

# Staff Report



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To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Environment
Date	Wednesday, April 15, 2026
Subject	<b>Recommendation Report – Site Plan Control By-law and Delegated Authority for Planning Updates – 2026-106</b>

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## Recommendation

1. That the Recommendation Report – Site Plan Control By-law and Delegated Authority for Planning Updates be received.
  2. That a by-law to establish site plan control, and to delegate authority with respect to the approval of site plans within the City of Guelph, and to repeal the Site Plan By-law (1986) – 12024, as amended, as shown in Attachment-1, be approved.
  3. That the amendment to the Delegation of Authority by-law Number (2024)-20994, as shown in Attachment-2, be approved.
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## Executive Summary

### Purpose of Report

This report recommends a new Site Plan Control By-law to reflect changes in the site plan approval process resulting from Provincial legislative changes (Bill 23, 97, 185).

This report also delegates authority to the Deputy CAO, Infrastructure, Development and Environment and the General Manager of Planning and Building Services to approve an extension of draft plan approval for draft plans of subdivisions and condominiums, and amends the authority to include the explicit approval of drawings and plans for planning applications. It will add delegated authority to the General Manager of Planning and Building Services and General Manager of Economic Development and Tourism to amend the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan to make minor administrative adjustments.

### Key Findings

Planning staff are consistently making process improvements to support the delivery of housing and to be in conformity with changes in the provincial planning framework. Through a new Site Plan Control By-law and amendments to the Delegated Authority By-law, staff aim to streamline approval processes, reduce staff time demands, and eliminate unnecessary reports.

## Strategic Plan Alignment

This report aligns with the priority of Improve housing supply in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

### Future Guelph Theme

City Building

### Future Guelph Objectives

City Building: Improve housing supply

### Financial Implications

None.

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## Report

### Site Plan Control

#### Background

Site Plan control is a municipal planning tool under the Planning Act to guide and regulate development. This tool is used to ensure that new developments meet quality benchmarks, have access to water and wastewater services, adequate parking, mitigate environmental impacts and prevent new developments from having negative impacts on neighbouring properties. In combination with other municipal planning tools such as official plans and zoning by-laws, site plan control ensures development is safe, functional and well designed.

#### Bill 23 – More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, introduced several changes to the Planning Act, which included limiting the scope of site plan control for municipalities. These changes included:

- Exempting site plan control for a residential development of 10 units or less
- Reducing the ability to evaluate exterior design

#### Bill 97 – Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023

Through Bill 97, the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023*, further amendments were made to the Planning Act. Notably, it re-introduced site plan control for residential development of 10 units or less in a **prescribed area** as described in Ontario Regulation 254/23.

A **prescribed area** under Ontario Regulation 254/23 is:

- Any area that is within 300 metres of a railway line, subject to restrictions
- Any area that is within 120 metres of:
  - A wetland
  - The shoreline of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River System,
  - An inland lake, or
  - A river or stream valley that has depressional features associated with a river or stream, whether or not it contains a watercourse.

## **Bill 185 – Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024**

Bill 185, the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024*, exempted certain classes of post-secondary institutions from the requirements Planning Act, including Site Plan Approval for housing projects. These classes of post-secondary institutions include publicly assisted universities, as well as colleges and universities federated or affiliated with a publicly assisted university. It also expanded the scope of lapsing provisions in the Planning Act for site plan control and subdivision control.

### **Summary**

The changes made in Bills 23, 97 and 185 were intended to accelerate the delivery of housing across Ontario, but they further limited municipalities' ability to regulate development through site plan control. In response to the updates made to the provincial planning framework since 2022, a new Site Plan Control By-law is required to ensure conformity with these changes and to strengthen the City's ability to guide and regulate development.

To align with the requirements of these Bills and in accordance with provincial direction, staff recommend repealing the existing Site Plan Control By-laws and replacing it with By-law (2026)-21217.

### **Delegated Authority By-law**

Planning staff are consistently seeking improvements to internal business processes and streamlining development where possible. Through the processing of development review applications and the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP), staff have identified minor amendments to the Delegated Authority By-law, (2024)-20994, as amended, which would improve these processes.

Staff are proposing updates to the list of approval instruments that the Deputy CAO, Infrastructure, Development and Environment (DCAO), and the General Manager, Planning and Building Services (GM Planning) are authorized to approve and execute. These updates would expand their authority to explicitly include drawings and plans, better reflecting the full range of planning approvals.

In addition, staff recommend granting the DCAO, IDE and General Manager, Planning and Building Services the authority to approve extensions to draft plan approvals. This change would reduce staff time spent processing extension requests and streamline approvals outside of the Council cycle. No changes are proposed for granting draft plan approval itself, as that will remain a decision of Council.

Finally, staff are requesting amendments that would allow the General Manager, Planning and Building Services and the General Manager, Economic Development and Tourism, to make minor administrative adjustments to the Affordable Housing CIP. This approach aligns with other planning documents where Council approval is not required for technical or administrative updates.

### **Financial Implications**

None.

### **Consultations and Engagement**

None.

## **Attachments**

Attachment-1 Proposed Site Plan Control By-law (2026) – 21217

Attachment-2 Proposed By-law to amend the Delegated Authority By-law, being By-law (2026) – 21218

## **Departmental Approval**

None.

## **Report Author**

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## **This report was approved by:**

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## **This report was recommended by:**

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