Town of Whitby
Public Opinion on Community Growth

Presentation to
Planning and Development Committee

February 11, 2008
Project Background
Purpose and Objectives

Purpose:

- To assist Town Council and staff in better understanding residents’ attitudes and perceptions regarding the context and scope of issues related to population growth in their community.

Objectives:

1. To assess general perceptions regarding growth and development in the Town of Whitby.
2. To evaluate residents’ concerns regarding the impact of population growth.
3. To measure support for ‘greenfield’ development.
4. To measure support for intensification development.
5. To assess residents’ opinions regarding the rate, location, and amount and type of growth in the community.
Methodology

Telephone Survey

• Random and representative telephone survey of 950 Town of Whitby residents, 18 years of age or older
• Field dates: November 14th to November 27th, 2007
• Average interview was 13 minutes in length
• 23% response rate – consistent with other residential studies of this nature

Self-complete Survey

• Self-complete version of telephone survey available
  • Town website
  • Town of Whitby municipal office
  • OP Review public meetings in Whitby and Brooklin
• Field dates: November 14th to December 6th, 2007
• 26 self-complete questionnaires received by cut-off date – majority returned during OP Review public meetings
• Interpretation of the results should be considered qualitative in nature
Sample Distribution

- Telephone survey sample provided statistically significant accuracy by geographic sub-area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic sub-area</th>
<th>Percent of total population</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Margin of error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>±3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Whitby</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>±4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklin</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>±4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Whitby</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>±8.0</td>
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</table>

- Margin of error meets or exceeds typical industry standards
- For the analysis, weights were assigned to the specific geographic sub-area data to ensure that their representation in the Town-wide sample was proportionate to their representation in the Town of Whitby population
Growth and Development
Important local issue facing Whitby

- Top-of-mind issues included:
  - Traffic congestion (23%)
  - Infrastructure, specifically roads and highways (8%)
  - Development and outward expansion (11%)
  - Rate of growth in the community (11%)
  - Increasing property taxes (8%)
  - Lack of public transit (4%)
Perceived rate of past growth

Question 2: In the past five years, would you say the rate of growth in the Town of Whitby has been too fast, too slow or about right?
Question 3: The current population of the Town of Whitby is approximately 111,000. Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned about population growth in Whitby?

One-third relate their concern to traffic congestion and urban expansion/development.
Most also agree Whitby’s share of Durham’s population should remain about the same (63%)
Importance of local job creation

Question 7: Thinking about future job creation, is it very, somewhat, not very or not at all important that you have the opportunity to work in or close to the Town of Whitby?
Greenfield Development
Question 8: Are you very supportive, somewhat supportive, not very supportive or not at all supportive of more residential subdivisions being established in Whitby?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very supportive</th>
<th>Not very supportive</th>
<th>Somewhat supportive</th>
<th>Not at all supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Whitby</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Whitby</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
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</table>
Agreement with urban expansion in Whitby

- Residents are less likely to agree with development in their “own backyards”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n=950)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Whitby (n=400)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklin (n=400)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Whitby (n=150)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
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Question 9a/b: If new residential subdivisions are established, would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with expanded development...?
Intensification Development
Question 10: Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very or not at all supportive of more residential development in already existing or built-up urban areas in Whitby?
### Agreement with intensification in specific locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percent of respondents who strongly or somewhat agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total n=950</td>
<td>Urban Whitby n=400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In areas close to Durham Region Transit</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On underdeveloped sites or on former industrial sites</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the area of or at the Whitby GO station</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In areas near plazas</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In major commercial areas</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In areas along major roads</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In downtown Whitby</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In existing low density neighbourhoods</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In downtown Brooklin</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Question 11a-i: For each of the following areas of Whitby, please tell me the extent to which you agree (strongly or somewhat) or disagree (strongly or somewhat) that more development should occur?*
**Support for intensification to protect agricultural land & natural heritage systems**

Question 12: To protect and preserve agricultural land and natural heritage systems, new growth will need to be accommodated in existing urban areas. In general, are you very, somewhat, not very or not at all supportive of this approach?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Concern about the preservation of Whitby’s natural environment

Question 13: Are you very, somewhat, not very or not at all concerned about the preservation of natural environment features in your community?
Overall Perceptions of Growth
General perceptions of population growth

Negative perceptions:
- Overcrowding and expansion (24%)
- High density housing (22%)
- Loss of green space/parks/farms (21%)
- Lack of infrastructure/roads (16%)
- Traffic congestion (11%)
- Inadequate planning (8%)

Positive perceptions:
- Proper planning/design (16%)
- Lots of green space/parks/trails (16%)
- More business/industry/amenities (15%)
- Low density/balanced mix of housing (15%)
- Increased availability of recreation facilities/libraries/etc. (12%)
- More employment opportunities (10%)

Question 14/15: In your opinion, what comes to mind when you think about bad/good growth and development in Whitby?
Self-complete Survey Findings
Self-complete survey findings

- Results should be considered qualitative due to the small sample size (n=26)
- Overall residents share similar views on population growth in Whitby to those residents who participated in the telephone survey.
  - believe the rate of growth has been too fast and are concerned about growth-related issues – traffic and urban expansion
  - support for greenfield development is divided
  - somewhat more support for residential intensification
Conclusions
Key Findings

- Whitby residents express a moderate degree of concern about population growth in their community.

- Common growth-related concerns include:
  - traffic congestion
  - road and highway infrastructure
  - increased development and urban expansion

- Overall support for ‘greenfield’ development and intensification is relatively low.

- Support for future development/expansion in specific community locations increases slightly (e.g. near public transit and in commercial areas).
Final observations

• In general, concerns and growth-related issues increase as age and length of residency increases
  – younger residents are less anxious about Whitby’s population demands

• Opinions expressed by Whitby residents are common to those in other municipalities, specifically:
  • Moderate degree of concern about the rate of population growth
  • Overall support for ‘greenfield’ development and intensification is generally low to moderate
  • Cite similar growth-related concerns about traffic congestion and gridlock
  • Believe highway/road infrastructure is insufficient - now and in the future
OTTAWA
336 MacLaren St.
Phone: 613.230.5089
Fax: 613.230.3836

TORONTO
33 Bloor St. E., Suite 900
Phone: 416.920.9010
Fax: 416.920.3299

CALGARY
630, 999-8th St. S.W.
Phone: 403.229.0711
Fax: 403.228.9165

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