

Mayor Guthrie and Members of Council:

Guelph is a groundwater dependent community. Our absolute growth is limited by this reality, as well as the ability of our rivers to absorb wastewater effluent.

What is the maximum population that Guelph can accommodate given these limitations? What do we want the City to look like once we hit that cap?

Do we want a "swiss cheese" City where key pockets within the built-up area are left undeveloped, while yet more greenfield areas have been urbanized? Or do we want a compact City that maximizes existing infrastructure and preserves greenspace?

This needs to be the starting point for our Growth Plan. Then work backward from there.

There are multiple sites within the City which have yet to be fully built out:

- the Downtown Secondary Plan
- IMICO
- the Innovation District
- the Lafarge lands
- key nodes and corridors

In addition, the possibility that the Dolime Quarry lands may become available for housing within the City boundaries has recently come into play.

There have also been some interesting proposals coming forward for intensification and redevelopment on commercial plazas.

Let's do the math. If all these sites are built out, where will that put us population-wise? Will that population put us at, or over our cap, or will we still have room/need for some greenfield development?

Our natural limits need to be the key framework for our Growth Management Strategy and that will help to determine our priorities.

The first key principle needs to be amended:

***"Grow within our existing boundaries."***

This needs to be amended to:

***"Grow within built up areas."***

This principle was clearly expressed by citizens in both the telephone survey and online survey. In fact, less than one in ten phone survey respondents wanted more single detached housing and only 8% of online survey respondents thought the City should build more single-detached housing to accommodate growth.

One weakness of the public engagement to date is that it skews to an older demographic and to people who are owners of single-detached housing. Under this scenario, it is not surprising that this group

expressed a preference for living in detached housing, even though they clearly see the need for more compact development.

How can the City reach a younger demographic? These are the people who will be driving home purchases and looking for housing in the future. Millennials are not necessarily interested in car or home ownership. It would be important to get more concrete data in this regard. Perhaps the University might be willing to participate in a survey of their students.

The values and preferences of future generations should be a key factor in shaping our growth.

Sincerely,  
Susan Watson