

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, March 8, 2021
Subject	York Road/Elizabeth Street Draft Land Use Study

Recommendation

1. That the York Road/Elizabeth Street Draft Land Use Study be received.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report provides the draft York Road/Elizabeth Street Land Use Study (included as [Attachment 1](#)) to Council for review and consideration; as well as outlines community engagement on the draft Land Use Study.

Key Findings

The York Road/Elizabeth Street Land Use Study and Urban Design Concept project was initiated in January 2020 with report [IDE-2020-02](#) and has three main tasks: the background report (complete), the land use study (current task) and the urban design concept (future task).

The draft land use study was informed by the [York Road-Elizabeth Street Background Report - 2020-127](#), including an employment survey that was completed for this area, as well as online community engagement that took place in September and October 2020.

The draft land use study proposes that the area will remain predominantly an employment area while making some changes along York Road to allow for intensification including the introduction of medium density residential areas near Cityview Drive South. In addition, modifications to the existing Mixed Business land use designation are proposed with the intent to increase flexibility and continue to encourage small to medium sized entrepreneurial and incubator enterprises in this area.

After this round of community engagement is completed, a recommended land use study will be prepared and presented to Council for endorsement. It is intended that this will occur in May 2021. The urban design concept will be developed following the land use study. The recommendations of this process feed into Shaping Guelph, the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review and Official Plan Review.

Financial Implications

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept plan is funded through the approved capital budget, Capital Account PL0057 Community Improvement Plan/Community Planning Studies, for costs associated with consultant services and community engagement consultations.

Report

Project Background

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept was initiated in January 2020 with report [IDE-2020-02](#). It will develop a coordinated land use strategy for the study area and urban design concept plan that includes a built form and public realm framework. This project will coordinate with the strategic goals of higher order plans and policies such as the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe as well as inform the municipal comprehensive review and Official Plan update.

The project has three main tasks: the background report, the land use study and the urban design concept. The background report was completed in September 2020 with report [York Road-Elizabeth Street Background Report - 2020-127](#). The intent is to produce a land use study and urban design concepts that respect the natural and cultural heritage of the area after engaging with stakeholders and residents. The recommendations of this process feed into Shaping Guelph, the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review and Official Plan Review.

Background Report

Land use compatibility

The [York Road-Elizabeth Street Background Report - 2020-127](#) included a Land Use Compatibility Study. One of the key findings of the Background Report was that the density of this area is lower than most other areas of the city from both an employment and residential perspective. There are opportunities for intensification, however, the combination of existing industrial uses along with both road and rail transportation corridors pose constraints in terms of the noise and air quality in the area. These uses impact where sensitive land uses (such as residential) may be developed and/or redeveloped. In some instances, sensitive land uses may not be appropriate, or careful consideration of the best mitigation techniques must be given in order to provide good land use compatibility.

The heavy manufacturing uses that have historically occurred in this area also require an examination of the potential contamination of each site and appropriate studies to identify the best way to remediate each site when future site-specific development occurs.

Unique Employment Opportunities

Through the employment survey that was conducted in early 2020 as part of this project, it was confirmed that this area provides opportunities for entrepreneurs and small to medium sized businesses to start and grow. These opportunities are generally occurring in areas designated Mixed Business and should be further encouraged.

Background Report Conclusion

The [York Road-Elizabeth Street Background Report](#) highlights the range of land uses that exist in the area and the importance of recognizing how these uses impact one another. The density of the study area is approximately 20 people and jobs per hectare which, in part, demonstrates that the existing conditions provide opportunities for additional investment and intensification in this area. As land use changes and opportunities for investment and intensification are explored, they should be balanced with the diverse residential, employment, transportation, cultural and natural heritage aspects of this area. Any future development or redevelopment must acknowledge the existing area's function and sense of place within Guelph.

Draft Land Use Study

The draft Land Use Study is included as [Attachment-1](#) to this report.

Vision for the York/Elizabeth area

The York/Elizabeth area will continue to primarily support business, commercial, and industrial employment opportunities while allowing for an appropriate level and scale of residential intensification in some areas to increase population along with supporting economic and employment growth for future generations.

The industrial and manufacturing base will remain with an emphasis on incubating smaller and medium-sized employment uses.

York Road will evolve from a service commercial auto dominated streetscape to a mix of business and some residential uses that capitalize on the proximity to the Ontario Reformatory lands and York Road's evolution into a multi-modal corridor.

Victoria Road South will continue to be the boundary between two distinct neighbourhoods:

The Ward East: West of Victoria Road, new development will respect the area's unique, diverse and eclectic qualities resulting from its origin as a neighbourhood where places of employment and working-class housing existed side-by-side.

East of Victoria: East of Victoria Road will be part of an important entranceway into Guelph and will have strong connections to the historic Ontario Reformatory Lands. This area will continue to include a diversity of land uses including employment uses, commercial uses, and residential.

Principles and goals of the land use study

1. Provide a clear and flexible land use strategy to accommodate change and evolution while providing a degree of certainty for private and public investment.
2. Protect and support existing employment uses as well as the appropriate expansion of employment uses. Improve land use compatibility between employment, residential and railway uses.
3. Emphasize the development of smaller and medium-sized employment uses in the area to act as incubator space for the growth of businesses that will offer meaningful opportunities for job growth.

4. Support the development of commercial uses that meet the needs of businesses and residents by providing a range of stores and services with an emphasis on providing opportunities on lands fronting on to York Road east of Victoria Road.
5. Where appropriate, to ensure compatibility with existing employment uses, allow for residential development in low and mid-rise development forms.
6. Support and facilitate development and investment that contributes to the economic and social vitality of the area. Capitalize on investments into York Road and GID/Ontario Reformatory lands to the south. Along York Road ensure that redevelopment reflects its role as an entranceway to Guelph and responds to the Ontario Reformatory Lands cultural heritage landscape.
7. Ensure there is adaptable green infrastructure in physical areas and supports the City's move to be net-zero by 2050.
8. Protect and conserve the existing natural and cultural heritage resources. Ensure that new development respects existing cultural heritage resources and protects the Natural Heritage System.

Summary of proposed changes to existing land use designations

- The Mixed Business designation is proposed to be modified to permit additional uses and provide flexibility in order to encourage small to medium-size entrepreneurial and incubator businesses.
- The York Road Corridor, east of Victoria Road, is proposed to change from Service Commercial to the proposed modified Mixed Business designation and Medium Density Residential. The intent is that this change will allow for more flexibility in the permitted land uses and encourage redevelopment of this area.
- The Medium Density Residential designation is proposed in the easterly section as it was concluded as part of the Background report that this area would likely be the least difficult area in which to introduce sensitive land uses such as residential.
- Where possible and appropriate, modifications are proposed to land use designations for some properties to recognize existing uses.
- The city-owned parcel at 106 Beaumont Crescent is proposed to be a neighbourhood park to serve the existing and proposed residential.
- The Mixed Office/Commercial designation is proposed in some areas (e.g. the north side of Elizabeth Street, the west side of Stevenson Street and portions of York Road) that are currently designated residential in order to recognize the existing mix of uses in those areas.
- This project does not propose changes to the Council-approved vision for 200 Beverley Street (IMICo). The 2006 Council Resolution regarding this property requiring a 3 to 4 acre park with frontage on Stevenson Street has been identified in the report and in part, provides rationale for not seeking other park lands in the westerly part of the study area.
- A number of properties in the study area are proposed to be added to the Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Resources as a proposed recommendation of this study.
- The recent changes made through the Commercial Policy Review are not being re-examined which means the Commercial Mixed Use Centre on the easterly side of the intersection of York Road and Victoria Road will remain.

Next Steps

- February/March 2021 – Community engagement on the draft land use study
- May 2021 – Recommended land use study to be presented to Council
- Q3 & Q4 2021 – Develop urban design concept plans for portions of the study area

Financial Implications

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept plan is funded through the approved capital budget, Capital Account PL0057 Community Improvement Plan/Community Planning Studies, for costs associated with consultant services and community engagement consultations.

Consultations

Consultation with City departments and service areas

To inform the Land Use Study consultation has occurred with staff from the following City departments and service areas:

- Business Development and Enterprise Services
- Engineering and Transportation Services
- Guelph Junction Railway
- Parks Services
- Legal, Realty and Court Services

Community Engagement Summary

Through the City's online community engagement site, Have Your Say Guelph, interested stakeholders were able to provide input into the York/Elizabeth Land Use Study through two different activities between September 17, 2020 and October 9, 2020. The online engagement allowed the community to share knowledge about the study area and thoughts about its future. A total of 43 responses were received. A summary of the feedback, as well as the full data set form part of the Land Use Study (Attachment 1).

Even though the majority of the area is designated for employment purposes, generally the feedback seemed to be provided from the perspective of residents in the area rather than businesses within the area. The feedback received, along with the Land Use Compatibility Study and the Background report informed the draft Land Use Study.

Community Engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement about the draft Land Use Study occurred in February and March 2021 and included a community survey online through Have Your Say Guelph, the City's online engagement platform and a virtual public open house which included feedback opportunities. Notice for the engagement was provided through City News and by mailing a notice to property owners and business owners in the study area. The online engagement allowed for the community to provide comments on the draft Land Use Study. The feedback from the community, as well as Council, will inform the recommended Land Use Study.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept plan will support the City's existing policies and guidelines and align with the following priorities within Guelph's Strategic Plan:

- Powering our future – This study will support a healthy economy.
- Navigating our future – The study will consider transportation connectivity, safety and improving connections to workplaces in Guelph.
- Building our future – By prioritizing policy work that supports the development of new assets this study will respond to Guelph's growing and changing social, economic and environmental needs.

Attachments

Attachment-1 [York Road/Elizabeth Street Draft Land Use Study](#)

Attachment-2 Staff Presentation - York Road/Elizabeth Street Draft Land Use Study

Departmental Approval

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