (YROP) June 2024 Office Consolidation forecast.

Based on the June 2024 forecast, the Region is forecast to accommodate a total of 2.064 million residents and 989,200 jobs by 2051. The Region also prepared growth allocations for each of the lower-tier municipalities, including King, starting from 2021 with a forecast to 2051. The Report from Watson breaks the forecast down into 5-year increments from 2021 to 2051. The following summarizes the Region’s forecast for the Township:

- The Township’s population is forecast to increase to 51,000 in 2051;
- The number of residential dwellings in the Township is projected to increase by 8,400 units by 2051 to approximately 17,400 households; and
- King’s employment is forecast to increase to 17,700 jobs in 2051.

In addition to the municipal growth allocations, the Region also identified intensification targets, greenfield densities, Employment Area densities and other growth management considerations which have been explored through Watson's Phase 1 Report.

The Phase 1 Report from Watson provides: an assessment of existing policies and macroeconomic conditions at the broader regional level and locally, while also conducting a residential land supply analysis; review of existing Employment Areas; an assessment of King's long-term growth potential; Employment Area and Community Area land need analyses; and five-year population, housing and employment forecast for each Village in the Township. The following subsections provide a breakdown of the findings and conclusions for each Strategy.

Growth Management Strategy

The Growth Management Strategy summarizes King's population and housing forecast in 5-year increments over the 2021 to 2051 planning horizon. The forecast identifies the Township's total population base is anticipated to grow to approximately 51,000 persons by 2051, which is an increase of approximately 22,600 residents, or an average annual population growth rate of 2% during this period. This growth rate is slightly higher than the growth rate of 1.9% per year seen for King over the past two decades. This growth forecast is based on the forecast target provided by York Region. It is within Council's discretion to plan for a higher population target for the 2051 planning horizon. This opportunity could be considered in light of existing development interest which indicates a potential that, based upon current and projected development applications, the forecasts shown for 2051 in Figure 6 will be exceeded by 2031, requiring sufficient servicing capacity be made available by York Region.

Based on the forecast, the Township will require approximately 8,390 new households by 2051, or 280 new households annually. The Phase 1 Report finds that over the long-term, housing demand is anticipated to gradually shift away from single/semi-detached units towards townhouses and low- and medium-rise apartment dwellings, largely driven by housing affordability and increased demand associated with the Township's growing seniors population. The Report finds that over the 2021 to 2051 forecast period, new housing development is forecast to comprise 34% low-density, 22% medium density (townhouses) and 44% high density (apartment) units. However, even with this shift the total housing base is expected to remain predominantly low-density dwellings.

The Phase 1 Report also allocates the Township-wide forecast population and housing by Village and, to the rural areas. The allocation of new households is forecast as follows:

- 68% to be accommodated in King City;
- 28% to be accommodated in Nobleton;
- 4% to be accommodated in Schomberg; and
- a small portion (approximately 1%) in the rural areas.

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In terms of overall population growth, King City is forecast to be the largest Village in 2051. **Figure 6** in the Report, as shown below, provides the population forecast by Village for 2024 and 2051.

Figure 6
King Township
Population by Village and Remaining Rural Area – 2024 and 2051

Village	2024 Population	% Share	2051 Population	% Share
Nobleton	7,050	24%	13,580	27%
King City	9,690	33%	23,210	45%
Schomberg	2,620	9%	3,350	7%
Remaining Rural	10,440	35%	10,860	21%
King Township Total	29,800		51,000	

Source: Forecast by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Figure 1: Population by Village

Through the Strategy’s review of Community Area Land needs, an assessment of the vacant greenfield residential lands and intensification potential within the built-up areas was also undertaken. Community Area Lands include lands within settlement areas (not including rural settlements) and are comprised of delineated Built-up Areas (BUA) and Designated Greenfield Areas (DGA). For King, Community Area Lands are comprised of the Township’s three Villages: Schomberg, King City and Nobleton. For Nobleton, the Community Area Lands are more specifically the lands within the Nobleton Urban Area rather than the Village Boundary.

The Phase 1 Report finds that the majority of growth (52%) is anticipated to be accommodated through intensification, primarily within the BUAs of the Villages, however this will be subject to enhancements in water and wastewater servicing capacities. Community Area Lands also include population related employment, (i.e., office, retail and commercial uses). An assessment of the Township’s commercial needs is underway and will be presented as part of the Phase 2 Report from Watson.

The Community Area Land needs assessment also determined, based on the forecast growth, available land area and density targets, that the Township will have a small deficit of 8 hectares (ha) of gross developable designated greenfield area lands in Nobleton by 2051. This deficit has been identified after including the additional 20 hectares of lands currently designated for employment in Nobleton (Pre-Brick Official Plan/Zoning By-law Amendment Applications) which are proposed to be converted to Community Area.

The Pre-Brick lands are currently designated for employment in Nobleton and are proposed to accommodate institutional uses and a “supporting employment area”, as defined by the YROP. However, as a result of recent changes to the definition of “area of employment” in the *Planning Act* and the PPS 2024 that come into effect October 20, 2024, institutional uses and

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supporting employment uses would not meet the new definition and, would not be permitted within an Employment Area. Furthermore, given the proximity of the lands to residential development, the lot configuration and the size of the parcel, staff consider this location a good option to support Community Area Land uses, including office, commercial and mixed-use developments. Appropriate land uses will be considered through the Township’s Official Plan Review.

While a deficit is forecast for Nobleton, the King City and Schomberg designated greenfield areas are anticipated to be fully built out over the forecast period; assuming sufficient servicing capacity is available to support the growth. **Figure 11** of the Report, as shown below, identifies the Community Area Land needs by Village Area for 2051.

Figure 11
King Township
D.G.A. Community Area Land Needs by Village Area at 2051

DGA Land Need - 2051					
		Nobleton	King City	Schomberg	King Township
Estimated DGA People and Jobs - 2024	A	3,700	5,100	960	9,760
Estimated DGA Population and Jobs in 2051	B	8,495	12,865	1,081	22,440
Existing DGA Area	C	210	367	30	608
Added Area (Employment Area Conversion)	D	20			20
Total DGA Area	E = C+D	230	367	30	628
DGA Density	F	36 ⁽¹⁾	35	35	35
DGA Land Demand to achieve 35 people & Jobs / ha	G = B/F	239	367	30	636
Surplus / Deficit DGA Lands	H= E-G	-8	0	0	-8

⁽¹⁾ Densities within the existing areas of Nobleton are assumed at 35 people and jobs per hectare. For new urban expansion, it is assumed that future lands within Nobleton would achieve a minimum of 50 people and jobs per hectare. The resulting blended density for the Nobleton Community Area is 36 people and jobs per hectare.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

Figure 2: DGA Community Area Land Needs

Finally, in addition to the land deficit, the Phase 1 Report concludes with the following observations for the Growth Management Strategy:

- More than half the Township’s housing growth over the forecast period is to be accommodated through intensification within the built-up area. Achieving this intensification target will require a larger proportion of higher-density development than what has occurred previously.
- If the intensification target is not realized, greater emphasis will be placed on the greenfield areas to accommodate growth, which may require additional greenfield lands and/or higher densities on greenfield lands.

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- With the changes to the planning framework proposed through the 2024 PPS, urban expansions are allowed for up to a 30-year horizon from the date of the approval of the Official Plan. As additional land needs will likely arise between 2051 and 2056, there is an opportunity to consider these needs through this Official Plan Review.
- A framework for location options for these expansion lands will be prepared as part of the Phase 2 analysis and subsequent Report.

Employment Land Strategy

Similar to the Growth Management Strategy, the Employment Land Strategy (ELS) summarizes King's employment forecast in 5-year increments over the 2021 to 2051 planning horizon and provides an overview of findings related to:

- vacant Employment Area supply;
- Employment Area densities;
- opportunities for intensification;
- demand forecast for employment within Employment Areas; and
- an Employment Area land needs analysis to 2051.

As noted, employment in King is forecast to increase to 17,700 jobs in 2051 (from 10,100 jobs in 2021). The employment forecast is not intended to limit the Township's growth trajectory as King has the ability to exceed this target.

The Report summarizes the Region's findings for the Township's employment lands, and prepares a separate forecast based on a set of observations. These observations include that the Employment Lands in King City extend further than what is contemplated in the YROP, that lands shown as part of the vacant land supply in the YROP for Schomberg have existing businesses operating on them, and that Employment Lands are still shown in Nobleton, where they are proposed to be converted to Community Area Land. These observations are summarized in **Figure 12** of the Report, the Vacant Employment Area Profile, which is also provided below.

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Figure 12
King Township
Vacant Employment Area Profile

	York Region M.C.R.			E.L.S.		
	Vacant Land (ha)	Density	Jobs	Vacant Land (ha)	Density	Jobs
King City	20	50	980	36	27	980
Schomberg	20	30	590	16	32	520
Nobleton	12	50	580	0	-	-
King Township	51	42	2,150	52	29	1,500

Source: Vacant land supply derived from Township data, by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

Figure 3: Vacant Employment Areas by Village

In preparing the ELS, the forecasted Employment Area land demand within the Township considered the following:

- long-term employment land employment growth potential;
- forecasted employment density assumptions in Employment Areas;
- trends in forecast Employment Area absorption; and
- the amount of vacant, developable shovel-ready land within Employment Areas across King.

Based on these considerations, the employment forecast has been separated into different land use categories, specifically: Major Office, Employment Area, Population Related, and Rural. Over the long-term planning horizon, 36% of the total employment growth, or 2,540 jobs are forecast within Employment Areas. Further, 6% of the growth is forecast for Major Office, 56% as Population related, and 2% as Rural. In determining the land needs for Employment Areas, only the Employment Area job forecast is considered. The other categories of employment land use are attributed to other areas of the Villages and the Rural Areas.

For growth within Employment Areas, the Report provides a breakdown of the forecast by Village from 2024 to 2051. King City is forecast to accommodate the largest share of Employment Area job growth, with approximately 43% of the total Employment Area job growth. Nobleton and Schomberg are forecast to account for 30% and 27% of the remaining Employment Area forecast to 2051, respectively.

In preparing the Employment Land needs analysis to 2051, several factors were considered, including setting an intensification target of 15% for Employment Lands, and recognizing that some vacant lands may not develop due to a variety of factors. Long-term land vacancy is a

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common characteristic that is experienced in Employment Areas across Ontario. For this land needs analysis, an estimate of 15% long-term land vacancy has been applied to the net development Employment Land inventory for Schomberg. After adjusting for land vacancy, Schomberg’s supply is 14 net ha which results in a Township-wide supply of 50 net ha of vacant Employment Land.

Based on the supply of designated, developable vacant urban land and forecast supply for these lands, a deficit of 21 net ha has been identified for 2051. This land needs analysis is further detailed in **Figure 15** of the Report, as shown below. Further, assuming a gross-to-net ratio of 55%, to account for considerations such as environmental features and infrastructure requirements (i.e., roads, stormwater management ponds, etc.) a total land area of nearly 40 gross ha (100 gross acres) would be required to accommodate this shortfall.

Figure 15
King Township
Forecast Employment Area Land Needs (Demand vs. Supply), 2024 to 2051

Township of King Employment Land Needs, 2024 to 2051		Land (net ha)
Employment Land Jobs 2024 to 2051	A	2,540
Intensification	$B = A \times 15\%$	385
Total Employment Land Jobs less Intensification	$C = A - B$	2,155
Employment Density (jobs per net ha)	D	30
Employment Land Demand (ha)	$E = C/D$	71
Vacant Employment Land Supply (net ha) ¹	F	50
Employment Area Deficit at 2051	$G = E - F$	-21

Note: Figures have been rounded and may not add precisely.
Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., 2024.

Figure 4: Forecast Employment Area Land Needs

The Phase 1 Report identifies that between 2024 and 2051, King Township is expected to accommodate approximately 2,540 jobs on its Employment Area lands. The employment forecast for the Township is not intended to be a constraining figure and King can, similar to the above population target, plan to exceed these targets to the 2051 horizon. Unlike population growth, the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) provides municipalities the flexibility to plan beyond the 30-year horizon for employment areas. Staff recommend exploring the option of a higher employment area target through the next phase of the Employment Lands Strategy.

Exploring a higher Employment Area target, resulting in a need for additional employment lands, can offer several advantages to the Township:

- Promoting economic diversification, whereby the Township could attract a wider range of industries by having a variety of employment land sizes and locations.

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- Increasing the employment area-to-population ratio supports the objective of diversifying the Township's tax base to support fiscal sustainability.
- A diversified tax base provides additional sources for municipal revenue to support public services and infrastructure.
- Increasing employment areas can lead to new public amenities and services, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and also contributes to sustainability by reducing the need for long commutes and encouraging local employment.

This analysis shows that the Township is not projected to have enough vacant Employment Land to support growth through 2051. The Report also evaluates the Employment Land needs by Village, identifying that the Employment Land deficiency is entirely within Nobleton. It similarly concludes, as the GMS did, that the Employment Areas in King City and Schomberg will be completely utilized by the year 2051. Accordingly, opportunities for new Employment Areas will need to be identified through the Phase 2 analysis and Report.

Finally, the Report provides overall observations and conclusions for the ELS, which detail the following:

- In order to remain competitive, the Township must continue to offer a range of parcel sizes and lot configurations within its Employment Areas;
- Exceeding the employment forecasts for the Township would ultimately increase the land needs by 2051;
- By 2051 it is forecast that the Township will need an additional 21 net hectares (ha) (40 gross ha/ 100 gross acres) of Employment Lands within Nobleton;
- King City and Schomberg's Employment Areas are forecast to fully build out within the 2051 planning horizon;
- Based on an initial high-level review of opportunities for urban boundary expansions, an urban boundary expansion for Nobleton (into the Nobleton Village Reserve) represents the best opportunity to establish a new Employment Area; and
- Moving forward it is vital for the Township to continue to annually monitor its absorption of vacant Employment Lands, Employment Area densities and Employment Area intensification to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of land to accommodate demand to 2051.

Next Steps

Based on the Phase 1 findings for the Growth Management and Employment Land Strategies, Staff recommend that Council direct Staff to prepare final population, housing and employment forecasts; final intensification and density targets; identify potential locations for urban boundary expansions; and explore the option of a higher employment area target, based on all Council and Public comments received.

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A Working Session with Council and a Report to Council are targeted for October 28, 2024, to present the density and intensification targets for each Village, Employment Area, Designated Greenfield Area (DGA), and Built-Up Area (BUA). The Working Session and Report will not only give Council the opportunity to provide final direction on the targets, but also consider location opportunities for urban boundary expansions, in response to the land needs identified through the Phase 1 Report.

5. Financial Considerations

The Township takes a strategic and comprehensive approach to developing plans and policies for services, growth and development balancing community needs, economic prosperity and environmental protection.

The projections in this report for population will need to be included in the next Development Charge (DC) study to ensure we plan for growth and the infrastructure needs for roads, water, sewer, parks, recreation, libraries, and fire services.

Currently the Township's has 95% property assessment for residential and only 5% for non-residential. In order to help support the growth within the Township and the services it provides increasing the non-residential assessment is important in redistributing the property taxes burden providing a healthier tax based to support all properties within King.

6. Alignment to Strategic Plan

The 2023-2026 Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP) was adopted by Council on June 12, 2023. The CSP reflects the priorities of utmost importance to the community and defines the obligations and commitments of the Township of King to its citizens and to the public. The CSP is aligned with the Townships long-term vision defined in the "Our King" Official Plan. The CSP also aims to ensure that staff initiatives focus on and work towards supporting King's Vision, Mission and Values.

This report is in alignment with the CSP's Priority Area(s), and/or associated Objective(s) and/or Key Results(s):

Priority Area: Complete Communities

Objective: Implement regulatory changes to manage growth that best serves King's unique landscape.

Key Result: Complete the Official Plan review and update (to 2051) by 2025.

The Growth Management and Employment Land Strategies will inform the development of the updated Official Plan for the Township, and directly advances the progress of the noted Key Result towards its defined target.

7. Conclusion

The Growth Management (GMS) and Employment Land (ELS) Strategies are being undertaken to support and inform the Township's Official Plan Review, guiding growth to year

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2051. This Report presents the Phase 1 findings for the Strategies and provides observations and recommendations based on the Community and Employment Area land needs. Based on the findings of the Report, Staff respectfully recommend that Council direct Staff to update the population, housing and employment forecasts by Village for the 2051 planning horizon and the density and intensification targets as set out in the Phase 1 Report for each Village, Employment Area, DGA and BUA based on Council and Public comments. Finally, Staff recommend that Council direct Staff to prepare the Phase 2 Report detailing the updated forecasts, targets and review of opportunities for urban area expansions, particularly for Nobleton, and report back to Council in Q4 2024.

8. Attachments

Appendix A - King GMS and ELS - Summary of Phase 1 Findings Report

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