

## Aurora should be 'healthy, accessible, and age-friendly' complete community

A complete community that is 'healthy, accessible and age-friendly' could be the vision for Aurora's future as work continues on a revised Official Plan.

The Official Plan (OP) is a key planning document and the revised OP, once approved, will help guide Aurora's growth and development through 2051.

It will be a key factor for the incoming 2022-2026 Council term.

The vision of the Town in the revised draft of the OP is aimed at developing a community that is 'healthy, accessible, and age friendly' while providing a 'range of places and opportunities to live, work, shop, be educated and play' in a sustainable way.

'A healthy, accessible and complete community is designed for residents of all backgrounds, abilities and stages of life to lead fulfilled lives,' reads the draft vision presented to Council. 'This vision for Aurora includes providing an array of jobs and investment opportunities, a full range of community services and amenities, opportunities for active and public transportation, and a broad mix of building and housing types, including affordable housing options.'

'The vision also includes providing access to a well-connected natural heritage system, places to meet and build social connections, and encourage active and healthy lifestyle choices while ensuring accessibility to all residents.'

Future growth, notes the vision, includes welcoming future residents 'in a way that preserves the Town's natural features and compliments its overall character. It is envisioned that Aurora will continue to value its historic charm while celebrating the current and future culture and diversity of the community.'

Key principles guiding the development of the draft updated OP are promoting what's described as 'responsible growth management' to accommodate a 'significant amount of population growth' mandated by the Province through 2051, ensuring design excellence, building a greener economy (including protecting green spaces), and providing 'meaningful' community services and facilities.

'Building a greener community' is highlighted as a priority to ensure that Aurora's communities are designed to be sustainable and mitigate the impact of climate change by incorporating green building technologies and energy-efficient development approaches.

'With a growing collective awareness concerning environmental sustainability and its interrelationship with the way our communities develop and function, sustainability must be recognized as a key consideration in the way we plan, design and build our communities now and in the future. Sustainability must be applied to all aspects of the built and natural environment to ensure that objectives for economic vitality, social vibrancy, and the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment are integrated into all aspects of planning and design.'

Aurora's 'character,' the draft continues, is 'intrinsically linked to its diverse natural features and systems.'

'The plan seeks to protect the natural environment and promotes the creation of comprehensive and linked Greenlands systems. It's an objective of the Town to ensure that all new development occurs in a matter that protects people and property and prevents social disruption from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion. The public cost or risk to the municipality and its residents from natural hazards should be avoided and minimized.'

Sustainability principles extend to new builds, infrastructure and transportation.

The renewed plan calls for the growth of a 'robust' transportation system that meets the needs of all residents in line with the

Town's goals for managed growth and sustainable development.?

The Town will prioritize the development of a safe, comfortable and enjoyable multi-modal network for vehicles, active transportation and transit that balances the needs of each mode of travel while providing for convenience and accessibility. [The plan ensures] the provision of sustainable infrastructure. The Town's infrastructure system, including its sewer, water, and stormwater systems and utilities serves an essential role in a community's successful operation and the ability to support development. The policies of this plan seek to ensure Aurora's physical infrastructure is developed to meet the needs of all residents and are consistent with the Town's objectives for managed growth and sustainability.?

The revised draft of Aurora's Official Plan has been the subject of extensive community engagement activities over the last two years and this work still continues.

The draft can be read in full at [engageaurora.ca/opr](http://engageaurora.ca/opr) and there residents can continue to provide their input, suggestions and more for consideration.

By Brock Weir  
Editor  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter