

Attachment-7 Staff Review and Planning Analysis

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) came into effect on October 20, 2024. It provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. All planning decisions, including the comments, submissions and advice provided to Council shall be consistent with the PPS.

Policy 2.1.6 of the PPS promotes achieving complete communities by accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options with multimodal access, employment, public service facilities, recreation, parks and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs.

Policy 2.3.1 requires that settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development. Land use patterns within settlement areas should be based on densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently use land and resources, optimize existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities, support active transportation, and are transit and freight supportive.

Policy 2.8.2 requires municipalities to plan for, protect and preserve employment areas for current and future uses. Residential, commercial, public service facilities and other institutional uses are prohibited in employment areas. The subject lands are located outside of the City's employment areas. The proposed six-storey hotel represents an efficient use of commercial lands, thereby preserving employment lands for future uses.

As the City's Official Plan is to be the main instrument for implementation of the PPS in Guelph [6.1], a more detailed review on how the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment is consistent with the above PPS policies as well as policies in the City's Official Plan will be outlined later in this analysis.

In Planning staff's opinion, the proposal to permit the proposed six storey hotel is consistent with the PPS. The development represents an efficient use of land and existing services within the settlement area.

Official Plan Conformity

Section 2.3 outlines the strategic goals of the City's Official Plan. The strategic goals are focused on ecological, social, cultural, and economic sustainability in decision making. Of particular relevance to this application are the following goals:

- Ensure an appropriate range and mix of employment opportunities, local services, community infrastructure, housing including affordable housing and other land uses are provided to meet current and projected needs to the year 2031 [2.3.1 b)].

- Direct development to those areas where full municipal services and related infrastructure are existing or can be made available, while considering existing land uses, natural heritage systems, development constraints, fiscal sustainability, development costs and related factors [2.3.4 a)].
- Encourage intensification and redevelopment of existing urban areas that is compatible with existing built form [2.3.6 d)].

Service Commercial Policies

The subject lands are designated "Service Commercial" in the City's Official Plan. Section 9.4.6 of the Official Plan contains policies that apply to the Service Commercial designation. The proposed Zone Amendment satisfies the Commercial objectives of the Official Plan

This includes:

- To ensure an adequate supply of service commercial uses throughout the city at appropriate locations.
- To concentrate highway-oriented and service commercial uses within well-defined designated areas, generally along arterial roads.
- To promote a high standard of building and landscape design for service commercial uses and to ensure that pedestrian and vehicular circulation do not conflict

The Official Plan defines Service Commercial uses as uses that support highway-oriented or service-oriented commercial activities that cannot be readily located within the downtown area or within a shopping centre location. The definition specifically mentions that this includes uses that primarily rely on business from tourists and inter-urban traffic such as hotels, gas bars, and fast-food restaurants.

Section 9.4.6 outlines several policies for development of service commercial lands. Relevant sections and related analysis have been examined by staff below.

- 1.** The Service Commercial designation is intended to provide a location for highway-oriented and service commercial uses that do not normally locate within Downtown because of site area or highway exposure needs and which may include commercial uses of an intensive nature that can conflict with residential land uses.

The proposed hotel would primarily serve inter-urban traffic and is ideally suited in a service commercial area.

- 2.** To promote continued commercial viability of Downtown and planned Mixed-use and Commercial areas; the City will limit the range of retail commercial uses that may be located within the Service Commercial designation.

The proposed development does not contain any retail uses and would not impact the viability of downtown and planned Mixed-use commercial areas.

- 3.** Development proposals within Service Commercial designations will be considered only in instances where adequate vehicular access, off-street parking and all municipal services can be provided.

The proposed development would provide adequate vehicular access and off-street parking. Engineering staff have identified concerns with the submitted stormwater management report but have noted that these concerns can be addressed at the time of Site Plan Application.

4. In some circumstances development may not necessarily be provided with direct access to arterial roads. The City shall encourage integration between adjacent service commercial uses in terms of entrances to public streets, internal access roads, common parking areas, grading, open space, stormwater management systems and municipal infrastructure provision where feasible.

The proposed hotel would share access and parking facilities with the neighbouring four storey hotel. Grading, open space, and stormwater management for the two buildings will be reviewed together.

With the inclusion of the Holding Provisions for the items noted above, the proposed development satisfies the Service Commercial land use policies.

Review of Proposed Zoning

The purpose of the Zoning By-law Amendment is to change the zoning from the current "Service Commercial" (SC) Zone to a "Specialized Service Commercial" (SC-5) Zone under Zoning By-law (2023) – 20790. The proposed zone amendment would maintain the permitted uses and provisions outlined in the SC zone, with two site specific provision and three **technical** provisions proposed.

As the Comprehensive Zoning By-law is still partially under appeal, three site-specific **technical** provisions are required. These provisions are to:

1. Permit a minimum required parking rate of 1 space per guest room. This complies with the minimum parking rate required in Table 5.3 of the Zoning By-law, but requires a site-specific provision to bring it into effect as Table 5.3 remains under appeal;
2. To permit a maximum of 15% of the minimum required parking spaces to be designed, provided and maintained for compact vehicles (compact spaces). This mirrors Section 5.3.3(a) of the 2023 Zoning By-law, which remains under appeal; and
3. Despite any other provision, parking spaces for compact vehicles shall have a minimum size of 2.4 metres in width and 5.5 metres in length, except this shall not apply to parallel parking spaces or accessible parking spaces. This mirrors Section 5.3.3(b), which remains under appeal.

As the above proposed provisions mirror the parking regulations approved by Council in April of 2023, staff are supportive of the proposed minimum parking rate of 1 parking space per guest room and proposed compact vehicle regulations.

The two other site-specific provisions relate to maximum building height and minimum buffer strip width. These are examined individually below.

Building Height

The applicant is requesting a maximum building height of 6 storeys for the proposed hotel whereas Table 8.7 Row A of the Zoning By-law permits a maximum building height of three storeys for service commercial properties.

The proposed building height of 6 storeys would have little impact on the neighbouring commercial and industrial properties. The height would help contribute to a more compact built form, in line with the Official Plan's objectives for commercial and mixed-use designations. The site can accommodate the additional parking necessitated by the additional density without requiring site specific provisions to landscaped open space requirements or required setbacks.

As the proposed height would allow for an efficient use of the lands without negatively impacting neighbouring properties, staff are supportive of the proposed site-specific regulation to permit a maximum building height of 6 storeys.

Buffer Strip

The applicant is also requesting a reduced buffer strip of one metre adjacent to the proposed hotel, whereas Table 8.6D requires a 3-metre buffer strip adjacent to interior side and rear lot lines. A buffer strip may include soft landscaping or fencing but may not include hardscaping like the proposed pathway.

The proposed reduction is requested for the portion of the lands between the proposed hotel and the lot line with 425 Woodlawn Road West (Wendy's). The remainder of the proposed development would comply with the required 3 metre buffer. This reduction will impact the ability for trees to be planted along the side yard and does not help support the City's urban forest policies.

Nonetheless the subject lands already comfortably exceed the minimum landscaped open space requirements as required in the City's Zoning By-law. The tight nature of the site would not allow the building and the proposed walkway to be pulled back 2 metres from the lot line without compromising other components of the site design.

Staff urge the applicant to consider altering the design of the proposed walkway to mitigate the impact on the buffer strip but accept a site-specific regulation to reduce the minimum buffer strip to 1 metre adjacent to the proposed hotel building.

Technical Provisions

As the Comprehensive Zoning By-law is still partially under appeal, three additional specialized provisions are required. These **technical** provisions are identical to the provisions required in the 2023 Zoning By-law. The following site-specific **technical** provisions are requested:

- That a minimum parking requirement of 1 space per guest room be permitted. This is in line with Table 5.3 Row 38 of the Zoning By-law.
- That a maximum of 15% of the minimum required parking spaces may be designed, provided and maintained for compact vehicles. This is in line with Section 5.3.3(a) of the Zoning By-law

- That despite any other provision, parking spaces for compact vehicles shall have a minimum size of 2.4 metres in width and 5.5 metres in length, except this shall not apply to parallel parking spaces or accessible spaces. This is in line with Section 5.3.3(b) of the Zoning By-law

As these proposed provisions mirror provisions approved by Council in 2023, staff have no concerns with the proposed **technical** provisions.

Municipal Services and Infrastructure

Policy 6.1.3 of the Official Plan requires all new development to be on full municipal services, including sanitary sewers, water supply, stormwater management and transportation networks.

Engineering staff have identified concerns regarding the submitted stormwater management report but have noted that these concerns can be addressed through the Site Plan Approval process.

Detailed comments from Engineering staff are provided in Attachment-8.

Environmental Engineering

To address previous concerns from engineering staff, the applicant has revised their groundwater sampling techniques. However, the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment has not been updated to reflect the new sampling technique and results.

For these reasons, Engineering staff recommend that a holding provision be put in place until a revised Phase II Environmental Site Assessment or an independent technical memo as outlined in comments from Engineering staff, and a reliance letter to the satisfaction of the City Engineer/General Manager.

Detailed comments from Engineering staff are provided in Attachment-8.

Holding Provision

As discussed above, a holding provision is recommended for the subject lands to ensure development does not proceed until the following conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the City.

Conditions:

1. The Owner shall provide the City either an updated Phase II Environmental Site Assessment or an independent technical memo as outlined in comments from Engineering staff, and a reliance letter to the satisfaction of the City Engineer/General Manager.