

Staff Report



To City Council
Service Area Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date Wednesday, September 10, 2025
Subject **Decision Report on Endorsement of the Guelph Innovation District Block Plan for Blocks 1 and 2**
328 Victoria Road South and 588 Stone Road East
File: BLKP24-001
Ward: 1

Recommendation

1. That the report titled Decision Report on Endorsement of the Guelph Innovation District Block Plan for Blocks 1 and 2, regarding the Block Plan application submitted by MHBC Planning Limited on behalf of the owner, Fusion Homes for lands municipally known as 328 Victoria Road South and 588 Stone Road East, from Infrastructure, Development and Environment dated September 10, 2025 be received.
 2. That City Council refuse the applicant submitted Block Plan for the Guelph Innovation District Blocks 1 and 2 as shown in Attachment-5 for the reasons outlined in Attachment-6 of Report 2025-419.
 3. That City Council authorize the General Manager of Planning and Building Services to issue final Block Plan endorsement after the applicant modifies the Block Plan to the satisfaction of City staff to include:
 - a. A Community Park of at least 6.7 hectares in size;
 - b. A minimum of 16.48 hectares of Employment Mixed-use land;
 - c. The elementary school in a non-Employment Mixed-use Block, provided it meets the sizing and phasing requirements of the Upper Grand District School Board;
 - d. The Frost Building in a Residential Block;
 - e. A single-loaded road along the eastern edge of Blocks 1 and 2; and,
 - f. Any revisions necessary to the Stormwater Management facilities to ensure adequate design and sizing, to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
 4. That the Block Plan be brought back to Council for endorsement if the above modifications are made in a way that is not satisfactory to City staff.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide planning information and a staff recommendation to Council regarding endorsement of Block Plans 1 and 2 of the Guelph Innovation District (GID).

Key Findings

The Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan was modified by the Province of Ontario through the OPA 80 approval process. These modifications were initially reversed by the Province of Ontario through Bill 150, then following a Special Meeting of Council on December 5, 2023, the modifications were reinstated through Bill 162.

Modifications were made to the amount of Residential and Mixed-use designated land and permitted building heights, among others. The overall Vision, Principles, and Objectives of the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan were not modified. As a result of these modifications made to the GID Secondary Plan, the population projections of the GID is expected to rise to between 8,111 to 9,472 people (from 4,600 people) and the jobs projections are expected to decrease from 4,200 jobs to 3,673 jobs.

City staff have identified several areas within the applicant's Block Plan for Blocks 1 and 2 that do not conform to municipal policies. As a result, staff cannot recommend that the proposed Block Plan be endorsed.

There are several issues that have not been adequately addressed by the applicant which, in staff's professional opinion, will significantly impact the achievement of a complete and well-functioning community on the Block 1 and 2 lands and may have long-term effects on the City. These issues include, but are not limited to: inadequate provision of parkland, especially for the Community Park, removal of Employment Mixed-Use land; location of a Cultural Heritage Resource (Frost Building) in a block dedicated for parkland; location of an elementary school in the Employment Mixed-use 2 block, no single-loaded road along the eastern edge of GID Blocks 1 and 2; and inadequate design and sizing of Stormwater Management facilities.

Moving away from previously council approved policies could have long term impacts on the City's planning and development objectives.

As this is not in compliance with council approved policies, a decision is required by council at this time to inform the continued development of this site.

Staff have identified several modifications, that if made by the applicant would result in a positive recommendation from staff.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The review of the Block Plan submission aligns with the City Building theme in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The review includes an assessment of its conformity with the policies of the City's Official Plan, which is the City's key document for guiding future land use and development.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Improve housing supply

Financial Implications

As outlined in the [Shaping Guelph Municipal Comprehensive Review: Fiscal Impact Analysis Memo](#), as the City grows, there are new operating and capital costs that are required to support this growth. Council should anticipate with each new residential unit or job created in the City in the short- to medium-term (10 to 15

years), that it will mean tax levy and rate pricing increases. This study demonstrates that higher-density growth mitigates tax and rate pressures over time, as this is the most cost-effective use of land and drives the highest taxation revenue per acre. There may be other social and economic benefits of the development to consider, and Council should continually weigh the potential City budget increase against the broader value proposition of any given development.

The City has previously invested in servicing infrastructure for a significant portion of the GID secondary plan area, and Council endorsement of the Block Plan will allow the applicant to move forward with Planning Act applications, including an Official Plan Amendment(s), Zoning By-law Amendment(s) and Draft Plan of Subdivision application(s) for the subject lands. This supports progress toward the collection of development charges to help support the servicing investments made to date and the completion of servicing needs for this area of the City in the future. More detailed financial implications will be reported in future decision reports to Council regarding the Planning Act applications.

Report

Background

The Guelph Innovation District (GID) Secondary Plan is divided into four Block Plan areas. Blocks 1 and 2 are generally bounded east of Victoria Road, north of Stone Road East, and the Eramosa River. Block 3 is located east of Victoria Road and south of Stone Road East. Block 4 is the Reformatory Complex lands, south of York Road and west of Watson Parkway South.

A Block Plan is required to be developed for each of the four identified Block Plan areas. This is in accordance with Official Plan policies 11.2.7.3.1 through 11.2.7.3.11 to implement the GID Secondary Plan policies. The purpose of a Block Plan is to establish an appropriate physical form of development proposed for the Block Plan area that demonstrates how Official Plan policies and GID Secondary Plan policies will be addressed.

Block Plans specifically address the extent and location of Secondary Plan elements on the lands, including roads, lot patterns, stormwater management facilities, park locations, proposed residential densities and employment uses and densities, etc., in sufficient detail. Additionally, the Block Plan areas will be used for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring achievement of Official Plan targets, as well as capital programming and land assembly.

As part of the Block Plan process, a Technical Review Committee (TRC) was established to support an efficient review process and includes City staff from Planning, Engineering, Transportation Planning, Heritage Planning, Parks, Environmental Planning, Economic Development and the Grand River Conservation Authority. TRC members have been discussing the GID Block Plan for Blocks 1 and 2 with the applicant, MHBC Planning Limited and the owner, Fusion Homes, since 2023.

The applicant submitted their first Terms of Reference for Blocks 1 and 2 in October 2023. Staff provided comments and the Terms of Reference were revised, with the final Terms of Reference being approved in April 2024.

The applicant submitted their first Block Plan submission for Blocks 1 and 2 in May 2024 and as per the Guidance Document for Block Plans, staff provided comments in approximately 60 days. These comments highlighted several issues where the development was not in compliance with City policies.

Informal meetings were held with City staff in the Fall of 2024, where a preliminary revised Block Plan was shown by the applicant. This Block Plan did not address the issues and comments provided for their first submission.

In March 2025, a second formal Block Plan submission for Blocks 1 and 2 was received. In addition to revised materials that made up the first Block Plan submission, staff also received new materials, including materials that are not required at the Block Plan stage, such as the draft Official Plan Amendment and draft Zoning By-law Amendment. As per the Guidance Document for Block Plans, staff provided comments in approximately 60 days, including comments on the new materials. Many of the issues identified in the first block plan submission were still present, and new issues were also identified.

A meeting with commenting staff and the applicant's team was held in-person in June 2025, where comments were discussed. Several scoped discussions were also held in June 2025, to discuss ways to resolve issues by topic area.

A third partial technical submission was received on July 17, 2025 and the remaining materials were received on July 25, 2025. While some issues were addressed through this third submission, there are still areas where the Block Plan does not conform to council approved policies and as such, direction is required from council on how to proceed.

Location

The subject lands are municipally known as 328 Victoria Road South and 588 Stone Road East (see Attachment-1 Location Map and Attachment-2 Aerial Photograph). The subject lands are located at the north-east corner of Victoria Road South and Stone Road East.

Currently, the subject lands have a combined area of approximately 116.6 hectares with 1,497 metres of combined frontage along Victoria Road South and 874 metres of combined frontage along Stone Road East. The subject lands are primarily vacant and used for agricultural uses with two buildings located on the north-western side of subject lands.

Surrounding land uses include:

To the north: Eramosa River Valley and Guelph Radial Line Trail;

To the east: Guelph Junction Railway, the Eramosa River, and industrial land uses;

To the south: Stone Road East, beyond which are lands located within Block 3; and,

To the west: Victoria Road South, beyond which is the Cutten Fields, and the Arboretum.

Secondary Plan Land Use Designations and Policies

In July 2022, the City of Guelph adopted its last comprehensive review of the [Official Plan \(known as OPA 80\)](#) which was [approved with modifications](#) by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on April 11, 2023. One of these modifications was to the land use and height mapping for the GID Secondary Plan. While these modifications were initially reversed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs

and Housing through Bill 150, the Minister did send a letter to Mayors which had their Official Plans modified requesting comments on the modifications. On December 5, 2023, a [Special Meeting of Council was held](#) to discuss comments, where Council approved a motion to direct staff to “take no further action on reversal of the site specific lands as described in the report, tabled as: Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan Land Use Schedule and Guelph Innovation District Building Heights Schedule.” On December 6, 2023, [a letter was sent from the Mayor to the Minister](#) stating that Council endorsed leaving the ministerial changes made in April 2023 for the GID. In May 2024, Bill 162 received royal assent which re-instated the modifications endorsed by City of Guelph Council, including the changes made to the GID Secondary Plan.

These ministerial modifications were limited to the mapping schedules for the GID Secondary Plan, specifically Schedule B: Land Use and Schedule C: Built Form Elements and some specific policies. These schedules denote the size and location of land uses and the minimum and maximum height of buildings for the GID Secondary Plan, respectively.

As a result of these modifications made to the GID Secondary Plan, the applicant has estimated that the population projections of the GID Blocks 1 & 2 is expected to rise to between 8,111 to 9,472 people (from 4,600 people) and the jobs projections are expected to decrease from 4,200 jobs to 3,673 jobs.

While staff do acknowledge that amendments to the GID Secondary Plan policies will be required to bring the rest of the policies into conformity with the modified schedules, the Official Plan and the Vision, Principles, and Objectives of the GID Secondary Plan remain in full force and effect which guide staff’s assessment of the submitted Block Plan for Blocks 1 and 2.

GID Blocks 1 and 2, are designated “Residential”, “Mixed-Use Corridor (GID)”, “Employment Mixed-use 1”, “Employment Mixed use 2”, “Open Space and Park” and “Significant Natural Areas and Natural Areas” as shown on Schedule B of the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan Land Use Schedule.

Lands designated as “Residential” are to be predominantly medium density housing forms such as townhouses and apartments with a limited supply of low density housing forms such as single and semi-detached dwellings. Uses permitted in this designation include multiple unit residential buildings, such as townhouses and apartments; detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings; convenience commercial uses limited to a maximum gross floor area of 400 square metres on a property; live/work units; community services and facilities; child care centres; schools; and park space including urban squares. Secondary Plan policy 11.2.6.3.5 contains further policy direction for the designation. Multiple unit residential buildings and live/work units are to be oriented towards a street with the main entrance to the building/dwelling unit accessible directly from a right-of-way. Orientation that facilitates maximum solar gain along the long axis of buildings shall be considered in local road design.

Lands designated as “Mixed-Use Corridor (GID)” are areas deemed vacant or under-used that are targeted for significant growth. These areas are to consist of a mix of residential, commercial, live/work, institutional, office and educational uses within a highly compact form of development that will contribute to the creation of focal points and transition areas. Uses permitted in the Mixed-Use Corridor (GID) land use designation include commercial, retail and service uses; office;

entertainment and recreational commercial uses; cultural and educational uses; institutional uses; hotels; live/work; and medium and high density multiple unit residential buildings and apartments. Policy 11.2.6.3.2.4 further sets out minimum ground floor heights and minimum and maximum building heights for development within identified nodes, and along College Avenue East in the Main Street Area.

Lands designated as "Employment Mixed-use 1" are targeted for significant growth as these areas will increase density, innovation and sustainability by permitting a mix of uses such as research and development, commercial, educational and entertainment. Uses permitted in the Employment Mixed-use 1 designation include: office and administrative facilities; research and development facilities; hotel and convention facilities; entertainment and recreational commercial uses; assembly and manufacturing of product lines requiring on-going research and development support; associated ancillary retail uses that are an integral component of the primary uses; and complementary or accessory uses. Such uses may include restaurants, financial institutions, medical services, fitness centres, open space and recreation facilities and child care centres. Low density employment uses such as logistics and warehousing are not permitted. Policy 11.2.6.3.3 provides direction for development within the Employment Mixed-use 1 areas which is to comprise a mix of street-related and campus form development. Prestige employment/research park uses is to make up most of the campus form and be concentrated within Block Plan Area 2, whereas high density is encouraged along Victoria Road South and Stone Road East.

Lands designated as "Employment Mixed-use 2" are to have a mix of uses and are to be designed as a transitional area. Permitted uses include research and development facilities; office and administrative facilities; cultural and education uses; institutional uses; entertainment and recreational commercial uses; associated ancillary retail uses that are an integral component of the primary uses; complimentary or accessory uses may also be permitted. Such uses may include convenience commercial uses and community facility uses. Uses that are not permitted include residential; live/work; and logistics and warehousing.

Lands designated as "Open Space and Park" are subject to the Open Space and Parks policies of the Official Plan and the applicable provisions of the Secondary Plan. In accordance with the policies of the Official Plan, municipal parks and municipal recreation facilities are permitted in all land use designations. As per policy 11.2.5.3.3, a new neighbourhood park is to be developed in a central location within the designated Residential lands north of the identified Main Street and will serve as a focal point for active and passive recreation. A new community park that also includes neighbourhood park components will be developed within the designated Residential and/or Employment Mixed-use 1 lands south of the identified Main Street; and will serve as a focal point for active and passive recreation.

Lands designated as "Significant Natural Areas and Natural Areas" in the GID Secondary Plan are subject to the Natural Heritage System policies of the Official Plan. Development or site alteration is not permitted within this designation including within established or minimum buffers. Development or site alteration may be permitted within adjacent lands to Significant Natural Areas provided it has been demonstrated through an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) that there will be no negative impacts to the protected natural heritage features and areas or their associated ecological functions. The applicant has submitted an EIS as part of the

Block Plan submission and staff review of the EIS is provided in the Staff Review and Planning Analysis in Attachment-6.

The relevant policies for the applicable land use designations are included in Attachment-3.

Existing Zoning

The subject lands are currently zoned "Urban Reserve 1" (UR.1) according to Zoning By-law (2023)-20790, as amended, which permits conservation uses and legally existing uses, buildings and structures.

Minor variance application A-2/23 was approved by the Committee of Adjustment on January 12, 2023, to permit a temporary agriculture, vegetation-based use on a portion of the subject lands for a temporary period of three years.

Details of the existing zoning are included in Attachment-4.

Financial Implications

As outlined in the Shaping Guelph Municipal Comprehensive Review: Fiscal Impact Analysis Memo, as the City grows, there are new operating and capital costs that are required to support this growth. Council should anticipate with each new residential unit or job created in the City in the short- to medium-term (10 to 15 years), that it will mean tax levy and rate pricing increases. This study demonstrates that higher-density growth mitigates tax and rate pressures over time, as this is the most cost-effective use of land and drives the highest taxation revenue per acre. There may be other social and economic benefits of the development to consider, and Council should continually weigh the potential City budget increase against the broader value proposition of any given development.

The City has previously invested in servicing infrastructure for a significant portion of the GID secondary plan area, and Council endorsement of the Block Plan will allow the applicant to move forward with Planning Act applications, including an Official Plan Amendment(s), Zoning By-law Amendment(s) and Draft Plan of Subdivision application(s) for the subject lands. This supports progress toward the collection of development charges to help support the servicing investments made to date and the completion of servicing needs for this area of the City in the future. More detailed financial implications will be reported in future decision reports to Council regarding the Planning Act applications.

Supporting Documents

The following materials were submitted in support of the second Block Plan submission and can be found on the City's website under Current Development Applications:

Archaeological Letter, prepared by Irvin Heritage Inc., dated March 10, 2025

Block Plan, prepared by MHBC Planning, dated February 3, 2025

Concept Plan, prepared by MHBC Planning, dated March 2025

Cover Letter, prepared by MHBC Planning, dated March 14, 2025

Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment Report, prepared by MHBC Planning, dated March 2025

Engineering Master Servicing Plan, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025

Environmental Impact Study, prepared by Natural Resource Solutions Inc., dated March 2025
Environmental Noise Assessment, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025
Functional Servicing Report, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025
Geotechnical Investigation Report, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025
Guelph Innovation District Urban Design Guidelines, prepared by Fusion Homes, BIG and MHBC Planning, dated 2025
Hydrogeological Characterization Report, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025
Interim Phase Two Environmental Site Assessment, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025
Interim Stage 1 & 2 Archaeological Assessment Report, prepared by Irvin Heritage Inc., dated March 10, 2025
Phase One Environmental Site Assessment Report, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025
Plan of Survey, prepared by Callon Dietz Incorporated Ontario Land Surveyors, dated January 16, 2017
Planning Rationale Report, prepared by MHBC Planning, dated March 2025
Redlined Secondary Plan, prepared by MHBC Planning Limited
Stormwater Management Report, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated March 11, 2025
Sustainability Checklist, prepared by MHBC Planning, dated
Sustainability Report, prepared by MHBC Planning, dated March 2025
Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan, prepared by Natural Resource Solutions Inc., dated March 2025
Traffic Impact Study, prepared by GHD Limited, dated March 11, 2025

A third partial technical submission was received on July 17, 2025 and additional remaining materials were received on July 25, 2025. While some issues were addressed through this scoped third submission, many of the same original issues continue to exist. The third submission included the following documents:

Planning Justification Report Addendum, prepared by MHBC Planning Limited, dated July 2025
Revised Block Plan, prepared by MHBC Planning Limited, dated July 15, 2025
Environmental Impact Study and Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan, prepared by Natural Resource Solutions Inc., dated July 24, 2025
Technical SWM Letter, prepared by Natural Resource Solutions Inc., dated June 27, 2025
Engineering Master Servicing Plan, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated July 16, 2025
Hydrogeological Characterization Report, prepared by MTE Consultants Inc., dated July 16, 2025
Revised Traffic Impact Study, prepared by GHD Limited, dated July 2025

Staff Review and Planning Analysis

Staff have reviewed the first, second and third technical submission for the Block Plan proposed by the applicant, technical studies and supporting materials, as well as the input received from the developer-led public consultation. Based on this

review, staff cannot recommend endorsement of the Block Plan as submitted. Further refinement to the Block Plan and additional information and analysis are required to demonstrate that the proposed Block Plan conforms to the City of Guelph's Official Plan and Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan policies. City staff have identified the following major issues with the Block Plan that do not conform with City policies and therefore affect the ability of staff to recommend endorsement.

Community Park Block is undersized

Based on the number of residential units proposed (4,654 at the high-end of the range), the net developable area for the development (97.3 hectares), Official Plan policies, GID Secondary Plan policies and the requirements of the Planning Act, City staff have recommended a community park of approximately 6.7 hectares in size. This is despite Official Plan policy requiring a Community Park of between 10-20 hectares. The size recommended would fit the facilities identified through the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Needs Assessment. The applicant submitted Block Plan identifies a community park of 3.64 hectares in size.

A 6.7 hectare community park size is integral to meeting the demand for more sport fields as the City grows, as identified through the City's 2022 Park Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Many parkland parcels that the City is currently acquiring are too small to accommodate sport field needs. The GID Secondary Plan is one of the last remaining opportunities to acquire a community park of this size. A community park of only 3.64 hectares will make it difficult to maintain service levels for tennis courts, soccer fields, ball diamonds, and cricket pitches as they take up large amounts of space. As shown on the applicant submitted Facility Fit Plan for their 3.64 hectare Community Park, the circle representing the cricket pitch diameter limits overlaps with most of the park facilities including the playground and parking. Parks Planning staff have required that the Community Park be one consolidated block that includes the following required features:

- One full-size Cricket Pitch;
- Four Tennis Courts in a complex;
- A washroom building with changerooms;
- A playground area;
- A picnic shelter;
- Parking areas to accommodate approximately 300 vehicles;
- Accessible pathways to connect the amenities and provide pedestrian circulation.

In summary, staff are recommending that a community park of at least 6.7 hectares in size be provided in Blocks 1 and 2.

Re-designation of Employment Mixed-use 1 land without replacement

The applicant submitted block plan is proposing to further reduce the amount of Employment Mixed-use land to approximately 5.3 hectares. This is after Provincial modifications made to the GID Secondary Plan already reduced the amount of Employment Mixed-use land from 40 hectares to 16.48 hectares. The availability of Employment Mixed-use land is a key component of the Vision and Principles of the overall GID Secondary Plan, as laid out in Principle 6 of the GID Secondary Plan, in particular as a critical component of the University-Downtown-GID trinity of

innovation spaces that make up the Guelph Agri-Innovation Cluster. In addition, these lands will play a critical role in achieving Guelph's jobs target to 2051.

The applicant submitted Block Plan proposes to locate a Stormwater Management Block and the Community Park Block on land designated Employment Mixed-use 1. While staff understand that the location of the Stormwater Management Block is most appropriate at the proposed location, staff are recommending that sufficient Employment Mixed-use land, in accordance with the modifications made by the Province of Ontario, be provided elsewhere on the Block Plan to achieve the vision, objectives, and policies of the GID Secondary Plan.

In summary, staff are recommending that 16.48 hectares of Employment Mixed-use land be provided in Blocks 1 and 2.

Locating the Elementary School Block in the Employment Mixed-use 2 land use designation

The applicant submitted Block Plan proposes to locate an elementary school in the Employment Mixed-use 2 land use designation. While educational uses are permitted in the Employment Mixed-use 2 designation, staff do not support using the entirety of this designation for this use, as this further impacts achievement of Principle 6: "Grow Innovative Employment Opportunities" of the GID Secondary Plan and does not conform to Policy 11.2.6.3.4.1 of the GID Secondary Plan.

Therefore, City staff are recommending that the Block Plan be revised so that the elementary school is located in a Residential block, as permitted by municipal and provincial policy and in accordance with the Upper Grand District School Board sizing and phasing requirements.

Location of a Cultural Heritage Resource in a Neighbourhood Park

In Heritage Planning staff's professional opinion and as approved by Heritage Guelph, the Frost Building meets the minimum criteria to determine cultural heritage value and interest under the Ontario Heritage Act and have made public their intention to recommend designation. On April 8, 2025 Council voted to defer the designation of the Frost Building until the Block Plan for the Guelph Innovation District is presented to City Council, but no later than March 31, 2026.

The applicant submitted Block Plan proposes a Neighbourhood Park in the area that includes the former Frost Building. Both Heritage Planning and Parks Planning do not support a Neighbourhood Park in this area as it implies that the building is being conveyed to the City, along with the costs of conservation, operation and maintenance. Acquisition of the heritage building is not aligned with departmental needs and limits the ability to implement park amenities that are needed. Staff recommend utilizing designation under the Heritage Act as the tool to conserve the heritage building, rather than parkland dedication.

City staff are recommending that the Block Plan be revised so that the Frost Building is not in a park block.

No single-loaded road along the eastern edge of the development

As per the policies of the GID Secondary Plan, a single-loaded perimeter local road is required to be considered along the western edge of the Eramosa River Valley. A single-loaded road is when development is only present on one side of the road, in this case only on the western side of Street G, as shown on Attachment-5. The single-loaded road provides a public edge, opportunities for separated active

transportation infrastructure, public view and public vista opportunities to the Natural Heritage System and greater protection opportunities of the Eramosa River Valley.

City staff are recommending that the Block Plan be revised to include a single-loaded road by shifting Street G to the west, which would allow for the Residential blocks currently located on the east side of Street G to be relocated to the west side.

Concerns with the design of Stormwater Management Facilities

Engineering staff have reviewed the third submission and have identified significant concerns relating to the three Stormwater Management (SWM) Facilities. An objective of the Block Plan review from an engineering perspective is to ensure that the proposed servicing, infrastructure and SWM requirements are planned appropriately and that sufficient land is planned to inform and guide the content of the subsequent development approvals. It is important and necessary for the applicant to address comments relating to SWM design through a revised Block Plan submission as changes to the SWM facilities could impact the overall layout of the Block Plan.

Engineering staff have identified concerns relating to SWM Facility inlet design, SWM Facility forebay sizing, the post-development Stormwater Management Hydrologic Model, Brentwood Storm Tank sizing and existing rail culvert capacity analysis.

City staff are recommending that any revisions necessary to the Stormwater Management facilities to ensure adequate design and sizing, to the satisfaction of the City Engineer, be made prior to endorsement of the Block Plan to ensure sufficient land is available for SWM facilities.

Attachment-6 includes the full staff review and planning analysis of the above major issues.

Additional Issues

Transportation Issues

There are outstanding transportation issues that will need to be addressed as part of the revised Block Plan. The Active Transportation Network components identified in the GID Secondary Plan are not accurately reflected in the Block Plan, and staff will continue to work with the applicant to address these comments. Additionally, the local road network does not meet engineering standards for spacing requirements where they intersect with our arterial road network and need to be addressed in future plans.

In addition to the above, there are additional issues with the applicant-submitted Block Plan that staff have outlined in the Staff Review and Planning Analysis in Attachment-6.

Consultations and Engagement

As per the Guelph Innovation District Guidance document, Block Plan consultation is led by the applicant and their consultant team.

Consultation included the following:

- Two Public Open House meetings were held in person on July 19, 2023 and July 10, 2024, both held at the University of Guelph Arboretum.
- Stakeholder sessions were held both in person and virtual.
- All adjacent land owners (within 120 metres of the boundary of the Block Plan area) were sent a notice of Public Open House for Open House #1.
- Stakeholder Groups were sent a notice of the Public Open House #1 through standard mail service. The stakeholder groups included the following: Guelph Chamber of Commerce, Karen Farbridge (Former mayor of Guelph), University of Guelph, Rare, Guelph Hiking and Trail Club, The Arboretum, Guelph Coalition for Active Transportation and Habitat for Humanity.
- All adjacent land owners (within 120 metres of the boundary of the Block Plan area) were sent a notice of Public Open House #2 and the initiation of the Block Plan through standard mail service.
- Standard commenting agencies were sent a notice of the Public Open House #2 and initiation of the Block Plan through standard mail service or email.
- Consultation with Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Haudenosaunee Development Institute has been occurring throughout the Block Plan process.
- All submitted Block Plan documents are posted on the City's website.

In addition to the above, the first Block Plan submission was presented to the City's Planning Advisory Committee on June 20, 2024.

A notice of decision meeting on Council endorsement of the Block Plan was emailed/mailed to interested parties on August 25, 2025 and posted on the City's current development application webpage.

Future Consultations and Engagement

Future Planning Act applications for a Draft Plan of Subdivision(s), Official Plan Amendment(s) and Zoning By-law Amendment(s) will be submitted by the applicant following endorsement of the Block Plan. Public notification and a statutory public meeting will be held for all future Planning Act applications in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act. Agencies, City departments, and residents will have future opportunities to participate and provide comments on these applications.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Location Map

Attachment-2 Aerial Photograph

Attachment-3 Existing Secondary Plan Land Use Designations and Policies

Attachment-4 Existing Zoning, Zoning By-law (2023)-20790

Attachment-5 Proposed Block Plan: Guelph Innovation District Blocks 1 and 2

Attachment-6 Staff Review and Planning Analysis

Attachment-7 Staff Presentation

Departmental Approval

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