

Information Report



Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Friday, December 11, 2020
Subject	Shaping Guelph – Employment Lands Strategy

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the Shaping Guelph: Growth Management Strategy (Shaping Guelph) Employment Lands Strategy (ELS) technical background study. This report also outlines upcoming community engagement opportunities related to the ELS, and next steps for Shaping Guelph.

Key Findings

The ELS is one technical background study that is required as part of the City's work to conform to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (APTG). The ELS provides a comprehensive overview of Guelph's existing employment land supply and assesses whether this supply is sufficient to accommodate Guelph's job growth forecast by APTG to 2051.

The ELS has identified that Guelph has enough employment lands to accommodate its forecast employment growth to 2051. Key to this are:

- maximizing opportunities for intensification of existing developed employment lands,
- planning for employment land densities of 40 jobs per hectare city wide, and
- increasing Guelph's long term supply of "shovel-ready" employment lands in the Hanlon Creek Business Park and the Guelph Innovation District.

Financial Implications

Shaping Guelph is funded through PL0054 approved capital budgets with anticipated costs associated with consultant services and community engagement.

Report

Details

In May 2019, the Province released A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (APTG). Amendment 1 to APTG was approved with an effective date of August 28, 2020. APTG guides growth and development within the Greater Golden Horseshoe over the next 30 years. APTG requires that Guelph plan for a population of 203,000 and an employment base of 116,000 jobs in 2051.

In October 2019, Council endorsed a process for Guelph to conform to APTG – Guelph's Municipal Comprehensive Official Plan Review (MCR). The MCR is known as

Shaping Guelph: Growth Management Strategy (Shaping Guelph). The Shaping Guelph process includes several technical background studies that have been prepared in 2020 and will be prepared in 2021. These are:

- Confirmation of a vision and principles for growth – completed
- A residential intensification analysis – completed
- An employment lands strategy – this report
- A housing analysis and strategy
- Growth scenario planning (based on a land needs assessment)

An overview of the scope of each of these studies was provided in report [IDE-2019-91](#).

What the employment lands strategy is about

As outlined above, one of the technical background studies of Shaping Guelph is the employment land strategy (ELS). The ELS provides a comprehensive overview and review Guelph's employment lands including:

- Identifying Guelph's long-term employment growth projections for employment areas,
- Assessing the ability of the employment areas to accommodate Guelph's employment growth,
- Recommending density targets for employment areas,
- Providing policy directions to promote the intensification of existing employment lands,
- Identifying which employment lands could be converted to other uses, and
- Providing policy recommendations for Guelph's employment areas.

What we learned about Guelph's employment lands

Over the past decade Canada's and Ontario's economies have experienced relatively strong economic growth. Despite these strong economies, the COVID-19 pandemic is posing significant risks to these economies. The impacts from this pandemic on these economies and Guelph's local economy remain largely unknown at this time. The potential impacts of the pandemic on Guelph's long term employment growth were considered as part of the ELS based on information known at this time.

Structural changes in the economy, such as an increased demand for advanced manufacturing and warehouse and logistics, are changing the nature of employment areas in Ontario including their built form and character. There is a need for Guelph to continue to ensure that the amount, type, and location of Guelph's employment areas are well aligned with the structural changes being experienced. A number of emerging industrial sectors are anticipated to influence the demand for employment lands in Ontario and Guelph. Advanced manufacturing is evolving and is requiring integrated operations on larger sites in a "campus style" setting. The goods movement sector is evolving and responding to consumer demands, as e-commerce is growing in Canada. Emerging goods movement uses in Guelph are anticipated to include warehousing facilities requiring specialized functions. Market demand on employment lands has been increasingly driven by growth in knowledge-based or creative class economies. These sectors include major office, flex office and multi-purpose facilities.

Guelph is home to an estimated 76,800 jobs. Guelph has a diverse employment base with manufacturing accounting for 25% of its total employment. Over the next several decades Guelph's employment base is anticipated to steadily grow across a broad range of industrial, office/commercial and population serving employment sectors.

Guelph has large and diverse existing employment areas comprised of about 840 net hectares of developed land. The majority of these lands are located in Guelph's south end and the north-west industrial park. In addition to these lands, it is estimated that Guelph has 391 net hectares of developable vacant land, of which 155 net hectares are "shovel-ready".

What is forecast for Guelph's employment lands

Guelph is required to plan for 116,000 jobs in 2051 in accordance with the forecasts of APTG. This is an increase of about 33,300 jobs between 2021 and 2051 representing an average annual growth rate of 1.1 per cent. A significant portion of this growth, 31%, is expected to be in employment land employment jobs, for example manufacturing, logistics, and automotive manufacturing and related uses. Between 2021 and 2051 it is expected that about 15 per cent of Guelph's employment growth will be accommodated through intensification of existing developed employment lands, such as expansions of existing buildings and additional buildings on partially vacant sites.

In addition to the amount of employment growth anticipated to be accommodated through intensification, it is projected that Guelph will need about 319 hectares of employment land, based on an employment density of 40 jobs per hectare to 2051. When examining Guelph's existing supply of employment lands, it was determined that lands currently identified in the Official Plan as Industrial or Corporate Business Park in the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan area and lands identified as Industrial on the north side of York Road at Watson Road are no longer appropriate for employment purposes and were not needed as part of Guelph's long term employment lands supply.

Accounting for the proposed conversion of the employment lands mentioned above, Guelph has an estimated supply of 354 hectares of vacant employment lands available for development. This is a sufficient supply to accommodate for our employment land needs to 2051. Post 2051, Guelph is forecast to have a small surplus of employment lands totaling about 35 hectares.

What is recommended for Guelph's employment lands

The ELS recommends several things that should be considered as part of upcoming growth scenario development, the preparation of a local growth management strategy and ultimately an amendment to the Official Plan. These recommendations include:

- Generally, lands identified in the Official Plan as Industrial, Corporate Business Park, Institutional/Research Park and lands identified in the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan as Employment Mixed Use 1 and Employment Mixed Use 2 should be identified as employment areas protecting them from conversion to non-employment uses in the future
- The downtown plays an important role in attracting and accommodating major office development. Guelph should continue to promote downtown as

- a focus area for major office and should explore financial tools and incentives to attract major office development downtown over the long term
- Guelph has sufficient shovel ready employment lands to meet short and medium term employment growth. To accommodate longer term employment growth Guelph will need to focus on making the remaining employment lands within the Hanlon Creek Business Park “shovel-ready” and will also need to advance planning and development of the Guelph Innovation District
 - A city-wide employment density target of 40 jobs per hectare should be included in the Official Plan
 - Converting existing industrial and corporate business park lands within the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan area and industrial lands north of York Road at Watson Road to allow for other uses
 - Recognizing the Hanlon Creek Business Park, the Hanlon Business Park, and the South Guelph Industrial Area as a Provincially Significant Employment Zone as identified by the province
 - There is a need for employment areas to provide for a wide range of amenities and employment-supportive uses, such as retail, service and institutional uses, to serve the needs of employers and employees within the employment areas opposed to the broader population. The Official Plan policies currently permit these types of uses as complementary uses and should continue to do so. To provide further clarity on the intent of these uses, a maximum retail size should be considered and day care centres should no longer be permitted on industrial lands to reflect APTG and other provincial policies about sensitive land uses.

To ensure a successful implementation of the ELS following completion and approval of the local growth management strategy, the ELS suggests that an employment area intensification strategy be undertaken to assess and evaluate the intensification potential and opportunities on Guelph’s employment lands over the long-term. Additionally, building on the baseline data in the ELS, it is recommended that a system be developed for monitoring and tracking employment land supply and demand data to assist with long term planning and land needs forecasting,

Next steps

The ELS, together with the other technical background studies, will be used to develop growth scenarios in early 2021. Community engagement on the ELS will begin in January 2021.

Financial Implications

Shaping Guelph: Growth Management Strategy is funded through PL0054 approved capital budgets with anticipated costs associated with consultant services and community engagement.

Consultations

Community and stakeholder engagement about the Employment Lands Strategy is planned for January 2021 and will include an opportunity for the community to ask questions of staff and the project team through the City's [Have Your Say](#) platform and a virtual roundtable discussion with key stakeholders.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Shaping Guelph: Growth Management Strategy aligns with the following priorities within the Strategic Plan:

Powering our future – the ELS includes several recommendations to ensure that the city maintains a healthy supply of employment lands encouraging the growth of Guelph’s employment base. The ELS recognizes the role of advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and clean tech in Guelph’s employment growth.

Sustaining our future – the ELS includes recommendations for making efficient use of our exiting employment lands supply through intensification and to assist with planning and designing an increasingly sustainable city as Guelph grows.

Attachments

Attachment-1: Shaping Guelph: Growth Management Strategy Employment Lands Strategy

Departmental Approval

Melissa Aldunate, MCIP, RPP, Manager Policy Planning and Urban Design

Report Author

Natalie Goss, MCIP, RPP, Senior Policy Planner

This report was approved by:

Krista Walkey, MCIP, RPP

General Manager, Planning and Building Services

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services

519-822-1290 extension 2395

krista.walkey@guelph.ca

This report was recommended by:

Kealy Dedman, P.Eng, MPA

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services

519-822-1290 extension 2248

kealy.dedman@guelph.ca