Council Direction:

N/A

Information:

This Report provides an update on GRIDS 2 (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy) and the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), including a project and work plan update, following the release of the new 2019 Growth Plan on May 2, 2019.

1.0 What is GRIDS and the Municipal Comprehensive Review?

The original GRIDS project was undertaken between 2003 and 2006 and allocated growth in the City to the year 2031. The City is undertaking an update to GRIDS, known as GRIDS 2, which is a long term growth strategy to allocate forecasted population and employment growth from 2031 to 2041. The forecasts for Hamilton project an increase of 40,000 jobs and 100,000 people between 2031 and 2041. As such, the original 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 and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) at the time of an Official Plan review to bring the City’s Official Plans into conformity with the 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.

2.0 Growth Plan 2019

On May 2, 2019, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe ("Growth Plan, 2019") was released.

The Growth Plan sets out minimum targets related to intensification and density which the City must plan to achieve. The Plan also identifies the criteria which must be followed when evaluating certain key planning changes such as settlement area boundary expansions and employment land conversions. Through the MCR process, the City is required to update its Official Plans to conform to the requirements of the Growth Plan by the year 2022.

Changes introduced in the Growth Plan 2019 include:

- revised minimum targets related to greenfield density and residential intensification;
- new permissions for urban boundary expansion and employment land conversion to occur outside of the MCR process;
- streamlined requirements for applying for alternative targets (if required); and,
- removal of certain MCR requirements including the completion of a housing strategy and employment strategy (though background work related to housing and employment is still required to inform the Land Needs Assessment).

3.0 GRIDS 2 / MCR – Project Update

With the release of the Growth Plan 2019, staff can move forward on the GRIDS 2 / MCR project and have updated the project work plan accordingly. Staff have been working on background work and technical studies to inform the GRIDS 2 / MCR project. With the release of the new Growth Plan, this work will need to be updated to reflect the new policy regime. Analysis related to the new minimum targets is required to determine the appropriate targets and comprehensively apply the policies of the Growth Plan for the City of Hamilton which will ultimately inform the Land Needs Assessment.

The work plan for GRIDS 2 / MCR is following a four phase approach. Phase 1, background work, was completed in 2017. The project is currently in Phase 2, which is completion of the Technical Studies noted above. Moving forward, Phase 3 will commence upon the completion of the Land Needs Assessment and will involve the examination of growth options to accommodate population and employment growth.
and, ultimately, the identification of a preferred growth option. Phase 4 will be the update to the UHOP and RHOP to implement the MCR and the new Provincial Plans. The updated work plan timeline is attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(d), and highlighted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td><strong>Council workshop (Special GIC):</strong> GRIDS background, Intensification and Density targets, Employment review, and Land Needs scenarios</td>
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<td><strong>General Issues Committee:</strong> Request to commence consultation on Employment Land Review, Intensification and Density targets</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Public Consultation:</strong> Employment Land Review, Intensification and Density Targets, Update on MTSA Planning and Urban Structure review</td>
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<td>2020</td>
<td><strong>General Issues Committee:</strong> Approval of Employment Land Review, Approval of inputs into Land Needs Assessment, Approval of alternative targets if required, Receive Land Needs Assessment, Define evaluation framework</td>
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<td><strong>Release of final Land Needs Assessment and Call for Requests:</strong> Public release of Land Needs Assessment and evaluation framework for consideration of growth options, Call for requests for consideration of urban boundary expansion</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>General Issues Committee:</strong> Evaluation results and preferred growth option, request to commence consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Public Consultation:</strong> Results of evaluation and Preferred growth option</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>General Issues Committee:</strong> Final preferred growth option</td>
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The Council workshop planned for October 21 will be structured as an information session for staff to provide members of Council with important context information related to the first GRIDS process and the identification of Elfrida as the City’s preferred growth area to 2031 (i.e. “how we got to where we are today”); and information on the studies and analysis being completed for GRIDS 2 (i.e. “where are we going”). This will
not be a decision making session, and it will be open for members of the public to attend and view if desired.

4.1 Timing Unknowns

The work plan above could be impacted by factors beyond staff’s control, including:

- Additional future provincial planning changes, which could include changes to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), additional Growth Plan changes, and/or changes to the Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology. The timing of these future changes is unknown, but as changes are announced, staff will be required to review and react to the new directions.

- Submission of privately-initiated requests to expand the urban boundary and/or convert employment land to a non-employment use. As previously noted, the new Growth Plan has introduced policies which allow for privately initiated applications for urban boundary expansion and employment land conversion, subject to criteria, in advance of the MCR. Council has adopted a strategy for responding to these applications, including an increased application fee, peer review agreement, and list of required studies to accompany an application (staff report PED19146). Should this type of application be received by the City, staff will be required to circulate, review and respond to this application within the Planning Act 120 day timeframe. This will require staff resources from multiple divisions to re-allocate their work priorities away from the GRIDS 2 / MCR project to instead focus on individual applications.

- The ongoing RHOP and UHOP appeals which are currently before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) could also have an impact on timing. At an October motion hearing, evidence was heard as to whether the RHOP and UHOP appeals, which date to 2009 and 2011 respectively, will be heard and disposed of in accordance with the 2006 Growth Plan or the 2017 Growth Plan. The 2017 Growth Plan has now been replaced by the 2019 Growth Plan. Depending on the decision coming out of this motion hearing, the work plan for GRIDS 2 and the MCR could be delayed pending the outcome of the appeals.

4.2 Impact on Elfrida Growth Area Study

Information from the Land Needs Assessment (LNA) and the identification of the preferred growth option to 2041 is required prior to commencing the next phase of the Study. Based on the updated MCR work plan attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(d), the results of the LNA are tentatively expected early 2020, with the evaluation and identification of the preferred growth option completed by mid-2020 (subject to the timing unknowns noted above).
APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” – Work Plan

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