

PRESENTATION TO GUELPH CITY COUNCIL JANUARY 17 2022
MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF MANAGING GROWTH WHILE ACHIEVING CARBON
NEUTRALITY TARGETS

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

CLAUSE 2

Request a minimum intensification target of 60% of all residential development occurring annually.

Reason for change

Guelph can only meet its carbon-neutral goals by adopting new urban forms that emphasize low-travel compact self-sufficient urban communities. Guelph's remaining Greenfield areas are largely incompatible with this new form. Intensification has proved success in meeting these goals and must be the dominant form for accommodating population growth.

NEW CLAUSE 4

Direct staff to prepare Greenfield Expansion Approval criteria that require a proposed Greenfield Expansion Proposal to demonstrate (1) the contribution development of the Greenfield Area will make to meeting community net-zero carbon goals and (2) that financial resources are available to meet both the capital costs of the required expansion of infrastructure and the future recurrent costs of maintaining this infrastructure.

Reason for this additional clause

Guelph must be very careful to make careful assessment of the risks, liabilities and benefits associated with the expansion of development into Greenfield Areas with high infrastructure costs and urban forms based on continued reliance on private vehicle transportation.

DIFFICULTIES TO BE OVERCOME

- The Places to Grow Framework adopted by the Province assumes population growth projections based on past demographic trends is a reliable basis for planning the future of cities. Downward trends in fertility are steepening rather than reducing. Most large countries now project population declines in the future . Major changes are occurring in the basics of the Canadian economy, reducing the capacity to rely on exploitation of natural resources as the primary source of wealth. Continuing population growth and increasing economic prosperity are uncertain at best.
- The Places to Grow Framework was established before the enormity of the changes in urban planning needed to achieve a low-carbon status for cities was realized. The main thrust of Places to Grow – to increase density and reduce travel-dependent activity – is consistent with achieving a low-carbon economy but this is not expressed as a commitment to carbon-neutral targets in PTG. In particular the need to redesign urban form to conform with much reduced dependency on individual vehicle transport is not a central feature of PTG targets.
- Guelph has the apparent advantage over built-out cities such as Burlington and Waterloo of having Greenfield Areas available to accommodate growth which should make accommodating growing population easier. This apparent advantage is deceptive because, unlike other cities with flat-land Greenfield areas such as Kitchener and Cambridge, most of the remaining Greenfield Areas in Guelph, specifically the Clair Maltby Area and the Dolime Quarry Area, are not low-cost flat land sites well-suited to conversion to urban use. To the best of my knowledge no other Ontario or Canadian City has considered glacial moraine topography or a worked-out quarry to be suitable for urban expansion. Development on either of these sites will be extra expensive and neither site is suited to compact self-sufficient live-work communities, likely to be an essential part of the required new urban form.
- The current pattern of hyperinflation in house and urban land prices is another large difficulty. Increasing house prices are based on the absolutely unsustainable belief that house prices can increase forever without limit – a belief that identifies the real estate market as a ponzi investment scheme.

With house prices at more than ten times median household income less than 15% of households have sufficient unaided income to qualify for home ownership. An adjustment in real estate value is inevitable and cannot be avoided by increasing the supply of unaffordable housing.

- The rapid growth of municipal infrastructure that has occurred over the last seventy five years has resulted in looming replacement and repair costs for existing infrastructure that does not have a secure income base. This liability, coupled with the costs of required new infrastructure not being fully met by capital income from development, poses a large financial burden on municipal budgets.

WAYS TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES

Given the great uncertainties regarding future population and economic activity trends, the lack of well-established models of the best urban form for achieving a sustainable low-carbon life style and economy, the current unsustainable price inflation in real estate, and the financial burden of maintaining existing infrastructure while subsidizing the costs of growth - there are two important principles that should govern the City's management of growth.

Principle One

Maintain a constant review of policy decisions with assessment of liabilities and risk included in all stages of approval of provision of municipal services.

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Principle Two

Adopt a rigorous criteria-based process that establishes the phasing of growth-related infrastructure expansion. The key criteria must include:

- (1) Reducing costs and carbon loading associated with new infrastructure by giving high priority to intensification projects that utilize existing infrastructure
- (2) Give highest priority to projects that create authentic compact urban form with demonstrable potential for reducing carbon footprint.
- (3) Expand infrastructure to Greenfield sites only after a need has been established which cannot be met by intensification.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR DOLIME

The background documents listed as providing support for the growth strategy do not include the 1993 River System Management Study which City Council adopted as an in perpetuity Vision Statement and Guide for planning the River Systems of Guelph.

The River System Master Plan has been incorporated into Official Plans , as is best practice for Master Plans, and continues, as do all other Council approved Master Plans until replaced or ended by a motion of City Council. Since no Council Motion has rescinded the 1993 Motion of adoption the Plan remains in effect.

I attach the pertinent sections of the River System Master Plan that deal with the Dolime property and its potential for development.

I ask that the RSMP be restored to the list of active City of Guelph Master Plans and that the RSMP be fully taken into account during the planning process for the Dolime lands.

RIVER SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT STUDY

Final Report
June 1993

5.6 West of the Hanlon Expressway

The City's Water Pollution Control Plant is located west of Hanlon Expressway on the north side of the River. Dominion Limestone - DoLime - a limestone quarry operates on the south side of the River. When its use ceases, this site has the potential of being developed as one of the major destinations on the river system which could accommodate both dramatically landscaped parkland as well as carefully designed and integrated private development.

Objective 10 - Match development and redevelopment with the special qualities of the river sector in which it is located

Speed River. West of the confluence the Speed River should be reinstated to its natural channel meandering through wetlands, meadows and woodland. This will provide a transition to the existing natural woodland west of the Hanlon Expressway and east of the confluence on the Eramosa. Areas of turf in parks along the lower Speed and Eramosa Rivers should be set back from river edge meadows and wetlands.

f) Kortright area (Hanlon Expressway to city limits)

The river channel

This portion of the river system, with its meandering channel and wooded banks, is representative of the historic Speed River valley, except where the banks have been altered in the vicinity of the DoLime plant and the Water Pollution Control Plant. The master plan (Figure 35) does not suggest any changes to the channel in this area.

The river edge landscape

The natural woodland along the Speed River west of the Hanlon Expressway provides the foundation for extending the wooded landscape type through this sector. The natural functions along storm channels and tributaries should be restored with extensive planting.

Significant Natural Areas

This stretch contains natural forest and wetlands associated with the Speed River Valley Class I Wetland and Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). The degradation of natural cover has occurred in the vicinity of the WPCP and DoLime plant, as well as in the vicinity of stormwater outfalls associated with residential developments on the east side of the valley. Dominance by weedy species such as Common Buckthorn threatens slope stability in Crane Park. Natural wetland cover is currently declining within Kortright Waterfowl Park.

The Plan will see protection of the remaining natural areas, and enhancement of disturbed cover in the vicinity of the WPCP. Naturalization is ongoing in Crane Park.

The primary route for the multi use recreational trail should follow the south and east bank of the river. Appropriate setbacks and a riparian buffer should be established through the current DoLime lands in association with the trail development.

A pedestrian underpass should be installed during construction of the new interchange at the Hanlon Expressway to link the trail on the south side of the river.

Areas for Development Control

The site of the existing Dominion Lime industry offers tremendous redevelopment opportunity for recreation and housing. The master plan suggests that appropriate setbacks for redevelopment (see Chapter 9) and a riparian buffer be established along the Speed River to enhance the continuity of habitat through this barren segment of the corridor and to enhance the appeal of the trail.

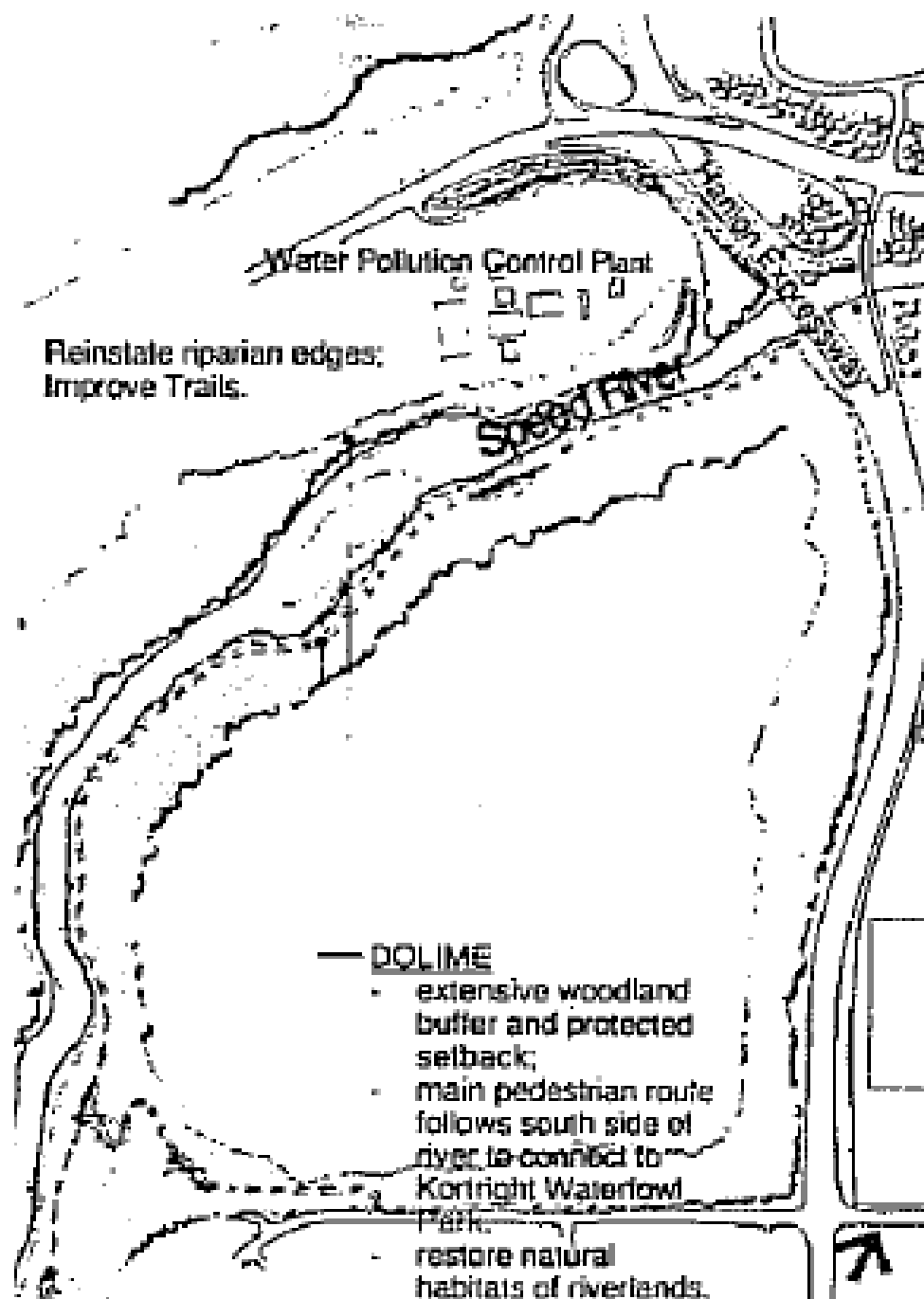


Figure 35: Kortright Area Sector

VISION STATEMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE RIVER SYSTEMS OF GUELPH

VISION STATEMENT

Rivers and river corridors in Guelph will be treasured and protected in recognition of their vital role in the life of the city. Land uses and buildings will be chosen to feature the rivers and provide a wide variety of beneficial uses of the riverlands. The ecological diversity of our rivers will be reinstated, enhanced and preserved.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1 - ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY

- Objective 1 - To maintain or enhance the baseflow of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers.**
- Objective 2 - To improve the quality of water in the Speed and Eramosa Systems.**
- Objective 3 - To enhance and restore the natural characteristics of channels and river-edge vegetation of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers and the ability of these rivers to permit fish passage.**
- Objective 4 - To protect existing natural woodlands, wetlands, steep slopes and drainage corridors associated with the Speed and Eramosa Rivers.**
- Objective 5 - To develop connecting links between natural woodland and wetland areas and the Speed and Eramosa River corridors.**

GOAL 2 - CONTINUITY OF CONNECTION

- Objective 6 - To provide continuous public access along the Speed and Eramosa Rivers.**
- Objective 7 - To protect and enhance views to the Speed and Eramosa Rivers.**
- Objective 8 - To improve public open space in the corridors of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers**
- Objective 9 - To provide a series of points of interest along the corridors of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers.**

GOAL 3 - COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT

- Objective 10 - To match development and redevelopment in each river sector with the special qualities of that sector.**
- Objective 11 - To have redevelopment in the corridors of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers face, focus and feature the riverland setting.**
- Objective 12 - To maintain the heritage features of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers and their contiguous buildings.**
- Objective 13 - To encourage a variety of land uses along the corridors of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers**

Adopted by the City of Guelph October 18 1993

17. Moved by Councillor McAdams
Seconded by Councillor Pate
1. That City Council receive the "Final Report of the City of Guelph River Systems Management Study, June 1993".
2. That City Council adopt as a basis for the planning of the river system of the City of Guelph, the attached "Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives For the River Systems of Guelph".
3. In preparation of master plans for parks and facilities the Recreation and Parks Department pay particular attention to the location and character of roadways. The plans should ensure that roadways provide convenient access and enhance the character of the parks and do not create problems of safety for pedestrians and vehicles, or nuisances such as noise for the neighbouring residents.
4. That the Management Master Plan for the River Systems of Guelph, prepared by Weinstein, Leeming and Associates, and presented as Chapters 8 and 9 in their "Final Report to the City of Guelph River Systems Management Study, June 1993", be adopted to be used as a guide in the preparation of plans for future City activities in the river corridors.
5. That the Director of Planning and Development take account of the recommendations of the Final Report of the City of Guelph River Systems Management Study in the preparation of the revision of the Official Plan and the rewriting of the Zoning By-law.

Carried