



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 14, 2020
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Public Consultation Round 2 and Work Plan Update (PED17010(g)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Lauren Vraets (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2634
SUBMITTED BY:	Steve Robichaud Director, Planning and Chief Planner Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction: N/A

Information:

This Report provides an update on the second round of public engagement for GRIDS 2 (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy) and the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) which took place in November and December of 2019.

1.0 What is GRIDS and the Municipal Comprehensive Review?

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 to the year 2051. The provincial forecasts for Hamilton project a population of 820,000 people and employment of 360,000 jobs by the year 2051. As such, GRIDS must be updated to plan for the additional jobs and persons to 2051 and assess the implications for the Official Plan, 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

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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 Project Update

The first round of public and stakeholder consultation for GRIDS 2 and the MCR was conducted in 2018 and focussed on Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Planning and Urban Structure. Building on the previous engagement activities, Planning Staff initiated the second round of public and stakeholder consultation in late 2019. The goal of the second round of public engagement was to gather feedback regarding the revised GRIDS Directions to Guide Development, residential intensification targets and Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) density targets, employment land conversion, and criteria to evaluate future growth areas.

2.1 Public and Stakeholder Consultation - 2019

2.1.1 Public Information Centres – Round 2

In November and December 2019, public information centres (PICs) were held at four locations across the City to present information on GRIDS 2 and the MCR. The eight events (afternoon and evening session at four locations) were attended by approximately 150 people. A full summary report of these events is attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(g).

At the PIC sessions, attendees were provided the opportunity to comment on the following key areas:

- GRIDS Directions to Guide Development;
- Residential Intensification Targets;
- Designated Greenfield Density Targets;
- Employment Areas; and,
- Future Growth Areas

A discussion on each of these five areas and what was heard from the public is below:

- 1) GRIDS Directions to Guide Development – a panel provided attendees with the original GRIDS 9 Directions to Guide Development, with proposed revisions incorporating Our Future Hamilton themes and stakeholder comments. After reviewing the information on the panel, attendees were asked to complete a comment sheet to provide their thoughts on the revisions to the GRIDS Directions.

Based on the comments received, Planning staff have updated the GRIDS Directions as follows (**Bold** – identifies proposed additions / modifications by staff, stakeholders and public):

1. **Plan for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**
2. Encourage a compatible mix of uses in neighbourhoods, **including a range of housing types and affordabilities**, that provide opportunities to live, work, **learn, shop** and play, **promoting a healthy, safe and complete community.**
3. Concentrate new development **and infrastructure** within existing built-up areas and within **the** urban boundary **through intensification and adaptive re-use.**
4. Protect rural areas for a viable rural economy, agricultural resources, environmentally sensitive recreation and the enjoyment of the rural landscape.
5. Design neighbourhoods to improve access to community life **for all, regardless of age, ethnicity, race, gender, ability, income and spirituality.**
6. Retain **and intensify existing employment land**, attract jobs in Hamilton's strength areas and targeted new sectors, **and support access to education and training for all residents.**
7. Expand transportation options **through the development of complete streets** that encourage travel by foot, bike and transit, and enhance efficient inter-regional transportation connections.
8. Maximize the use of existing buildings, infrastructure, and vacant or abandoned land.
9. Protect ecological systems **and the natural environment, reduce waste**, improve air, land and water quality, and encourage the use of green infrastructure.
10. Maintain and create attractive public and private spaces and respect the unique character of existing buildings, neighbourhoods **and communities, protect cultural heritage resources, and support arts and culture as an important part of community identity.**

The final GRIDS 10 Directions will be brought forward for Council endorsement alongside the forthcoming Land Needs Assessment (LNA) report.

- 2) Residential Intensification Targets – attendees were provided with background information about residential intensification (what is it?), an explanation of the 2019 Growth Plan target of 50% intensification for Hamilton, what the City has done already to encourage intensification (Official Plan policies, Zoning By-law updates,

pilot projects), and what the recent demand has been for intensification units. Participants were then asked what intensification target the City should be striving for and were given three options: lower than the Growth Plan target, meeting the Growth Plan target, or aiming higher than the Growth Plan target.

Participants were encouraged to complete a comment sheet about this topic area. Some key insights gained from the public comments regarding intensification include: a general preference to increase the intensification target beyond the 2019 Growth Plan target; concern about housing affordability, housing mix, and compatibility as a result of intensification; and a preference for intensifying in areas that will have access to transit. These comments will assist Planning staff as part of land needs assessment work to determine an appropriate residential intensification target for the City.

- 3) Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) Density Targets – attendees were provided information about where the greenfield areas are in the City, how the DGA density of people and jobs per hectare (pjh) is calculated, and a snapshot of the City's current DGA planned density (56 pjh). Participants were asked to provide their preference for three DGA density options: lower than the Growth Plan target of 50pjh, meeting the Growth Plan target, or aiming higher than the Growth Plan target.

Attendees were encouraged to share their preferred option by submitting a comment sheet. Some key takeaways from the DGA density comments include: general support for a density target higher than 50pjh; new growth areas should mix uses and provide transportation options; and, concern about cost to build and maintain new greenfield areas. These comments will be taken into consideration as part of the land needs assessment work.

- 4) Employment Areas – the presentation panels provided attendees with background information about employment areas in the city (where are they?), and what criteria are considered when there is a request for conversion to a non-employment use (Growth Plan and City of Hamilton conversion criteria). Attendees were provided with maps depicting areas that were identified as candidates for employment conversion in the draft Employment Land Review report (PED17010(f)) which was presented at the November 20, 2019 General Issues Committee.

PIC participants were encouraged to provide their thoughts on the draft Employment Land Review report and proposed conversion sites on comment sheets available at the event. Some key takeaways from the employment land conversion comments include: suggestion that the density measure of jobs per hectare needs to be reviewed to acknowledge the rapidly changing nature of work;

concern over becoming a bedroom community if employment land is lost; and, more consideration of employment opportunities in the agricultural sector. These comments will be considered through the final preparation of the Employment Land Review report.

- 5) Evaluating Future Growth Areas – these panels of the PICs provided participants with the Provincial Growth Plan criteria that must be satisfied prior to an urban boundary expansion occurring. Attendees were asked to provide their feedback about what other criteria should be considered for evaluating where and how the City may grow in the future. The final panel allowed participants to write their proposed criteria on a sticky note and post it on the board.

Comment sheets were also available for participants to provide detailed feedback. Some key takeaways from these comments include: the need to consider climate change mitigation and adaptation; desire to maintain and enhance greenspaces; connectivity to active transportation and public transit; and, ensuring access to public facilities and emergency services. These comments will be considered in the preparation of the growth option evaluation framework.

2.1.2 Stakeholder Workshop #2

In December 2019, a second GRIDS2 / MCR stakeholder workshop was held. Consistent with the first stakeholder workshop held for GRIDS 2 / MCR in June of 2018, Planning staff invited a variety of potential participants, including Conservation Authorities, environmental groups, BIAs, chambers of commerce, school boards, society of architects, and the home builders association.

The purpose of the second stakeholder workshop was:

- To obtain feedback from the various stakeholders regarding residential intensification targets and DGA density targets; and,
- To have a focused discussion about what a climate change lens would look like when considering different options for accommodating forecasted population growth.

The discussion of the climate change lens assists in linking the discussion of planning for growth with the City's Corporate Goals and Areas of Focus for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. The session was hosted by Planning staff, and participant discussion groups were guided by a trained facilitator.

A total of 15 stakeholders representing the following organizations attended the session:

- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

- Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
- Hamilton Conservation Authority
- Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- Environment Hamilton
- Downtown Hamilton BIA
- Waterdown BIA
- Flamborough Chamber of Commerce
- Hamilton Halton Home Builders Association
- Greenbelt Foundation
- Niagara Escarpment Commission
- Indwell

Some of the key takeaways from Stakeholder Workshop #2 are:

- Many participants expressed interest in the City working towards intensification and density targets higher than the Growth Plan requirements;
- Participants observed that both lower and higher DGA density target options have potential benefits that should be considered;
- There was general agreement that the City's intensification target should be higher, but participants were unsure how much higher than the Growth Plan target; and,
- A climate change lens for growth options should include consideration for low impact development, access to transit, walkable communities, protection of greenspaces, affordability, and food security, among others.

A full summary of the stakeholder workshop is attached as Appendix "A" Report PED17010(g). The comments from the stakeholder are being considered as Planning staff move through the GRIDS 2 / MCR workplan and associated studies.

2.1.3 Other Consultation Opportunities

In addition to the public information centres and stakeholder workshop, staff continued to share information on the GRIDS 2 / MCR process with interested groups to gain feedback and ideas going forward. Consultation included:

- The GRIDS 2 / MCR website (www.hamilton.ca/GRIDS2-MCR) - which provides a description of GRIDS 2 / MCR, including a video describing the project in plain language; updated project timeline; copies of all panels from the PICs; and, on-line commenting forms (over 800 webpage visits were recorded between October 2019 and January 2020, 10 online comments submissions were received - provided in Appendix "A" to Report PED17010(g)); and,

- Internal staff working group meetings with representatives from Public Works, Public Health, Community Services, Transit, and Planning and Economic Development.

Staff will continue to engage the public and stakeholders through all future phases of the GRIDS 2 / MCR project.

3.0 Work Plan Update

The Province released an update to the Growth Plan and a revised Land Needs Assessment Methodology in August, 2020. The City is required to plan for growth using the revised LNA method. The work plan for GRIDS 2 / MCR has been updated to reflect the time needed to revise work that had previously been completed.

The next phase of GRIDS 2 / MCR will include public and stakeholder consultation regarding the findings of the Land Needs Assessment and evaluation of Phasing Principles to guide potential development. The draft Land Needs Assessment and related reports will be presented at a special General Issues Committee (GIC) meeting scheduled for December 14, 2020. Following public consultation on these documents, final approval of the Land Needs Assessment and Phasing Principles is anticipated be presented to the General Issues Committee in March, 2021 and will include a summary of the results of the public consultation.

The updated project timeline is attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(g). The timeline has been adjusted to reflect the revised anticipated completion of the project and the presentation of the preferred growth option to this Committee. The timeline adjustments are reflective of the iterative nature of the long-range planning process. For example, changes or updates to one study may be required as a result of the completion of another study.

Based on the project timeline, staff anticipate completion of GRIDS 2 / MCR in January 2022.

4.0 Planned Consultation – Round 3

Staff are planning the third round of public consultation for the first quarter of 2021. At this third round of public engagement, consideration of the findings of the Land Needs Assessment and future development Phasing Principles will be discussed. Due to COVID-19 restrictions to protect the health and safety of the public and City staff, alternatives to in-person Open House engagement events are being reviewed. Staff are working with City Communications representatives to develop a virtual public engagement experience that is interactive, informative, and accessible. The project will have a presence on the Engage Hamilton portal (www.engage.hamilton.ca). More

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information will be presented to members of Council once the details of the virtual public engagement strategy are in place.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” – Public Consultation Round Two Summary Report

Appendix “B” – Updated Work Plan

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