

# Guelph Innovation District (GID) Block Plan 1 & 2

Council Endorsement Meeting

September 10, 2025

# Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan

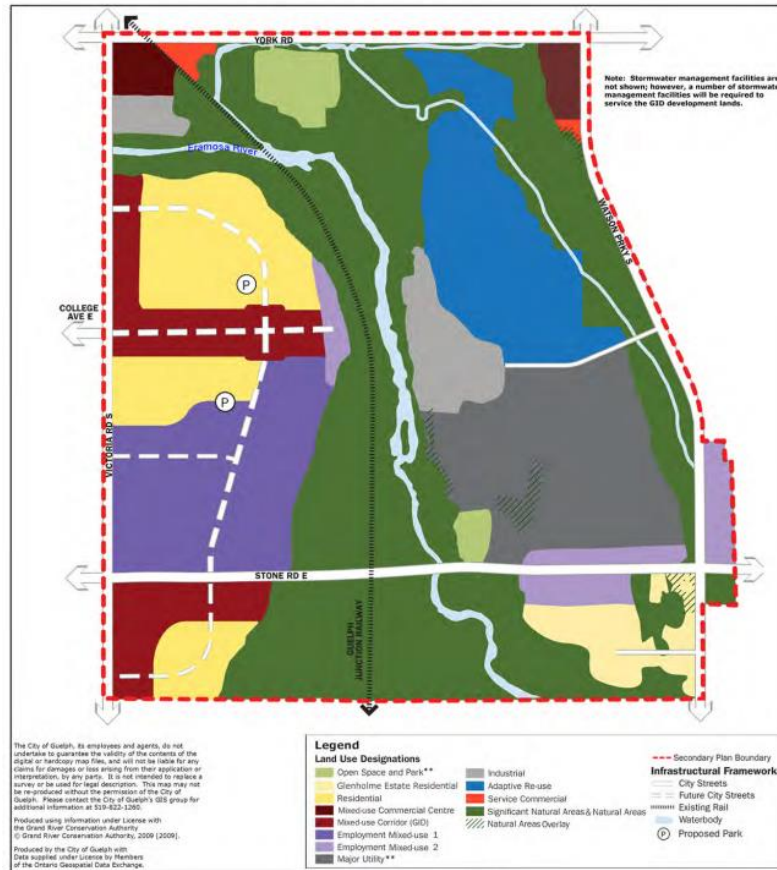
- Guelph Innovation District (GID) Secondary Plan adopted by City of Guelph Council on May 12, 2014, following an extensive secondary planning study beginning in 2005.
- Appeals withdrawn and in effect August 10, 2017.
- Fusion Homes purchased two parcels of land on December 14, 2021.
- Vision for GID:
  - “compact, mixed-use community”;
  - “home of innovative, sustainable employment uses with an adjacent urban village”;
  - “land use connections...envisioned between the GID, as an innovation centre, the University of Guelph, as a knowledge-based research centre and the Downtown, as the City’s civic hub and cultural centre, supporting the emergence of a University-Downtown-GID trinity of innovation spaces”; and
  - “celebrates the rich heritage resources of the district, including the stunning river valley, dramatic topography and views, and historic Reformatory Complex”.

# Provincial Changes Made to the GID Secondary Plan

- On April 11, 2023, Province of Ontario approved OPA 80, the City's latest Growth Management Strategy with eighteen (18) modifications;
- Council approved these modifications on December 5, 2023.
- Some modifications made to select policies, the land use schedule, and heights schedule for the GID Secondary Plan.
- Modifications not made to the overall Vision and Objectives of the GID Secondary Plan.
- Significant change in the population and employment forecast for Blocks 1 & 2 as a result of modifications.

# Modifications to GID Land Use Schedule

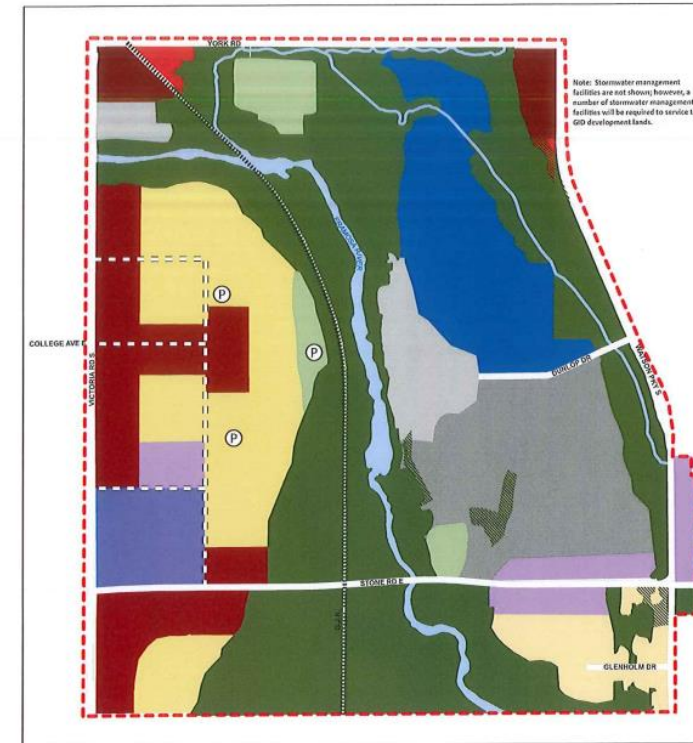
## Previous Schedule



Produced by the City of Guelph Planning Services February 2024

**CITY OF GUELPH OFFICIAL PLAN SCHEDULE B: GUELPH INNOVATION DISTRICT SECONDARY PLAN LAND USE**

## Current Schedule

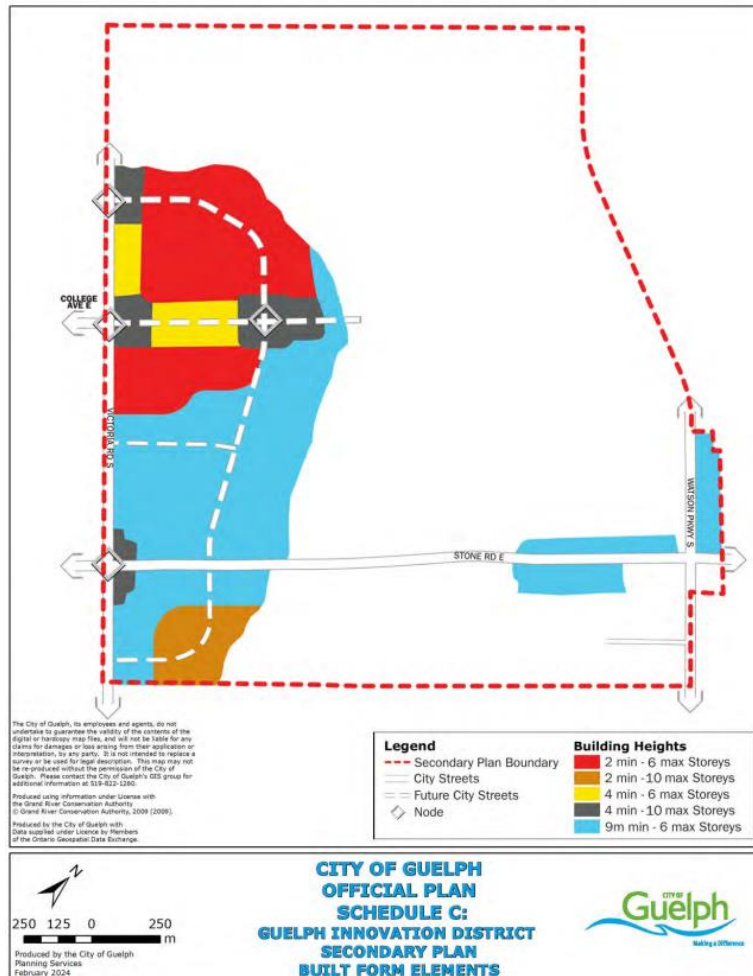


### City Of Guelph Official Plan Schedule B (Modified): Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan Land Use

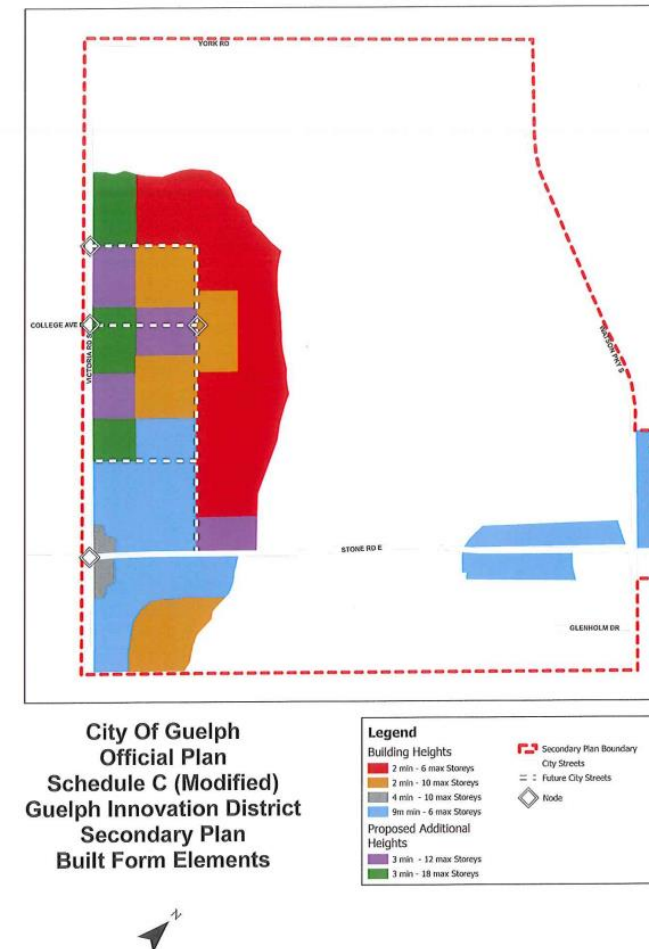


# Modifications to GID Height Schedule

Previous Schedule



Current Schedule



# Policy Modifications to the GID Secondary Plan

- Removing the function of the Main Street as a transition area between the Residential and Employment Mixed-use 1 lands because of the reduction in Employment Mixed-use 1 land.
- Removing the location of the single-loaded local road from within the Mixed-use Employment Area because of the reduction in Employment Mixed-use land.
- Changing urban design policies for the height of the street wall because of the changes to the Height Schedule.

# Development Steps in GID

- Block Plans are required to be developed to the satisfaction of the City and approved by the City for each of the identified Block Plan areas prior to approval of any Planning Act development application;
- Following Block Plan approval, applications for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, draft plan of subdivisions, and site plan applications, as required can then move forward.
- These development applications are to be generally consistent with the approved Block Plan but Block Plans may be amended through development applications, provided the policies of the GID Secondary Plan continue to be satisfied.

# What is a Block Plan?

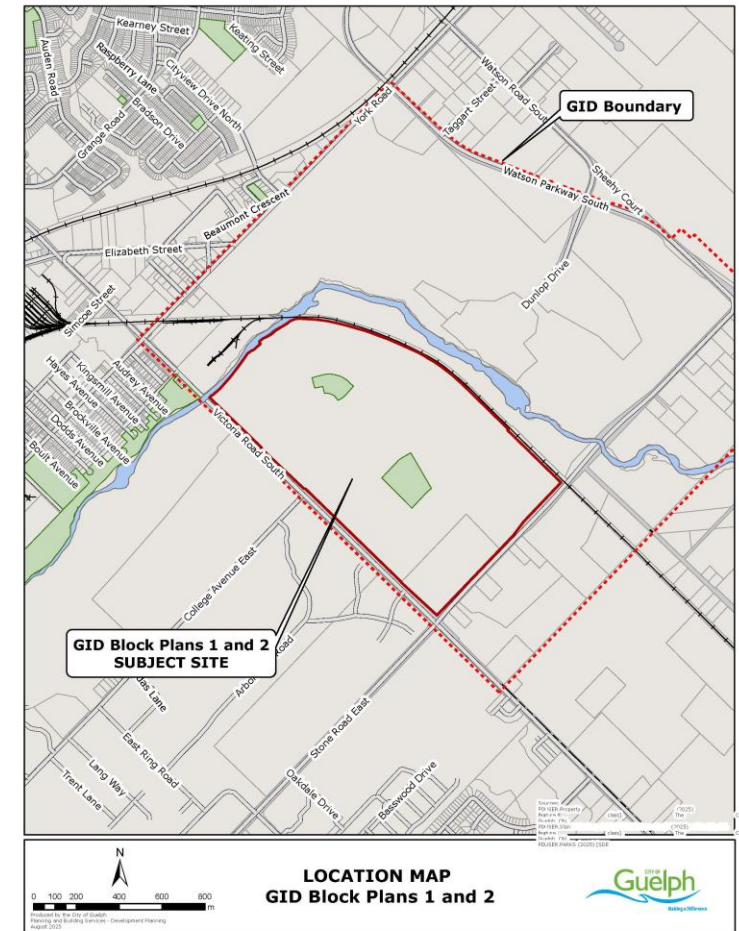
- Block Plans establish the pattern of development which ensures that development occurs in an orderly, cost effective and timely manner.
- Block Plan areas will also be used for the purpose of monitoring and ensuring achievement of population, employment and density targets as well as capital programming and land assembly.

# What do Block Plans Include?

- Block Plans are prepared in accordance with a Terms of Reference and include the following:
  - Road pattern;
  - Layout of development blocks, stormwater management ponds, and facilities;
  - Location, size and configuration of parks, open space and urban squares;
  - Density and distribution of housing types;
  - Architectural design controls;
  - Achievement of the population, employment and density targets;
  - Provision of municipal services;
  - Refinement of trail network and active transportation links;
  - River crossings;
  - Location of public views and vistas;
  - Evaluation of cultural heritage resources and methods of conservation;
  - Conformity with the built form and site development policies of the GID Secondary Plan; and
  - Conformity with the energy policies of the GID Secondary Plan.

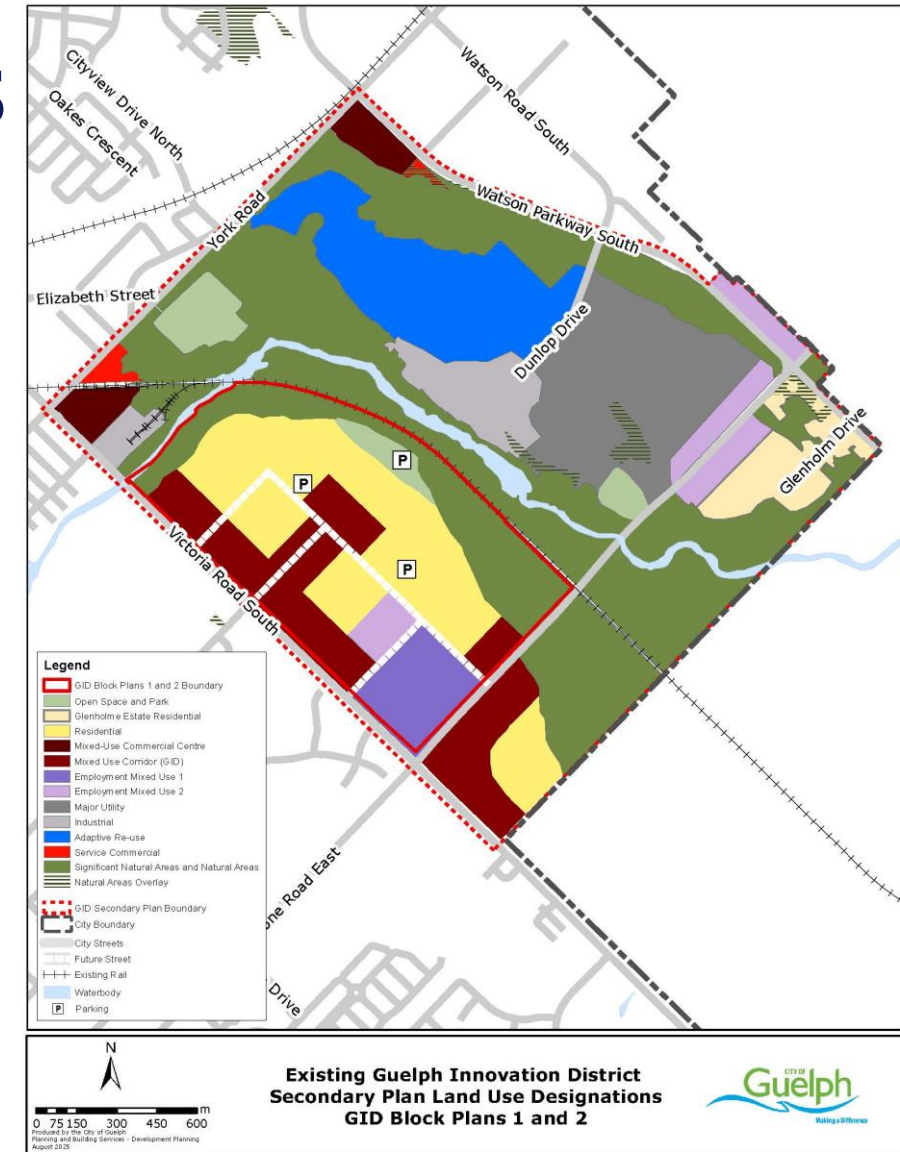
# Context of Block Plan Areas 1 & 2

- Blocks 1 & 2 are 116.6 hectares in size;
- 1,497 metres of frontage on Victoria Road South;
- 874 metres of frontage on Stone Road East



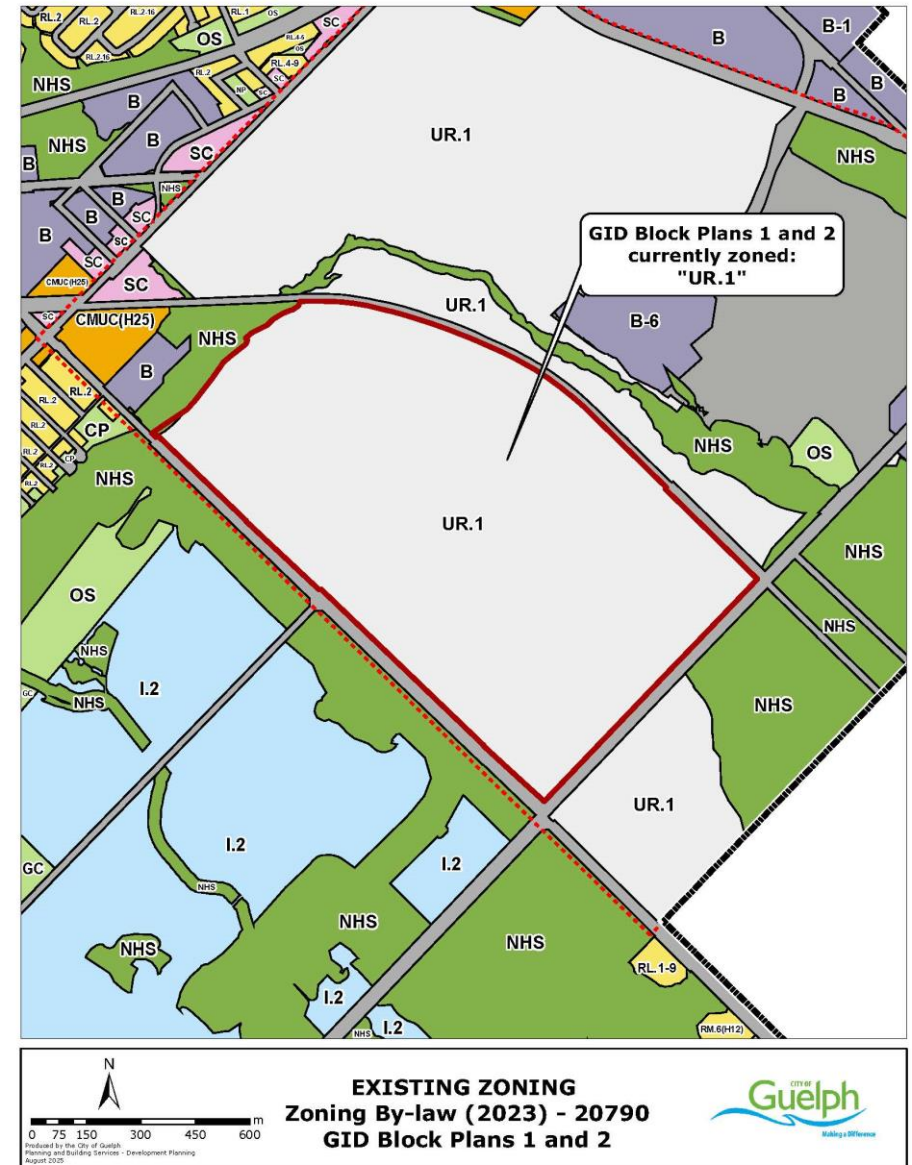
# Secondary Plan Designations

- A number of designations on Blocks 1 & 2, including designations specific to the GID Secondary Plan.
- Includes:
  - Open Space and Parks;
  - Residential;
  - Mixed-use Corridor (GID);
  - Employment Mixed-use 1;
  - Employment Mixed-use 2; and
  - Significant Natural Areas & Natural Areas.



# Existing Zoning

- Urban Reserve 1;
- Future Zoning By-law Amendment applications will be required to change the zoning.



# History of Staff Work on Blocks 1 & 2

- City staff have been working with the applicant on the Block Plan since 2023;
- First Terms of Reference submitted in October 2023, revised and then approved in April 2024;
- First Block Plan submission was in May 2024;
- Second Block Plan submission received in March 2025;
- Several scoped discussions and a larger discussion held in June 2025;
- Third technical submission received with all materials on July 25, 2025.



# Issues Identified by Staff

- Several issues continue to exist including:
  - Size of the Community Park;
  - Amount of Employment Mixed-use Land;
  - Location of the School Block;
  - Location of the G.M Frost Building;
  - Provision of a single-loaded road; and,
  - Design and sizing of Stormwater Management facilities.
- Staff are recommending to Council that they not endorse the applicant-submitted Block Plan but direct the applicant to make modifications that address these issues in order to receive endorsement.

# Size of Community Park

- The total parkland dedication requirement for the block plan is 7.7 ha
- The Official Plan requires Neighbourhood Parks to be minimum 1 ha, and Community Parks to be 10-20 ha
- Based on changes to the Planning Act parkland dedication rates, parks of these sizes are not feasible in GID
- To ensure community recreation needs are met, staff recommend one Community Park totaling 6.7 hectares and 1-3 Neighbourhood Parks totaling 1 hectare in the block plan
- The applicant submitted block plan includes a Community Park of 3.64 ha

# Configuration of Parkland

- Facility-fit plans were required to include:

## **Neighbourhood Park(s)**

- Playground
- Informal open space

## **Community Park**

- Cricket pitch with two overlapping soccer fields
- Four tennis courts
- Washroom and changeroom building
- Playground
- Picnic shelter
- Parking for 300 vehicles

- The applicant-submitted facility-fit plans demonstrated that:
  1. The Community Park is too small to fit the required amenities
  2. Two Neighbourhood Parks are too narrow to fit playgrounds
  3. One Neighbourhood Park includes the Frost Building, limiting the ability to program the park with typical park amenities

# Amount of Employment Mixed-Use Land

- Prior to provincial modifications to the GID Secondary Plan, there was 40 hectares of Employment Mixed-use land.
- Now, there is approximately 16.48 hectares.
- The applicant-submitted Block Plan would further reduce the amount of Employment Mixed-use land for employment uses to 5.3 hectares.

# Employment Vision, Principles, and Objectives of the GID Secondary Plan

- GID is to be the City's "innovation centre".
- The GID will "grow innovative employment opportunities that support the knowledge-based innovation sector."
- The GID will "accommodate a significant share of Guelph's employment growth."
- The Employment Mixed-use 1 designation "includes areas targeted for significant growth as a landmark area in the University-Downtown-GID trinity", made up of a mix of street-related and campus form development.

# Location of School Block

- Applicant-submitted Block Plan proposes to locate the required elementary school in the Employment Mixed-use 2 designation.
- Staff do not support using the entirety of this designation for an elementary school as it is not in keeping with the employment objectives of the GID Secondary Plan.
- Staff are recommending that Council direct the applicant to relocate the elementary school block to a Residential block within Block 1 & 2, in accordance with the Upper Grand District School Board's phasing and sizing requirements, in order to receive endorsement.

# Location of the G.M Frost Building

- On April 8, 2025, Heritage Planning staff brought a report forward recommending the G.M Frost Building for designation as it met the minimum criteria.
  - Council voted to defer designation of the G.M Frost Building until the Block Plan is presented to Council, but no later than March 31, 2026.
- The applicant-submitted Block Plan proposes a Neighbourhood Park where the G.M Frost Building is located.
- This implies that the G.M Frost Building and the costs of conservation, operation and maintenance would become the responsibility of the City.
- In addition, 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 Ontario Heritage Act as the tool to conserve the heritage building, rather than parkland dedication.

# Provision of a Single-Loaded Road

- 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 on the western side of Street G on the applicant-submitted Block Plan.
- A single-loaded road provides a public edge, opportunities for separated active transportation infrastructure, public views and vistas, and greater protection of the Eramosa River Valley.

# Stormwater Management Facilities

- Significant concerns relating to the three Stormwater Management (SWM) Facilities. Need 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 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.
- The current design strategy increases the number of structures within the SWM facilities, which increases the number of structures for the City to operate and maintain and complicates sediment management and cleanout logistics.

# Staff-recommended modifications

Staff are recommending that Council direct the applicant to make the following modifications in order to receive endorsement:

1. Revise the Block Plan to include a Community Park of 6.7 hectares in size.
2. Include 16.48 hectares of Employment Mixed-use land for employment uses within Block 1 & 2.
3. Locate the elementary school block in a Residential block within Block 1 & 2, in accordance with the Upper Grand District School Board's phasing and sizing requirements.
4. Revise the Block Plan so the G.M Frost Building is in a Residential block.
5. Include a single-loaded road by shifting Street G to the west.
6. Make any necessary revisions to the design and sizing of the stormwater management facilities.

# Next Steps

- City staff and the applicant have been working collaboratively but are now seeking Council direction on the key issues identified.
- If Council directs the Block Plan to be modified, the applicant would modify the Block Plan and come back to staff for final endorsement.
- If Council endorses the Block Plan as submitted, the applicant would then prepare and submit Planning Act development applications, as required, for specific areas in Blocks 1 & 2, in accordance with the Phasing Plan.
- If Council-directed modifications are made in a way that is not satisfactory to City staff, the Block Plan will come back to Council for final endorsement.

# Recommendations to Council

1. 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.
2. 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 Community Park of at least 6.7 hectares in size;
  - A minimum of 16.48 hectares of Employment Mixed-use land in GID Blocks 1 & 2;
  - 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
  - The Frost Building in a Residential Block;
  - A single-loaded road along the eastern edge of GID Blocks 1 and 2; and
  - Any revisions necessary to the stormwater management facilities to ensure adequate design and sizing, to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
3. 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.