



Hamilton

# INFORMATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members City Council
<b>DATE:</b>	April 30, 2019
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	GRIDS and Elfrida Growth Area Study (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Jason Thorne General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

The purpose of this Information Update is to respond to requests for information arising from the Planning Committee meeting of March 19, 2019 and the General Issues Committee meeting of March 20, 2019. These information requests related, in general, to the Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS) adopted in 2006, the on-going update to GRIDS, known as GRIDS2, and the on-going Elfrida Growth Area Study.

## Background – GRIDS and the identification of Elfrida

The Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS) was adopted in 2006 and was an integrated planning process that identified a broad land use structure, associated infrastructure, economic development strategy and financial implications for growth options to serve Hamilton for 25 years (to the year 2031).

The adoption of GRIDS in 2006 was the culmination of a three year process which involved significant public engagement, stakeholder consultation, and inter-departmental staff input. The GRIDS process started with the identification of a series of growth concepts (“how” the City would grow) which, through evaluation and review, were refined into five growth options. The five growth options were geographic based (“where” the City would grow). Stakeholder, public and technical review of the growth options resulted in the identification of the preferred growth option – “Nodes and Corridors”. The preferred growth option was based on accommodating an additional 80,000 dwelling units by the year 2031, distributed as follows:

- 31,900 units would be accommodated on vacant lands within the existing urban boundary;

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- 26,500 units would be accommodated through residential intensification within the existing built-up area; and,
- 21,600 units would be accommodated through a future urban boundary expansion area.

The preferred growth option formed the basis of the City's urban structure in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP), and identified two future urban boundary expansion areas - one for employment (AEGD) and one for non-employment (Elfrida) land uses.

The Elfrida Study Area was included as a special policy area in the Rural Hamilton Official Plan (RHOP) adopted by Council on September 27, 2006. This special policy area outlined a process and studies required to incorporate the lands into the urban boundary. When the RHOP was approved by the Province on December 24, 2008, the Province removed the special policy area. This deletion was appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) (formerly the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB)) by land owners in the area.

The UHOP, adopted July 9, 2009, included a more general set of policies that addressed urban boundary expansion, and a policy reference to Elfrida as a future growth area. When the UHOP was approved, the Province again removed the reference to Elfrida as a growth area; however, the general policies addressing urban boundary expansions were left in the Plan. The modification that removed the references to Elfrida was appealed to the LPAT by the City and land owners in the area.

At the time of finalization of the RHOP and UHOP, a strategic decision was made not to expand the urban boundary for either the AEGD or the Elfrida area. The decision not to proceed with an urban boundary expansion for the employment lands (AEGD) or non-employment lands (Elfrida) through the adoption of the RHOP / UHOP was to allow for the completion of a Secondary Plan (and associated technical studies) prior to the lands being added to the urban boundary. Completing the Secondary Plan prior to adding the lands to the urban boundary ensures that a land use planning framework is in place to guide future development in the area. This approach avoids the potential for multiple non-decision appeals of future development planning applications resulting in the area being primarily planned by LPAT decisions or settlements rather than through a public process.

Both the RHOP and the UHOP appeals relating to the identification of the Elfrida area are still before the LPAT. Settlement discussions between parties to the appeals have been attempted but have been unsuccessful to date. Recently, the City brought forward a motion for direction regarding the interpretation of Transition Regulation (Reg 311/06) to the Provincial Growth Plan, 2017. The motion was seeking direction on which Growth Plan (2006 or 2017) would apply to the resolution of the outstanding appeals. The City's position is that the 2017 Growth Plan should apply. The motion hearing was held on October 25 and 26, 2018. To date, no decision has been released and the

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appeal proceedings are on hold until a decision is released and any appeals of that decision are concluded.

However, while the policies relating to the identification of the Elfrida area are still under appeal, the Provincial Growth Plan and the general urban boundary expansion policies in the UHOP (Section B.2.2, Volume 1) set out the requirements for a future urban boundary expansion to move forward. These policies require completion of a number of studies (eg. sub-watershed study, environmental impact assessment, agricultural impact assessment, servicing study, financing policy and land budget analysis), which must be completed as part of a municipally initiated comprehensive review and secondary plan prior to an urban boundary expansion occurring.

### GRIDS 2 and the Municipal Comprehensive Review

The City is undertaking an update to GRIDS, which planned to the year 2031, known as GRIDS 2, which will plan for the next 10 years of growth between 2031 and 2041. The forecasts for Hamilton project an increase of 40,000 jobs and 100,000 people between 2031 and 2041. As such, GRIDS must be updated to allocate the additional jobs and persons beyond 2031 (to 2041) and to determine the impact on the Infrastructure Master Plans and Development Charges By-law. A municipal comprehensive review (MCR) is a requirement of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) at the time of an Official Plan review to bring the City's Official Plans into conformity with Provincial plans. The MCR is broad and encompasses many inter-related components, and must be completed prior to any expansion of the urban boundary. However, many of the studies that are required as part of the MCR are also part of a growth strategy. As such, the MCR will be completed concurrently with GRIDS 2, which has the benefit of combining the public and stakeholder consultation into one process, and efficiently using staff time and resources.

The studies being completed as part of GRIDS 2 / MCR include:

- Residential Intensification Update
- Urban Structure Review
- Major Transit Station Area Planning
- Designated Greenfield Area Analysis
- Employment Update and Employment Land Review
- Agricultural System Refinements
- Land Needs Assessment

The Growth Plan identifies targets the City must plan to achieve in allocating its projected growth to 2041. These targets relate to residential intensification, greenfield density of development, and density around Major Transit Station Areas. The chart below summarizes the required targets in the 2017 Growth Plan, compared to proposed revisions to those targets in the draft Amendment No. 1 to the Growth Plan which was

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released in January 2019. Amendment No. 1 is not yet final and binding and further changes could be forthcoming in the final amendment:

Target	2017 Growth Plan	Draft Amendment No. 1
"Intensification Target" - % of units to be constructed annually within the built-up area	50% between completion of the MCR (2021) and 2031; 60% between 2031 and 2041	60% between completion of the MCR and 2041
"Greenfield Density Target" - Minimum persons and jobs per hectare (pjh) in the Designated Greenfield Area	80 pjh (minimum) in new greenfield areas added to the urban boundary; 60 pjh in existing greenfield areas	60 pjh across the entirety of the designated greenfield area
"MTSA Target" - Minimum persons and jobs per hectare (pjh) in Major Transit Station Areas along the Priority Transit Corridor (LRT)	160 pjh (minimum)	160 pjh (minimum)

These targets will inform the Land Needs Assessment by allocating the City's projected growth to the different geographic areas identified. The Growth Plan allows for a municipality to apply for an alternative target if it can be demonstrated that the targets cannot be met or are not appropriate within the local planning context.

The Land Needs Assessment will identify how much of the City's anticipated growth can be accommodated within the existing urban boundary, and how much may need to be accommodated through an urban expansion area. If an urban expansion is required, a thorough and transparent evaluation process will take place to identify the preferred growth option. Updates to the Infrastructure Master Plans will also be completed.

In terms of future urban expansion area, there is existing historical and policy direction on lands to be included in the review of future expansion areas as part of GRIDS 2 / MCR:

- In September, 2006, City Council approved the following motion "...that staff be directed to incorporate the lands along Twenty Road in the required five-year review of the Official Plan and Master Plans." The Twenty Road lands referred to in this motion are the lands located north of Twenty Road and south of the hydro corridor between the existing urban boundary to the east and west.
- In February, 2015, four parties to the AEGD appeals signed a Minutes of Settlement which included the following clauses related to the future growth management of the City (a copy of the Minutes of Settlement can be provided upon request):

"14. The Parties agree that it is the intent of the City of Hamilton that:

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- a. It will continue to look to the AEGD former study area as its first priority for employment lands.
- b. The Elfrida lands are its first priority for non-employment lands; and
- c. The Twenty Road East lands as shown in Schedule D are the City's next priority for non-employment lands after the Elfrida lands."

The four parties that signed the Minutes of Settlement are:

- Peter Pickfield (lawyer) on behalf of Silvestri Investments;
- Joel Farber (lawyer) on behalf of Twenty Road West Landowners Group;
- Anthony Wellenreiter (lawyer) on behalf of Craig Smith; and,
- Nancy Smith (lawyer) on behalf of the City of Hamilton.

Further, from a policy perspective, the Provincial Plans (Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan) restrict urban expansion into the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt Plan, with the limited exception of small expansions (up to 10ha) of Greenbelt 'Towns' (Waterdown and Binbrook in the local context). Therefore, only lands within the 'whitebelt' (i.e. outside of the Greenbelt Plan) may be considered for future expansion (see attached map of whitebelt areas).

#### Elfrida Growth Area Study

As noted, the Elfrida area was identified through GRIDS as the preferred area to accommodate future residential growth to 2031. The Elfrida Growth Area Study (EGAS) was initiated in 2016, to fulfil the requirements for an urban boundary expansion identified in the UHOP. The EGAS is a unique opportunity to develop a complete urban community that achieves transit supportive densities with multi-modal connections to existing urban areas, efficiently uses existing and new servicing infrastructure, and is integrated with the adjacent urban lands. This Study will develop a land use plan and associated policies for the area that protects the natural heritage system and surrounding agricultural lands while providing opportunities for future growth and development in the area.

A number of different background studies are part of the EGAS, including the following:

- Transportation Management Plan
- Servicing Master Plans
- Agricultural Impact Assessment
- Commercial Review
- Urban Design Guidelines
- Cultural Heritage Assessment
- Natural Heritage Review
- Financial Strategy

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These studies will inform the completion of a Secondary Plan, and ultimately, the future urban boundary expansion. The Elfrida Sub-Watershed Study is being completed concurrently.

The EGAS is dependent on the results of the Land Needs Assessment (LNA) which is being completed as part of GRIDS 2 / MCR. The LNA will identify how much land is required to accommodate growth on a city-wide basis (for the 2021 to 2031 time period, as well as the 2031 to 2041 time period), and the EGAS will determine how much of this growth can be accommodated in the study area.

Attached Information Requests

As per the request of Committee members at the meetings noted above, the following information is attached for information:

- Attachment 1: GRIDS (2006) Summary of Evaluation and Consultation Process – this summary provides a chronology and overview of the GRIDS process, including a summary of consultation events and the evaluation process which was undertaken to identify the preferred growth option. The detailed evaluation matrix which presents the results of the growth options evaluation is also provided.
- Attachment 2: GRIDS 2 Growth Summary Report (2016) – this report provides a summary of the City's growth between the adoption of GRIDS in 2006 to 2016, covering topics such as demographics, intensification, greenfield density, and employment.
- Attachment 3: Map of Residential and Employment Growth Opportunities in the Whitebelt – this map provides an overview of the City's 'whitebelt' lands, which is the term used to describe lands that are outside of the City's urban boundary, but not located within the Greenbelt. The map identifies the whitebelt lands, and also identifies whether the lands could be utilized for residential, employment, or both, in the future (this determination is primarily based on the location of the lands in relation to the airport NEF contours).
- Attachment 4: Summary of consultant and staff costs incurred to date on the Elfrida Growth Area Study and Sub-Watershed Study – this summary provides a breakdown of the costs incurred to date. The staff costs are an approximation.

For more information on GRIDS 2 and the MCR, please visit the website at:

[www.hamilton.ca/grids2-mcr](http://www.hamilton.ca/grids2-mcr)

For more information on the Elfrida Growth Area Study, please visit the website at:

[www.hamilton.ca/elfrida](http://www.hamilton.ca/elfrida)

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You may also contact the following staff if you have any questions or would like more information:

GRIDS 2 / MCR

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Note: Attachments 1 through 4 of this Information Update have not been included with Appendix A to Report FCS19051. The attachments may be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.hamilton.ca/government-information/news-centre/information-updates>