

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date	Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Subject	Official Plan Update – Phase 1 Official Plan Amendment Decision Report

Recommendation

1. That the City-initiated Official Plan Amendment Number 110 to update the Official Plan be approved in accordance with Attachment-1 of Report 2026-40, dated February 10, 2026.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to present the final recommended Official Plan Amendment Number 110 (“OPA 110”) as Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update. Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update, titled “Laying the Groundwork”, includes provincial changes to the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act, and the new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (“PPS, 2024”) that do not require supporting work or further studies. In addition, staff are also proposing select amendments to implement the Transportation Master Plan (2022), the Parks Plan (2022), and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2023). Staff are recommending the approval of OPA 110.

Key Findings

In July 2022, City of Guelph Council adopted its last comprehensive review of the Official Plan (known as OPA 80) which was approved effective April 11, 2023, with modifications by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, taking effect on May 16, 2024.

Since OPA 80, a number of changes have been made to the planning policy framework in the Province of Ontario and the City of Guelph. The Planning Act and Ontario Heritage Act have been amended through various pieces of legislation including, but not limited to, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23), the Planning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023 (Bill 150), Get It Done Act, 2024 (Bill 162), Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 (Bill 97), Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024 (Bill 185), Homeowner Protection Act, 2024 (Bill 200), and Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 (Bill 17).

Additionally, in October 2024, the Province of Ontario released a new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS, 2024) which is a province-wide land use planning policy framework that replaces both the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A

Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020. All planning decisions must be consistent with the PPS, 2024.

Finally, since the adoption of OPA 80 by City Council, a number of City master plans have been approved and are now in place. The Official Plan must be updated to implement recommendations from those master plans, especially the Transportation Master Plan (2022), the Parks Plan (2022) and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2023).

Therefore, the scope of Phase 1 is to propose and implement amendments to address provincial policy changes and Council-approved recommendations from the above-mentioned master plans.

Since the Statutory Public Meeting on October 15, 2025, and following further engagement opportunities in November 2025, staff have made minor changes to OPA 110 to address comments received and correct any errors or omissions from the previous draft. As only a few varied comments were received since the Statutory Public Meeting, staff have not prepared a separate comment and response matrix. Instead, comments received have been addressed directly in the body of this staff report.

Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update is not proposing site-specific changes to land use designations or zoning. The Official Plan will continue to use the Growth Management Strategy in OPA 80, adopted by City Council on July 11, 2022 and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on April 11, 2023.

Next steps for the Official Plan Update are to move to Phase 2 which will focus on the themes of Transportation and Employment.

City staff do continue to monitor provincial legislative changes and consultations that may have an impact on the Official Plan Update, in particular [ERO 025-1099](#), consultation on simplifying and standardizing official plans. As a decision on this consultation has not yet been posted, City staff are recommending that the Official Plan Update work continue. City staff will report back to Council if these changes affect the delivery of Phase 2 or other future phases.

Strategic Plan Alignment

This report and the final recommended OPA 110 (Attachment-1) support the Future Guelph theme of City Building, the Future Guelph objective of Improving Housing Supply, with the supporting action of implementing direction from the Province on Bill 23 and other legislation. Updating our Official Plan to have regard for provincial matters and to be consistent with the PPS, 2024 provides certainty for the community on the City's planning policy framework, given the number of recent provincial changes.

Future Guelph Theme

City Building

Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Improve housing supply

Financial Implications

As Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update is mostly administrative and aligns with provincial and existing municipal policy direction, no financial implications are

expected as a result of this update. As the Official Plan Update moves forward into later phases, any anticipated financial implications will be identified in future staff reports.

Report

In July 2022, City of Guelph Council adopted its last comprehensive review of the Official Plan (known as OPA 80). Since OPA 80, a number of changes have been made to the planning policy framework in the Province of Ontario that affect the City of Guelph.

Various provincial legislative changes have also been made since OPA 80. This includes, but is not limited to, the following bills:

- [Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022](#);
- [Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023](#);
- [Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024](#);
- [Bill 200, Homeowner Protection Act, 2024](#); and
- [Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025](#).

These legislative changes affected the Planning Act, 1990 and the Ontario Heritage Act, among others.

Additionally, in October 2024, a new Provincial Planning Statement came into full force and effect. [The Provincial Planning Statement \(PPS, 2024\)](#) is a province-wide land use planning policy framework that replaces both the [Provincial Policy Statement, 2020](#) and [A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020](#) (on which OPA 80 was predicated). The PPS, 2024 provides policy direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS, 2024 continues to recognize municipal official plans as the most important vehicle for implementing the PPS, 2024 and for achieving comprehensive, integrated, and long-term planning. The PPS, 2024 requires that all land use planning decisions be consistent with the PPS, 2024.

Finally, since the adoption of OPA 80 by Council, a number of City master plans have been approved and are now in place.

City staff have been working through what is expected to be a multi-phase update to the City of Guelph Official Plan. The first phase of this update, titled "Laying the Groundwork" proposes various amendments to:

- have regard for recent changes to the Planning Act & the Ontario Heritage Act;
- be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024; and
- implement the following Council-approved master plans: the [Transportation Master Plan \(2022\)](#), [the Parks Plan \(2022\)](#), and [the Parks and Recreation Master Plan \(2023\)](#).

On October 15, 2025, the City of Guelph held a Statutory Public Meeting for [draft Official Plan Amendment 110 \("OPA 110"\)](#). Since the Statutory Public Meeting, City staff have held further engagement opportunities for comments to be made on draft OPA 110. Comments have been received and as a result, staff have made minor changes to OPA 110.

As only a few varied comments were received since the Statutory Public Meeting, staff have not prepared a separate comment and response matrix. Instead, comments received have been addressed directly in the body of this staff report.

The next sections of the staff report describe changes made to draft OPA 110 since the Statutory Public Meeting.

Cultural Heritage

Following motions from the Heritage Advisory Committee, City staff have made the following changes:

- Including a proposed policy objective on “Adaptive Reuse” in the City of Guelph Official Plan as Item Number 44 of OPA 110. This policy objective is consistent with the definition of “Adaptive Re-use” from the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan.
- Revising the proposed definition for “Heritage Conservation District” in Item Number 186 of OPA 110 to clarify that properties listed within a Heritage Conservation District are designated on the City’s Heritage Register.

The Heritage Advisory Committee also approved a motion that the term “early engagement” in Item 4 of OPA 110 be clearly defined. This will be looked at through a future Indigenous Engagement project as part of the Official Plan Update. Please see the “Complete Community” section of this staff report for more information.

Employment

No substantial changes have been made to policies under this theme from draft OPA 110. Employment will be one of the two focuses for Phase 2 of the Official Plan Update. In particular, staff will focus on understanding the effects of provincial changes to the definition of an “Employment Area/Area of Employment”, our employment land needs, our ability to achieve our jobs target of 116,000 jobs by 2051, and will recommend to Council additional policy changes following further detailed study.

Environment

No substantial changes have been made to policies under this theme from draft OPA 110. The City is planning to undertake a review of its Natural Heritage System policies as part of a future phase of the Official Plan Update.

Complete Community

No substantial changes have been made to policies under this theme from draft OPA 110. Following engagement with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (“MCFN”) and Six Nations of the Grand River (“SNGR”), City staff have committed to undertaking an Indigenous Engagement project as part of a future phase of the Official Plan Update. This project will begin no later than 2028, contingent on City budget and Council direction. As the Official Plan Update continues, City staff will share more information on this project.

Supporting Growth

Following a motion from the Planning, Environment and Water Advisory Committee to strengthen the policy language on settlement area boundary expansions, City staff have made a minor change to Item Number 12 of OPA 110.

Transportation

Following internal discussions, City staff have made several revisions to proposed Schedule 5: Road & Rail Network from the draft to better implement the street hierarchy in the Transportation Master Plan. These changes include:

- Labelling Woodlawn Road east of Victoria Road North as a Collector Road;
- Labelling Eastview Road east of Victoria Road North as an Arterial Road;
- Labelling Arthur Street North as an Existing Collector;
- Labelling Silvercreek Parkway North, south of Willow Road and north of the rail tracks as an Existing Collector;
- Including a “Recommended Grade Separation” symbol on Edinburgh Road North where it crosses the rail tracks;
- Labelling York Road, Watson Parkway South, and Victoria Road North where they intersect with the Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan as Arterial Roads;
- Removing a “Full Interchange” symbol at the intersection of Highway 6 and Stone Road West;
- Labelling Scottsdale Drive from Stone Road West to Kortright Road West as an Arterial Road;
- Labelling Kortright Road East as a Collector Road;
- Labelling Lowes Road East as a Local Road;
- Labelling Laird Road, west of Highway 6 as an Arterial Road;
- Labelling Southgate Drive, south of Laird Road as a Collector Road and an Approved Collector Road;
- Labelling Poppy Drive as a Collector Road;
- Removing a “Full Interchange” symbol at the intersection of Highway 6 and Maltby Road/Concession Road 7 and adding a “Proposed Road Closure” symbol between Highway 6 and Maltby Road/Concession Road 7; and
- Labelling Maltby Road as a Collector Road and an Approved Arterial Road to recognize its current status and its future status as per the Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan;

Each of these changes are to align with the Council-approved Transportation Master Plan. Transportation will be the other focus of Phase 2 of the Official Plan Update. In particular, in Phase 2, staff will focus on implementing the remainder of the Official Plan policy recommendations from the Transportation Master Plan (2022).

Parks

City staff have made a minor change to Item Number 145 of OPA 110 and specifically Policy 7.3.5.6 vi) in response to a comment received. Staff have clarified that parcels of land where the sole function is for trails or active transportation connections are not acceptable as parkland dedication. This is consistent with the parkland dedication criteria in the 2022 Park Plan.

Structure of the Amendment

To improve readability, the final recommended amendment is presented in a table format in Attachment-1. Attachment-1 is made up of three (3) tables: Amendments to Policy, Amendments to Definitions, and text descriptions of Amendments to Mapping. Sections of the Official Plan that are proposed to be added or changed are referred to as items in the three tables.

For accessibility purposes, text that is proposed to be amended has the strong (or bold) styling applied. All other unmodified (i.e. not strong or bold) text represents existing Official Plan policy that is being carried forward and which has been included for context and does not constitute part of the amendment. In the third column of the first two tables, titled "Current Policy" for Table 1 or "Current Definition" for Table 2, text proposed for removal has had the strong style applied to it. In the fourth column of the tables, titled "Final Amendment" for both Table 1 and Table 2, text proposed for addition has had the strong style applied to it.

Italics are used in the Official Plan to indicate that a term is defined within the document; for accessibility purposes, italics are not used in Attachment-1. However, the absence of italics to depict existing defined terms or terms proposed to be defined through this amendment does not remove the effect of these terms being defined or proposed to be defined. Terms proposed to be defined through this amendment have been specifically noted in the fifth column of the first two tables, titled "Staff Comments". Unless otherwise noted, terms that are already defined will use the definitions already included in the glossary. The fifth column of the first two tables, titled "Staff Comments", also note terms that are proposed to no longer be defined through this amendment. Text descriptions of amendments proposed to mapping are located within the third table of Attachment-1 and are in plain text with normal styling.

Financial Implications

As Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update is mostly administrative and aligns with provincial and existing municipal policy direction, no financial implications are expected as a result of this update. As the Official Plan Update moves forward into later phases, any anticipated financial implications will be identified in future staff reports.

Consultations and Engagement

There have been a number of public engagement touchpoints since this project was initiated. This includes a presentation to the Guelph-Wellington Developers Association and Guelph & District Homebuilders Association on May 7, 2025, a presentation to the Heritage Advisory Committee on July 3, 2025 an in-person Information Session and a virtual Information Session on July 7 and July 8, 2025 respectively, and a presentation to the Planning, Environment and Water Advisory Committee on September 8, 2025. In addition, a [HaveYourSay page](#) was also created and launched in June 2025 where materials have been posted. Materials presented focused on the scope of this phase of the Official Plan Update and the themes of this update.

The Notice of Public Meeting was mailed to local boards and agencies and City service areas on September 17, 2025. Notice of the Public Meeting was advertised in Guelph Today (City Information section) on September 24, 2025, and on the City's website. The Statutory Public Meeting was held on October 15, 2025. No delegates spoke to the draft amendment and no written correspondence was received.

On November 6, 2025, City staff [presented draft OPA 110 to the Heritage Advisory Committee](#) for comment. Overall minor comments were received that have been addressed. Please see the "Cultural Heritage" section of this staff report for more information.

On November 10, 2025, City staff [presented draft OPA 110 to the Planning, Environment, and Water Advisory Committee](#) for comment. One minor comment was received that has been addressed. Please see the "Supporting Growth" section of this staff report for more information.

The project's HaveYourSay page hosted a commenting forum from October 16, 2025 to November 14, 2025, on draft OPA 110. One comment was received. This comment was questioning the need to include Item Number 12 as it is already captured in PPS 2.3.2.1 and 2.3.2.2, the entire City of Guelph is within a settlement area, the policy may cause confusion about the potential to expand the corporate boundary, and that the Province is consulting on simplifying and standardizing official plans through [ERO 025-1099](#).

City staff continue to recommend that Item Number 12 and related new Policy 3.4.8 be included in OPA 110. As per the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024: "municipal official plans are the most important vehicle for implementation of the Provincial Planning Statement and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning." This includes the implementation of Provincial Planning Statement policy. Furthermore, City staff believe that proposed Policy 3.4.8 clearly states that growth within the current City of Guelph boundaries has been planned to the year 2051, which is the current planning horizon of the City of Guelph Official Plan. This policy does not undermine the infrastructure capacity constraints of the City of Guelph as proposed Policy 3.4.8 b) states that sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure would need to be presented for a change to the boundary to proceed.

City staff are aware of ERO 025-1099 and have [made comments](#) to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. City staff will continue to monitor legislative or regulatory changes that may impact the Official Plan Update. As a decision on ERO 025-1099 has not yet been posted, City staff are recommending that the Official Plan Update work continue. City staff will report back to Council if these changes affect the delivery of Phase 2 or other future phases.

City staff have received numerous comments from residents about utilizing this phase of the Official Plan Update to re-designate and re-zone the former Frank Kortright Waterfowl Park (hereinafter referred to as "the Niska Lands") to an Open Space designation and zone. The portion of the Niska Lands north of Niska Road are currently designated as "Open Space and Park" and "Significant Natural Areas & Natural Areas" in the City of Guelph Official Plan and zoned as "Open Space" and "Natural Heritage System" in the City of Guelph Comprehensive Zoning By-law. The portion of the Niska Lands south of Niska Road and bounded by Pioneer Trail and Ptarmigan Drive are designated as "Medium Density Residential" and "Significant Natural Areas & Natural Areas" in the City of Guelph Official Plan and split zoned as "Medium Density Residential 6 with a Holding Provision", "Low Density Residential 6 with a Holding Provision", and "Natural Heritage System" in the City of Guelph Comprehensive Zoning By-law. The entirety of the Niska Lands are currently managed by the Grand River Conservation Authority.

Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update has not proposed any site-specific land use changes on the Niska Lands or anywhere else in the city of Guelph. The purpose of Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update is to propose amendments to have regard for recent changes to the Planning Act & the Ontario Heritage Act, to be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, and to implement the following Council-

approved master plans: the Transportation Master Plan (2022), the Parks Plan (2022), and the Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2023). The City of Guelph Official Plan continues to utilize the Growth Management Strategy in Official Plan Amendment 80 ("OPA 80"), as adopted by City Council in July 2022 and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in April 2023, to guide changes to specific land use designations. As staff have not conducted site-specific land use research and analysis as part of Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update, City staff continue to recommend that it would be inappropriate to use OPA 110 to make any site-specific land use changes in the City of Guelph.

City staff did receive one additional comment on the Parks theme besides those regarding the Niska Lands via email. Please see the "Parks" section of this staff report for more information.

City staff have also been engaging with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River. As part of this engagement, City staff have committed to undertaking an Indigenous Engagement project as part of a future phase of the Official Plan Update. This project will begin no later than 2028, contingent on Council direction and budget as needed for the project. As the Official Plan Update continues, City staff will share more information on this project.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Final Recommended Official Plan Amendment Number 110

Departmental Approval

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