

# Staff Report



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To	<b>City Council</b>
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, June 15, 2020
Subject	<b>Shaping Guelph Growth Management Strategy – Community Engagement and Growth Vision and Principles</b>

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## Recommendation

1. That the draft vision and principles for growth to 2041 contained within report number 2020-49 be endorsed for the purposes of guiding the development of the Shaping Guelph Growth Management Strategy.
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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of community engagement conducted as part of Shaping Guelph Growth Management Strategy to date. A draft vision and principles for growth to 2041 are provided for endorsement for the purposes of guiding the development of the strategy.

### Key Findings

To bring Guelph's Official Plan into conformity with A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019 (Growth Plan), it is necessary to determine where and how Guelph will grow to 2041. In October 2019, Council endorsed a process for the city's municipal comprehensive Official Plan review (MCR).

To help inform a vision and principles for growth for Guelph to 2041, several community engagement opportunities were provided in late 2019 and early 2020. These included:

- A statistically valid telephone survey of 600 residents of Guelph;
- Two online surveys asking about preferences for how and where Guelph should grow; and
- A speaker event and community engagement at "Guelph 2041: A conversation about a growing city" in February 2020.

It was clear from all of the community engagement conducted to date that there is a strong preference for growth to be contained within the city's current boundaries. There is also a preference for this growth to locate in already developed areas, such as downtown and within nodes and corridors, and at higher densities. Across all community engagement platforms, respondents ranked availability of housing; transportation infrastructure; and protection of the environment, especially protection of groundwater, as important considerations as Guelph grows.

The city's Official Plan includes a vision, strategic goals, and objectives for growth to 2031. The existing vision, goals, and objectives remain relevant and generally reflect the 2019 Growth Plan vision. Additionally, the community feedback that was received to date on the MCR confirms that, with a few adjustments, this current vision for growth will serve Guelph well going forward.

To plan for Guelph's 2041 forecast population and employment, the Growth Plan requirement to accommodate a minimum of 50% of new residential development within the city's built up area, and to reflect what was heard through community engagement about the priorities and challenges associated with this growth, adjustments are recommended to Guelph's vision and principles for growth to 2041.

A draft vision and principles for Guelph's growth to 2041 is recommended to be endorsed for the purposes of guiding the development of the 2041 growth management strategy and the MCR.

### **Financial Implications**

The MCR is funded through PL0054 approved capital budgets with anticipated costs associated with consultant services and community engagement.

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## **Report**

### **Background**

In May 2019 the Province released A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan). The City is required to bring its Official Plan into conformity with the Growth Plan by July 1, 2022 through a municipal comprehensive review (MCR) – a City-initiated amendment to its Official Plan that applies the policies and schedules of the Growth Plan.

To bring Guelph's Official Plan into conformity with the Growth Plan, it is necessary to determine where and how Guelph will grow to 2041. In October 2019, Council endorsed a process for the city's MCR. The MCR process includes several background studies that will be prepared in 2020 and 2021. These are:

- Confirmation of a vision and principles for growth to 2041
- Employment lands strategy
- A residential intensification analysis
- A housing analysis and strategy, and
- Growth scenario planning (based on a land needs assessment).

An overview of the scope of each of these studies was provided in report [IDE-2019-91](#).

### **Community engagement – vision and principles for growth**

To help inform a draft vision and principles for growth for Guelph to 2041, several community engagement opportunities were provided in late 2019 and early 2020.

#### **Ipsos telephone survey**

In December 2019, Ipsos, on behalf of the City, conducted a telephone survey of 600 residents to gauge their opinions, attitudes and preferences about Guelph's growth and growth management. Generally, residents are optimistic about growth in the city. They believe that population growth will mostly benefit the economy,

followed by benefitting them personally. Residents surveyed believe that the best approach for accommodating future growth and development is to build in already developed areas at higher densities to protect the most green space. Most residents see the availability of housing as a significant challenge for the city today and moving forward. Transportation infrastructure is also an issue of importance. Most residents feel that growth should be accommodated within the existing boundaries of the city. Half of residents surveyed feel that the city needs to do more to protect the environment, especially groundwater, air quality, and environmentally sensitive areas.

### **Online surveys**

From February 7 to March 8, 2020 two surveys were available through the city's [website](#). The first survey asked a series of questions about how Guelph should grow over the next 20 years and what challenges Guelph might face as we grow. The second survey focused on questions about where Guelph's future population and jobs should be located. This survey also asked about preferences for housing types. 598 responses were received in total on these two surveys.

Respondents felt strongly that a significant amount of housing would be needed to accommodate the city's population growth. There was a strong preference that new housing should be accommodated within the city's existing boundaries.

Respondents preferred that new housing be built in already developed areas, especially downtown and in nodes and corridors. They also felt that new housing should be in close proximity to transit. There was a strong preference that Guelph should grow more compactly and that most new housing should be built as apartments and townhouses to allow for more land for greenspace. However, when asked where the respondent would prefer to live in the future, the majority of respondents indicated that they would like to live in a single detached or semi-detached home. Respondents thought that the city could be doing more to protect the environment and were most concerned with the protection of Guelph's groundwater resources.

Respondents felt that job growth should be distributed throughout the city. Some cited this as a preference to reduce travel times between work and home. There was also a preference for manufacturing and warehousing jobs to continue to be located in the city's existing employment areas.

When asked about challenges the city might face as it grows, responses were many and varied. Common responses included:

- Housing that is affordable
- The availability of a range of housing types
- Adequate roads to accommodate a range of modes of transportation, including cars, bicycles, and pedestrians
- Increasing need for and pressure on health care facilities, especially the hospital
- Public safety, especially downtown, and
- Increasing homelessness and poverty.

While challenges, such as the increased need for health care facilities and increasing homelessness/poverty, will not be specifically addressed through growth management planning, the city is well positioned, together with its government and community partners, to continue to address these challenges as it grows.

## **Shaping Guelph – a conversation about a growing city event**

On February 27, 2020 the city hosted “Guelph 2041: A conversation about a growing city”. This event included talks and a panel discussion with Todd Salter, Guelph’s General Manager of Planning and Building Services/Chief Planner, Pamela Robinson, Director of the School of Urban and Regional Planning with Ryerson University, and Jennifer Keesmaat, head of the Keesmaat Group and previously Toronto’s Chief Planner. This event was attended by approximately 250 people. In addition to the talks and panel discussion, attendees were asked to provide input on priorities and locations for Guelph’s growth. The top priorities were:

- Grow “up” not “out”;
- Plan for climate change;
- Grow mostly in areas like downtown, along major streets and at major intersections; and
- Put places to live, work and play close together.

Overwhelmingly, attendees identified downtown Guelph as an area to accommodate growth. Some of the city’s existing intensification corridors and nodes were also identified as areas to accommodate growth.

It was clear from all of the community engagement that there is a strong preference for growth to be contained within the city’s current boundaries. There is also preference for this growth to locate in already developed areas, such as downtown and within nodes and corridors, at higher densities. Across all community engagement platforms it was clear that availability of housing; transportation infrastructure; and protection of the environment, especially protection of groundwater, are of utmost concern as Guelph grows. Many of these concerns are the same as those expressed through the city’s previous growth management process as the city planned for growth to 2031.

Attachment 1 provides an overview of the vision and principles community engagement.

## **Vision and principles for growth**

### **Growth Plan Vision**

The Growth Plan contains a [vision](#) for the growth of the Greater Golden Horseshoe to 2041. This vision is centered on:

- Supporting the achievement of complete communities
- Protecting employment zones
- Increasing the amount and variety of housing options
- Supporting modern, well-maintained, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure
- Providing a variety of effective and well-used choices for transportation
- A healthy natural environment with clean air, land, and water
- Cultural heritage resources and open spaces that provide people with a sense of place
- Urban centres that are vibrant and characterized by more compact development
- Development that supports climate change mitigation and adaptation
- A regional economy that will continue to mature into an economic powerhouse of global significance

## **Official Plan Vision and Goals**

Guelph's current Official Plan contains the following vision for growth to 2031:

"Guelph in 2031 will be a community of approximately 175,000 people and 92,000 jobs. The City will manage population growth within its current boundaries in a manner that ensures water supply and wastewater treatment are sustainable. New development will respect the existing character of Guelph and retain the qualities that set Guelph apart from its neighbours. The City will continue to diversify its employment base and will continue to be recognized as a leader in agri-food and innovation, advanced manufacturing and environmental technologies." (Official Plan Section 2.1, Toward 2031)

The Official Plan also includes the following strategic goals (Official Plan Section 2.2) for growth to 2031:

- Providing an adequate supply of lands for growth within our existing city limits
- Directing growth to strategic locations within our urban area
- Having a mix of land uses in strategic locations allowing for many people and jobs (density) that support frequent transit service
- Maintaining a healthy mix of residential and employment lands
- Supporting efficient growth
- Growing sustainably
- Protecting and enhancing our natural heritage system, and
- Protecting our water, energy, air quality, and cultural heritage resources

Over the last several years, to help achieve the current Official Plan vision, the city has developed several action plans and strategies, such as the Natural Heritage Action Plan, Urban Design Action Plan, and Affordable Housing Strategy. The city is also working to implement this vision through the development of a Cultural Heritage Action Plan and a new zoning bylaw. Work continues on implementing these action plans and the policies of the Official Plan.

The current Official Plan vision was developed as part of the city's work to conform to the 2006 Growth Plan. The Official Plan existing vision is generally consistent with the 2019 Growth Plan vision. Additionally, the community feedback that we received on a vision for growth to 2041 confirms that, with a few adjustments, the current vision for growth is working well and will continue to serve Guelph well for managing its growth into 2041.

The Growth Plan requires that the city plan for a population of 191,000 people and an employment base of 101,000 jobs in 2041. Additionally, the Growth Plan requires that the city plan for a minimum intensification target of 50% within its built up area. To plan for this, and to reflect what was heard through community engagement about the priorities and challenges associated with this growth, adjustments are recommended to Guelph's vision and principles for growth to 2041.

### **A vision and principles for growth to 2041**

It is recommended that the following draft vision and principles be endorsed for the purposes of guiding the development of the growth management strategy and MCR.

The following is the foundational vision for managing Guelph's growth to 2041 to align with a Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019):

Guelph in 2041 is a place of community. Guelph is a diverse community that is rich in history and vibrant new places and spaces. We are welcoming to new people to live and work within our neighbourhoods and to new businesses that support and strengthen our diverse and innovative local economy. Our community has a full range and mix of housing that is accessible and affordable. We have built a community where we can safely walk, cycle, ride transit, or drive anywhere we want to go. Our city has been thoughtfully designed and is compact, connected, and complete. We have places to shop, to work and to explore open spaces and parks. Our cultural heritage resources have been embraced and celebrated. Our natural heritage system and water resources are protected and maintained as one of our most valuable assets.

The Official Plan sets out how we will manage Guelph's land use patterns that shape the city's social, economic, cultural, and natural environments. The Official Plan is a companion to the city's Community Plan – a plan that identifies the community's priorities to develop a welcoming and prosperous city. Together, the Official Plan and Community Plan create a strong foundation that will guide the future of Guelph.

In 2041, our Guelph is a place we are proud to call home. We are proud because we have worked together to shape its future.

The following are foundational principles that provide guidance for Guelph's growth management strategy and Official Plan policies that achieve the vision for Guelph and conforms to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019).

- Accommodating new people and jobs, as forecast by A Place to Grow, within Guelph's existing city boundaries by:
  - Intensifying throughout the built-up area, with higher densities within Downtown and strategic growth areas; and
  - Planning to meet the minimum density target in the designated greenfield area;
- Creating a vibrant community in a compact and efficient form;
- Planning for a full range of land uses to support community needs in a sustainable and fiscally responsible way;
- Maintaining a sufficient supply of lands for innovative employment uses and to meet projected employment needs;
- Supporting a range and mix of housing options that includes increasing the supply of housing options that are affordable;
- Providing a complete multi-modal transportation system to meet our individual needs and abilities;
- Ensuring an accessible, connected open space, park and trail system and sustainable network of recreational facilities;
- Ensuring servicing, including water, wastewater, and stormwater, are adequate to support Guelph's growth;
- Protecting, conserving, and enhancing our natural heritage system and groundwater resources;
- Preparing Guelph for a net-zero carbon future;

- Adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change;
- Embracing, celebrating and conserving cultural heritage; and
- Planning and designing an attractive urban landscape that reinforces and enhances Guelph's sense of place and identity while encouraging innovative design and development opportunities.

The draft vision and principles will be refined through the MCR process with the final vision and principles being brought to Council for approval with the MCR Official Plan amendment at the conclusion of this study.

### **Next Steps**

Using the draft vision and principles for growth outlined in this report, work will begin on the MCR background studies. Community engagement on several of the background studies is anticipated throughout the remainder of 2020 and early 2021.

### **Financial Implications**

The MCR is funded through PL0054 approved capital budgets with anticipated costs associated with consultant services and community engagement.

### **Consultations**

The following community engagement activities have been completed to date:

- Ipsos telephone survey – December 2019;
- Online surveys – February/March 2020; and
- Guelph2041: A Conversation about a Growing City – February 27, 2020.

A summary of the community engagement that has occurred to date is outlined earlier in this report. Additional community engagement will occur together with the background studies throughout the remainder of 2020 and early 2021.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment**

The MCR aligns with the following priorities within the Strategic Plan:

Powering our future – the draft vision and principles for growth to 2041 recognizes the importance of a healthy supply of employment lands and ones that support innovative employment uses.

Sustaining our future – the draft vision and principles for growth to 2041 prioritizes the protection, conservation, and restoration of the city's natural heritage system. It also recognizes the city's role in responding to climate change and preparing for Guelph as a net-zero carbon future

Navigating our future – the draft vision and principles for growth to 2041 recognizes the importance of connecting existing and future neighbourhoods with all modes of transportation

Building our future – the draft vision and principles for growth to 2041 is centered on welcoming and making space for our future neighbours.

### **Attachments**

Attachment-1 June 15, 2020 Council Presentation

Attachment-2 Shaping Guelph: Guelph Growth Management Strategy Vision and Principles for Growth Community Engagement Summary

## **Departmental Approval**

N/A

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