



CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division

TO:	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 29, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Heather Travis (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4168
SUBMITTED BY:	Steve Robichaud Director, Planning and Chief Planner Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Council receive the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands), attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j);
- (b) That Council receive the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook), attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(j); and,
- (c) That Council authorize staff to commence public and stakeholder consultation, utilizing both digital and non-digital platforms, on the draft evaluation framework and phasing criteria identified in Appendices “A” and “B” attached to Report PED17010(j), and that staff report back on the results of the consultation prior to final approval of the evaluation framework and phasing criteria.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the final approval of the Land Needs Assessment (LNA), the next phase of GRIDS (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy) 2 and the Municipal

SUBJECT: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 18

Comprehensive Review (MCR) will be the evaluation of where and when the City will grow to the year 2051, as noted on the project timeline attached as Appendix “F” to Report PED17010(j). Staff will commence the process of evaluating the implications of alternative scenarios in terms of where growth could occur as a result of an urban expansion, and to develop and assess alternative models relating to the phasing of development of those expansion lands. All alternative growth options are predicated on the City meeting or exceeding provincially mandated residential intensification and density targets (i.e. intensification targets increasing from 50% between 2021 and 2031, to 60% between 2031 and 2041, and 70% between 2041 and 2051, and a planned density of new designated greenfield areas of 77 persons and jobs per hectare).

The attached GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) and Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) have been designed as tools to assist in this evaluation and decision making process.

The framework and principles are reflective of the policy direction of the Provincial Policy Statement, Provincial Growth Plan, and Urban Hamilton Official Plan, the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development endorsed by Council, and address important themes relating to climate change, financial implications, complete community building, and infrastructure requirements.

Staff are requesting Council to receive the draft framework and phasing principles, attached as Appendices “A” and “B” to Report PED17010(j) and authorize staff to consult with the public and stakeholders on the materials. Based on the results of the public consultation, staff will report back to Council on any changes or additions to the framework and phasing criteria resulting from the consultation prior to final approval and application of the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) and Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) to the growth options.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 17

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: N/A

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

SUBJECT: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 18

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Through GRIDS 2 and the MCR, the City is planning for growth to the year 2051. The Provincial Growth Plan identifies an ultimate 2051 population of 820,000 persons and employment of 360,000 jobs in the year 2051.

In December 2020, Staff presented the GRIDS 2 / MCR draft Land Needs Assessment to General Issues Committee. A Land Needs Assessment (LNA) is a study that identifies how much of the forecasted growth can be accommodated within the City’s existing urban area based on inputted targets, and how much growth may need to be accommodated within any potential urban expansion area. Following public consultation on the draft LNA in January 2021, staff are recommending Council approval of the final LNA through Report PED17010(i) in March 2021.

Staff have recommended Council adoption of the “Ambitious Density” scenario in the final LNA. The “Ambitious Density” scenario results in the lowest land need out of the four scenarios modelled in the LNA, and from a climate change policy perspective, represents the preferred option. This scenario identifies a need of approximately 1,340 gross developable ha of Community Area lands and 0 ha of employment lands to the year 2051. The land need of 1,340 gross developable ha is based on a planned intensification target which increases, over time, from 50% between 2021 and 2031, to 60% between 2031 and 2041 and to 70% between 2041 and 2051, and a density of 77 persons and jobs per hectare (pjh) in new growth areas. The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria has been developed independent of the LNA and growth scenarios.

Following Council receipt of the Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria, the following are the next steps in the GRIDS 2 / MCR process:

Time frame	Key Project Milestones	Status
Spring 2017	MCR Commencement, Employment Land Review call for requests	Completed
May 2017	Growth Plan 2017 released	Completed
May 2018	Land Needs Assessment Methodology released by Province	Completed
May / June 2018	First round of public / stakeholder consultation – focus on urban structure (i.e. where should intensification occur?) and major transit station area planning	Completed

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SUBJECT: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 18

Time frame	Key Project Milestones	Status
November 2018	Imagining New Communities – information sessions on greenfield density	Completed
May 2019	Growth Plan 2019 released	Completed
April 2021	Public Consultation on Draft Framework and Phasing Criteria	Pending (Pre-planning work has commenced)
April 2021	Approval of Employment Land Review report	Pending
May 2021	Approval for Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria	Pending
May to September 2021	Growth Options Evaluation / Scenario Modelling	Pending
October 2021	Public Consultation on Evaluation and Phasing Analysis Results, including Preliminary Preferred Growth Option	Pending
December 2021 / January 2022	Approval of Final Preferred Growth Option	Pending

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Policies at both the Provincial and local level provide direction on criteria and requirements to be considered in advance of a settlement (urban) area boundary expansion. A complete policy review is included in Appendix “D” to Report PED17010(j).

The Province has advised City staff that the City’s Growth Plan conformity (MCR) is to be completed by July 1, 2022 (see Appendix “E” to Report PED17010(j)).

Key policy considerations are highlighted below.

Growth Plan 2019, as amended

Policies 2.2.8.2 and 2.2.8.3 of the Growth Plan identify a series of comprehensive criteria that must be considered prior to expansion of the urban boundary. Policy

SUBJECT: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide) - Page 5 of 18

2.2.8.2 requires a municipality to demonstrate that sufficient opportunities to accommodate projected growth through intensification and existing designated greenfield area lands are not available, based on minimum intensification and density targets of the Plan. This review has been undertaken through the GRIDS 2 / MCR LNA.

Policy 2.2.8.3 outlines that, where the need for a *settlement area* boundary expansion has been justified in accordance with policy 2.2.8.2, the feasibility of the proposed expansion will be determined and the most appropriate location for the proposed expansion will be identified based on the comprehensive application of all of the policies in this Plan, including a list of criteria addressing servicing, financial viability, watershed planning and protection of the natural heritage system, and impacts on the agricultural system, amongst other matters. The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands), attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j), has been designed to ensure compliance with the above noted matters. Analysis of how each component above has been addressed can be found in the Analysis and Rationale for Recommendation section of this Report.

Policy 2.2.8.3(k) provides particular direction on potential settlement area boundary expansion within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt. Policy 2.2.8.3(k) restricts expansions into the Greenbelt Protected Countryside to a minor expansion of up to 10 ha (of which no more than 50% may be used for residential purposes) from a defined Town / Village only (in Hamilton, both Waterdown and Binbrook are considered ‘Towns’ in the Greenbelt Plan). Special consideration to policy 2.2.8.3(k) regarding small expansion into the Greenbelt Protected Countryside is also included in this Report, and the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook), attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(j) responds to this policy direction.

Corporate Goals and Areas of Focus for Climate Change

The City of Hamilton has declared a climate change emergency and set a target to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and be carbon neutral by 2050. Land use planning and growth management can play an important role in helping the City achieve that goal. In the City’s Corporate Goals and Areas of Focus for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Goal #4 is related to planning and aims to ensure that a climate change lens is applied to all planning initiatives to encourage the use of best climate mitigation and adaptation practices. In particular, a climate change lens, as part of the GRIDS 2 / MCR evaluation framework, is one area of focus. This direction is also consistent with Direction #1 of the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development. Discussion of the climate change lens as part of the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) attached as Appendix “A” is included in the Analysis / Rationale for Recommendations section below.

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Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP)

The Urban Hamilton Official Plan contains policies regarding urban boundary expansion and, specifically, the studies and criteria that must be considered prior to the City expanding its urban boundary (all UHOP policies cited in Appendix “D” to Report PED17010(j) remain under appeal).

The UHOP criteria identifies the need to address similar matters as those identified in the Growth Plan, to be completed as part of a secondary plan and municipally initiated comprehensive review, including the completion of a land needs assessment, sub-watershed plan and environmental impact study, agricultural impact assessment and financing policy. These matters are addressed in the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Public and Stakeholders

Consultation and public engagement has been a fundamental component of the GRIDS and GRIDS 2 processes. Throughout the GRIDS 2 process, staff have strived to both build awareness about growth management planning in general, and to seek feedback about growth planning in Hamilton, through multiple engagement opportunities throughout the process (both in person and virtual), in addition to extensive information, graphics and videos on the project website.

In staff report PED17010(g) (December, 2020), staff reported on the second round of consultation completed for GRIDS 2 / MCR, which was held in November and December of 2019. As one component of the second round of public consultation, members of the public were asked about what criteria would be important for the City to consider in the evaluation phase of GRIDS 2 / MCR. Several themes emerged from these comments, including climate change impacts, affordable housing, protection of green space and agricultural lands, servicing capability, and the provision of a variety of housing types. These comments were summarized in the Public and Stakeholder Engagement Report attached to Report PED17010(g). Many of the themes identified by members of the public are reflected in Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j). Further public consultation on the evaluation framework and phasing principles will be undertaken in late March / early April 2021.

A second GRIDS 2 / MCR stakeholder event was held on December 16, 2019 and focussed on how a climate change lens could be used in the future evaluation of growth options. Ideas that emerged from the discussion included the provision of transit, low impact development for stormwater management, active transportation and walkable

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communities, green building standards, protection of natural areas and food security. Consideration of the stakeholder comments has provided input into how a climate change lens can be utilized in the evaluation and phasing of growth. The next phase of public consultation with the public and stakeholders will focus on the GRIDS 2 / MCR evaluation framework and phasing principles. This consultation will occur in April 2021.

Long Range Planners of Ontario (LORAPON) workshop

On February 21, 2020, City of Hamilton staff designed, organized and hosted a workshop on the inclusion of a climate change lens in growth management planning for members of the Long Range Planners of Ontario (LORAPON) to identify and develop capacity and understanding of “best practices”. One of the key discussion topics was the inclusion of a climate change lens in the evaluation of urban expansion areas.

Some of the key themes which emerged from the discussion included:

- Should an urban boundary expansion be undertaken, there are a range of topics and criteria that could be integrated into an evaluation framework using a climate change lens.
- The ability to meaningfully compare the differences between different candidate sites will depend on the granularity of the metrics used and the available data.
- Land fragmentation could be a barrier to the creation of complete communities, for example, due to the need to protect natural heritage systems and the potential impact on the ability to make transportation connections.
- Planning for land use and transportation to prioritize sustainable modes of transportation is one the main opportunities for planners to respond to climate change.
- Prioritizing land use decisions that enable and encourage active modes of transportation and support transit is a key opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Compact built form was largely considered to be a well-accepted key indicator of low-emissions intensification, with a range of potential measures discussed – e.g. the ‘15-minute Neighbourhood’ approach.

Staff Review

Members of the GRIDS 2 / MCR staff working group (including water / wastewater planning, transportation planning, growth management, community planning, public health) have reviewed the draft framework and phasing principles and provided input and commentary on the documents and will continue to be involved in the preparation of the final framework.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. Growth Options and Phasing of Development: Where and When Will the City Grow?

The next phase of the GRIDS 2 / MCR project, following the approval of the LNA, is the evaluation of where and when the City will grow. The draft LNA has identified a required Community Area land need ranging between 1,300 and 1,600 ha of lands to be added to the urban boundary for the 2021 to 2051 time period.

The Ambitious Density scenario of the LNA (which is being recommended by staff for endorsement in Report PED17010(i)), identifies a required land need of 1,340 ha to 2051. Under the Ambitious Density scenario, a choice will need to be made through the evaluation and phasing analysis regarding which whitebelt lands are added to the urban boundary and which lands will remain rural, and further, when and how will the lands be phased for development.

Where can the City grow?

In terms of where the City can grow, as has been previously noted in Report PED17010(h), the City's options for expanding the urban boundary to accommodate population growth are limited. The majority of Rural Hamilton (94%) is within the Greenbelt Plan area. Staff respect and support the Greenbelt Plan and the protections it provides, including the restriction on urban boundary expansion into the Greenbelt Plan area. Staff do not support any removal of lands from the Greenbelt Plan boundary. (The Growth Plan does allow an exception for a minor expansion from Waterdown / Binbrook, which is discussed further below).

Urban boundary expansion is therefore restricted to lands that are referred to as the whitebelt lands (i.e. rural lands that are not within the Greenbelt Plan Protected Countryside). The City has a finite supply of whitebelt lands. The total area of whitebelt lands is approximately 4,320 ha. Of this area, only 2,200 ha can be considered for expansion for Community Area uses due to restrictions from the airport Noise Exposure Forecast contours. Netting out non-developable features, such as natural heritage features, cemeteries and rights-of-way, reduces the developable whitebelt land area for Community Area uses to approximately 1,600 ha. These areas are shown on Appendix "C" to Report PED17010(j). Further delineation of gross developable areas will occur through future planning phases.

The question of 'where' the City will grow will be focussed on the four Candidate Expansion Areas shown on Appendix "C" to Report PED17010(j), including various growth options and combinations related to these lands. Under the Ambitious Density scenario of the LNA, which identifies a required land need of 1,340 ha, the

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SUBJECT: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide) - Page 9 of 18

City will not require all of the whitebelt lands to be added to the urban boundary for development prior to 2051.

When will the City grow?

The question of phasing of development will be a key consideration in planning the City's growth to 2051. While the LNA has identified an ultimate land need to 2051, it is known that not all the lands will be required for development immediately. Based on the Ambitious Density scenario (which is being recommended by staff for endorsement in Report PED17010(i)), the approximate phasing breakdown of land need is as follows:

Table 1: Approximate Phasing Breakdown of Land Need Under the Ambitious Density LNA Scenario

Timeframe	Land Need (ha)	Available Community Area Whitebelt Lands (ha)	Remaining Community Area Whitebelt Lands After Urban Expansion (ha)
2021 – 2031	300	1,600	1,300
2031 – 2041	600	1,300	700
2041 - 2051	440	700	260

The analysis of when growth will occur amongst the Candidate Expansion Areas is of equal importance as the where growth will occur. The consideration of phasing has significant impacts on the provision of servicing, transportation, and community services as well as the City's ability to pay for and maintain these services.

Further, as shown in Table 1 above, following the determination of when and where the City will grow to 2051, there will be remnant Community Area whitebelt lands in the approximate amount of 300 ha. A recommended direction on the future of these lands from a planning policy perspective will also be an outcome of the phasing analysis.

2. Structure of Feasibility Evaluation and Phasing Framework

As noted above, the evaluation has two components: where and when the City will grow. Therefore, the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands), that has been developed by the City's consultant team (Dillon Consulting), is premised on a two-stage evaluation approach, outlined below:

SUBJECT: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide) - Page 10 of 18

Stage 1: Feasibility Evaluation of Candidate Expansion Areas:

The first phase of the evaluation will include a feasibility analysis of each of the Candidate Expansion Areas against a series of considerations based primarily on the Growth Plan criteria identified in Policy 2.2.8.3. The Growth Plan policy provides a detailed list of criteria to be satisfied prior to urban boundary expansion occurring, including servicing, financial, natural heritage, and agricultural impacts to be accounted for. In addition to the Growth Plan criteria, additional considerations / criteria have been identified resulting from the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development and the Urban Hamilton Official Plan. A summary of the themes and considerations to be evaluated during Stage 1 is described below.

The feasibility evaluation in Stage 1 will identify any Candidate Expansion Areas that do not meet the provincial and local criteria and therefore would not be screened through to the second stage of evaluation. The Stage 1 feasibility evaluation will not prioritize or rank one area against another, rather each Candidate Expansion Area will be assessed individually.

The overall recommendation as to whether a given Candidate Expansion Area is feasible for expansion will be based on the comprehensive application of all of the criteria and the most appropriate areas will advance to the more detailed Phasing Analysis in Stage 2. A Candidate Area may not be carried forward to the detailed phasing analysis in an instance where the evaluation shows that the area addresses none or very few of the considerations. It is also important to note that from a policy alignment perspective, there are a few considerations which must be addressed in a fulsome manner in order to proceed to the phasing analysis. For example, Growth Plan Policy 2.2.8.3(a) states that there is to be “sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities” to accommodate the expansion. Similarly, Growth Plan Policy 2.2.8.3(b) requires that the “infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets”. These considerations differ from others, such as agriculture, where the Provincial direction is to avoid prime agricultural lands where possible and to minimize and mitigate the impact on the agricultural system where prime agricultural lands can’t be avoided. Accordingly, based on the interpretation of Provincial Growth Plan policies, if any one of the Candidate Areas addresses none of the considerations for Infrastructure Services, Transportation Systems or Municipal Finance, then the Candidate Area would likely not be feasible for expansion.

Stage 2: Phasing Criteria and Analysis

The second stage of the evaluation will be focused on determining the preferred order of phasing of future development based on the anticipated land need by decade noted above. The phasing analysis will evaluate a series of growth

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scenarios (anticipated to be 4 – 5) against each other to ultimately determine the preferred scenario. For example, a distributed allocation of growth to all candidate areas or an allocation of a quantum of growth to one or more areas by decade could be considered. The scenarios will be identified following the approval of the final LNA including endorsement of the final land needs scenario. The evaluation of each scenario will be undertaken based on a series of considerations identified in the next section.

Modelling of required infrastructure and transportation upgrades, public service facility needs, and financial impacts will be undertaken as part of Stage 2. Staff are investigating opportunities to model greenhouse gas emissions resulting from each scenario with support from the Community Energy & Emissions Plan. Evaluation of climate change risks / opportunities, agricultural impacts, and complete community considerations will also be undertaken (more details below).

It is important to note the phasing evaluation will consider all themes comprehensively, and the scenario that produces the best results overall will be identified as the preferred option. It is possible for a scenario to perform higher in certain areas compared to the scenario chosen as preferred, but the preferred scenario will represent the option that performs best across the greatest number of themes. The preferred scenario must provide for alignment of land use planning, infrastructure planning, and fiscal impacts of growth.

The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) is attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j).

3. Feasibility and Phasing Evaluation Themes and Considerations

Both the Stage 1 – Feasibility Evaluation and the Stage 2 – Phasing Analysis are based on the evaluation of several key themes:

Climate Change

Climate change is a critical part of both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations. While climate change is identified as its own theme in both stages, it is noted that climate change considerations are embedded within many of the other themes as well. Many of the themes / considerations in both stages are complementary and inter-related to each other. Both mitigation and adaptation considerations are addressed in the evaluation framework and phasing criteria.

Climate change considerations in Stage 1 relate to opportunities to reduce GHGs and private automobile use through built form, district energy opportunities, infrastructure resiliency, tree canopy protection and hazard land planning.

Through Stage 2, the phasing analysis will consider opportunities and risks from a climate change lens resulting from the different phasing scenarios. Further, staff are investigating the inclusion of GHG emissions modelling through the Community Energy & Emissions Plan to investigate the impact on GHG emissions resulting from the phasing of whitebelt development.

Complete Communities

Complete communities refer to areas that allow people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access the necessities of daily living, including jobs, stores and services and a full range of housing and transportation options. Consideration of how a Candidate Expansion Area can be developed as a complete community, or can contribute to the completeness of the surrounding community is an important factor. Considerations to be evaluated in Stage 1 include the ability of each area to function as a standalone complete community, provision of a range of housing options, access to existing or planned community facilities, and the degree of contiguity with the existing urban area.

Stage 2 will also include an evaluation of complete communities as part of the phasing analysis, including whether or not the phasing scenario contributes to the development of complete communities, responds to market needs and what infrastructure is required to support a complete community.

Servicing Infrastructure

Evaluation of servicing requirements to support growth will be a key component of the evaluation of both Stage 1 and 2. GRIDS 2 is an integrated strategy that is being informed by updates to the City's Infrastructure Master Plans (Water / Wastewater and Stormwater). The Master Plans will, in turn, be updated to the year 2051 based on the identification of the preferred growth option through GRIDS 2 / MCR. Stage 1 of the evaluation will include high level assessment of the capacity in existing and planned water and wastewater distribution and treatment systems to accommodate growth, ability of a growth area to maximize existing capacity within the water / wastewater systems, required expansions or extensions to trunk infrastructure, capacity in existing or planned stormwater management systems, and capacity in existing or planned waste management systems.

Stage 2 will include modelling of the phasing scenarios to identify if the phasing scenario allows for efficient servicing based on existing or planned water,

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wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. Efficient servicing can generally mean maximizing existing infrastructure, not needing to build significant new infrastructure, cost effective solutions to accommodate development, and other matters.

Transportation System

Evaluation of the impacts of expansion on the transportation system will be undertaken as part of Stage 1 and 2, and will include an evaluation of existing and planned road, transit, sidewalk, and cycling infrastructure. The Stage 1 evaluation will include analysis of each Candidate Expansion Area in relation to existing and planned transit routes / stops and pedestrian / cycling networks. Further, the analysis will review capacity in the existing street network to accommodate the proposed population and job increase. Connection to surrounding street and active transportation networks will also be considered. Staff in the City's Transportation Planning Section will undertake modelling of the proposed growth areas to determine impacts on the transportation infrastructure.

The phasing evaluation in Stage 2 will consider how phasing of growth areas could prioritize areas that are connected to the BLAST network or planned transit, alignment with the existing road and active transportation network, and phasing impacts on street network capacity.

Municipal Finance

Financial impacts resulting from future growth and development is a key consideration in the evaluation of where and when the City will grow. Does the Candidate Expansion Area and / or the proposed phasing of growth have an unreasonable or unanticipated financial impact on the City? The Growth Plan criteria identify the requirement that municipal infrastructure and public service facilities required to support growth must be financially viable over the full life cycle of the assets. The information provided by the modelling and identification of required infrastructure upgrades, transportation improvements and new or expanded public service facilities will be used to inform the completion of a Fiscal Impact Assessment (FIA) to be completed as part of GRIDS 2 / MCR by Watson & Associates. The FIA will inform evaluation of both Stage 1 and 2.

In accordance with Council direction approved at the January 15, 2020 GIC meeting, the FIA being completed by Watson & Associates will also evaluate options for the timing of construction and financing of infrastructure related to both intensification / redevelopment, the completion of existing communities and greenfield development (urban expansion). Informed by a best practices review, options to consider will include front ending the cost of infrastructure and facilities by the City and / or developers.

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Agriculture

The vast majority of the City's rural lands area located within the Greenbelt Plan area which provides long term protection of the City's agricultural land base. Impact on the agricultural system, including the agricultural land base and the agri-food network, will be considered as part of both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluation. The Growth Plan requires that expansion into prime agricultural areas should be avoided where possible, and if avoidance is not possible, alternative locations will be evaluated and prioritized based on minimizing and mitigating impacts on the agricultural system. The City will be completing an Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) to supplement existing information on the Agricultural System within the whitebelt areas. Each Candidate Expansion Area will be evaluated in relation to prime and non-prime agricultural lands, potential impacts on the agricultural system, including the agri-food network, presence of agricultural assets, and compliance with Minimum Distance Separation formula.

As part of the Stage 2 phasing analysis, the AIA will evaluate the proposed phasing scenarios in relation to prioritizing development of non-prime agricultural lands, as well as prioritizing development of areas that contain fewer existing agricultural and livestock operations, and minimizing land fragmentation.

Natural Heritage and Water Resources

Consideration of impacts on the natural heritage and water resource system and the ability to demonstrate avoidance or the minimization / mitigation of impacts will be evaluated as part of Stage 1. As per the direction of the Growth Plan, evaluation of impacts on watershed conditions, key hydrologic areas, and the diversity, connectivity and long term ecological function of the natural heritage system will be considered for each Candidate Expansion Area.

Cultural Heritage

Consideration of cultural heritage and archaeological resources will take place as part of the Stage 1 evaluation and will consider the presence of significant cultural heritage resources and significant archaeological resources within the potential expansion areas, and the ability for these resources to be conserved.

Natural Resources

Natural resources, including mineral aggregate resources and active or abandoned gas / petroleum wells are to be considered in the evaluation as per the direction of the Growth Plan. While it is not anticipated that any of the expansion areas contain

significant resources, this evaluation will be undertaken as part of Stage 1 to identify any areas that require protection or avoidance.

4. Greenbelt Protected Countryside – Waterdown and Binbrook

As noted above in the policy review section, the Provincial Growth Plan includes a special provision for a minor expansion of up to 10 ha into the Greenbelt Protected Countryside from lands identified as a Town or Village within the Greenbelt Plan. Within Hamilton, both Binbrook and Waterdown are identified as ‘Towns’ in the Greenbelt Plan. Therefore, a consideration could be given to permit a 10 ha expansion from each of Waterdown and Binbrook.

If an expansion from one of these areas is to occur, the Growth Plan requires that the expansion be limited to no more than 10 ha in size, and further, that no more than 50% of the expansion area be used for residential purposes. Other criteria identified in the Growth Plan which must be satisfied for such an expansion to occur are the requirement for the expansion to support the achievement of a complete community or support the local agricultural economy, demonstration that the proposed use cannot be reasonably accommodated within the urban boundary, servicing by existing water and wastewater systems, and prohibition of expansion into the Natural Heritage System.

It should be noted that there is no requirement for the City to expand the urban boundary from these two areas, and consideration of such an expansion will only be undertaken if there is a need for a logical rounding out of the boundary or a recognition of existing uses. Further, as the Growth Plan policy restricts the expansion area in not only size but also in use, with a restriction on a maximum of 50% of the expansion area to be used for residential purposes, the City must be satisfied of a need and / or use for the remaining 50% of the lands (non-residential portion) prior to consideration of expansion.

Staff have prepared a modified framework for the evaluation of any requests for expansion from Binbrook or Waterdown; it is based on the criteria identified in Growth Plan policy 2.2.8.3(k), in conjunction with some of the criteria identified in the Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria for the whitebelt lands. A two phase process is proposed.

Phase one will include the evaluation of all expansion requests from Waterdown and Binbrook against a set of screening criteria based on Growth Plan policy 2.2.8.3(k). These criteria are mandatory, and an expansion area will only be screened through to the second phase of evaluation if the mandatory screening criteria are all satisfied.

The second phase will evaluate each proposed expansion area that remains against a series of criteria which represent local and provincial planning priorities, including the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development. The criteria identified in the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) were selected to ensure that, in addition to the mandatory criteria identified in the Growth Plan, other local priorities are also evaluated and considered in the decision-making process, including logical expansion, agricultural, fiscal and transportation impacts. Certain criteria that are included in the whitebelt evaluation framework are not appropriate for the evaluation of the small expansion requests for Waterdown and / or Binbrook due to the size restriction, Growth Plan policy direction, and the existing conditions in these areas.

Each expansion area will be evaluated against the criteria in phase 2 and identified as fully addressing, mostly addressing, partially addressing or not addressing the criteria. Following the evaluation, the areas will be ranked against each other, and the expansion area that best satisfies the criteria will be identified as the preferred expansion option. If no expansion requests are put forward which meet the criteria, no expansion from either of these areas will be recommended.

A direction on implementation of the proposed expansion, including requirements for future studies and appropriate land use designations and controls to limit development on the non-residential portion of the lands will also be recommended.

Staff are aware of a number of interested landowners in the Waterdown area that are requesting consideration of lands for inclusion in the urban boundary. To date, no expressions of interest from Binbrook have been received. The evaluation of requests in the Waterdown area (and Binbrook if any are received) will take place concurrently with the evaluation in the whitebelt lands.

The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) is attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(j).

5. User-Friendly Format

To ensure that members of the public can participate meaningfully in the next phase of GRIDS 2 / MCR and understand the process and results of the evaluation and phasing analysis, the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) have been designed to be a user-friendly, easy to understand and graphically pleasing document. The purpose of this tool is to provide a logical and understandable format for evaluating expansion requests against planning priorities to ensure that council, applicants / land owners, members of the public and outside agencies can easily understand the performance of Candidate Expansion Areas as suitable growth areas, and the

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preferred phasing order of the growth. The framework has been designed to graphically display complicated information in an accessible manner. Background information and technical reports that inform the evaluation framework will also be available for public review, if interested, but the framework will provide a snapshot of all information in an easy to use format.

6. Next Steps

Public and stakeholder consultation on the framework will take place in the month of April. Staff will report back to Committee with a final framework for endorsement following the consultation period.

The two phase evaluation process will occur over the spring and summer of 2021, concluding in the fall of 2021 with the identification of a preliminary preferred growth scenario. High level evaluation of each whitebelt Candidate Expansion Area in Stage 1 of the evaluation process will be undertaken immediately following the approval the Urban Boundary Expansion - Evaluation and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands).

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Do not endorse the evaluation framework and phasing principles. This option would also have the risk of delaying the GRIDS 2 / MCR process.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Economic Prosperity and Growth

Hamilton has a prosperous and diverse local economy where people have opportunities to grow and develop.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” – GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands)

SUBJECT: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide) - Page 18 of 18

- Appendix “B” – GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook)
- Appendix “C” – Community Area whitebelt growth options
- Appendix “D” – Policy Review
- Appendix “E” – Letter from Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Ontario Growth Secretariat)
- Appendix “F” – Updated GRIDS 2 / MCR Project Timeline

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