



# Integrated Operational Review of Planning, Building, Engineering & Enterprise Services & the Development Review Process

A report from  
GGA • Management Consultants  
with  
IBI Group

August 2012

# GGA • MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

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Mr. Peter Cartwright  
General Manager, Economic Development  
Finance & Enterprise Services  
Corporation of the City of Guelph  
City Hall, 1 Carden Street,  
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August 24, 2012

Dear Mr. Cartwright:

## **Integrated Operational Review of Planning, Building, Engineering & Enterprise Services & the Development Review Process**

GGA • Management Consultants and IBI Group are pleased to submit our final report on the Integrated Operational Review of Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise Services for the City of Guelph focused on the development review process. We believe that our recommendations, if implemented, can contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness with respect to how the City manages its growth and uses its development review processes to support a sustainable and livable community.

We would like to thank City management and staff in Planning, Engineering, Building and Enterprise services for all the constructive comments and suggestions which contributed to our understanding of existing processes and potential improvements. We would also like to thank the Project Oversight Committee who gave thoughtful consideration and comments which contributed to our Assessment and Recommendations. The cities of Hamilton, London, Kitchener, Cambridge and Brantford provided us with comparative information on their own development review processes, which was particularly helpful to this review and we would like to thank their managers as well. We would also like to thank our Steering Committee of Janet Laird, Al Hearne, Todd Salter, Richard Henry, Bruce Poole and yourself for your guidance and helpful comments.

We appreciated very much this opportunity to be of assistance to the City of Guelph and wish you well as you face the challenges of providing needed municipal services to the benefit of the Guelph community.

Yours truly,



Gerald A. Grant  
GGA • Management Consultants

c.c. John Perks & John Ariens IBI Group  
Jane Londerville & Hannah Calinescu, GGA

**Corporation of the City of Guelph**  
**Integrated Operational Review of Planning, Building, Engineering & Enterprise Services**  
**& the Development Review Process**

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**Corporation of the City of Guelph  
Integrated Operational Review of Planning, Building, Engineering & Enterprise Services  
& the Development Review Process**

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## **Executive Summary**

The City of Guelph is a growing, diverse and vibrant community with a well-educated population of just over 120,000 in 2011. The City of Guelph recognized the inherent challenges of providing for sustainable growth and development and retained GGA • Management Consultants and IBI Group to conduct an integrated operational review of the current development review processes and the related roles of Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise (Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative) services.

The objectives of this Integrated Operational Review included the following objectives:

- ◆ to review the current development review processes and the roles of Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise (Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative) services
- ◆ to assess organization, management and operating structures, processes, service delivery, resources and approaches to conflict resolution
- ◆ to identify opportunities for improved service delivery effectiveness, efficiency and customer service
- ◆ to make recommendations for improvement with an implementation plan

## **Assessment**

The City of Guelph has a growing economy focused on agriculture and life sciences, with the advanced manufacturing, technology economy and environmental technology sectors contributing to the City's economic development. Sustainable growth is dependent upon effective planning to provide housing, commercial development and transportation infrastructure to support this growth while maintaining Guelph's high quality of life.

PBEE and Enterprise have professional staff who are committed to ensuring that the City of Guelph and its residents continue to benefit from a high quality of life in a healthy and sustainable community. In our interviews and in the responses to our questionnaires we were impressed by the conscientious and thoughtful approach that staff gave to their growth management and development review responsibilities. Staff recognized that the decisions that are made with respect to development have a long-term impact not only for the foreseeable future, but for many generations to come. Staff are working diligently to support Council and its directions, e.g. intensification, downtown development and are seeking to reflect these directions in their review of development applications. They are also mindful that they must abide by the provisions of the Ontario Planning Act and other provincial acts and regulations. They are also aware that development decisions can be challenged at the Ontario Municipal Board. They are, therefore, conscientious in ensuring that there is appropriate justification for the positions they take with respect to specific changes or amendments which they request of developers relative to their applications. Unfortunately, staff morale has been affected by a lack of effective management direction, management resignations and related publicity, workload issues and past City human resources related decisions and reorganizations. The Planning department now has new management in place and has hired new staff to fill vacancies – the time is right to move forward and build a more adaptive learning organization which has engaged management and supports staff in their development review activities. Both PBEE and Enterprise departments would

benefit from improved management direction and greater interdepartmental coordination and communications through the implementation of an improved service delivery model.

PBEE and Enterprise have completed major new policies to guide development, including the Official Plan Update and the Economic Development & Tourism Services Strategy, and are seeking to support Council in its desire to create a healthy, economically strong and sustainable community, and to protect the City's natural and heritage assets. PBEE and Enterprise have also sought to support Council's desire that Guelph be a municipal leader in energy conservation and sustainable development by achieving the goals of its Community Energy Plan and Engineering and Planning have had major roles to play in the successful Civic Square core redevelopment and infrastructure program which has impacted departmental workloads. The Enterprise departments have been instrumental in establishing the new Hanlon Creek Business Park and attracting new industry.

Our review of the development review processes found that there are opportunities for improvement and that there is a need for an improved service delivery model. Management needs to be more engaged and supportive of staff in development review. Communications and coordination amongst departments and with stakeholders could be improved. Our review found that site plan review is generally well coordinated, however, there are communications issues which need to be addressed. A mandatory pre-consultation meeting to start the development review process as practiced by many other municipalities would assist developers in application preparation and would help to streamline the development review and approval process. Information systems to monitor application processing could be improved and better use could be made of existing application and processing information to improve customer service, interdepartmental coordination and process management.

### **Improved Service Delivery Model for Development Review Needed**

An improved service delivery model is needed whereby management and staff can work more productively together to provide better customer service to the development industry, as well as the community and its stakeholders. What is needed is a service delivery model that is "evolutionary" not "revolutionary" and we are confident that the City can move forward to implement this improved service delivery model successfully. This improved service delivery model has four major interdependent components, which are:

- ◆ **Build a More Adaptive Learning Organization**
- ◆ **Improve Management Direction, Engagement & Coordination**
- ◆ **Improve Development Review Processes with Better Coordination, Information Management & Communications with Stakeholders**
- ◆ **Improve Communications Interdepartmentally and with Stakeholders**

Our recommendations to establish this improved service delivery model include the following:

#### ***Recommendation #1: Build a More Adaptive Learning Organization***

- Recommendation 1.1 Re-establish Planner II Positions Over Time & Implement a Team Organization Within Planning & Initiate Organization Development Process
- Recommendation 1.2 Establish a Human Resources Staffing & Succession Plan to Address Management & Skills Requirements Now and in the Future
- Recommendation 1.3 Integrate & Orient New Employees & Provide Mentorship & Training Opportunities for Existing & New Staff in all Departments

***Recommendation #2: Improve Management Direction & Communications***

- Recommendation 2.1 Clarify Roles & Responsibilities of all Manager Positions in Planning, Engineering, Building & Enterprise Departments Relative to Their Direction & Involvement in the Development Review Process
- Recommendation 2.2 Establish a Manager-level Interdepartmental Management Committee for Development to Better Manage Development Review Processes
- Recommendation 2.3 Planning & Engineering General Managers Should Review, Track and Monitor Application Processing, Project Issues & Timelines on a Weekly Basis

***Recommendation #3: Improve Development Review Processes with Better Coordination, Information Management & Communications with Stakeholders***

- Recommendation 3.1 Develop a Business Services Centre in Conjunction with the Information Services Area on the Main Floor of City Hall
- Recommendation 3.2 Establish a New Position of “Business Facilitator” to Assist City Businesses, Including the Development Industry to Access City Services & the Assistance They Need
- Recommendation 3.3 Establish Gold Star Protocol for new Development Proposals which would have Major Benefits to the City – Gold Star Program
- Recommendation 3.4 Implement a Mandatory Pre-consultation Process for all Development Applications
- Recommendation 3.5 Establish a Development Review Committee with Regularly Scheduled Meetings
- Recommendation 3.6 Implement a Revised Site Plan Review Process with Updated Urban Design Guidelines
- Recommendation 3.7 Reinstate One Step Engineering Review & Comments Process
- Recommendation 3.8 **Expand the Use of & Improve Management Information Systems & Performance Measurement to Support Development Application Processing & to Improve Customer Service with the Assistance of City’s Information Technology Department**
- Recommendation 3.9 Review the City’s Comprehensive Zoning By-law Relative to Allowable Uses
- Recommendation 3.10 Consolidate Enforcement of all Property-Related By-laws within One Department
- Recommendation 3.11 Improve the Management, Coordination & Review of the City’s Capital Projects
- Recommendation 3.12 Enterprise Departments Should Review New Major Economic Development Opportunities with Employment & Tax Benefits and Coordinate Action to be Taken Relative to the Development Review Process

Recommendation 3.13 Enterprise Departments Should Become More Proactive in Investment Attraction & Business Retention

***Recommendation #4: Improve Communications Interdepartmentally & with Stakeholders***

Recommendation 4.1: Develop an Overall Communications Strategy to Support the Development Review Process

Recommendation 4.2: Establish a Customer Service Mission Statement in Consultation with Staff & Provide Customer Service Training

Recommendation 4.3: Revise City Website to Better Support Development

Recommendation 4.4: Encourage Better Interdepartmental Communication & Coordination Amongst PBEE & Enterprise Staff

**Implementation & Change Management Plan**

It is also recommended that an Implementation and Change Management Plan be put in place with implementation of the recommendations being carried out over the coming 4-year period. We are pleased to note that City management and staff have already started to implement some of our recommendations. PBEE and Enterprise Services managers should use the Implementation and Change Management Plan to monitor progress on implementation of the recommendations and make periodic reports to Council.

Further detail on the Recommendations can be found in Section 7.0 and on Implementation in Section 8.0 of this report.

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## **1.0 Introduction, Objectives & Methodology of the Review**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The City of Guelph is a growing, diverse and vibrant community with a well-educated population of just over 120,000 in 2011. Guelph citizens take pride in the City's rich heritage which dates back to the early 1800's. Today, the City of Guelph has a growing economy focused on agriculture and life sciences, with the advanced manufacturing, technology economy and environmental technology sectors contributing to the City's economic development. Sustainable growth is dependent upon effective planning to provide housing, commercial development and transportation infrastructure to support this growth while maintaining Guelph's high quality of life.

The City of Guelph recognized the inherent challenges of providing for sustainable growth and development and retained GGA • Management Consultants and IBI Group to conduct an integrated operational review of the current development review process and the related roles of Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise (Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative) services. The Environment section of the Planning, Building, Engineering & Environment department was not part of this review. GGA and IBI were asked to provide recommendations to improve the coordination and processing of planning, engineering and building permit approvals, as well as Enterprise-related inquiries.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Review**

The objectives of this integrated operational review included the following:

- ◆ to review the current development review processes and the roles of Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise (Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative) services
- ◆ to assess organization, management and operating structures, processes, service delivery, resources and approaches to conflict resolution
- ◆ to identify opportunities for improved service delivery effectiveness, efficiency and customer service
- ◆ to make recommendations for improvement with an implementation plan

GGA • Management Consultants and IBI Group are pleased to provide this report which summarizes our findings and recommendations with regard to this integrated operational review.

### **1.3 Methodology of the Integrated Operational Review**

This integrated operational review was carried out in three phases:

- Phase I: Review of Services, Functions & Operational Issues
- Phase II: Assessment & Development of Service Delivery Opportunities & Related Recommendations
- Phase III: Preparation of Integrated Operational Review Report, Recommendations & Implementation Plan

The City of Guelph commissioned a *Stage 1 City of Guelph Operational Review Issues Scoping Report* in 2011 which identified through stakeholder interviews operational issues to be researched and investigated through this integrated operational review. Stakeholders identified a range of issues related to the review of applications for development. Building permit processing was not a significant concern. The report identified the following operational issues which should be addressed:

- ◆ clear & consistently applied development review process which is fair to all, timely & without unnecessary delays
- ◆ effective communications and a problem-solving, consensus-building approach
- ◆ improved coordination between Planning, Engineering & Building Services, particularly with respect to new industrial investment-related applications
- ◆ staff's decision-making roles (empowerment), internal project ownership by City management and staff, and an appropriate workload resource match
- ◆ quality of proponent submissions and how this can be encouraged
- ◆ Council role & stakeholder contributions to development review and approval

These operational issues were considered through the following information-gathering and research, and in the preparation of the Assessment and Recommendations contained in this report. This information gathering and research included:

- ◆ review of background documents, studies and reports related to Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise services, including organization charts, annual budgets, reports to Council, etc.
- ◆ review of City of Guelph strategies with respect to encouraging and managing growth, including:
  - City of Guelph Strategic Plan: 2007
  - Community Energy Plan; April 2007
  - City of Guelph Employment Lands Strategy Phase 1, July 2008
  - Urban Design Action Plan; May 2009
  - Prosperity 2020: Economic Development & Tourism Strategy – March 2010
  - Strategic Plan for the Guelph Agri-Innovation Cluster; March 2010
  - Downtown Community Improvement Plan; Updated 2012
  - Downtown Secondary Plan: April 2012
  - Development Priority Plans: 2009-2012
  - Brownfield Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan; February 2012
  - Economic Development & Tourism Services Strategy – Open for Business; February 2012
  - Official Plan Update - Envision Guelph; OPA 48 adopted by Council June 5, 2012 (Has been submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for review and decision). This is an update of the Official Plan 2001 & 2006 consolidation
  - City of Guelph Strategic Planning Framework 2012-16
- ◆ interviews with Planning, Building, Engineering, Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative managers and staff
- ◆ preparation, distribution and analysis of staff questionnaires regarding management and administration of development-related activities

- ◆ two staff communication sessions: one to explain the purpose of the integrated operational review; the information being sought, and the opportunities for staff participation, and a second to provide staff with our assessment and directions for recommendations in order to obtain their comments
- ◆ review of development review processes through data analysis, document and file reviews and case studies
- ◆ a review of existing management information systems, e.g. Amanda, and the manner in which information is used to manage development review
- ◆ benchmarking / best practices research and interviews with 5 comparable municipalities regarding their development review process. These selected cities were Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Brantford, Cambridge; research on other cities was also taken
- ◆ integration of findings into Assessment and identification of Opportunities for Improvement
- ◆ presentations to the Project Oversight Committee, Steering Committee and staff, addressing their comments in the final report and recommendations
- ◆ Preparation of Final Report, including Recommendations and Implementation Plan

Based on the research and analysis, an assessment was made of planning, engineering, building and enterprise services delivery and opportunities to improve the development review process. Recommendations were then made to guide future service delivery.

## **2.0 Context for the Integrated Operational Review**

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### **2.1 City of Guelph Has a Growing Population & Rate of Growth which Exceeds Most Other Cities in its Region**

The City of Guelph has a growing population and experienced a growth rate over the past 5 years of 5.9%. Guelph's population growth rate exceeded that of Brantford, Cambridge, Hamilton, and London, but was less than that experienced by Kitchener, all cities with which Guelph competes for growth and investment (see Exhibit 1).

**Exhibit 1: Guelph & Other Municipalities in the Region – Population & Growth Rate**

Municipality	Population 2011	Growth Rate
Guelph	121,688	5.9
Brantford	93,650	3.8
Hamilton	519,949	3.1
London	366,151	3.9
Kitchener	219,153	7.1
Cambridge	126,748	5.3

However, this growth in population is somewhat less than the City forecasted based on the 2006 census and expected development. Exhibit 2 shows the population in 2006 and the forecast population in 2011 as contained in the City's Community Profile.

**Exhibit 2: City Population Forecast**

Population 2006	Population 2011	Population Projected 2011
114,943*	121,688⊕	125,770*

Sources: \* Guelph Community Profile   ⊕ Statistics Canada Census 2011

The Ontario Government, in its *Places to Grow* strategy and report, designated Guelph as a growth centre in south-western Ontario given its location outside the Province's designated "Green Belt". Guelph's population is also less than the provincial government's population growth forecast for 2011. Clearly, the economic conditions in Ontario following the 2008 global financial crisis have had an impact on growth and new investment in Guelph like all other cities in Ontario. That said, Guelph continues to be well positioned for future population, employment and economic growth. However, Guelph cannot afford to be complacent. Competition is

increasing amongst Ontario cities and regions for new investment and the increased employment and assessment which accompany it. Guelph has some significant advantages, including:

- ◆ location close to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- ◆ presence of the University of Guelph
- ◆ availability of development-ready industrial land, e.g. Hanlon Creek Business Park
- ◆ educated workforce
- ◆ excellent road and rail access
- ◆ proximity to the US through the border crossings at Niagara, Windsor and Port Huron

In fact, Guelph is seeking to become a world leader in sustainable development, energy conservation and new agri-bio technology and these advantages will benefit Guelph to do so.

## **2.2 City of Guelph Strategies for Growth Management**

The City of Guelph has initiated strategies to encourage and manage this growth. These strategies include:

- ◆ City of Guelph Strategic Plan: 2007
- ◆ Community Energy Plan; April 2007
- ◆ City of Guelph Employment Lands Strategy Phase 1, July 2008
- ◆ Urban Design Action Plan; May 2009
- ◆ Prosperity 2020: Economic Development & Tourism Strategy – March 2010
- ◆ Strategic Plan for the Guelph Agri-Innovation Cluster; March 2010
- ◆ Downtown Community Improvement Plan; Updated 2012
- ◆ Downtown Secondary Plan: April 2012
- ◆ Development Priority Plans: 2009-2012
- ◆ Brownfield Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan; February 2012
- ◆ Economic Development & Tourism Services Strategy – Open for Business; February 2012
- ◆ Official Plan Update - Envision Guelph; OPA 48 adopted by Council June 5, 2012 (Has been submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for review and decision)
- ◆ City of Guelph Strategic Planning Framework 2012-16

Of particular importance in these regards are the goals of the new, recently approved City of Guelph Strategic Planning Framework 2012 – 16 to encourage and manage growth and provide high quality municipal services through improved public service and communication:

1. Organizational Excellence:

- ◆ Engage employees through excellence in leadership
- ◆ Develop collaborative work team and apply whole systems thinking to deliver creative solutions
- ◆ Build robust systems, structures and frameworks aligned to strategy

2. Innovation in Local Government

- ◆ Build an adaptive environment for government innovation to ensure fiscal and service sustainability
- ◆ Deliver public service better
- ◆ Ensure accountability, transparency and engagement

3. City Building

- ◆ Ensure a well-designed, safe, inclusive, appealing and sustainable City
- ◆ Be economically viable, resilient, diverse and attractive for business
- ◆ Strengthen citizen and stakeholder engagement and communications

Also important are the City's goals to be a municipal leader in achieving its Community Energy Plan and build a sustainable, energy-conserving community with supportive economic development.

Community Energy Plan goals:

- ◆ Guelph will be the place to invest, supported by its commitment to a sustainable energy future
- ◆ Guelph will have a variety of reliable, competitive energy, water, and transport services available to all
- ◆ Guelph energy use per capita and resulting greenhouse gas emissions will be less than the current global average
- ◆ Guelph will use less energy and water per capita than comparable Canadian cities
- ◆ All publicly funded investments will visibly contribute to meeting the other four CEP goals

Prosperity 2020 priorities:

- ◆ Focus Investment and Growth
- ◆ Re-position Guelph
- ◆ Invest in Tourism
- ◆ Invest in the Downtown
- ◆ Strengthen Governance, Profile and Reach

The Guelph Official Plan Update also has complementary strategic directions to be pursued relative to existing and new development:

1. Planning a Complete & Healthy Community

- a) Utilize an interdisciplinary approach to planning whereby decisions are made with an understanding of the ecological, social, cultural and economic interrelationships and implications for any particular course of action.
- b) Ensure an appropriate range and mix of employment opportunities, local services, *community infrastructure*, housing including *affordable housing* and other land uses are provided to meet current and projected needs to the year 2031.
- c) Provide for urban growth and land use patterns that ensures efficient use of public expenditures and municipal financial sustainability over the long term.

- d) Ensure that *development* is appropriately staged and phased to meet the goals, objectives and policies of this Plan, in particular the City's growth management strategy and targets, municipal fiscal sustainability, the logical and planned expansion and provision of municipal services and community infrastructure and the avoidance of premature *development*.
  - e) Encourage steady and diverse economic growth while striving to achieve a balanced tax assessment ratio and a wide range of employment opportunities.
  - f) Promote opportunities for employment in the emerging high-tech "knowledge based" sectors including environmental management and technology and agri-food technology.
  - g) Foster sustainable local food systems.
  - h) Preserve and enhance a safe, liveable and healthy community.
2. Protecting what is Valuable
- a) Ensure that land use planning provides for a diverse and inclusive city.
  - b) Protect and, where possible, enhance natural heritage features and functions and biodiversity of the City's Natural Heritage System and support linkages between and among such systems and features within the City and beyond.
  - c) Enhance the visual identity of the City through protecting and celebrating the City's cultural heritage resources.
  - d) Establish and implement policies and actions that will contribute to achieving the targets of the City's Community Energy Plan.
  - e) Support an integrated approach to meeting the energy needs of the community by designing places and buildings in a way that minimizes consumption of energy and water and production of waste whereby supporting an increasingly low carbon footprint.
  - f) Promote opportunities for the use and generation of renewable and alternative energy systems.
  - g) Decouple energy consumption from population growth.
  - h) Advance innovation by building on the synergies between infrastructure, built form and climate change imperatives.
3. Transportation
- a) Develop a safe, efficient, convenient and sustainable transportation system that provides for all modes of travel including cycling and walking to support sustainable land use patterns.
4. Municipal Services
- a) Direct development to those areas where full municipal services and related infrastructure are existing or can be made available, while considering existing land uses, natural heritage systems, development constraints, fiscal sustainability, development costs and related factors.
  - b) Protect, maintain, enhance and sustainably manage the finite groundwater and surface water resources that are needed to support the City's existing and planned growth and natural systems.
  - c) Promote the effective management of waste to ensure protection of the natural and built environment.
5. Community Infrastructure
- a) Ensure an accessible, connected open space, park and trail system and sustainable network of recreational facilities necessary to promote a physically active and healthy community that meets resident needs for active and passive recreation activities.

- b) Provide an appropriate supply and distribution of community facilities to meet the social, health and education needs of existing and future residents in a manner that maximizes accessibility.
  - c) Ensure that an adequate supply, range and geographic distribution of housing types including affordable housing, special needs housing and supporting amenities are provided to satisfy the needs of the community.
6. Urban Design
- a) Preserve, enhance and protect the distinct character of the City and the sense of a community of neighbourhoods.
  - b) Build a compact, mixed-use and transit-supportive community.
  - c) Plan and design an attractive urban landscape that reinforces and enhances Guelph's sense of place and identity while encouraging innovative design and development opportunities.
  - d) Encourage intensification and redevelopment of existing urban areas that is compatible with existing built form.
7. Downtown
- a) Strengthen the role of the Downtown as a major area for investment, employment and residential uses such that it functions as a vibrant focus of the City.
8. Implementation
- a) Promote informed public involvement and engagement in a user-friendly planning and development process.

As noted in the goals for the City's new Strategic Plan 2012-2016, the City has committed itself to continually improve public service delivery. The City is desirous that new development supports the City to achieve its goals to create a healthy and sustainable community which fosters economic development while protecting natural and heritage assets. The development review process is an important way that the City ensures that new development leads to the achievement of these goals.

### **2.3 Managing Growth & Development: a Complex Undertaking Involving Many Stakeholders**

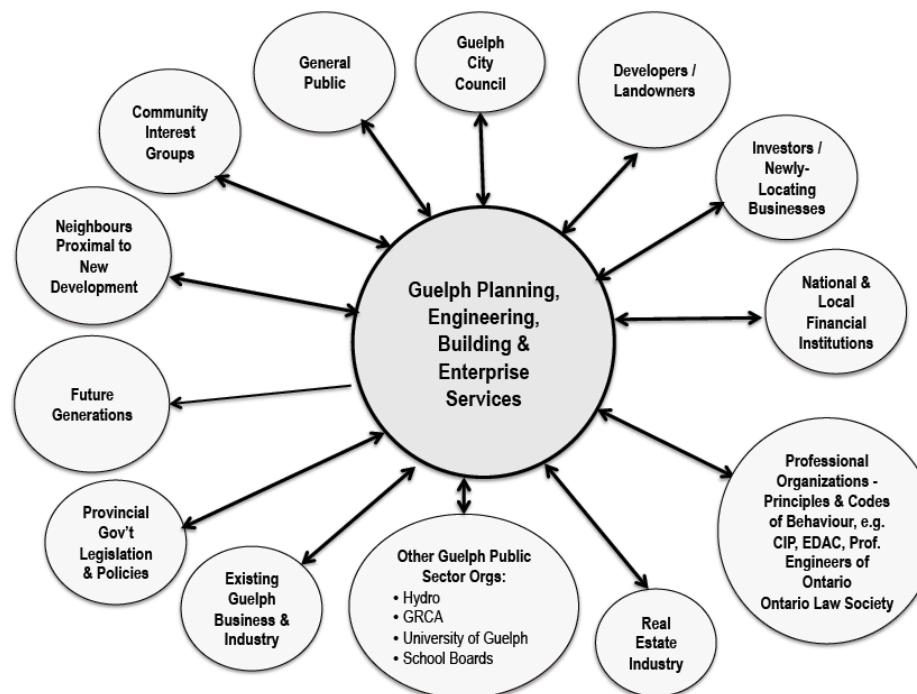
Managing growth and development is a complex undertaking and involves the interests of many stakeholders. Given Guelph's strategic goals to be a world leader in sustainable development, energy conservation and agri-bio technology, this will be even more challenging. Exhibit 3 illustrates this complexity.

City managers and staff who are involved in the development review process are guided by Guelph City Council, by the City's Official Plan Update and other Council approved policies. Developers and landowners have the right to expect clear and understandable policies and recommendations regarding land development in the City. The community also has a right to expect that the development which occurs supports a healthy community, one which is sustainable and protects heritage and environmental assets, and which contributes to a high quality of life and the social and economic wellbeing of residents. The desire of the community to participate, whether they are a neighbour to the development, a community interest group, or a member of the general public, must be supported. Community stakeholders should be assisted to provide their views in a constructive manner within the development review process.

City staff must abide by the Ontario Planning Act and other provincial legislation, plans, policies and regulations affecting land use planning, e.g. the Clean Water Act, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Provincial Policy Statement, as well as sound planning principles and codes of behaviour as required by their professional organizations. Staff must take into consideration Council directives and public input to the planning process. They must also assist investors and

newly-locating businesses to identify the most appropriate sites for development and facilitate the process by which their investments can be achieved and the accompanying increase in employment and tax revenues realized. Further, existing Guelph business and industry seeking to continue to grow within the Guelph community need to be assisted in finding the necessary land and infrastructure for this growth either within their existing site or elsewhere in the community. City staff must also coordinate with other Guelph public sector organizations which support or are impacted by development. These include Guelph Hydro, the Grand River Conservation Authority, the University of Guelph and Guelph school boards, amongst others. The manner in which the City manages its growth and development impacts national and local financial institutions and the availability of capital to the local business community and investors. In carrying out this operational review, we have been mindful of this complexity and the challenges faced by the City and its staff in managing growth for the benefit of the entire Guelph community while respecting the rights of all stakeholders.

**Exhibit 3: Managing Development is a Complex Undertaking with Many Stakeholders**



In Section 3 which follows the roles of the Planning, Engineering, Building Services and Enterprise departments in carrying out the development review process are described.

## **3.0 Departmental Roles & Responsibilities in Growth Management & the Development Review Process**

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### **3.1 Roles & Responsibilities of City of Guelph Departments in Development Review**

There are two divisions in the City's administration which have principal roles to carry out relative to growth management and the development review process. The first is the Planning, Building, Engineering and Environment (PBEE) Division and 3 of its departments: Planning, Building and Engineering Services. The second is the Finance & Enterprise Division principally through Enterprise and its 3 departments: Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative. Enterprise is a new organization (last 6 months) that has brought the three departments together to better coordinate their investment attraction and business service activities.

#### **3.1.1 Planning Services Roles & Responsibilities**

##### **◆ Development Planning Services:**

- Reviews and evaluates development applications including subdivision and condominium plans; land use changes including official plan and zoning by-law amendments, site plans, as well as minor variances and consents (severance and part lot control exemptions);
- Prepares the annual Development Priorities Plan (DPP);
- Administers the City's Environmental Advisory Committee;
- Administers / coordinates the City's River Systems Advisory Committee (RSAC)
- Provides mapping services, zoning review of development applications, front counter / phone inquiry service, landscape plan review, environmental planning review, heritage planning and technical / GIS data analysis services
- Functional guidance for Committee of Adjustment Team; Site Plan Team; Infill/Downtown Team; Greenfield Development Team; Development Priorities Plan Team; Condominium/Subdivision Registration Team

##### **◆ Policy Planning & Urban Design Services:**

- Land use, policy formulation and long range studies
- Establishes strategic directions on a wide range of community planning issues, i.e., Growth Management, Affordable housing, Brownfield sites
- Coordinates community improvement initiatives
- Undertakes urban design and special projects
- Reviews and reports on Federal, Provincial County policy legislation and guidelines
- Undertakes statistical analysis related to population, employment and housing
- Provides heritage planning functions, including support of development review and policy / urban design projects, and supports the Municipal Heritage Committee
- Guidance to Urban Design Team on:
  - Community design projects
  - Major development proposals; undertakes urban design and special projects, and provides urban design guidance and support for large scale, complex and controversial development proposals and major policy projects

### **3.1.2 Engineering Services Roles & Responsibilities**

- ◆ Transportation Planning & Development Engineering
  - Provides a review of development applications relative to the City's transportation, water and other infrastructure-related requirements
  - Manages major municipal infrastructure development projects

### **3.1.3 Building Services Roles & Responsibilities**

- Permit and Zoning Services to support development after approval of development applications
- Inspection Services to ensure development and construction meet building codes
- Administers Committee of Adjustment for minor variances and consent applications

### **3.1.4 Enterprise Services Roles & Responsibilities**

- ◆ Economic Development
  - Brings forward businesses seeking to locate or expand in the City and advises them on the development review process
  - Acts as "Business Champion" in development review process
  - Promotes and markets the City as an excellent place for business and investment
  - Undertakes investment attraction and business retention programs in coordination with other community organizations, e.g. Guelph Chamber of Commerce
  - Works with businesses to make it easier for them to succeed by providing services such as:
    - site location analysis
    - assistance with expansion projects
    - advice and referrals to government agencies and organizations
    - manage and market City-owned industrial lands, e.g. Hanlon Creek Business Park
  - Coordinates with other City businesses and institutions to foster investment and economic development, including the University of Guelph, Guelph Chamber of Commerce, through cooperative business development efforts
  - Operates the Guelph Film Office which encourages film and television production in the City and manages the permitting process
- ◆ Downtown Renewal
  - Promotes investment and intensification in the City's downtown core, seeking to attract new businesses and residential development
  - Manages grants and incentives in conjunction with the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan (CIP), including:
    - Façade Improvement Grant
    - Tax Increment Based grants
    - Feasibility Study Grants
    - Minor Downtown Activation Grant
    - Major Downtown Activation Grant

- ◆ Community Energy Initiative

- Promotes Guelph as a place to invest based on the City's commitment to a sustainable energy future
- Responsible for encouraging wide-scale energy conservation initiatives through new urban development and rehabilitation of existing industrial, commercial and residential buildings through the development review process and other means
- Accesses and leverages funding from other levels of government and develop partnerships with other parties to support energy conservation and green energy production initiatives, e.g. district heating, local electricity production, use of solar technology
- Encourages energy conservation initiatives in cooperation with other City institutions, e.g. Guelph Hydro, University of Guelph and with Guelph business and industry

### 3.2 Expenditures & Staffing

Exhibit 4 following presents the expenditures and staffing for the principal departments involved in growth management and the development review process. As can be seen from the exhibit, expenditures and revenues have been relatively stable taking into account inflation and the impact of Ontario's economic downturn in 2009. Staffing resources have been relatively stable in all departments, with the exception of vacancies.

**Exhibit 4: Expenditures & Staffing of Departments in Development Review Process**

#### Planning & Engineering Expenditures & Staffing

Planning	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Expenditures	\$2,316,200	\$2,672,700	\$2,217,003	\$2,514,160	\$2,567,522	\$2,457,517
Revenues	\$878,000	\$1,028,800	\$703,200	\$701,600	\$821,600	\$826,640
Net Expenditures	\$1,438,200	\$1,643,900	\$1,513,803	\$1,812,560	\$1,745,922	\$1,630,877
FTEs	19	21	23	23	23	21.8

Engineering	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Expenditures	\$4,299,200	\$4,591,900	\$3,097,931	\$3,965,470	\$4,377,730	\$4,066,446
Revenues	\$2,111,000	\$2,453,800	\$2,401,125	\$3,108,965	\$3,596,065	\$2,734,191
Net Expenditures	\$2,188,200	\$2,138,100	\$696,806	\$856,505	\$781,665	\$1,332,255
FTEs	32	33	34	33	36	33.6

### Building Services & Economic Development Expenditures & Staffing

Building Services	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Expenditures	\$2,457,100	\$2,763,600	\$2,523,604	\$2,843,815	\$2,922,880	\$2,702,200
Revenues	\$1,932,200	\$2,223,200	\$1,810,043	\$1,994,100	\$1,995,900	\$1,991,089
Net Expenditures	\$524,900	\$540,400	\$713,561	\$849,715	\$926,980	\$711,111
FTEs	29.5	31	32	27	27	29.3

Economic Development	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average
Expenditures (Salaries, Wages, Benefits)	\$736,300	\$748,200	\$673,500	\$592,600	\$595,772	\$669,274
Expenditures (Marketing)	\$314,800	\$357,400	\$423,500	\$378,600	\$362,420	\$367,344
Revenues	\$209,700	\$192,400	\$169,400	\$176,500	\$182,000	\$186,000
Net Expenditures	\$841,400	\$913,200	\$927,600	\$794,700	\$776,192	\$850,618
FTEs	6.0	6.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.4

Source: City of Guelph Planning, Engineering, Building Services & Economic Development Departments

In Section 4 which follows the development review process as carried out in Guelph is described. Information is also provided on the number of applications processed, housing units approved, registered and started, and other factors impacting the rate of application processing and number of developer submissions.

## **4.0 Current Processing of Development Applications in Guelph**

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### **4.1 Development Review Process**

Exhibit 5 provides a generalized overview of the development review process as it is carried out by the City of Guelph. An application for development can arise either by a private sector developer or landowner submitting an application to the Planning Department, or by a private sector investor or company approaching Enterprise Service's Economic Development department seeking to locate or expand their business in the City. These latter applications are often for industrial development and may involve the City's Hanlon Creek Business Park. A private sector investor or business could also contact the Downtown Renewal department, particularly if they were interested in establishing a commercial business or major residential development in the downtown core. If the investor or business is in the energy sector, or is attracted to Guelph because of its reputation as a sustainable, energy conserving community, it may initially contact the Community Energy Initiative department.

On its website the City provides guidelines and application forms which are to be completed by the private sector proponent of a development. When an application is received by the Planning department it is reviewed relative to the City's Official Plan Update, Zoning Bylaw and other relevant policies and the required information as set out in the application guidelines. The plan review process must meet the requirements of the Ontario Planning Act and its regulations. Included in these requirements is the requirement to review a completed subdivision application within a period of 180 days, and to complete a review of a rezoning application within 120 days, amongst other requirements (provincial standards). The Planning department has the lead role in overseeing the development review process and it is the Planning department that ultimately recommends to Council whether or not the proposed development should be approved. If the application is deemed to be incomplete upon receipt and review by the Planning department, the applicant must revise or add to their application and resubmit it to the Planning department for further review. Concurrent with the initial review by the Planning department or subsequent to a revision by the applicant, the application is reviewed by Engineering, Building Services and other relevant City departments. This may be done in the form of a pre-consultation meeting or the applicant may consult with each department individually. Guelph does not have a mandatory pre-consultation meeting requirement. Often, particularly for subdivision and other major developments, the applicant is required to conduct a series of studies to support their application relative to transportation, environmental and infrastructure impacts.

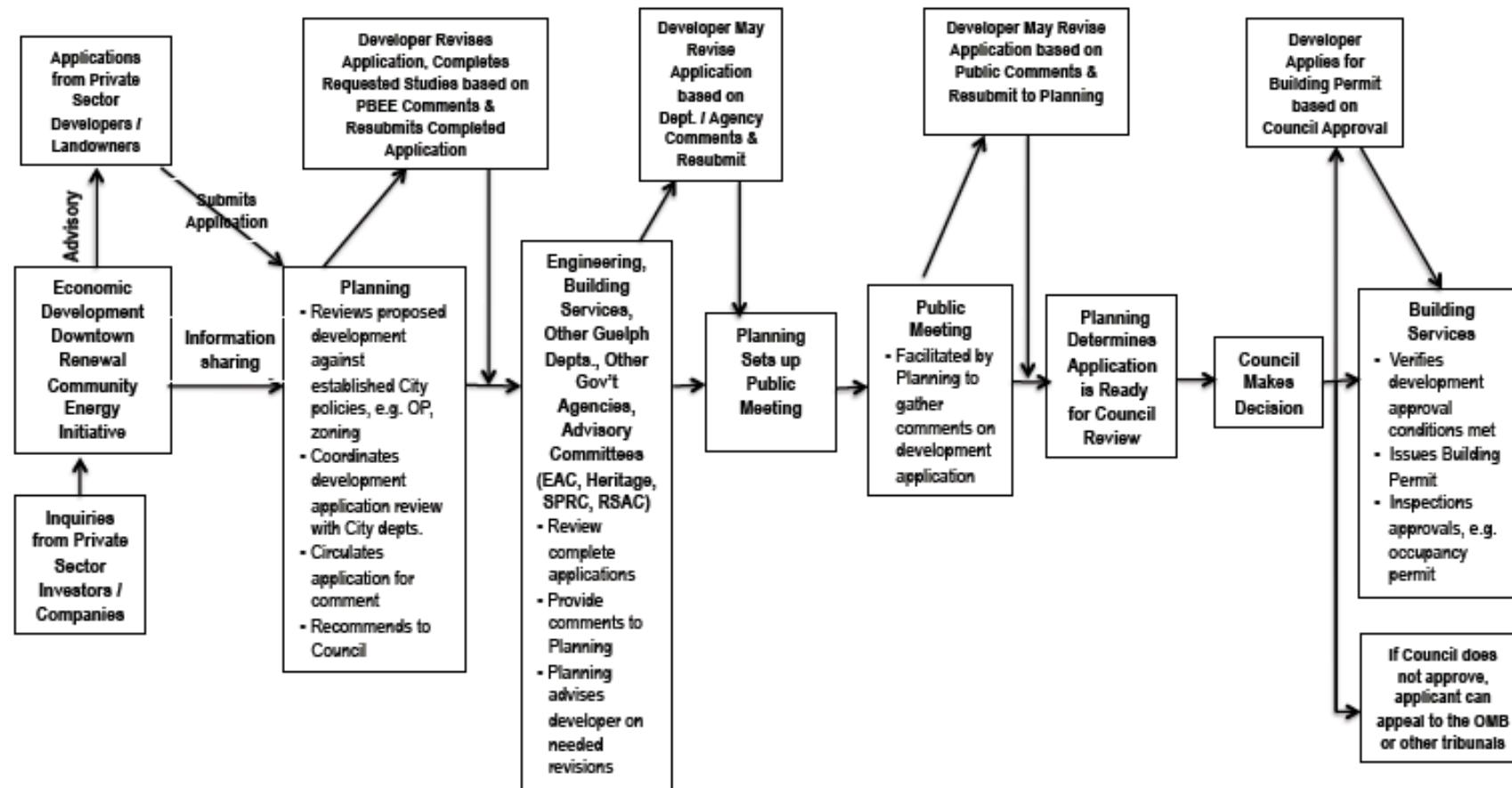
Once the application is deemed complete it is circulated again to other local agencies, e.g. Grand River Conservation Authority, Guelph Hydro, and to one or more advisory committees which have been established by Council or the City to assist it in the review of applications, e.g. the Environmental Advisory Committee, the Heritage Advisory Committee or the Site Plan Review Committee. The applicant is often required to revise the application. At this point, the proposed development can be subject to review by the public through one or more public meetings. At the public meetings, neighbours of the development, community interest groups and members of the general public can provide their views with regard to the proposed development and whether it should be changed in some manner or should be approved or not approved by Council. Following the public meeting(s), the applicant may be asked to revise their proposed development to take into account the feedback from the public and resubmit a revised application to the Planning department. The Guelph community, its community interest groups and other stakeholders are very active in contributing their views to the development review. Planners report high attendance and many comments from the public and these interest groups at public meetings. Responding to these comments and revising applications can lengthen the review process. The Planning department then undertakes a final review of the proposal and recommends a course of action to Council. Council reviews the application and makes a decision to approve or not approve the proposed development.

If the Council approves the development, the developer can then apply to Building Services for a building permit. Building Services will review the application and drawings and issue the permit. If there are conditions to development application approval, Building Services must verify that these conditions have been met prior to issuing the permit, which can be time consuming if the necessary sign-offs from City departments are not available. Following issuance of the permit and as

construction is undertaken, Building Services conducts a series of inspections and upon completion of all required inspections issues an Occupancy Permit which allows the developer and / or building owner to occupy buildings constructed in the development.

Often there are multiple application submissions before an application is deemed complete. This can occur because of poor quality / incomplete submissions by the developer, conflicts with existing City planning policies and requirements, and / or differences in views between City staff and developers relative to the specific aspects of the application. This can add time to the review process and cost to the developer. Also, if Council does not approve an application, the applicant can appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board and other tribunals, e.g. the Ontario Conservation Review Board for heritage designation. These appeals can significantly impact timeframes and staff resources.

#### **Exhibit 5: Development Review Process Overview**



This development review process has several variations based on the type of development being proposed or if a change to a specific City development policy is being requested. The types of applications reviewed by the City include:

- ◆ Applications for subdivision development
- ◆ Applications for site plan approval
- ◆ Applications for land use changes, i.e. re-zonings, Official Plan amendments

If an existing development requires a minor change to an existing approved plan it can be submitted to two other types of review. These reviews are not as detailed or complex in their review and administration requirements. These are minor site variances which are submitted for review by the Committee of Adjustment, which is administered by Building Services, and application for removal of part lot control for review by the Planning department and Council approval. Guidelines and application forms for all of these types of application and processes can be found on the City's website. Flowcharts for Guelph's Subdivision development application review process and Site Plan application review process can be found in Appendix A of this report.

#### **4.2 Applications Received, Reviewed & Resulting Approved Development – Research & Data Analysis**

Exhibit 6 presents an overview of the number of applications received in each of the past 5 years. As can be seen from this exhibit overall subdivision applications and site plan applications do not show a growth trend. However, the number of applications for rezoning has been increasing while the number of applications for Official Plan amendments has been declining.

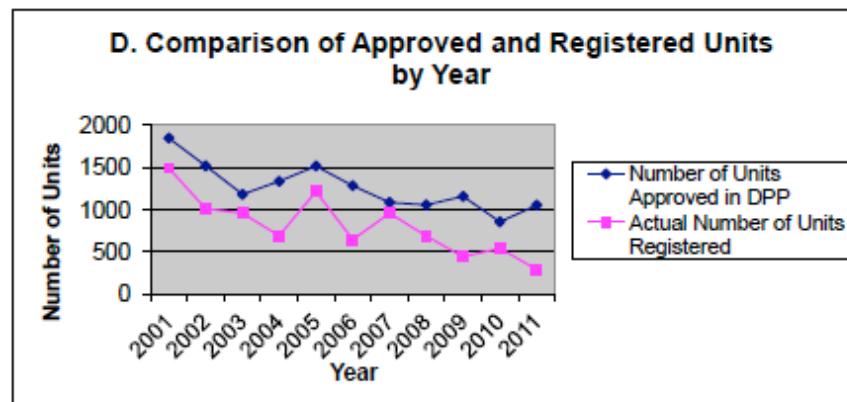
**Exhibit 6: Overview of Applications Received in Past 5 Years**

Total New Applications Received	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Subdivision Development Applications	5	5	1	4	3
Site Plan Applications	76	63	58	45	64
Land Use Change Applications	ZC-2 OP-20	ZC-7 OP-2	ZC-12 OP-0	ZC-10 OP-2	ZC-19 OP-8

Source: Guelph Planning Services Department

As can be seen from Exhibit 7, the number of approved housing units has been declining for the past 10 years. The number of registered housing units has also been declining and is below that which has been approved in each of the previous years by a significant margin. The number of housing units being built has declined due to economic and market conditions.

**Exhibit 7: Comparison of Approved & Registered Housing Units by Year**



*Source: Guelph Site Plan Review Committee 2010 Final Report*

As can be seen in Exhibit 8, based on the greenfield subdivision approved housing units, fewer units are being built than have been approved. The City states in the Guelph Development Priorities Plan that it is expected that the deficit will be made up over time.

## Exhibit 8: Comparison of Actual &amp; Approved Draft Subdivision Plans by Year

	Detached	Semi-detached	Townhouses	Apartments	Total
ACTUAL OVERALL TOTAL (2011)	221	70	167	425	883
APPROVED IN 2011 DPP	304	96	258	668	1326
ACTUAL OVERALL TOTAL (2010)	0	0	0	0	0
APPROVED IN 2010 DPP	156	86	132	230	604
ACTUAL OVERALL TOTAL (2009)	138	42	370	123	673
APPROVED IN 2009 DPP	334	74	549	77	1034
ACTUAL OVERALL TOTAL (2008)	68	94	25	165	352
APPROVED IN 2008 DPP	459	156	123	402	1140
ACTUAL OVERALL TOTAL (2007)	34	0	64	0	98
APPROVED IN 2007 DPP	-	-	-	-	675

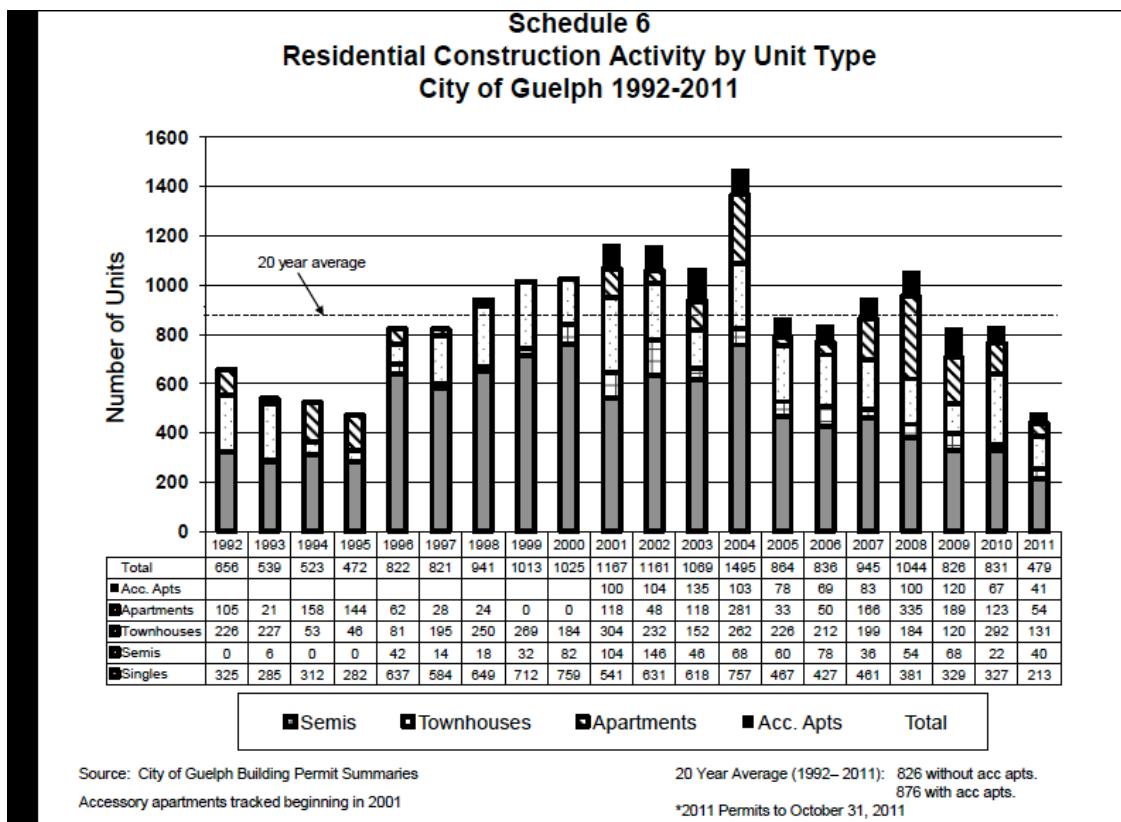
Summary of 2007-2011 Draft Approvals						
Draft Approvals by Year	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	Average
Expected in Approved DPP	1326	604	1034	1140	675	955.8
Actual Draft Approvals	883	0	673	352	98	401.2

Greenfield Draft Plan Approvals – Deficiency	
Based on 600 units per year (for 2007-2011)	
Current Unit Deficit:	994
Plus 2012 allocation:	660
Total:	1654

\* Source: Guelph Development Priorities Plan 2012

Exhibit 9 further illustrates this drop in housing construction. Residential units constructed are below the number approved through plans of subdivision & infill sites and are lower than the targets set in the Growth Management Plan, Official Plan or *Places to Grow*.

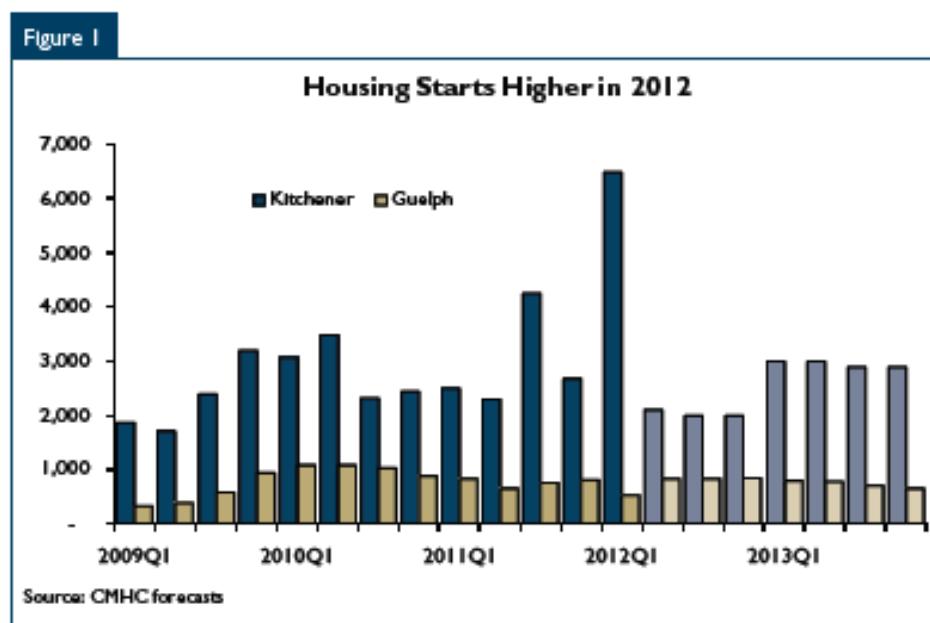
**Exhibit 9: Residential Construction Activity by Unit Type 1992 - 2011**



\* Source: *Guelph Development Priorities Plan 2012*

While housing starts are continuing to grow in recent years in Kitchener, they are continuing to decline in Guelph, as illustrated by Exhibit 10. This is explained in part by the fact that Kitchener has experienced a higher population growth rate than Guelph has over the past 5 years. This may also be as a result of higher house prices in Guelph.

**Exhibit 10: Housing Starts Guelph & Kitchener 2009 – 2013 (F)**



\* The forecasts included in this document are based on information available as of April 27, 2012.

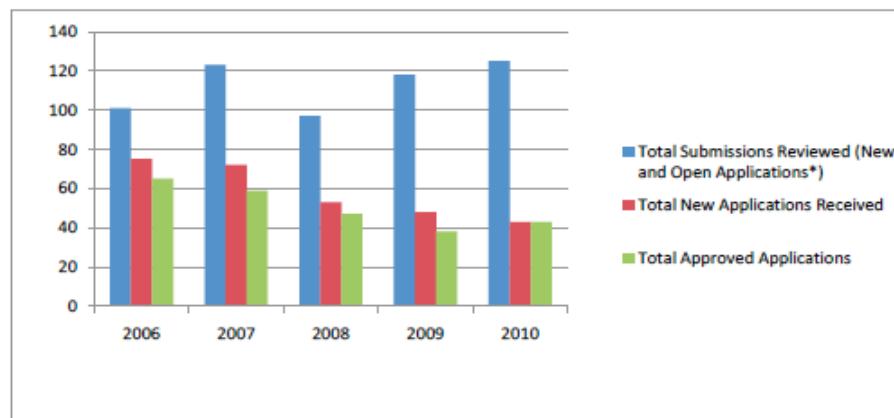
Source: CMHC Housing Market Outlook – Kitchener and Guelph, Spring 2012

#### **4.3 Applications for Site Plan Approval**

Exhibit 11 shows the number of applications for site plan approval from 2006 – 2010. The number of submissions reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) is in the range of 100-120 range annually. There has been a decrease in the number of new applications received by the SPRC over this time period.

**Exhibit 11: Guelph - Applications for Site Plan Approval**

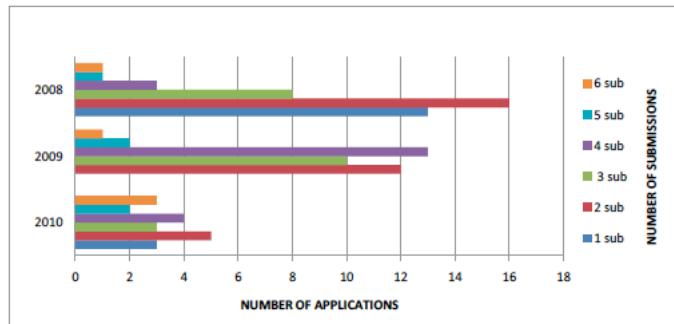
**APPLICATIONS/SUBMISSIONS:**



*Source: Guelph Site Plan Review Committee 2010 Final Report*

While the Planning Department does not track and summarize for management purposes the time it takes for the review of subdivision applications or land use applications, e.g. Official Plan amendments and zoning amendments, it has undertaken a study of the time taken for site plan review applications from initial submission until approval. The SPRC has been seeking to improve its review process and reduce the number of repeat submissions required by developers to obtain approval. As can be seen from Exhibit 12 following, the average time to achieve approval in 2010 was 147.3 calendar days (i.e. includes holidays & weekends). Of the 147.3 calendar days the application was "in the hands" of the applicant 91.3 days, and "in the hands of" the City staff for review 56 days.

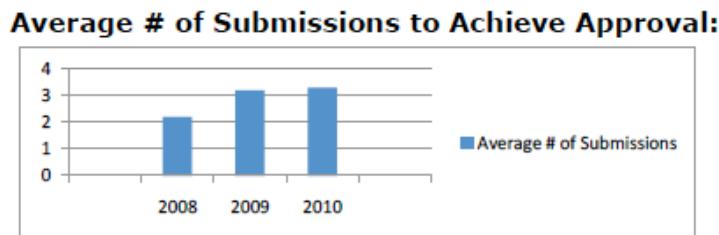
**Exhibit 12: Number of Submissions for Every Approved Application Per Year**



Source: *Guelph Site Plan Review Committee 2010 Final Report*

Trends from 2008 – 2010 indicate that no approved application has taken more than 6 submissions to achieve Site Plan approval. The number of submissions is dependent upon the complexity of the application and the quality of the submission. The number of applications reviewed by staff in any given year does not significantly affect the number of submissions required before granting Site Plan approval.

**Exhibit 13: Average Number of Submissions to Achieve Approval**



Source: *Guelph Site Plan Review Committee 2010 Final Report*

Trends from 2008 to 2010 indicate there is a slight increase in the number of submissions required to achieve Site Plan Approval. This can be associated with a wider circulation of plans to other departments, and more detailed review due to City initiatives (e.g. Urban Design Guidelines, Facility Accessibility Design Guidelines). The average # of submissions in 2010 was 3.3 per application, (one preliminary submission; one formal application and one resubmission).

#### **4.4 Summary Conclusions**

Sections 2, 3 and 4 provide an overview of the City of Guelph's growth, its growth management and approach to development, the roles played by the Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise departments of Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative, the development review process and data on departmental staffing and expenditures and applications processed. Our summary conclusions are as follows:

- ◆ Guelph's population is growing and its rate of growth of 5.9% in the past year exceeds neighbouring cities, with the exception of Kitchener
- ◆ Guelph has put in place a number of strategic policies to manage growth and is seeking to become world leader in sustainable development and energy conservation
- ◆ Managing growth is a complex undertaking involving many stakeholders and is made more complex by the City's goals for sustainable development
- ◆ Planning, Engineering, Building Services and Enterprise have had relatively stable expenditures and staff resources over the past 5 years available for growth management and application processing
- ◆ The development application review process involves a series of steps from initial consultation through provision of a completed application and review by City departments and external agencies, review in public meetings and final review by Council. The time to complete the process can increase if there are multiple application submissions before an application is deemed complete. This can occur because of requirements for additional reports (transportation, environmental, etc.), poor quality / incomplete submissions by the developer, conflicts with existing City planning policies and requirements, and / or differences in views between City staff and developers relative to the specific aspects of the application. As well, concerns expressed in public meetings can add to the approval time frame. This can add time to the review process and cost to the developer
- ◆ There is no data available which would document the average length of time it takes for an application to be processed. Applications are tracked to some degree within individual departments manually, e.g. white boards, excel lists, but no summary data is gathered and reported on monthly. The exception is the review of Site Plan applications where a study was completed looking historically back to 2007 and an analysis completed. This study showed that the time to review a Site Plan application averaged 147 calendar days, with the application in staff hands 56 days – a reasonable period
- ◆ The development review-related workload for City staff is not increasing as the number of applications received has not increased substantially. However, the complexity of the issues to be addressed in the review process has increased due to the City's goals related to sustainable development and the active participation of stakeholders and the public in the development review process and this is impacting workload
- ◆ Subdivision and Site Plan applications received over the past 5 years do not show a growth trend. The number of zoning applications has been increasing, while the number of Official Plan amendments has been declining.

In Section 5 which follows, the results of our benchmarking research with 5 other comparable municipalities is presented. The development review process as carried out by these municipalities is described and best practices which could be of benefit to Guelph identified.

## 5.0 Benchmarking With Other Municipalities – Development Review

The purpose of comparing development review practices in other jurisdictions was to identify best and possible useful approaches that could be applied in Guelph. Five municipalities were chosen for comparison using criteria, including comparable size, location in south and central Ontario, and experiencing significant growth over the past few years. All of the selected municipalities are from the City of Guelph pre-approved list for purposes of comparison such as this. All selected municipalities have been identified in the Phase 1 Scoping Report as having best practices and three of the municipalities were in the top 7 most often mentioned by Guelph stakeholders in this regard as documented in the Scoping Report. Three of the selected municipalities are similar to Guelph in that they have a major university. Cambridge and Kitchener are lower tier municipalities but were included because they are competitive with Guelph for development and have been given subdivision approval authority by Waterloo Region. Exhibit 14 presents an overview of the municipalities selected for benchmarking and the criteria used.

**Exhibit 14: Overview of Benchmark Municipalities & Selection Criteria**

Municipal Benchmarking Review Matrix re: City of Guelph Operational Review Economic Development & Tourism Services, Planning & Building Services & Engineering Services						
Municipalities	Size and Population	Identified as exemplifying “Best Practices” in Pothier Report (* top 7 most often mentioned)	Approved by City of Guelph for Benchmarking Review	Single Tier	Two Tier	University
Guelph	S: 86.72 km <sup>2</sup> P: 121,688		X	X		X
Hamilton	S: 1,138.11 km <sup>2</sup> P: 519,949	X *	X	X		X
London	S: 420.57 km <sup>2</sup> P: 366,151	X	X	X		X
Brantford	S: 72.47 km <sup>2</sup> P: 93,650	X	X	X		
Kitchener	S: 136.89 km <sup>2</sup> P: 219,153	X *	X		X	X
Cambridge	S: 112.86 km <sup>2</sup> P: 126,748	X *	X		X	

### 5.1 Experience & Best Practices in Development Review – Municipal Comparison

#### 5.1.1 Summary of Findings & Best Practices – Hamilton, London, Kitchener, Cambridge, Brantford

All of the selected municipalities must and are carrying out their development review in compliance with the Ontario Planning Act and Ontario Government policies related to development and housing, e.g. the Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy. Based on our interviews, all cities find managing the development process challenging and report that it can be difficult to reconcile all stakeholder interests. There is no one best practices model in place for development application

review. However, there are best practices which are being carried out by a majority of the municipalities and certain practices are placing municipalities in the lead with regard to providing high quality customer service while, at the same time, ensuring that the development which is taking place reflects the municipality's development policies and official plan and zoning requirements. We are also aware of best practices in development review which have been implemented by municipalities not in our benchmarked group. Where appropriate we have included these in this summary. These best practices include:

◆ **Mandatory Pre-consultation Process**

All of the municipalities in our benchmarking review have a mandatory pre-consultation process whereby applicants for development must attend a pre-consultation meeting and submit prior to this meeting an application form and preliminary information which describes the proposed development. Based on this pre-consultation application form, the municipality invites the applicant to a meeting. In some municipalities this meeting occurs on a regularly scheduled basis with an established development review committee which facilitates participation and attendance of all relevant departments and agencies. Municipalities can exempt an applicant from a pre-consultation meeting if it deems the proposed development is minor and that there are minimal issues involved. The mandatory pre-consultation meeting is seen by these municipalities as one of the most important contributors to the timely review of development applications and to the identification of potential development issues or impediments which will need to be addressed at the earliest stage in the application process. The pre-consultation applications are circulated to all relevant city departments and agencies and a representative from each department and agency attends the pre-consultation meeting and provides a description of the expectations which will need to be met once the applicant prepares a formal application for development. If the applicant is required to undertake various studies to complete the development application, these studies are identified at the pre-consultation meeting. The objective of this meeting is to identify early on as many of the relevant issues and requirements as possible and to establish the expectations which the applicant will need to meet. This facilitates the applicant understanding what is required and the applicant's ability to begin the information-gathering process as soon as possible. It also facilitates city departments and agencies to early on assess the implications of any department's requirements on the requirements of others, and to build consensus amongst departments as to what could be a viable solution which the developer can address in his/her application.

Identifying development issues early on also contributes to greater applicant satisfaction with the process as one of the major complaints of the development community in Guelph and elsewhere is that after submitting formal applications and late in the review process, city and / or agency staff identify a major issue which must be addressed and which significantly delays approval. Having a mandatory pre-consultation process also assists the municipal departments, and in particular Planning and Engineering, to manage their workload as they have advance notice of a new application for development. Guelph has an informal pre-consultation process but often formal applications are submitted without any notice and in many cases these do not have all the required information or studies completed. Applicants have often talked to some departments individually in the preparation of their application but this does not allow for a full understanding of the development and its requirements by all departments at the same time. The mandatory pre-consultation process provides for simultaneous review and a consensus as to the most important development issues and their possible resolution.

◆ **Prioritizing Development Applications for Review**

The Phase I Scoping Report identified an issue with regard to the processing of applications involving employment lands, industrial development and other projects that were deemed to be of high priority and supportive of expanding Guelph's tax base and employment in a major way. These applications often began with an inquiry to one of the Enterprise departments, most often Economic Development. These applications were reported as being "parachuted in" by City Planning staff who were requested to give the application immediate attention. All of the municipalities in our

benchmark comparison indicated that they too received this type of application. They indicated that they recognized the importance of these applications but that they processed the applications as they would any other application and did not give them preferential treatment (although they concede they may receive greater attention). They did not see these applications as being an imposition, nor did they view the actions of their Economic Development staff, while often supportive of the application, as being inappropriate.

In our research and drawing on our own experience in other jurisdictions we note that the City of Toronto has determined that applications that would involve significant economic benefits to the City should receive immediate attention. These applications are then designated as "Goldstar Program" applicants and a senior planner and economic development officer are given coordinative responsibility for facilitating the processing of the application through the various City departments and agencies. Application files are marked as Goldstar Program applications which are clearly visible to any department which is involved in the review process. Our interviews would suggest that this is working well for Toronto.

◆ **Development Application Processing**

All municipalities indicated that they assign dedicated staff for each application and provide ongoing support and oversight by the Manager of Planning. Managers indicate they are engaged and monitor applications and help to resolve issues if they arise. They also use staff meetings to discuss policy and its interpretation to ensure consistency in its application. Hamilton and London have regularly scheduled review meetings which ensure participation by all relevant departments and agencies to expedite approval processes. London has developed a File Manager system with specific timeframes and standards established for each step in their review processes. London has also clearly described processes and standards with supporting documentation for each of their development review processes.

The City of Hamilton has effectively streamlined its Site Plan process, modelling it to generally follow the Draft Plan of Subdivision process. The process is coordinated by the Planning Department; applicants are required to complete a form and there is a municipal application fee for this process. For initial Site Plan submission, applicants are required to provide a Site Plan, a preliminary Grading Plan and Building Elevations. The Planner responsible for the file, circulates it to other members of the DRC and if necessary to outside agencies. Comments are required within 3 weeks. The comments are circulated to the applicant, and the applicant is invited to a subsequent DRC meeting. At the conclusion of the review the DRC and the applicant go over all of the standard conditions and identify with a check mark those conditions which apply. The applicant then leaves the DRC meeting with formal Conditional Site Plan Approval.

Like Guelph, most cities we have benchmarked use software like Amanda to register paper-based applications. London and Hamilton have developed more advanced file management systems with digital document management and tracking of applications. Hamilton also tracks staff time through timesheets. The City of Mississauga has developed a file management system that is fully digital and accessible over the Internet. Departments and agencies file their comments on applications electronically. Applicants are provided with a password which allows them to monitor progress on the review of their application, read comments and make inquiries online at any time remotely from the city's offices via the Internet. Like London, Guelph has reviewed the time required for staff to review certain applications and has sought to reduce the number of submissions required for approval.

The City of Mississauga has an even more highly-developed online system which provides password-based developer access to their application file and all comments and reports in real time.

- ◆ **Communications, Conflict Resolution & Customer Service**

All municipalities that we consulted believe that ongoing communication from the beginning of the development application process through to final approval by Council is critically important to providing good customer service and to the overall satisfaction which the stakeholders have with the development review process. Managers also encourage their staff to take a problem-solving approach to their review of development applications. As mentioned earlier, all municipalities designate a planner to have overall responsibility for coordinating the review application and communication with the stakeholders. Hamilton has taken this a step further: first, it has established a “One-Stop” business centre which is the first point of contact for any person wishing to file a development application. This One-Stop business centre can assist a business with acquiring business licenses as well as permits. It is located on the first floor of the City Hall and, therefore, has high visibility. Key components of Hamilton’s customer service related to development applications are three facilitators resident in the business centre. These facilitators have planning expertise and experience, but are not involved directly in the review process. They are available to the applicant to assist in addressing any conflicts or impediments that might arise during the planning review. If a planning issue arises and if it cannot be resolved between the planning staff and the applicant, the applicant can request mediation by the facilitator, who tries to assist the applicant and the planning staff to find a solution acceptable to both parties.

Hamilton also provides a Customer Service Survey on its website which an applicant can complete to provide feedback to the City on customer service experience. London, in addition to establishing a File Manager with clear responsibility for an application, has developed customer service standards for each step in its review process and publishes these on its websites for view by developers and other stakeholders.

Hamilton, London and Kitchener have particularly effective websites to support the development application and review process. Their websites are well organized and it is easy for an applicant to find the relevant information they would need, including development guides and manuals which clearly describe the processes and information requirements. Hamilton has a clear demarcation which directs residents and developers who are interested in development to two separate sections of their website which provide information, recognizing the differing needs, interests and understanding of these two groups. Hamilton also provides informative videos describing some of their application processes, e.g. Committee of Adjustment.

- ◆ **GIS Used to Support Planning, the Application Process & As a Service to Developers**

Several of the municipalities have been making investments in geographic information systems to support city planning and development activities and as a service to assist applicants in the preparation of their development proposals. These municipalities are providing interactive on-line access to maps with city official plan, zoning and infrastructure information. Kitchener, London and Hamilton are particularly advanced in these regards.

- ◆ **Improving the Quality of Applications Received**

One of the concerns identified by Guelph staff, in the Phase 1 Scoping Report and raised in our interviews by other municipalities was the fact that often applicants are submitting applications which are incomplete, having errors and omissions, and do not provide clarity with respect to the development proposed. All of the municipalities that were consulted are now requiring developers to provide complete applications with the required information before an application is reviewed. They have found the mandatory pre-application requirement to be particularly effective, ensuring that complete applications are received. We note that Milton, while not one of our benchmarked municipalities but a municipality which has experienced the fastest growth of any municipality in Ontario in the past 5 years has instituted a policy where an applicant is required to pay additional fees if the

engineering component of the application has been reviewed twice and is still deemed to be incomplete. This additional fee is seen as an incentive to ensure a more timely approval of the application and an appropriate use of staff time.

In the following section we describe in more detail the development review processes undertaken by each municipality.

### **5.1.2 City of Hamilton**

#### ◆ Departmental Roles & the Development Review Process

- The Hamilton Planning Department receives and coordinates the processing of all development applications with Engineering and other relevant city departments (see Organization Chart, Appendix B). Applications are not accepted unless the applicants first go through a formal pre-consultation process; this is mandatory. The City of Hamilton has established a Development Review Committee (DRC) which consists of all departments responsible for land development application processing (Engineering, Forestry, Parks, Legal, Planning, Fire etc).
- Concept plans, draft proposals, preliminary submissions are submitted to the Planning Department for a mandatory Pre-consultation. Planning staff circulate to all relevant departments and comments are requested within three weeks. The City of Hamilton maintains very strict timelines and ensures that there is a maximum 4 week turnaround from the date of application to the DRC meeting. The DRC meetings are scheduled for every Wednesday at hourly increments. Staff from the pertinent departments attend the DRC and the applicant is invited. A form is completed outlining the various concerns and comments from each department and the form also outlines the need for support studies for a formal application together with requisite fees. The owner applicant and all departments sign the form. This form has to be included with any development application. Minor applications or revisions to previous applications can be exempted from the DRC Pre-consultation process. The DRC also deals with Site Plan approvals in much the same manner.
- Formal planning applications are processed by the Planning Department; currently the City is divided into west and east development sections and the manager of the section distributes files to pertinent staff. Depending on the complexity, the file is processed by a Senior Planner, Intermediate Planner or a Planning Technician. With all planning applications having to go through a Pre-consultation process the City can quickly determine whether or not an application is complete and ensure that all the requisite studies have been included. The application is circulated to other departments and agencies with comments expected within a 30 day period. Notice also goes to the Ward Councillor and to all property owners within a 120-meter radius. A Public notice sign is also erected on the property.
- Planning staff endeavour to follow-up with agencies to ensure comments are submitted as quickly as possible. Comments received are automatically circulated to the proponent.
- Upon receipt of comments Planning staff convene a meeting with the owner and agents and try to resolve issues or concerns. Typically within 90-120 days a report is prepared for consideration at Planning Committee. The staff report, the applicant presentation and delegations from the public are presented at the Formal Public Hearing before the Planning Committee.
- Hamilton has an internal tracking system used by planning staff to keep track of development applications. The tracking system and its information, however, are not accessible to the applicant or the public.
- The City of Hamilton has very effectively and efficiently streamlined the Site Plan process. In the past, like most municipalities, Hamilton required a full submission including, Site Plan, Grading and Servicing drawings, Landscaping, Lighting, Stormwater Management and a complete set of

Building Elevations. These would then be reviewed by the various Departments, changes made and coordinated by Planning staff and returned to the applicant for negotiations and revisions. This was a cumbersome time consuming process, which resulted in significant delays and costs to the industry. For example, the removal of one parking space on a site plan triggered revisions to all of the drawings and the need for a full re-submission of everything.

- In an effort to streamline the Site Plan process, the City of Hamilton has modelled it to generally follow the Draft Plan of Subdivision process. The City established a Development Review Committee (DRC) which consists of all the Departments involved with Land Development matters (Zoning, Building, Legal, Planning Recreation & Parks, Fire, Growth Management) etc. This Committee meets every Wednesday and deals with development requests, new development applications and site plan approvals. The process is coordinated by the Planning Department; applicants are required to complete a form and there is a municipal application fee for this process. A key aspect of the streamlined site plan approval process has been the delegation of approval authority to the Director of Planning and Manager of Development Planning. For initial Site Plan submission, applicants are required to provide a Site Plan, a preliminary Grading Plan and Building Elevations. All other drawings are not necessary at this time. The Planner responsible for the file, circulates it to other members of the DRC and if necessary to outside agencies. Comments are required within 3 weeks. This response time is mandatory and one of the key cornerstones resulting in the success of the Hamilton Site Plan process. The comments are circulated to the applicant, and the applicant is invited to a subsequent DRC meeting. Applications are scheduled every hour and the drawings are reviewed and any necessary changes or concerns are marked on the drawings. The City has a standard form 'Site Plan Conditions' document which contains a list of standard site plan conditions. At the conclusion of the review the DRC and the applicant go over all of the standard conditions and identify with a check mark those conditions which apply, including any special conditions. The applicant then leaves the DRC meeting with formal Conditional Site Plan Approval. Owner/agent is sent a letter outlining the conditions and a copy of the stamped, redlined approved plans and is required to sign, date and return copy to the Planner within 5 days. Approval is good for one year. Hamilton prides itself on giving such site plan approval generally within a 4 week turn around period.
- Following receipt of Conditional Site Plan Approval, the applicant is responsible for satisfying the identified Conditions of Approval. This will typically involve revising the Site Plan in accordance with the comments received and then submitting the Grading, Servicing and Landscaping drawings to correspond with the approved Site Plan. The applicant's various consultants work with their municipal counterparts in finalizing and fine tuning their respective drawings. For example a Consulting Engineer will work with Public Works staff in finalizing the grading and servicing details while the applicants Landscape Designer works with their municipal counterparts in finalizing the landscaping components. All are working from the same approved site plan and thereby multiple submissions are eliminated and the onus is on the applicant to prepare all final plans and drawings and to satisfy all the conditions of Site Plan Approval. Zoning conformity is an integral part of the Conditions of Site Plan Approval, and if variances are involved, a standard condition is to obtain variance approval. The applicant is provided a degree of certainty with Conditional Site Plan Approval in that all variances have been identified and can be dealt with following Conditional Site Plan Approval. Under the previous system, variances were the last thing to be obtained and could not be applied for until formal Site Plan approval had been issued leaving uncertainty for the developer. Now, with Conditional Site Plan approval, the Site Plan will not change further and no additional variances would be created.
- When all site plan conditions have been satisfied, these are reviewed by the Planning Department. A Site Plan Agreement generally is not required, as the owner signs an undertaking on the actual face of the Site Plan. Any Special Conditions of Site Plan Approval are also included within this undertaking. Securities are provided for the site works, and the applicant has a choice between providing securities based on a lump sum calculation using unit costs for servicing, asphalt, curbing and landscaping, or alternatively, can provide the City with a detailed cost estimate in

order to determine the value of securities. Upon receipt of final plans with a signed undertaking and securities, the Planning Department then issues final Site Plan Approval and immediately forwards a memorandum to the Building Department indicating that Site Plan Approval has been obtained and that Building Permits can be issued.

- The Hamilton Site Plan process works very well, and helps eliminate delays and unnecessary costs for the development industry and duplication of work for planners. Multiple submissions are avoided and Site Plan applications are processed more quickly. Most of the delays encountered are as a result of the applicant having to complete final plans and obtain clearances for the Draft Site Plan Conditions. The City of Hamilton also has different fees and processes dealing with modifications to existing Site Plans and/or exemptions.

◆ Public Involvement in Development Review

- Hamilton has a Public Consultation Policy relative to applications for Official Plan Amendments, Re-zonings and new Plans of Subdivision. Following receipt of a complete application notice is sent to all property owners within 120m, as well as Ward Councillor, explaining nature and effect of application(s), with a request to advise Department of any concerns or support for the application(s) within 21 days. Concerns are addressed in staff report a copy of which is forwarded to all respondents within one week of the Public Meeting date. Alternatively, the applicant can hold a Community Information Meeting prior to submission of the application where Manager of Development Planning, Ward Councillor and all property owners within 120m have been provided individual invitations. Applicant is required to submit requisite documentation (e.g. minutes, comment cards, list of attendees, etc.) with formal application. This enhanced public participation process contributes to a collaborative approach which recognizes the interests of all parties in an effort to reconcile conflicts.

◆ Key Operational Issues Impacting Application Process & How they are Being Addressed

- The mandatory pre-consultation process ensures that complete applications are submitted and thereby allows the City to maintain the timelines established under the Planning Act. Most departments co-operate and development applications are given immediate review and processing. The use of the DRC has really streamlined in the development approval process and the applicant can meet with all the departments at one sitting and resolve issues to the satisfaction of the departments.

◆ Management of Development Review Process & Performance Measures

- Applicants are tracked internally by the Planning department. Staff also complete timesheets and charge their time to each project. This allows the Project Managers to properly track both staff involvement and processing of application. Planning applications fees are based on a summary of yearly time sheet information. Fees are adjusted accordingly.
- Hamilton Site Plan process is unique in that it is treated the same as the Draft Plan process. Applicants submit Grading Plan, Site Plan and Building Elevations which are reviewed by the DRC and within 4 weeks Conditional Site Plan approval is issued. At the DRC meeting a form letter containing standard Site Plan conditions is prepared so that at the end of the DRC meeting the applicant walks away with formal Conditional Site Plan approval. The onus is on the applicant to prepare final Grading, final Landscaping, final Grading and Servicing Plans and work with each department to get the approval and clear all conditions to get final Site Plan approval. We are not aware of any other Municipality in Southern Ontario that processes a Site Plan and grants conditional approval within a 4-week period.
- Hamilton has a complement of 53.5 management and planning staff involved with development review. (see organization Chart Appendix B).

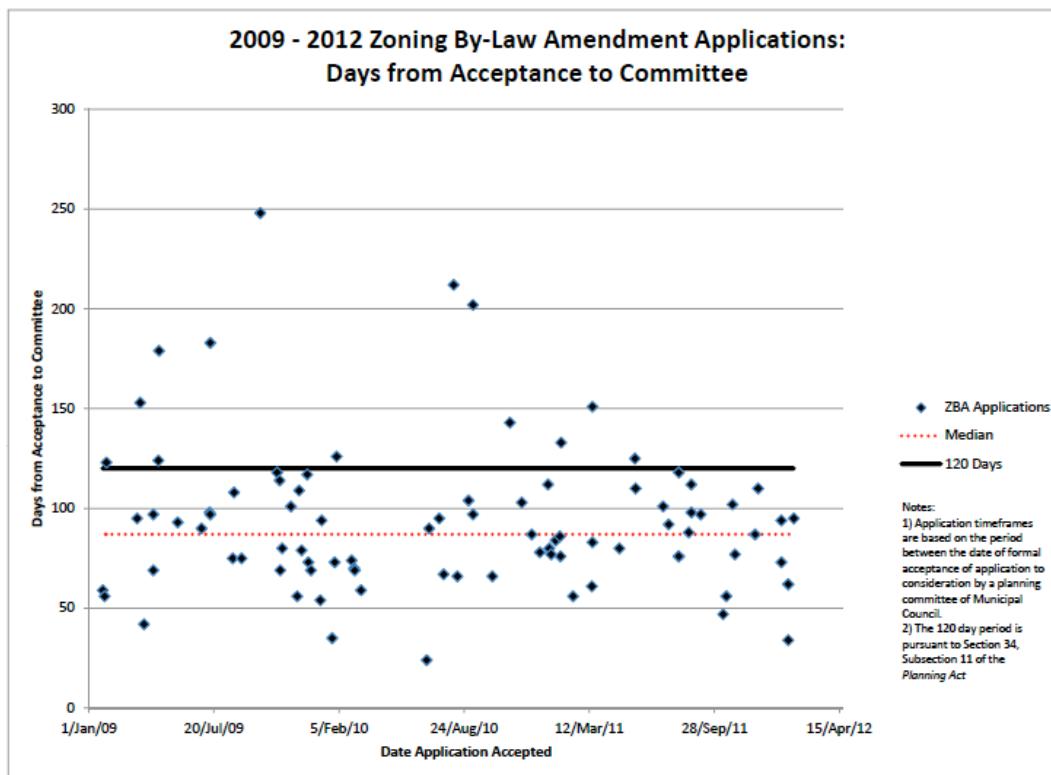
- City of Hamilton also has Business Facilitation staff that are responsible for troubleshooting applications and addressing application processing difficulties. In essence they operate similar to an Ombudsman in that they help expedite processing, coordinate problem solving and reduce delays. These staff are part of the Planning department but operate independently and deal with many issues, including development application processing, Zoning issues, Licensing, and others. These staff have been instrumental in reducing planning approval delays and coordinating problem solving.
- Hamilton has established a “one stop” business centre and services to assist business to access City services including preparation of development applications, building permits and business licenses. The Business Facilitators are located in the centre and the centre is located on the first floor of City Hall where it is very visible to the public. Also, City staff are accessible in the evening once a week to receive building permit applications.
- ◆ Coordination with Economic Development, Downtown Renewal & Community Energy Initiatives Relative to New Investment Development Opportunities
  - Economic Development is part of the overall planning department and reports to the same General Manager. As such new business applications can be immediately brought forward through the planning approval process.
  - Applications are not prioritized; however, should a large industrial firm come forward, staff endeavour to expedite approval. This has not however resulted in conflicts.
- ◆ Downtown Renewal and/or Community Energy involvement in Development
  - Hamilton has Downtown Renewal and various grant programs available to help stimulate downtown development. No community energy is in place. Hamilton also has grants available for Brownfield remediation and site clean-up. The City has also a number of other Committees involved with land development including Heritage and an Environmental Committee.
- ◆ Best Practices / Features of Development Review Process in Hamilton
  - Very timely development review process.
  - Extensive use of the DRC to expedite development applications and to coordinate municipal departments.
  - Fixed scheduling of DRC meeting (every Wednesday).
  - Mandatory Pre –consultation.
  - Highly efficient site plan review process which gives applicants assurance that their applications will be accepted if conditions are met, and a process which limits the requirements to change all documents as a result of a change requested by one department to their part of the application.
  - Business Facilitators to mediate and resolve conflicts between applicants and city staff.
  - “One stop” business service centre to assist business and developers to access City services, including development-related services.

### **5.1.3 City of London**

- ◆ Departmental Roles & the Development Review Process
  - The City of London processes a full range of development applications similar to most Southern Ontario Municipalities
  - There are three service areas that are coordinated to address planning and development approvals in London - Development Services, Planning, and Engineering. Development Services is involved with the review of site plan, subdivision and consent applications, as well as processing building applications. Processing minor variances will soon be moved to Development Services from Planning. Planning is responsible for processing Official Plan and zoning amendments, as well as developing planning policy.
  - Every application that is processed in Development Services is assigned a File Manager – there are two staff persons in this role, one for the east of the city and one for the west. Their role is to coordinate the City review and comments and to keep the review process moving. They are also responsible for the “big picture” – workload, consistency of comments etc. Reporting to each File Manager are two planners, a landscape architect, a site plan officer and technical support person who work as a team. This process has been in place for a few years. There was a buy-in and adjustment period, and the system is still not without issues. However, it is improving as the “cultural shift” is made.
  - Planning management and staff complement is 44.
  - Calls coming in on applications are logged in Amanda however, so all staff are aware of previous comments to the developer during any subsequent contact.
  - London uses Livelink to store applications, plans, comments etc. electronically; these can be viewed internally but not by developers or the public. The City is moving in the direction of making more information available externally.
  - London also uses AMANDA extensively in the Building department to keep track of building permit applications, however, not too much in other areas. The City realizes they are not using AMANDA to its full potential and have plans to develop it further.
  - Councillor's get circulated applications within their wards. Generally councillors deal only with the manager/directors and avoid staff contact in regards to development applications.
  - Inquiry: Developer comes in and gives a high level overview of the proposal. City advises what the process will be and what they will require to do.
  - Proposal/Pre-application: Developer submits a proposal in writing and this initiates a mandatory pre-application procedure. The City commits to responding within 2 weeks with any issues and requirements (basically staff's opinion on the proposal). A meeting is held with a written summary produced. This ensures the City requirements are clear and avoids “surprises” e.g. unanticipated requirements later in the process.
  - The developer then makes their application and City commits to processing a re-zoning within 3 to 4 months and an Official Plan Amendment within 6 months (the average processing times are less than the statutory requirements).
  - The site plan review process is very straightforward and the process is streamlined. The subdivision process by its nature tends to be more complex.

- EAPAC, Transportation, Heritage Advisory, and Agricultural Committees are volunteer advisory committees that report directly to council. There is a staff person assigned to each committee .Selected applications are reviewed by the committees based on the nature of the application. Typically the City finds there are not too many issues.
  - Plans are sent to committees such as Environment for review but committees are aware of the tight schedule for review; if their comments are not received in time for the next review committee meeting, they are not considered.
  - London has an Urban Design Peer Review Panel made up of volunteers. They review those applications which meet certain criteria (currently approx 50 per year). The Panel has an advisory role to staff. Initially developers were somewhat concerned but they have come to see the benefit. Council is more inclined to approve an application that has had objective review and developers value the level of input from senior professionals they receive at no cost. The comments from the committee are advisory not binding.
- ◆ Public Involvement in Development Review
    - Public participation in the development review process is encouraged through committee participation and through public meetings.
    - Depending on application, developers are encouraged to have a neighbourhood/community meeting early in the process.
    - Public meetings are held at end of approval process in front of council.
  - ◆ Key Operational Issues Impacting Application Process & How they are Being Addressed
    - London does not prioritize applications and does not have a fast track process – “all applications are expedited”.
    - London has performance targets for the timing of application processing based on provincial standards and monitors progress against these time standards. This is particularly the case of OP amendments and rezoning applications where they monitor all applications and review these applications which are “outliers” to assess factors leading to delays or too rapid an approval (see Exhibit 15).
    - London is moving toward e-services to attempt to expedite applications.

**Exhibit 15: 2009-2012 Zoning By-Law Amendment Applications: Days from Acceptance to Committee (An Example of Performance Monitoring)**



Source: City of London

Management of Development Review Process & Performance measurement

- Planning monitors the length of time to process applications for OP and rezoning and analyzes the results. This analysis is of both types of outliers – those applications which were processed quickly and those that have taken a longer time. Those applications which were processed quickly are analyzed both for best practices and to ensure due diligence was done. The applications which took longer to reach the approval stage are examined to see if they could have been expedited in some way.
- ◆ Coordination with Economic Development, Downtown Renewal & Community Energy Initiatives Relative to New Investment Development Opportunities
  - Economic development is the responsibility of the London Economic Development Commission (LEDC) which is a separate economic development agency independent of City Hall

- LEDC is informed of all applications and only gets involved when needed. If LEDC has a known lead on a large project, London's planning, engineering and building services managers will prepare for this by getting a team together in advance.
- ◆ Best Practices / Features of Development Review Process in London
  - London requires an early mandatory pre-consultation, together with the submission of complete applications prior to formal development application review to ensure that all development issues and requirements are identified early on and to inform developers what is required to gain approval of their applications.
  - London has designated file managers who coordinate development review with a supportive team approach.
  - London monitors its application processing against published performance standards and uses the information for management purposes.
  - London tracks and reviews applications as a whole relative to the time taken for processing as a means to improve their review process and also to ensure due diligence is undertaken. e.g. OP and zoning amendments
  - London has an Urban Design Review Panel made up of professionals from the community who volunteer. Selected applications are referred to them for comment which is seen as beneficial and providing additional input on design issues which can sometimes be contentious.
  - London's Official Plan and zoning application processing is timely and expeditious and most applications are processed well within provincial standards.

#### **5.1.4 City of Kitchener**

##### **City of Kitchener's Approach to Development Review**

- ◆ Departmental Roles & the Development Review Process
  - All applications are received by and processed by Kitchener's Planning Division.
  - Each application type (i.e. site, subdivision) has its own process and submission requirements. Processes are described on Kitchener's website.
  - There is internal protocol (procedure manual) for staff to follow in processing each application type. This includes timing of recommendation to council, form letters, circulation and contact lists.
  - Kitchener has adopted a complete application process. As prerequisite to submission of any development application, the proponent must participate in a mandatory pre-submission consultation meeting.
  - Pre-submission consultation involves Kitchener departments, external agencies (e.g., Region, GRCA, school boards, etc.). Proponent completes a pre-submission consultation application form with the required information which is circulated for review and comments. A pre-submission consultation meeting is then scheduled where proponent hears from each department or agency as to what they require in the formal application. A written meeting report identifying submission requirements is provided by City staff. Participation by departments and agencies is expected to be comprehensive to minimize surprises or requests for further information following formal submission.

- There are committees involved in development review process. Heritage Committee and Environment Committee are made up of individuals with experience or interest in field. The Heritage Committee reviews heritage impact statements that accompany planning applications and provides comments and recommendations to staff, which in turn is incorporated into staff report and discussed along with all other circulation input. The Environment Committee carries out a similar role with respect to Environmental Assessments and some environmental studies that are sometimes connected to development applications. Committees do not report directly to Council on typical planning applications. The Heritage Committee does report directly to Council on heritage permits (referred to as alteration permits in the OHA) and heritage designations under Part IV and Part V of the OHA which are sometimes connected to development applications.
  - Planning applications are assigned to staff by a manager based on a number of factors which may include workload, experience or history with the site.
  - Applications are assigned by the Planning Division Manager to a staff Planner. The Planner is responsible for the entire development review process from submission through to decision as file manager.
  - File manager is contact person for applicant, developer and public.
  - Applications are not prioritized and there is no need to do this because of manner in which applications are assigned. There is no fast tracking of any individual applications.
  - Kitchener Planning staff circulates applications based on type as prescribed by Planning Act as well as to other agencies it deems appropriate. Application is also circulated to other internal City Departments. Ward Councillor is copied on initial notice of application.
  - The assigned Planner, whether it be senior or junior level, is responsible for the process and recommendations. Planners are empowered to make recommendations and decisions. There is good support system within the Division to provide assistance to the planner if and when issues arise regarding an application. Section manager and Director ultimately have to sign off on all planning recommendations to Council.
  - Planning is a Division within Community Services and is comprised of 28 manager and staff in total, excluding Sign & Dependency Permit Administrator (see Organization Chart, Appendix B).
  - Kitchener utilizes Amanda as a tracking system. It is managed by two full-time staff assigned to program, input and update information. Everyone involved in development review has access to view Amanda and can update within their area of responsibility. System is set up to do more than record information; letters, conversations and reports outside of the formal application process are uploaded into Amanda so that Kitchener has a proper history of who has said what, etc. in advance of pre-submission and application. Serves as check to confirm that specific steps, approvals or releases have been issued
  - A building permit is not issued until all required information has been entered into Amanda.
  - Kitchener also enters all counter contacts with property owners, developers etc. in Amanda using street address or property identifier.
  - Kitchener also has a well developed GIS and mapping capability to support its planning activities and as a service to those preparing development applications
- ◆ Public Involvement in Development Review

- Most Planning applications require that at least one public meeting be held. City of Kitchener holds its statutory public meeting at end of process after all of the issues pertaining to departments and agencies have been identified and addressed if possible. The public is then fully aware of what the issues were and how they were addressed, what is still outstanding and staff recommendation. It is an opportunity for public to advise Council of its concerns with the knowledge of knowing how everyone else in the process has dealt with the application.
- Public meeting is held with Council in attendance, it is only opportunity for public to express views to all of Council in an open forum.
- Holding of an informal Open House meeting in early stages for certain types of applications or where it is determined that there may be high level of interest or concern, has been beneficial to all parties. The meetings are usually attended by the ward councillor and occasionally by a handful of councillors
- Occasionally there is direct contact by developers or public with Councillors outside of formal meetings as part of the process. City Councillors also contact Division managers if they have any questions about an application. If someone is not satisfied with potential outcome of a planning application, their only recourse in advance of a formal decision is to Council on a particular issue at the Public Meeting as part of the public process. The City has procedure for hearing delegations. If someone is still not satisfied, their only recourse after Council decision is an appeal to OMB.
- ◆ Key Operational Issues Impacting Application Process & How they are Being Addressed
  - Kitchener has adopted a complete application process. As a prerequisite to submission of any Planning application, the proponent must participate in a formal pre-submission consultation.
- ◆ Management of Development Review Process & Performance Measures
  - Planning Act sets target dates for certain types of applications; Kitchener makes best efforts to follow these timelines.
  - Kitchener does not track precise % of cost recovery related to application fees, not evaluated.
  - Kitchener believes that Planning serves more than the interests of development industry; as a result some of the cost of the development review process should be absorbed by taxpayers. Revenue is shared with other divisions including Engineering.
- ◆ Coordination with Economic Development, Downtown Renewal & Community Energy Initiatives Relative to New Investment Development Opportunities
  - Economic Development Division's involvement in planning applications is focused primarily on downtown redevelopment, brownfields, the marketing of potential development sites and is first line of contact for new industry.
  - The City has adopted a 'Growth Management Strategy' which mandates a biannual Growth Management Plan which identifies existing and proposed subdivision locations, project status, development requirements, studies and reports on municipal infrastructure needs. These sites are then categorized by A, B C priority based on when services available, dependence upon other developments, completion of supporting information and when various approvals would be considered.
- ◆ Best Practices / Features of Development Review Process in Kitchener
  - Complete application process as prerequisite to Planning application review.

- Mandatory pre-submission consultation meeting required to ensure that development issues and requirements are identified early to expedite application preparation and review process
- Taking full advantage of Amanda as file management tool. Reports and correspondence are digitized and uploaded to the system with information accessible to all departments involved in development review
- GIS / interactive mapping to support application preparation
- Development Manual and Development Handbook– comprehensive guides to the development process available on-line
- Urban Design Manual with urban design guidelines and standards provides guidance on City's requirements
- Homebuilder's Liaison Committee, two-way dialogue, information sharing and problem solving

#### **5.1.5 City of Cambridge**

- ◆ Departmental Roles & the Development Review Process
  - All Planning applications are received by and processed by Planning services in consultation with Engineering and other departments.
  - Applications are assigned by the Director to a planner based on workload, complexity, and experience.
  - A planner (file manager) is contact person for applicant, developer and public relative to the processing of each application.
  - A planner is responsible for process and recommendations. Planners are empowered to make recommendations and decisions. Director and other staff provide support and assistance when required.
  - Commissioner/ directors meet weekly to review workload, current applications in process and new application submissions, and will discuss any issues which may have arisen.
  - Cambridge has adopted complete application by-law and requires a mandatory pre-consultation (PC) for all planning applications. Cambridge has a set regular meeting schedule to deal with pre-consultation submissions, i.e. every 3 weeks for site plans, monthly for subdivisions which contributes to timely application review and attendance by all involved City departments and staff.
  - PC submissions are circulated to relevant departments and responses submitted to the planner responsible for the application. A PC meeting is held with the applicant and all agencies and departments with an interest. Issues and submission requirements are identified and minutes are generated and sent to the applicant so that it is clear to the applicant what is required for approval of their application.
  - Upon receipt of formal application, staff determine within 30 days if the application is complete and advise applicant accordingly. The City circulates all applications as prescribed by the Planning Act based on circulation list generated by clerks department (including ward councilor).
  - Following receipt of circulation comments, staff prepare circulation report and work with the applicant to resolve issues. This is followed by staff recommendations and report to council.
  - Each application type i.e. site, subdivision has its own process and submission requirements, info other than application forms is not on website.

- Cambridge's Planning Operations and Policy Planning departments each have a director and are involved in development review.
- Cambridge has a number of advisory Committees to the planning process: they include: Heritage, Environmental, Economic, Trails. Core Area. Applications are not circulated to committees; should they become aware of or wish to participate, Committee comments are submitted to Planner.
- There are 17 planning involved in development review. This does not include Engineering staff who report to the Director of Planning Operations (see Organization chart in Appendix B).
- Cambridge utilizes Amanda as a tracking system for building permits and is looking into expanding it as a development application tracking resource.
- Amanda is also used to track committee of adjustment applications.
- ◆ Public Involvement in Development Review
  - Staff schedule statutory public meeting within 30 to 35 days, place notice in local paper on Wednesdays.
  - Applicant presents proposal at public meeting.
  - Commissioner contacts ward councillor to determine if an informal neighbourhood meeting would be beneficial.
- ◆ Key Operational Issues Impacting Application Process & How they are Being Addressed
  - Cambridge has adopted a complete application process, as prerequisite to review of any Planning application. Incomplete applications are not accepted.
- ◆ Management of Development Review Process & Performance Measures
  - Planning Services tracks development application through regular updates of 'Project Process Chart'. Application timelines are scheduled i.e. receipt, due dates for reports, circulation, committee dates. Staff monitor this information and adjust scheduling to manage staff workload, number and types of applications coming forward at same time. For example, minimize number of complex applications being on same Council agenda.
  - Staff track and record neighbourhood meetings.
  - Cambridge does not track % of cost recovery related to application fees; fees are based on what is deemed to be reasonable rates.
  - Cambridge has a development manual for engineering standards and guidelines. Cambridge reports that adherence to these requirements makes it easier for applicants, reduces delays and reduces the need to review multiple submissions.
  - Cambridge reports that the quality of applicant submissions impacts the time for review; better quality applications move faster and reduce staff time.
- ◆ Coordination with Economic Development, Downtown Renewal & Community Energy Initiatives Relative to New Investment Development Opportunities
  - Economic Development participates in the development review process, and provides comments on development applications.

- Applications are not prioritized; the better the quality of submission the faster it moves through process. Do not fast track individual applications. Acknowledge that, should a high priority project come along, appropriate resources would be diverted as needed.
- In addition to its role in development review, city Economic Development Department also manages acquisition, development and sale of City developed industrial land.
- ◆ Best Practices / Features of Development Review Process in Cambridge
  - Mandatory pre-consultation required.
  - Compliance with legislative and locally applied timelines.
  - Fixed scheduling of pre-consultation and subdivision review meetings to ensure attendance by relevant City and agency staff.
  - Neighbourhood meetings early in process based on type of application or potential issues.

#### **5.1.6 City of Brantford**

- ◆ Departmental Roles & the Development Review Process
  - The City of Brantford was one of the first municipalities in Ontario to be delegated subdivision approval powers by the province of Ontario. Brantford has experienced significant growth with the recent completion of the 403 and the City has a business park within which they own and sell industrial land. As planning applications are received they are referred to an appropriate member of the Planning staff based on knowledge, experience and complexity of the project. In the past, the City would have one planner doing Site Plans another doing Re-Zoning and another one doing Variance and Severances. Now Brantford is in the process of revising their process so that the same planner is responsible for one proponent's applications which could include any of these activities. The reason for this is to create continuity and take advantage of project knowledge with the individual who processed previous applications. Brantford sees this as a major factor supporting efficient and effective development application processing.
  - The City has a mandatory pre-consultation requirement and any new application must go through a formal pre-consultation process. The other departments involved with land development include Building, , Public Works, Servicing Transportation, Waste, Transit, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Corporate Services, Legal & Finance. The pre-consultation process is generally a 3-4 week process and involves circulation of the pre-consultation application form to all pertinent municipal departments and outside agencies. Brantford reports a quick turnaround and most departments comply with the circulation requirements and provide comments in a timely manner. Any delays are pursued by Planning staff. The pre-consultation process is discussed with the applicants who attend the meeting with all relevant departmental staff so that they fully understand the development opportunities and constraints. The pre-consultation process is required for applications to amend the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw, Plans of Subdivision and Condominium and Site Plans. It identifies the necessary support studies and any additional requirements if the development is in the downtown or along a corridor. Urban Design guidelines are in the process of being developed to provide further guidance to applicants. The City has developed design guidelines for specific areas but is also developing a comprehensive set of Design Guidelines to assist the development community. The City is also preparing a Site Plan manual to help applicants through the Site Plan process.

- The City has a full range of development staff including senior, junior, intermediate Planning staff and Planning Technicians. Each Planner spends some time at the counter dealing with public inquiries although the function is primarily the responsibility of the junior and intermediate planners.. Planning staff regularly meet with the Director and other senior staff to discuss applications and policy issues.
- The department also has policy planners who assist with development application processing and likewise the development planners provide input into new policy initiatives. Planning management and staff complement is 15 (see Organization Chart in Appendix B).
- Brownfield remediation is a big part of the Brantford planning strategy as there are many brownfield sites within the City. A specific Brownfield Planner is on staff and they provide assistance regarding development charges relief and tax increment financing for brownfield sites. The City also is implementing a Downtown Master Plan (and Streetscape Guidelines) as well as a Waterfront Master Plan to help guide development in the downtown and along the Grand River.
- Brantford currently utilizes the Amanda system to track development applications though it is not being used to its full potential. Time tracking is not considered an important issue by the City .Staff do not complete time sheets relative to the time they spend on application review.
- Economic Development initiatives, particularly those involving legal issues are more complex and often require expertise from outside the Planning department. These more complex economic development initiatives are typically handled by the Directors. Senior managers from various departments meet on a regular basis to ensure consistent adherence to municipal objectives and to discuss specific problems and issues with any particular project.
- The City charges for planning applications and they are based on approximately 50% recovery of the Development Planning staff costs. Their fees are currently under review. The volume of application review work has been steady, however, a slight slowdown has occurred recently possibly due to matters related to the economy and aboriginal land claims
- ◆ Public Involvement in Development Review
  - Brantford requires that applications be presented to local residents at an informal 'Ward Meeting' that must be held, prior to applications proceeding to the statutory Public Meeting under the Planning Act. The meeting is chaired by the Ward Councillors who are assisted by Planning Staff and it is an opportunity for the public to ask questions of the proponent in an informal setting. Notes are taken and they form part of the planning report (also containing the staff recommendation) that is considered by Committee of the Whole during the statutory Public Meeting. Public notice signs and direct mail outs, together with newspaper advertisements are frequently used by the Municipality to solicit comments.
- ◆ Key Operational Issues Impacting Application Process & How they are Being Addressed
  - Brantford senior managers did not identify any specific issues affecting the application process and indicated that generally the application process works quite well and that time delays are minimized by having the planners follow up with outstanding issues and items. Complete applications help facilitate the process and early mandatory pre-consultation is also beneficial.
- ◆ Management of Development Review Process & Performance Measures
  - The Directors and the Managers generally follow the status of applications to ensure that unnecessary delays are avoided. Brantford is generally a smaller market and most of the development projects are handled by local builders and local consultants who are very familiar with staff and the

local process. Brantford has not deemed it necessary to develop online application tracking or recording of agency comments. Brantford has not put in place performance measures or customer service standards relative to development review.

- ◆ Coordination with Economic Development, Downtown Renewal & Community Energy Initiatives Relative to New Investment Development Opportunities
  - The Economic Development department undertakes economic development-related marketing in coordination with Brant County. However, there are servicing constraints related to the remaining supply of public industrial land. The City previously developed significant industrial land holdings but, at this time only has a supply of approximately 50-60 acres. The City objective is to create new jobs and taxes and with less land available. Major industrial applications are not formally fast-tracked; however, they are coordinated through the process by Economic Development staff which sees these as a priority for the City. When a high priority project comes along it is given immediate attention and the review process monitored. Brantford has a business retention and business expansion strategy together with Downtown Business Improvement Areas.
- ◆ The City of Brantford has a Downtown Action Committee and a Downtown Action Plan together with local business improvement areas and a number of facade grants and performance grants available. The primary function of the Downtown Action Committee is to act as a liaison among the downtown businesses and to resolve issues such as parking, signage, landscaping and maintenance. The City of Brantford also has a Downtown Master Plan and Streetscape Guidelines.
- ◆ Best Practices / Features of Development Review Process in Brantford
  - The City requires early mandatory pre-consultation, together with the submission of complete applications. This has greatly improved the development review process as key issues are identified up-front and are addressed with the formal submission. The development industry has responded with appropriate reports and thereby facilitates the application processing significantly.
  - Planning Director actively seeks to maintain continuity of review process and comments in the delegation of applications to staff for their review.
  - Designated Brownfields planner helps to facilitate rehabilitation of sites with new development.

In Section 6 which follows we present based on the research and findings presented in Sections 2 – 5 our Assessment of Guelph's development review process and the manner in which it is administered by the Planning, Engineering, Business Services and Enterprise departments of Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative.

## **6.0 Assessment**

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Based on our review of PBEE and Enterprise roles and responsibilities, management and staff interviews and questionnaires, the development review process as carried out by these departments (including processes, procedures and information systems support), our research and data analysis, including file review and case studies and the summary conclusions and our benchmarking and best practices review of other comparable Ontario municipalities we present our overall Assessment.

### **6.1 City Departments & Development Review Process – Operational Strengths**

#### **6.1.1 Professional Staff with a Commitment to the Guelph Community**

PBEE and Enterprise have professional staff who are committed to ensuring that the City of Guelph and its residents continue to benefit from a high quality of life in a healthy and sustainable community. In our interviews and in the responses to our questionnaires we were impressed by the conscientious and thoughtful approach that staff gave to their growth management and development review responsibilities. Staff recognized that the decisions that are made with respect to development have a long-term impact not only for the foreseeable future, but for many generations to come. Staff are working diligently to support Council and its directions, e.g. intensification, downtown development and are seeking to reflect these directions in their review of development applications. They are also mindful that they must abide by the provisions of the Ontario Planning Act and its regulations. They are also aware that development decisions can be challenged at the Ontario Municipal Board. They are, therefore, diligent in ensuring that there is appropriate justification for the positions they take with respect to specific changes or amendments which they request of developers relative to their applications.

#### **6.1.2 PBEE & Enterprise have Completed Major New Policies to Guide Development**

The City of Guelph is seeking to be a leader in sustainable development, in the protection of its natural and heritage assets, and in energy conservation. PBEE and Enterprise staff have developed major new policies to assist Council to guide development to support this leadership role. These policy documents advocate new and innovative approaches which call for an enlightened and state-of-the-art approach to urban development. These policy documents were developed through extensive community consultation involving many different stakeholders in the community. They reflect world-wide research in municipal development and reflect the best practices being pursued by cities elsewhere in Canada, as well as North America and around the world. These policy documents include:

- ◆ City of Guelph Strategic Plan: 2007
- ◆ Community Energy Plan; April 2007
- ◆ City of Guelph Employment Lands Strategy Phase 1, July 2008
- ◆ Urban Design Action Plan; May 2009
- ◆ Prosperity 2020: Economic Development & Tourism Strategy – March 2010
- ◆ Strategic Plan for the Guelph Agri-Innovation Cluster; March 2010
- ◆ Downtown Community Improvement Plan; Updated 2012
- ◆ Downtown Secondary Plan: April 2012
- ◆ Development Priority Plans: 2009-2012
- ◆ Brownfield Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan; February 2012
- ◆ Economic Development & Tourism Services Strategy – Open for Business; February 2012

- ◆ Official Plan Update - Envision Guelph; OPA 48 adopted by Council June 5, 2012 (Has been submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for review and decision)
- ◆ City of Guelph Strategic Planning Framework 2012-16

In so doing, the City has demonstrated that it has responded positively to Ontario Government directions with respect to *Places to Grow*, the Provincial Long Term Affordable Housing Statement, and the Environment Assessment Act.

#### **6.1.3 Supporting Council Direction for Sustainable Development, Heritage & Energy Conservation**

In the City's 2007 Strategic Plan, the Strategic Plan 2011-2016 which has been approved recently, and the Official Plan Update which was adopted by Council in June 2012, PBEE and Enterprise Services management and staff have supported Council's commitment to create a healthy and sustainable community, and to protect its natural and heritage assets. They have also sought to support Council's desire that Guelph be a municipal leader in energy conservation and sustainable development by achieving the goals of its Community Energy Plan. All of the priorities of these plans and related policies have been brought to bear in the development review process. This has made the provision of development review services more challenging as City staff have sought to inform and educate stakeholders, many with differing views of the City's expectations regarding development.

#### **6.1.4 Site Planning Generally Well Coordinated with Some Communications Issues**

Of the principal development review processes, the site planning review process is well managed. The establishment of the Site Planning Review Committee (SPRC), with posted meeting dates, has been effective in bringing together representatives of all departments in one meeting. Developers are provided with the full range of comments on their applications in the site plan review meetings. Meetings are scheduled on a regular basis every two weeks with dates published in advance. The coordinator and review staff monitor the flow of applications and have analyzed the average time taken to process site plan applications and the number of submissions required to obtain approval. The results demonstrate that applications are reviewed by staff in a reasonable length of time (average of 59 days), with an average of 3 submissions being required before approval.

Communications by staff within the meetings can be terse and lacking in diplomacy. A problem-solving approach is not always evident in the comments provided by staff to developers. The lack of up-to-date design guidelines is contributing to these communications issues. More direction from Planning management would be beneficial.

#### **6.1.5 Engineering & Planning Support Key to Guelph's Civic Square Core Redevelopment & Infrastructure Program**

The City of Guelph seized the opportunity presented by the recent federal and provincial infrastructure programs to redevelop City Hall Square, Courts Administration Building, new Transit Hub and Market Square, among other projects. Engineering planned and managed much of the construction of the projects with the assistance of Planning. Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative (CEI) managers and staff were also involved in the completion of these projects.

These projects placed additional demands on departmental managers and staff, particularly given the tight timeframes which had to be met in order to receive funds. Nevertheless, managers and staff continued to support private development and the development review process throughout this period.

### **6.1.6 Focus & Effort on Investment Attraction**

Economic Development, working with Planning and Engineering, was instrumental in establishing the new Hanlon Creek Business Park. This involved complex public-private sector partnership negotiations and management of site development and servicing requirements. Economic Development has also successfully accessed and leveraged funding from other levels of government for its investment attraction activities, e.g. OMAFRA grant - \$100,000. CEI staff, with the support of Economic Development, have attracted Canadian Solar Industries to Guelph, supporting the City's goal of being an Energy Innovation Centre and taking advantage of the provincial Green Energy Act. CEI has helped to establish a partnership with Guelph Hydro to further energy-related investment in the City. Downtown Renewal is working closely with CEI on intensification and district heating projects which are fulfilling Council's objectives to increase employment in the downtown core. Planning Services has prepared the Downtown Secondary Plan and Planning Services and Downtown Renewal are working together on implementation. Implementation of the Downtown Secondary Plan will be a complex interdepartmental and multi-stakeholder collaborative effort, with Planning Services playing a key ongoing lead role in the areas of development review, urban design, heritage planning, administration of the Brownfield CIP and development of updated design guidelines and zoning regulations. Downtown Renewal will also play a key role in this collaborative effort.

### **6.1.7 Permit Administration Efficient & Well-Managed by Building Services**

Building Services is operating an efficient and effective building permit process. It has implemented the computerized Amanda system to track and manage permits, which provides Building Services with property specific information on permits and the completion of subsequent inspections. The Phase I Scoping Report for this operational review noted that there were few concerns expressed by stakeholders. Building Services has recently completed its own operational review with the services of an external consultant and has been actively implementing the recommendations. Building Services has also been helping Planning to utilize Amanda to record planning applications and to support communications regarding public meetings. Building Services staff are working effectively as a team with positive morale.

### **6.1.8 Development-related Fees Competitive with Other Municipalities**

As can be seen from Exhibit 16, Guelph's development related fees are competitive with other south-western Ontario municipalities. For example, subdivision related fees are similar to those charged in Cambridge, Kitchener and London, but significantly lower than those charged in Hamilton. Guelph's fees associated with Official Plan amendments are similar to those in Brantford, Hamilton and London, but lower than Kitchener and Cambridge.

## Exhibit 16: Development-related Planning Fees

City	Site Plan	Subdivision	OP Amendment
Guelph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential - \$119.25/unit</li> <li>• Commercial - \$2,.37/m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Industrial - \$1.47/m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Other - \$300</li> <li>• As Built - \$885</li> <li>• Site Plan Agreements - \$745</li> </ul>	\$7,455 + \$400/ha to max. of \$30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5,215 minor</li> <li>• \$6,810 major</li> </ul>
Brantford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5,309 major</li> <li>• \$1,994 minor</li> </ul>	\$14,233 + \$445/ + ha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6,572 major</li> <li>• \$4,769 minor</li> </ul>
Cambridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3,500 + \$100/ residential unit)</li> <li>• \$3,500 + \$100/100m<sup>2</sup> non- residential building area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$8,000 + \$200/ha</li> <li>• \$8,000 + \$100/unit</li> </ul>	\$8,000
Hamilton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6,240 major + \$250/unit</li> <li>• \$6,240 + \$1/m<sup>2</sup> up to max of 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> for industrial &amp; 50,000m<sup>2</sup> for commercial</li> <li>• \$770 minor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$16,860 + \$530/block</li> <li>• \$16,860 + #110/unit</li> </ul>	\$6,030 Phase 1 \$4,180 Phase 2
Kitchener	\$3,858 + \$77/residential unit	\$7,223 + \$150/ha	\$9,258
London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$750 (3-20 units) + \$40/unit</li> <li>• \$750 (non residential) + \$150/2000m<sup>2</sup> vacant land or,</li> <li>• \$750 + \$150/100m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area in excess of 1000m<sup>2</sup> of existing floor area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$7,500 + \$125/unit single family</li> <li>• \$7,500 + \$250 per block for multiple family, commercial, industrial, institutional</li> </ul>	\$6,000

## **7.0 City Departments & Development Review Process – Operational Improvement Opportunities & Recommendations**

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Our Assessment has identified a number of operational strengths within the Planning, Engineering Building Services and Enterprise Services departments of Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative which are assisting Guelph to achieve its goals of managing growth and developing a sustainable and healthy community for residents and future generations. Our research and analysis has also found operational improvement opportunities which need to be addressed if the City's growth management goals are to be achieved in an efficient as well as effective manner through the development review process. These operational improvements can address existing administrative and organizational problems now and build the City's capabilities and capacity to manage growth in the future.

### **Improved Service Delivery Model for Development Review Needed**

An improved service delivery model is needed whereby management and staff can work more productively together to provide better customer service to the development industry, as well as the community and its stakeholders. What is needed is a service delivery model that is "evolutionary" not "revolutionary" and we are confident that the City can move forward to implement this improved service delivery model successfully. This improved service delivery model has four major inter-dependent components which are:

- ◆ Build a More Adaptive Learning Organization
- ◆ Improve Management Direction, Engagement & Coordination
- ◆ Improve Development Review Processes with Better Coordination, Information Management & Communications with Stakeholders
- ◆ Improve Communications Interdepartmentally and with Stakeholders

#### **7.1 Build a More Adaptive Learning Organization**

Human resources development must be a priority and is key to improving service delivery. This is particularly important for Planning staff but is relevant for staff in other departments as well. Our interview and staff questionnaire responses indicate that there are significant morale issues. There has been a disconnect between management and staff relative to performance expectations. Staff have not seen management as engaged with them in pursuing common goals and sharing with the daily challenges of managing growth, developing policies, processing development applications and coordinating activities interdepartmentally.

Staff do not believe that their work is valued; they do not believe that management provides them with sufficient support in managing the conflicts that arise from the complexity of the development review process and the many stakeholders involved. Reorganizations, dismissals, manager resignations, City financial constraints which have required staff to take leave days without pay, are all contributing factors. There has been a high turnover in positions, particularly in Planning which in the first quarter of 2012 had seven vacancies, including two management positions. While these positions have now been filled, the vacancies which were created have contributed to an increased workload for those who remained. Further, a number of the staff have and will be taking various types of legitimate leave which contributes further to existing staff workload issues and the associated workload needs to be better planned and accommodated.

There has been a lack of team orientation and organization within Planning and, to some extent, within Economic Development. Staff work independently on work that has been assigned to them. When they leave or are away, work on their assignment stops until they return, or the work is assigned to a new or different staff person who has had no exposure to the assigned project or application previously. Changing staff leads on projects and applications is contributing to service delivery issues and is impacting staff morale. The current organization structure and work method does not provide for a team approach where more than one individual has knowledge of an application or project and can provide informed coverage in the event of absence by the main person responsible. A past decision

was taken in Planning to move staff in intermediate Planner II positions to Planner III levels. As a result, the Planning department has some experienced, senior staff who have worked for the City for sometime. The remaining staff are much younger entering the workforce from university or with limited experience gained in another city. As a result, there is a gap at the intermediate level. Planner I staff need to be mentored and provided professional development opportunities so that they will be able to move to Planner II positions once they have sufficient experience. Finally, there is no formal orientation, training or mentoring for new and existing staff relative to the development review process or the City's growth management priorities. Staff are given their application and / or project assignments and expected to carry them out with informal coaching from managers and more senior staff when they are available. The Planning department now has new management in place and has hired new staff to fill vacancies – the time is right to move forward and build a more adaptive learning organization which has engaged management and supports staff in their development review activities.

### ***Recommendation #1: Build an Adaptive Learning Organization***

#### **Recommendation 1.1 Re-establish Planner II Positions Over Time & Implement a Team Organization Within Planning & Initiate Organization Development Process**

- ◆ Establish Planning teams led by a senior planner (Planner III) and staffed with Planner II and Planner I positions supported by a planning technician or administrative assistant in both Development Planning and Policy Planning & Urban Design. Begin by using existing staff resources and evolve through future recruitment.
- ◆ Managers should review current departmental priorities and workloads and assign policy projects or development applications to a senior planning team leader who would have overall responsibility and accountability for assigned work. The team leader would discuss the new assignments in a team meeting and distribute the work amongst his or herself and staff such that at least two staff have knowledge of each assignment – a lead file manager and a supporting staff member. Progress on all assignments would be tracked against a workplan approved by the manager and discussed at bi-weekly team meetings.
- ◆ Teams would be responsible for providing coverage for vacations and temporary leaves. Contingency planning for vacancies and longer leaves would be discussed and agreed upon between managers and team leaders.

#### **Recommendation 1.2 Establish a Human Resources Staffing & Succession Plan to Address Management & Skills Requirements Now and in the Future**

- ◆ Establish a plan to address future human resource requirements, to better plan for situations where there are a number of vacancies; this could include the retention of temporary contract staff and the use of consultants to address immediate needs, more rapid response to anticipated vacancies.
- ◆ Work with the City's Human Resources department to develop a longer-term Staffing and Succession Plan. Undertake an assessment of current positions and their incumbents with a view to impending retirements, current acting appointments, as well as vacancies and past history of turnover in specific positions.
- ◆ Assess the skills requirements for each position and undertake a skills inventory of existing staff and their suitability and likely success in more senior positions if they become vacant.

- ◆ In future, if multiple vacancies occur unexpectedly within a short period of time placing increased workload demands on existing management and staff, working with Human Resources consider the use of an external consultant to screen, qualify and short list to 3 candidates for each vacant position so as to minimize management time required for candidate interviewing and to allow managers to continue to support immediate work requirements.

#### **Recommendation 1.3    Integrate & Orient New Employees & Provide Mentorship & Training Opportunities for Existing & New Staff in all Departments**

- ◆ Through management leadership initiate an organization development process with existing and new employees which encourages meaningful participation in a process to improve policy development, development application review and the work environment.
- ◆ Management should facilitate a discussion of Council priorities and their implications for planning policy, development review and coordination between departments (see also Recommendation 2.2).
- ◆ Encourage staff to discuss the challenges they face with senior planners and management to help to develop solutions. Management should make and keep commitments to implement the solutions.
- ◆ Develop an orientation program for new staff which builds on current corporate HR programs and is focused on growth management and the City's policies and priorities related to development, investment attraction, engineering standards and management's expectations with regard to staff professionalism, productivity, customer service and ethics.
- ◆ Provide training opportunities to existing staff through in-house seminars, presentations by experts and internal City managers and specialists, on relevant growth management issues, new development technologies, case studies of past projects and how issues could have been managed better, etc.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for staff to attend external conferences and seminars which are relevant to their work and could bring new ideas and increase productivity. Require all staff who attend such conferences to provide a presentation on what they learned to other staff at a staff meeting.
- ◆ Set customer service goals and provide customer service training to all staff within PBEE and Enterprise Services to improve communications with developer clients and stakeholders.
- ◆ Develop a program for senior planning staff to mentor junior staff on more complex planning applications to better prepare them to take on these assignments in the future on their own and to help them be ready to move to Planner II positions over time.

#### **7.2    Improve Management Direction & Communications**

Our interviews, questionnaire results and review of development review processes point to the need to improve management direction and communications within and between PBEE and Enterprise Services departments. Staff are looking for leadership from their managers and would like to have more engagement by their managers in cooperative problem-solving when issues with developers and other stakeholders arise. Managers should support and guide staff so that they feel empowered to make decisions. In turn, staff should feel comfortable to bring issues to management's attention when these issues are particularly challenging to resolve relative to City policies and diverse stakeholder views. They would also like to receive more consistent policy-related direction relative to development decisions and priorities. This is affecting staff productivity and morale and the effectiveness and timeliness of development-related processes and decisions. There is a clear need for PBEE and Enterprise Services managers to clarify Council's directions and priorities and communicate these to staff.

The recent vacancies in manager positions in Planning and the manner in which the Phase I Scoping Report and its findings were released and communicated has also impacted staff perceptions of management within their departments and senior levels in the City's administration. The continuing reorganizations throughout the City government, changing management positions and reporting relationships have also been unsettling to staff.

Departmental managers are perceived to have been more engaged with the Executive Team and corporate level issues and decision-making, and were not always accessible to discuss issues involving development review and application issues as they emerge. Later, when these issues have been unresolved, it is reported that managers, because of communications from Executive Team, Council, developers or other stakeholders, have made decisions without consulting the staff involved. Staff do not feel confident that if they express their professional opinions they will be supported by their managers, and staff report a tendency on the part of management to assume that conflicts with stakeholders, if they arise, emanate from staff.

Managers should increase their participation in problem-solving with respect to specific applications and interdepartmentally to bring consensus. Planning, Engineering, Building Services and Enterprise Services managers should develop implementation plans and priorities to deliver commitments in policy documents – Downtown Secondary Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Community Energy Plan, and the recommendations of this report. Managers should track activities and performance, taking into account available staff, with appropriate reporting. Implementation will need to be a collaborative effort involving coordination across multiple departments.

The application review processes themselves are understood by staff but operating procedures, protocols, service standards are not well documented. There is limited management-level and interdepartmental coordination /oversight of Planning, Engineering, Building Services and Enterprise Services departmental input into application review processes. Department heads are not seen by staff as working together to solve problems, i.e. departmental "silos". Staff are generally working independently whether it is an application review, a policy development project, or implementing an economic development strategy. The staff member does consult with other staff members but is, for the most part, solely accountable for service quality, timeliness and communications with stakeholders. The application review process and the processing of applications could be better tracked and monitored by PBEE and Enterprise Services management. Management is not requesting or accessing information for oversight of the application process and one of the reasons for this is the under-utilization of the Amanda system.

### ***Recommendation #2: Improve Management Direction & Communications***

#### **Recommendation 2.1 Clarify Roles & Responsibilities of all Manager Positions in Planning, Engineering, Building & Enterprise Services Departments Relative to Their Direction & Involvement in the Development Review Process**

- ◆ Establish performance objectives for managers relative to ensuring quality, customer service and effective interdepartmental coordination regarding the development review process and their other responsibilities.
- ◆ Use annual performance review to monitor, provide feedback and increase accountability for the management of development review processes, as well as staff development initiatives.

#### **Recommendation 2.2 Establish a Manager-level Interdepartmental Management Committee for Development to Better Manage Development Review Processes**

- ◆ The Interdepartmental Management Committee for Development (IMCD) should include the Executive Director, PBEE, the Executive Director, Finance & Enterprise Services, General Manager of Economic Development, General Manager of Planning, General Manager of Engineering, Chief Building Official, (Building Services), Manager of Policy Planning & Urban Design and Manager of Development Planning. The Corporate Managers of

Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative could participate when matters relevant to their departments are involved. The IMCD should oversee the development review process and interdepartmental coordination.

- ◆ The Committee should review current policy documents and strategies and prepare an integrated statement of priorities for review by Council, and to clarify Council and Executive Team roles in development review. It is our understanding that there is a process underway to define a communications protocol for council. Council's role in the planning process is to make an informed decision once the review is complete. They should not be directly contacting planning staff during the review process. If they have been contacted by concerned developers or citizens, the communication protocol should direct them to contact the General Manager of Planning Services to get clarification on the status of the application and any issues involved.
- ◆ Undertake a consultation with Council to review priorities and implications for development and stakeholders, including customer service.
- ◆ Communicate results to staff and engage through workshops as an organization development process to bring forward issues for further consideration by Council and Executive Team and PBEE and Enterprise Services managers, as appropriate.

**Recommendation 2.3 Planning & Engineering General Managers Should Review, Track and Monitor Application Processing, Project Issues & Timelines on a Bi-weekly Basis & Report to IMCD Monthly**

- ◆ PBEE managers should take cooperative action interdepartmentally and with staff to resolve conflicts and reach consensus relative to the application review process and specific applications under review, making expanded use of Amanda and future systems development.

**7.3 Improve Development Review Processes with Better Coordination, Information Management & Communications with Stakeholders**

**Advisory & Communications Support to Business & the Development Industry**

The first issue which confronts a developer or business looking to invest and build in the City is who to contact? Information is available on the City's website but this information is presented in a manner which is not particularly inviting, e.g. lists of website links to applications, lists of e-mail contacts. If the developer or business person visits City Hall they are directed to a reception desk and then referred to a relevant department, e.g. Planning,. Other municipalities are establishing business service centres where advisors are immediately available to assist them whether they need a business license, are looking for a site for their new factory, or want to submit an application for development. The advisors bring together staff from relevant departments in a meeting if this is deemed appropriate. Examples of municipalities with business service centres include Hamilton and Toronto. In fact, as we learned through our best practices review, Hamilton has established "facilitator" positions within their business service centre which can provide ongoing assistance, often mediating and resolving issues which emerge during the development application review process. London has two file managers responsible for monitoring the progress of all applications in their geographic area. Guelph has established the General Manager of Economic Development as a "Business Champion" to carry out a similar mediation role in the development review process. Given that Economic Development is seen as an advocate for development, Planning staff sees this advocacy in conflict with any mediation role the General Manager may wish to pursue, which is making this approach ineffective and is creating unnecessary conflicts between departments. Staff should also be encouraged to be courteous and professional in their communications and to take a problem-solving approach to address planning and development issues with developers.

**Protocol for Major Investment Opportunities & Developments**

Another issue which is affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the development review process is the "parachuting in" of development proposals usually associated with a proposed new industrial development which has employment and assessment benefits for the City and could lead to a land sale in the City's

Hanlon Creek Business Park. Planning and Engineering staff are unclear as to how to process these applications in light of their existing workload and submissions already in hand. Management has not established any protocol for which applications fall into the priority category or for dealing with these types of applications and opportunities. Time is often of the essence as Guelph may be in competition for the investment.

While the cities we consulted in our benchmarking and best practices review manage these applications through their normal processes, the City of Toronto has established its Gold Star Program to address this issue. Proposed developments which meet criteria related to employment and assessment are designated as Gold Star projects by an interdepartmental committee. These projects are highlighted in communications related to development review, application review is monitored closely and any impediments to decision-making are immediately addressed.

### **Pre-consultation Process**

The most important process issue which is affecting the efficiency and timeliness of development review is the fact that there is no mandatory by-law enforcing the pre-consultation process as the first step in development review. All benchmarked communities have a pre-consultation bylaw in place. As a result, applications can arrive unexpectedly with information gaps. This often leads to multiple re-submissions by the developer and multiple calls to the different departments involved as developers or their representatives seek to determine what is required to complete their submission. This can often lead to developers receiving conflicting direction from different departments, the resolution of which delays application processing. This is particularly the case for the processing of subdivision plans, official plan amendments and re-zonings. The establishment of the Site Plan Review Committee which brings together staff from relevant departments in one meeting to provide comments has made this less of an issue for those submitting site plan applications. Planners report constantly chasing review input from other departments and this was evident in our file review. Because of the lack of management involvement interdepartmentally in application review, the planner in these circumstances has little authority or ability to ensure that proposed deadlines for comments, even if agreed to in advance, are met.

### **Development Review Committee**

Currently, meetings to review subdivision applications, official plan amendments, rezonings and other applications are called as the perceived need arises. The Committee of Adjustment and Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) are the only review meetings with a regular schedule and specifically identified staff to be involved. Other municipalities have a development review committee which has a regular schedule of meetings to review pre-consultation applications and other applications. Guelph could improve the efficiency of its operations by establishing a Development Review Committee with regularly scheduled meetings and with development applications put on the agenda keyed to specific time targets. By doing so, staff will be encouraged to have comments ready knowing an application is scheduled for a specific date.

### **Revised Site Plan Review Process & Updated Urban Design Guidelines**

While Guelph's site plan review process is generally well managed and has been improved with the establishment of the SPRC, further improvements could be realized if communications with the developers were improved and if a revised Site Plan review process similar to that carried out in Hamilton is implemented (see Section 5.1.2). Currently, conflicts are arising in the site planning process related to urban design issues. With adoption of the Official Plan Update it would be beneficial if the Planning department could turn its attention to updating existing urban design guidelines and making them more comprehensive.

### **Engineering Review & Comments**

The two-step review process established by Engineering whereby a preliminary review is followed by a later more comprehensive review is resulting in new requirements impacting developer applications too late in the review process. Staff are taking action independently of each other on the same application, e.g.

environmental planner taking an application to the Environmental Advisory Committee without consulting with or informing the staff member responsible for coordinating the review of the application.

### **Management Information Systems & Performance Measurement**

Currently the Amanda system used to administer the building permit application review process has only recently been used to record development application submissions and the dates of key meetings, e.g. public meetings, Council meetings. Development applications are submitted on paper forms and records and comments are maintained in a paper-based filing system. There is no digital retention of documents and no online document management system. Departmental comments and actions are not accessible by other departments involved in the review process. While Guelph posts the online status of major development applications, Mississauga has an integrated online development application system which provides the status, as well as all review comments by departments and agencies as they are submitted. These are publicly available to the developer as well as any other interested parties. Departments and agencies submit their comments via a web application so they are available in "real time". The development review process and the development industry could benefit if geographic information systems were more highly developed. Kitchener, for example, provides interactive web-based mapping and aerial photography which developers can access and use to prepare and revise their applications. There are no customer service or performance standards evident with the exception of site planning and there is limited monitoring of application processing and across relevant departments and the progress towards approval of individual applications. London is monitoring against provincial standards established under the Planning Act in response to Council requests for more information on the time taken to process applications. Toronto has also established time-related targets for application processing. We note this is an area of increasing interest but is not a common practice in our benchmarked cities.

### **Review of City's Comprehensive Zoning By-law**

Another improvement opportunity relates to rezoning applications and the current zoning by-law. We note that in 2011 the number of rezoning applications increased. This is due, in part, to the fact that the zoning by-law has been in place for many years and is quite specific in its designations of allowable uses. As a result, individuals and, in particular businesses, which want to carry out an activity which is not clearly identified in the zoning by-law must apply for a rezoning, if the use is not directly specified in the existing zoning bylaw. The Places to Grow Act requires a comprehensive zoning bylaw update be completed within 3 years of adoption of an official plan. We suggest the lists of uses be examined as part of this review. A reconsideration of the designated uses in the by-law could reduce the development review workload and better reflect changes in the economy and human activities.

### **Enforcement of Property-Related By-laws**

Currently, the enforcement of property-related by-laws is split among several departments. For example: the Site Alteration by-law is the responsibility of Engineering Service, the Tree Preservation by-law falls under Planning Services an the Business License by-law is under By-law Compliance.

Consolidating responsibility for enforcement of most property-related by-laws in one department could be beneficial for staff utilization and efficiency, clearer for the public and would likely improve compliance.

### **City Capital Projects – Coordination & Review**

While PBEE and Enterprise Services resources are focused on private sector development, these departments are also involved when the City undertakes major capital projects, as has been the case with City Hall and Civic Square, new Transit terminal, Market Square, Hanlon Creek Business Park. These types of projects should have input from all relevant departments as would be the case for private development projects. Currently, there is no consistent approach to how these

public capital projects are managed and implemented, which has led to conflicts and delays in decision-making. An improved management approach is needed going forward.

### **Enterprise Services: Economic Development, Downtown Renewal & Community Energy Initiative**

Enterprise Services is a new division which has brought together Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative to provide a focus for the City's business development efforts. All three of the departments have been involved in promoting the City to investors and providing information and support services to the business community. Economic Development has been focused on attracting investment in the agri-business sector, manufacturing and other industrial sectors. In coordination with other stakeholders, e.g. University of Guelph, Chamber of Commerce, it has established an Economic Development Strategy and Marketing Strategy for the agri-business sector. It has also established Connect Guelph, a business support services network of local economic development programs to provide assistance to small and medium-sized businesses in Guelph. Economic Development has also been effective in acquiring and leveraging funds from other levels of government to support its investment attraction efforts.

Downtown Renewal is pursuing investment, especially commercial and residential development based on the City's recently approved Downtown Secondary Plan. Community Energy Initiative has prepared the City's Community Energy Plan which has, as its goal, establishing Guelph as a world-leading city in energy conservation and alternative renewable energy products and their use. Each of these departments has had some notable successes. Economic Development has established the Hanlon Creek Business Park. Working with Planning Services, Downtown Renewal has been instrumental in supporting recent new high-rise residential development in the downtown core to help meet the Places to Grow intensification targets and will continue to facilitate other forms of appropriate development downtown, consistent with the Downtown Secondary Plan. These initiatives are fulfilling the City's goals of increasing economic activity in the downtown core. Community Energy Initiative has been promoting and marketing Guelph as an energy city, has established a unique partnership with Guelph Utilities to promote investment in the energy sector, and has been successful, with the assistance of Economic Development, in attracting a solar energy equipment manufacturer to Guelph.

Going forward, there is a need to improve the coordination among the Enterprise Services departments and to make maximum use of available resources. Often, the managers are attending the same meetings regarding a development project, and all have been involved in the review of development applications being coordinated by Planning staff. Often their involvement has been as advocates for the development, which is seen as problematic by the Planning staff. The General Manager of Economic Development has been given the mandate of "Business Champion" and asked to intervene in application reviews late in the review process when the proponent is concerned that approval might not be forthcoming. This role has not been effective. It is appropriate for Economic Development and the other departments to advocate for investors and their development projects and to bring projects to the fore for consideration by other City departments. However, the Business Champion role is bringing this advocacy at too late a stage in the review and any efforts to mediate a solution between the proponent and the Planning, Engineering and Building Services departments is made ineffective because Economic Development is perceived to be biased and "pressuring" for approval. An alternative mediation approach would be beneficial.

Marketing and branding are important to attract new investment to the City. This marketing and branding should be supported by the communications strategy related to development. This is particularly important for the Enterprise Services departments of Economic Development, Downtown Renewal and Community Energy Initiative, but is also relevant for Planning, Engineering and Building Services.

Each of the Enterprise Services departments is involved in its own marketing and branding efforts to attract investment. Each department has its own strategies and plans for investment attraction which are ambitious relative to the resources which are available. There is a need for the Enterprise Services departments to clarify

their mandates, improve coordination and better define their roles in bringing forward investment opportunities and coordinating the review of proposed investments with Planning, Engineering and Building Services.

There is concern amongst City staff as to how best to manage the review of development projects which will have significant economic, employment tax and other benefits for the City. While our benchmarked municipalities process these applications in a similar manner to all other applications, the City of Toronto has established its Gold Star program for these types of developments. Developments which are deemed as high priority are designated by a committee of Planning, Economic Development and other departmental senior staff as Gold Star projects. All application and review forms have this highlighted and a senior Economic Development and Planning staff member are put in charge of coordinating the development review process and communications with the proponent. Currently, these type of applications are seen as “parachuted in” by Planning staff who resent the unanticipated impact on their workload. A cultural change is needed led by management in the Enterprise Services departments and Planning to change this thinking. The approach taken by the City of Toronto would have merit if applied in Guelph.

An integrated marketing approach to promoting and attracting investment across the Enterprise Services departments would be beneficial to provide consistent branding and messaging. The Enterprise Services departments also need to track and record their investment attraction and business retention contacts and activities using a customer relations management system (CRM). Currently, marketing expertise and staffing is located predominantly in Economic Development. Economic Development could coordinate this integrated marketing effort for all Enterprise Services departments.

Attracting investment is one source of economic growth and employment. The other source is local entrepreneurship and assistance to local business for retention and expansion. In addition to their investment attraction activities the Enterprise Services departments should give priority in their strategies to encouraging entrepreneurship and the retention and expansion of local businesses. Leveraging Connect Guelph is one way to do this but the roles and responsibilities of each of the partners needs to be clear and a culture and administrative protocol and mechanisms for sharing information on contacts and support activities with business is needed.

If Guelph wants to communicate that is open to business and better coordinate services to business it could follow Hamilton's lead and establish a “One-stop Business Centre” at City Hall where all contact for the business can be coordinated and initial service provided. The services would include first contact and information relative to:

- ◆ economic development information and services
- ◆ planning and building applications
- ◆ business licensing and information
- ◆ financial program and incentive information and referrals
- ◆ business facilitation and mediation services

The City would bring the first point of contact for each of these services and departments into the Centre. Signage and promotional information on the City's websites would direct investors and business people to the Centre.

***Recommendation #3: Improve Development Review Processes with Better Coordination, Information Management & Communications with Stakeholders***

**Recommendation 3.1 Develop a Business Services Centre in Conjunction with the Information Services Area on the Main Floor of City Hall**

- ◆ Provide a “one-stop shop” and “open for business approach” to Guelph’s business community and external investors.
- ◆ Develop a feasibility plan for this centre, its mode of operation and staffing with the involvement of Enterprise Services, Planning, Engineering and Building Services and integrating “front desk” services provided on the third floor by Planning and Engineering. Services could be linked with services currently being provided by Information Guelph and Reception at City Hall.
- ◆ The centre should be supported by a communications strategy and included in the Enterprise Services marketing strategies.

**Recommendation 3.2 Establish a New Position of “Business Facilitator” to Assist City Businesses, Including the Development Industry to Access City Services & the Assistance They Need**

- ◆ The Business Facilitator could be available to act as a mediator if issues arise in the development review process between the developer applicant and the different City departments involved. This position could be established as a contract or fee-for-service basis and evolve into a full-time position based on demand.
- ◆ The Business Facilitator position could be resident within the new Business Service Centre. This position would replace the current “Business Champion” role of the General Manager, Economic Development. This would allow the General Manager of Economic Development to refocus his efforts on investment attraction, business retention and marketing.

**Recommendation 3.3 Establish Gold Star Protocol for new Development Proposals which would have Major Benefits to the City – Gold Star Program**

- ◆ Establish a protocol for new development proposals which would have major benefits to the City in terms of achieving the City’s Strategic Plan objectives, including employment and tax assessment.
- ◆ Establish criteria which can be used to screen development proposals and applications. These proposal or applications which meet the criteria would be designated as Gold Star applications.
- ◆ The IMCD would make the decision as to which proposals or applications meet the criteria and are designated Gold Star. These applications would be allocated to a senior planner with IMCD providing direction and management support to expedite such applications as and when necessary.
- ◆ Criteria for the Gold Star program would be presented and approved by Council a priori to their use in screening. The criteria could include employment and tax assessment requirements, but could also be expanded to include other criteria, e.g. energy conservation, affordable housing, downtown redevelopment. The IMCD would report to Council semi-annually on those proposals & applications which have been designated.

**Recommendation 3.4 Implement a Mandatory Pre-consultation Process for all Development Applications**

- ◆ Put in place a mandatory pre-consultation process with a supportive by-law approved by Council.
- ◆ Develop appropriate guidelines and application forms and make available on City’s website.

- ◆ Establish a Pre-consultation Committee of Planning, Engineering and other departmental staff who would participate based on the type of application involved.
- ◆ Provide exemptions for minor development applications based on completion of pre-consultation form. Exemption form would provide an opportunity for each department and agency to indicate whether a pre-consultation meeting was needed. If no department deemed a pre-consultation meeting necessary, applicant would be notified by the planner managing the file that they can proceed with the preparation of their application and any expectations they would have to meet based on each department and agency's review of the pre-consultation form.

**Recommendation 3.5 Establish a Development Review Committee with Regularly Scheduled Meetings**

- ◆ Committee should have responsibilities to review pre-consultation applications and all other applications, with the exception of site plans and matters to be reviewed by the Committee of Adjustment.
- ◆ Meeting schedules and agendas should be set well in advance keyed to application review / customer service targets.

**Recommendation 3.6 Implement a Revised Site Plan Review Process with Updated Urban Design Guidelines**

- ◆ Establish a revised process whereby applicants can receive draft approval based on an approved site plan, a preliminary grading plan and building elevations. All other drawings and requirements would then be reviewed and approved by individual departments (see Section 5.1.2).
- ◆ Prepare up-dated urban design guidelines, including the development of guidelines for specific areas, e.g. downtown, heritage district, nodes and corridors, and infill and intensification

**Recommendation 3.7 Reinstate One Step Engineering Review & Comments Process**

- ◆ Reinstate the one-step formal engineering review of completed applications and ensure that review comments are provided to meet established deadlines and, where possible earlier to help reduce the application review time. IMCD should monitor the timeliness of the provision of engineering comments, as well as all other departments and agencies.

**Recommendation 3.8 Expand the Use of & Improve Management Information Systems & Performance Measurement to Support Development Application Processing & to Improve Customer Service with the Assistance of City's Information Technology Department**

- ◆ Expand use of Amanda system to track applications, including comments from departments and agencies, and allow access interdepartmentally.
- ◆ Over time develop a web-based access to applications and comments for developers which can be accessed remotely.
- ◆ Develop a plan to create a fully accessible (internally and to external stakeholders) document management system to support application review and to support the planning policy development process.
- ◆ Establish customer service performance targets comparable to those used by the City of London; measure and report the extent to which these targets are met on an ongoing basis and seek to improve performance. At a minimum, performance targets could be the provincial standards, e.g. 180 days for a complete subdivision application, 10 days to review a complete building permit application. Efforts should be made over time to bring the elapsed median time below the provincial standard.

- ◆ Develop a GIS strategy to support the provision of electronic mapping and the recording of planning-related data and make accessible as a service to the development industry.

**Recommendation 3.9    Review the City's Comprehensive Zoning By-law Relative to Allowable Uses**

- ◆ As part of the required revision to the Zoning Bylaw as required by the Planning Act, review and revise wording on allowable use so as to reduce the number of rezoning applications for minor variations in use.

**Recommendation 3.10    Consolidate Enforcement of all Property-Related By-laws within One Department**

- ◆ Review responsibility for all property related bylaws such as Site Alteration and Tree Preservation and consolidate in one department.

**Recommendation 3.11    Improve the Management, Coordination & Review of the City's Capital Projects**

- ◆ Capital projects are considered through the annual budgetary process and prioritized. Projects that receive approval by Council and the CAO will be assigned to a specific department. Where these capital projects involve buildings or infrastructure, as opposed to information technology or other capital assets, it is likely that these capital projects will be assigned to either Engineering or Corporate Building Maintenance.
- ◆ A project charter for each major capital project should be developed which identifies and documents:
  - which department and manager has lead responsibility for project implementation
  - project workplan, process and schedule, including public information sessions to receive and review input from the public
  - progress reporting at specific points in schedule
  - the roles to be played by other managers and departments, including review and approval of plans and construction
  - a change order process to approve changes to a project where changes are due to unforeseen circumstances or a change in project concept or construction is deemed to be needed

IMCD should review and approve the project charter and should ensure that projects follow standard development review processes with reviews and comments from Planning, Building, Engineering and Enterprise Services staff are taken into account and addressed.

**Recommendation 3.12    Enterprise Services Departments Should Review New Major Economic Development Opportunities with Employment & Tax Benefits & Coordinate Action to be Taken Relative to the Development Review Process**

- ◆ Enterprise Services managers should clarify their mandates and roles with respect to development review, e.g. Economic Development to focus on industrial development; Downtown Renewal on commercial and residential development; Community Energy Initiative to be an advisor on energy-related opportunities.

**Recommendation 3.13    Enterprise Services Departments Should Become More Proactive in Investment Attraction & Business Retention**

- ◆ Enterprise Services departments should undertake more proactive targeting of companies in key sectors where Guelph has an advantage to encourage them to relocate or expand their operations to Guelph.
- ◆ Enterprise Services Departments, led by Economic Development, should:

- establish common branding and marketing messages across Enterprise Services departments and in their marketing collaterals
- establish a Customer Relations Management system for use by all three departments
- establish a database of information, facts and figures for use in marketing messages and collaterals
- establish improved websites with new branding and communications messages, complemented by other marketing collaterals and campaigns
- establish a business retention plan to ensure existing Guelph businesses are given the same attention as new prospects

## **7.4 Improve Communications Interdepartmentally & with Stakeholders**

Effective communication with stakeholders, including developer clients, is very important to effective and efficient development review, the level of satisfaction which the process, and can help to mitigate any dissatisfaction associated with the development review result. Currently, there is no communications protocol in place relative to the role which should be played by managers and staff with regard to the provision of information regarding application review, nor to the approach that should be taken should conflict or differences of opinion arise during the process. Planning staff in particular are not clear of the role they should play in communicating relative to development application review, i.e. should they take a problem-solving approach to support development, or should they insist on strict adherence to development policies and regulations. This is particularly problematic when policies can be open to interpretation, e.g. support for innovative energy conservation initiatives. This is also the case when policies and guidelines are enforced as if they are mandatory regulations, e.g. Urban Design Guidelines. There has been limited consistent guidance from Planning management in this regard over the last several years, as reported by staff. This was documented in the City's Phase I Scoping Report. Communications with developers can be terse, lacking in diplomacy and confrontational. Developers can find their meetings with staff difficult and they perceive a lack of professionalism in the manner in which staff present themselves and provide their comments.

While the City's corporate Communications department has overall responsibility for communications with residents and the business community, there is a lack of a specific communications strategy to support development and growth management. The City has been actively developing major development-related strategies and policies, e.g. Downtown Secondary Plan, Economic Development Strategy – Open for Business, Community Energy Plan and the Official Plan Update. Once these have been approved by Council the principal form of communication is to place these documents on the website. Similarly, information on the development application review process is primarily available through printed documents which can be downloaded from the City's website with the interpretation of these documents left predominantly to the applicant. The City's website does not convey an open to business customer service orientation under its Business webpage. Further, considerable development-related information is not found under the Business webpage but under the Living webpage. There is a need to develop an overall communications strategy to support the development review process and growth management. This should include the development of new web pages related to the development review process under the Business webpage and heading. Hamilton has an effective website and communications support for the development process, including You Tube videos which provide a friendly explanation of some of the City's development-related review processes. This is particularly important given the necessary shift to much higher density as a result of affordability issues and the targets in the Places to Grow Act.

### ***Recommendation #4: Improve Communications Interdepartmentally & with Stakeholders***

#### **Recommendation 4.1: Develop an Overall Communications Strategy to Support the Development Review Process**

- ◆ Communications strategy should establish clear goals with respect to informing developers and other stakeholders of the City's new development-related strategies and policies and their implications and importance to the creation of a healthy and sustainable community with a growing economy and high quality of life for residents.
- ◆ Communications strategy should also support and explain the development application review process.

- ◆ Tools which could be used include the provision of information through the City's website, the use of other social media, including Youtube videos, printed materials, advisory assistance in the new Business Centre, etc.

**Recommendation 4.2: Establish a Customer Service Mission Statement in Consultation with Staff & Provide Customer Service Training**

- ◆ Develop customer service philosophy and principles, e.g. cooperate with developer to identify possible solutions to development review issues.
- ◆ Involve representatives from all departments in a committee to develop the customer service principles and review them with the IMCD.
- ◆ Promulgate through interactive workshops involving all staff.
- ◆ Provide customer service training to support implementation of the customer service mission statement for all PBEE and Enterprise Services staff.

**Recommendation 4.3: Revise City Website to Better Support Development**

- ◆ Develop a more business-friendly customer service orientated set of web pages under the Business heading on the City's website.
- ◆ Provide links between the Business web pages and other social media, e.g. Facebook, You Tube, Twitter, and develop appropriate content.

**Recommendation 4.4: Encourage Better Interdepartmental Communication & Coordination Amongst PBEE & Enterprise Services Staff**

- ◆ Promote a team orientation across departments relative to development application review.
- ◆ Include interdepartmental coordination and cooperation as an element to be discussed and evaluated in staff performance reviews in PBEE and Enterprise Services departments.
- ◆ Provide improved information-sharing accessibility to development applications and comments electronically through improved use of Amanda and other management information systems.

## **8.0 Implementation & Change Management**

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It is clear from our Integrated Operational Review that successful implementation of our recommendations would best be achieved through a change management process. Change management involves:

- ◆ vision and leadership
- ◆ a recognition and acceptance of the need for change
- ◆ a change in organizational goals
- ◆ a change in the way services are provided
- ◆ an understanding that the City's organization is a dynamic system of departmental inter-dependencies which is (or should be) working together, pursuing excellence in public service
- ◆ a process of communication and education involving management and staff which focuses on the need for change and the methods by which it can be achieved
- ◆ a process for monitoring and reporting on progress towards new goals and ways of operating or "doing business"

Our Integrated Operational Review recommendations call for an improved way of providing development review services which will require a change in management thinking across PBEE and Enterprise Services departments and the City's administration.

The change management process will require a communication plan and a process for involving managers across all departments to discuss the importance of continuing to identify new ways of delivering services more efficiently and effectively and how the Integrated Operational Review exemplifies this. The change management process can be used by senior management to support the Mayor and Council and the new directions they wish to pursue, and specifically to establish and communicate a new organizational approach, protocols and procedures to support growth management and the development review process. Implementation of the Integrated Operational Review recommendations will support Guelph's Strategic Planning Framework 2012-16 goals to improve public service delivery and incorporate innovative practices to do so.

Implementation of our Integrated Operational Review recommendations will require an understanding and acceptance by all departmental managers and staff of the rationale for and need for change in development application processing. This understanding and acceptance needs to be supported by a clear improvement in customer service and a demonstration that the City is committed to working with the development community to implement the City's overall strategic plans and policies. For these reasons, it is our view that the recommendations should be implemented as a complementary package over a 4-year period and continuing thereafter. Implementation of the recommendations would be through a change management process involving PBEE and Enterprise Services and which is supported by all City departments. The Interdepartmental Management Committee for Development (IMCD) should take the lead in this change management process. It will be important for all PBEE and Enterprise Services departments and their staff to be involved in the process through facilitated consultations and workshops led by their management and focused on implementation of the recommendations.

The change management process should be championed by the Executive Director, PBEE and the newly-appointed Executive Director, Finance & Enterprise Services with the IMCD when established. We are pleased to note that the departments have already begun to put some of our recommendations in place. The

Executive Director, PBEE put in place a Transition Plan in February 2012 with the support of the CAO to address the vacancies in Planning and to address the workload pressures on existing staff by retaining temporary contract resources. Planning now has new management and recruited new staff and is well positioned to move forward in a constructive manner. Managers have expressed to us that they recognize the need for change and have begun to implement some of our identified operational improvements. Economic Development has purchased a client relations management system and is undertaking new marketing and branding and business retention and expansion programs. A strategy to improve the City's GIS is underway with Planning Services involvement.

Building on these positive efforts, we would recommend that an implementation and change management process be undertaken which would include the following steps, after review and approval of this report by Council:

- ◆ The IMCD should review the Integrated Operational Review report and its recommendations and determine how best it could implement the recommendations and their intent. It is possible that the IMCD may have some differing views with respect to the identified priority or approach associated with one or more recommendations in the report. If this occurs, they should identify and describe an alternative approach and the rationale for doing this.
- ◆ The IMCD should prepare an Implementation & Change Management Plan within 3 months which describes how it will implement the recommendations over the coming four-year period and include in this Plan any changes in approach or priority which they believe would be beneficial to the overall implementation. IMCD should confirm or revise the timing of the individual recommendations, based on Exhibit 17. Once this Plan is approved more detailed sub-plans should be developed with respect to individual recommendations.
- ◆ The Implementation and Change Management Plan should be submitted to the CAO and then to Council and should include:
  - The approach which will be taken to each of the recommendations and the roles which will be played by the IMCD and individual departmental managers
  - Steps to be undertaken and their sequence in implementing each recommendation
  - A schedule which assigns a timeframe for completion of each step. (This schedule could vary somewhat from that presented in the Integrated Operational Review report)
  - Key milestones in the implementation process and the expected outcomes to be reported
  - A timetable for reporting to Council on the progress being made.

More detailed plans with any associated resource requirements for each recommendation should be prepared and brought forward as part of the annual budgeting process and timed to the implementation schedule.

### **Recommendations & Implementation Plan**

As a guide to the development of the Implementation & Change Management Plan, the following Implementation Plan is provided to guide the IMCD and Council in their decision-making. Exhibit 17 presents our Recommendations and suggested Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan provides for implementation of the Recommendations over a 4-year period. Lead and principal support departments who would have principal responsibility for implementing each recommendation are identified. In order for these lead and principal support departments to carry out the implementation, there will be a need for much coordinated effort across all PBEE & Enterprise Services departments, as well as with other departments within the City administration, including the CAO's Office, Human Resources, Legal Services, Communications, Information Technology, Finance, amongst others, as well as advisory committees and external agencies as appropriate.

A majority of our recommendations can be implemented without an increase in existing resources. Expenditures, where needed, would be spread over several years for planning and implementation activities as shown in Exhibit 17. The City will need to invest in an improved website, information systems and establishment of a business service centre over the coming years if these recommendations are adopted. These would be one-time only expenditures and the level would depend on a variety of factors, including availability of in-house website development skills, software compatibility / availability, in-house space planning skills, need to retain external expertise, etc. Further investigation and specifications development would be required for detailed costing. The resource implications, therefore, should be considered order of magnitude estimates and as a guide only. Management will need to develop detailed plans with expenditure requirements to implement each recommendation and include these in their departmental budgets when the latter are presented in the annual budget development and approval process.

#### Exhibit 17: Recommendations & Implementation Plan

Integrated Operational Review Recommendations & Implementation Plan									
Recommendations	Lead & Principal Support Departments / Managers	Resource Implications	Timing						
			2012		2013		2014		2015
<b>1.0 Build a More Adaptive Learning Organization</b>									
1.1 Re-establish Planner II Positions & Implement Team Organization	GM & Managers, Planning & Development	W - L							
1.2 Establish HR Staffing & Succession Plan	PBEE & Enterprise Services Managers, HR	W							
1.3 Integrate & Orient New Employees & Provide Mentorship & Training	PBEE & Enterprise Services Managers, HR	L - M							
<b>2.0 Improve Management Direction &amp; Communications</b>									
2.1 Clarify Roles & Responsibilities of all Manager Positions in PBEE	Exec. Directors PBEE & Enterprise Services	W							
2.2 Establish Manager Level IMCD	Exec. Directors PBEE & Enterprise Services	W							
2.3 Review, Track & Monitor Application Processing; Report to IMCD	Planning & Engineering Managers	W							

**Key:**
**Timing**

Plan	
Implement	

**Resource Implications (estimates for staffing, consultants, software, etc.)**

W	With existing resources
L	0 - \$50,000
Medium	\$50,000 - \$125,000
High	\$125,000 plus

Integrated Operational Review Recommendations & Implementation Plan										
Recommendations	Lead & Principal Support Departments / Managers	Resource Implications	Timing							
			2012		2013		2014		2015	
<b>3.0 Improve Development Review Process</b>										
3.1 Develop Business Services Centre	GM Planning Services, GM Economic Development, Managers Building Services, Engineering	M								
3.2 Establish "Business Facilitator" position	GM Planning Services	L - M								
3.3 Establish Gold Star Protocol for Priority Developments	GM Economic Development	W								
3.4 Implement a Mandatory Pre-consultation Process	Managers, Development & Planning Policy	W								
3.5 Establish Development Review Committee	Manager Development & Planning Policy	W								
3.6 Implement Revised Site Plan Review Process with Updated Urban Design Guidelines	Manager Development, Coordinator Site Plan Review, Manager Policy Planning & Urban Design, Senior Urban Designer	M								

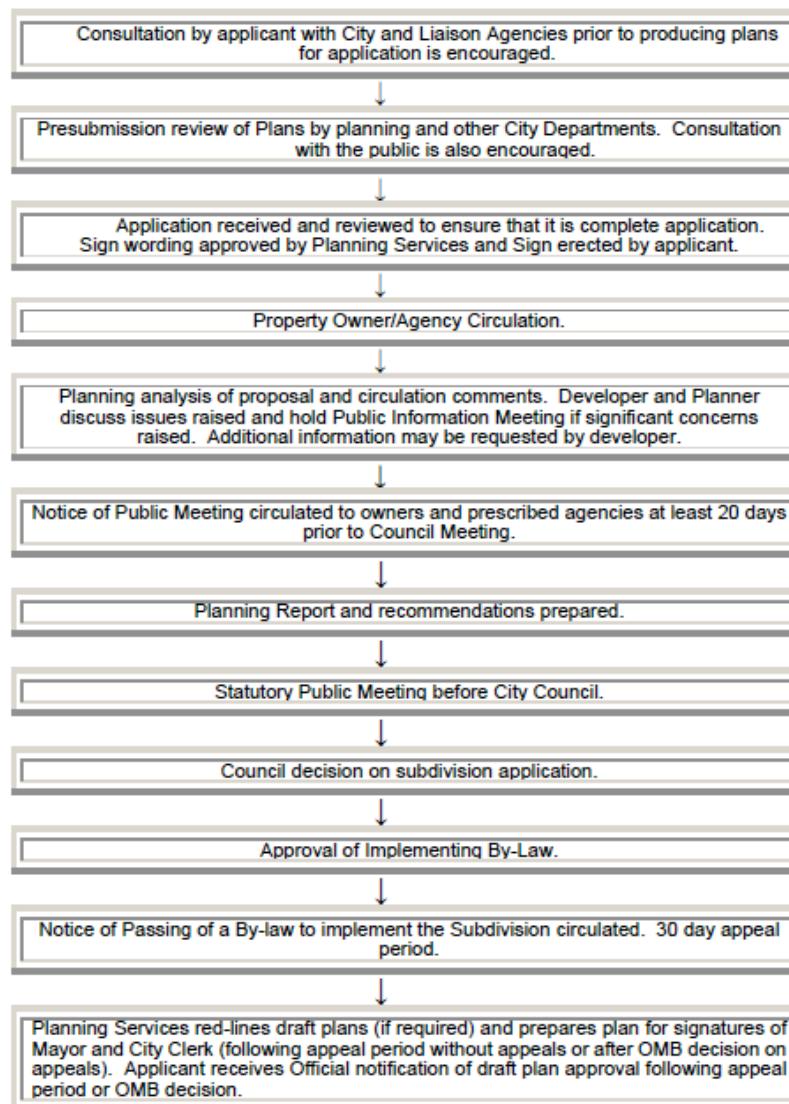
Integrated Operational Review Recommendations & Implementation Plan								
Recommendations	Lead & Principal Support Departments / Managers	Resource Implications	Timing					
			2012	2013		2014		2015
<b>3.0 Improve Development Review Process (con't)</b>								
3.7 Reinstate One Step Engineering Review	Manager Transportation Planning & Development, Engineering	W		■	■	■	■	■
3.8 Expand Use of & Improve Management Information Systems & Performance Measurement	Managers Planning Policy & Development, IT	L - M		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■
3.9 Review Comprehensive Zoning By-Law Relative to Allowable Uses	Manager Planning Policy, Exec. Dir. PBEE, Chief Building Official, Manager of Development Planning	H*		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■
3.10 Consolidate Enforcement of Property-related By-laws	Chief Building Official	W - L		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■
3.11 Improve Management, Coordination & Review of Capital Projects	Exec. Dir. PBEE, GM Engineering	M		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■
3.12 Enterprise Services Depts. Should Review New Major Economic Development Opportunities Relative to Development Review Process	Exec. Dir. Enterprise Services, Managers ED, DR & CEI	W		■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■
3.13 Enterprise Services Depts. Should Become More Proactive in Investment Attraction & Business Retention	GM ED (Lead), Corporate Managers DR, CEI	L		■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■	■■■■■

\* Resource needs already budgeted for in existing City Capital Plan.

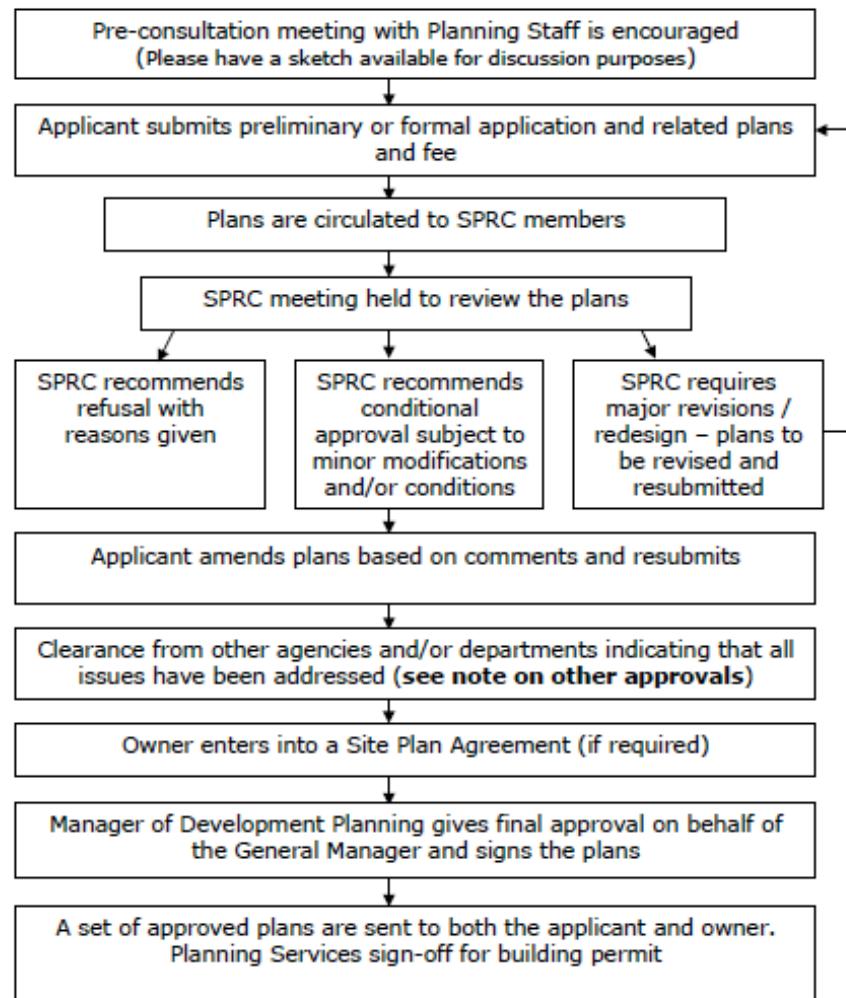
Integrated Operational Review Recommendations & Implementation Plan								
Recommendations	Lead & Principal Support Departments / Managers	Resource Implications	Timing					
			2012		2013		2014	
<b>4.0 Improve Communications Interdepartmentally &amp; with Stakeholders</b>								
4.1 Develop Overall Communications Strategy to Support Development Review Process	Exec. Dir. PBEE, GM Planning Services, HR, Communications	L						
4.2 Establish Customer Service Mission Statement	GM Planning Services, HR, Communications	W						
4.3 Revise City Website to Better Support Development	GM Planning Services, HR, Communications	L - M						
4.4 Encourage Better Interdepartmental Communication & Coordination	Managers PBEE, Managers Enterprise Services	W						

We believe that our Recommendations and Implementation Plan can contribute to increased efficiency and effectiveness with respect to how the City manages its growth and uses its development review processes to support a sustainable and livable community. PBEE and Enterprise Services management should use this Plan as a guide, confirm priorities and resource requirements, and inform Council on an ongoing basis of their progress in implementation.

## **Appendix A: Guelph Subdivision Application Review Process Flowchart**



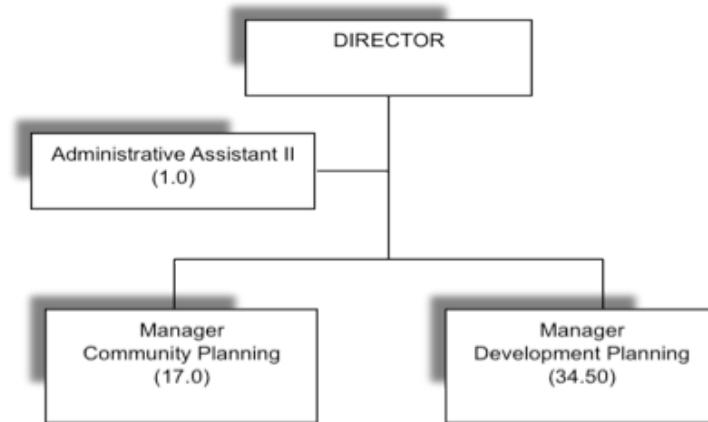
## Guelph Site Plan Application Review Process Flowchart



Source: *City of Guelph Website*

## **Appendix B: Municipal Organization Charts – Other Municipalities**

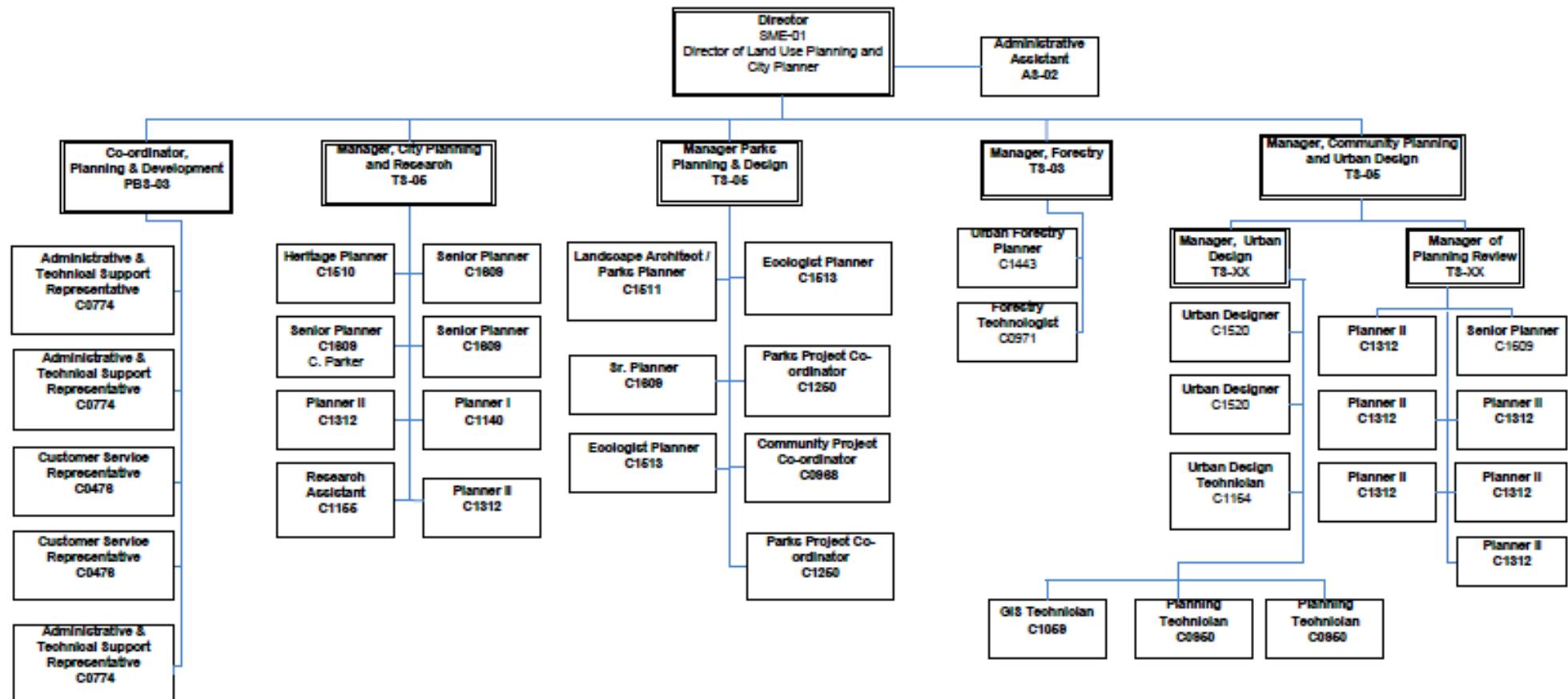
## **City of Hamilton**



Complement (FTE)	Management	Other	Total	Staff/Mgt Ratio
<b>2011</b>	3.0	50.5	53.5	16.83:1
<b>2012</b>	3.0	50.5	53.5	16.83:1
<b>Change</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	

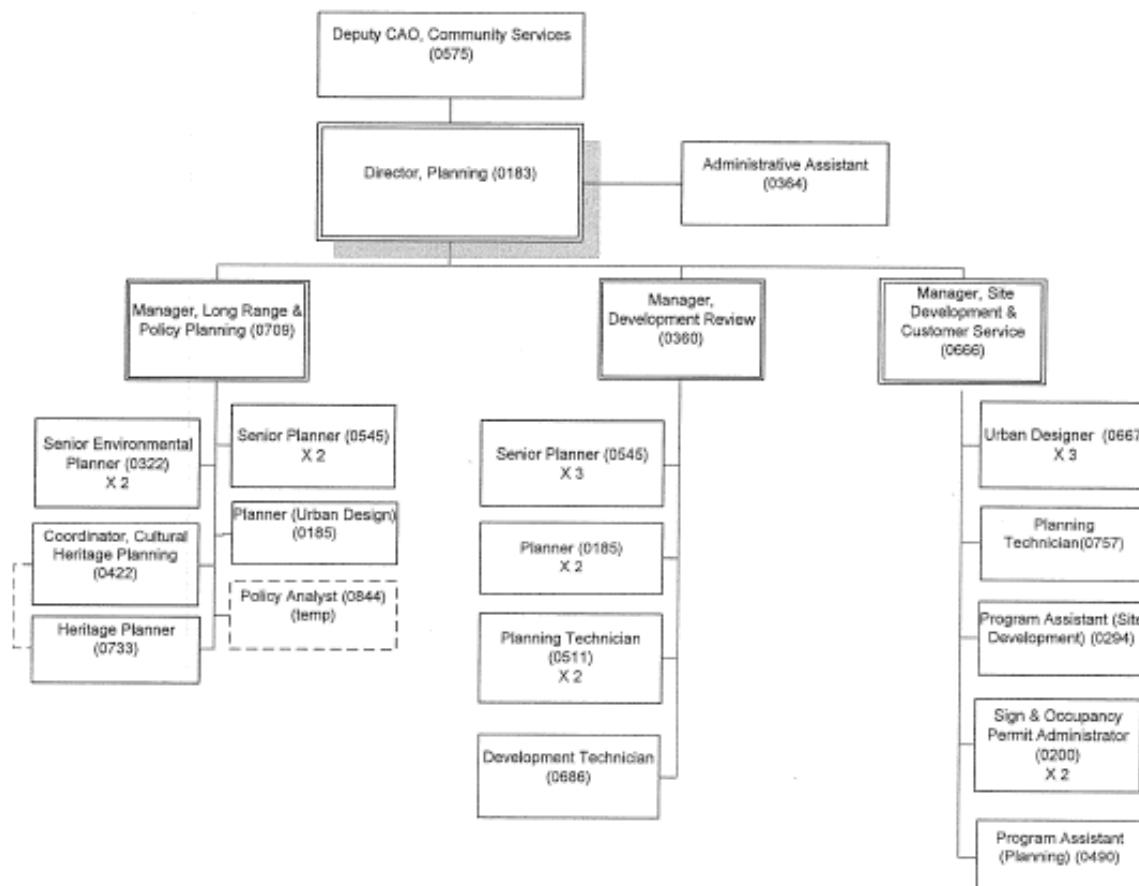


City of London Land Use Planning (currently being reorganized)



## **City of Kitchener**

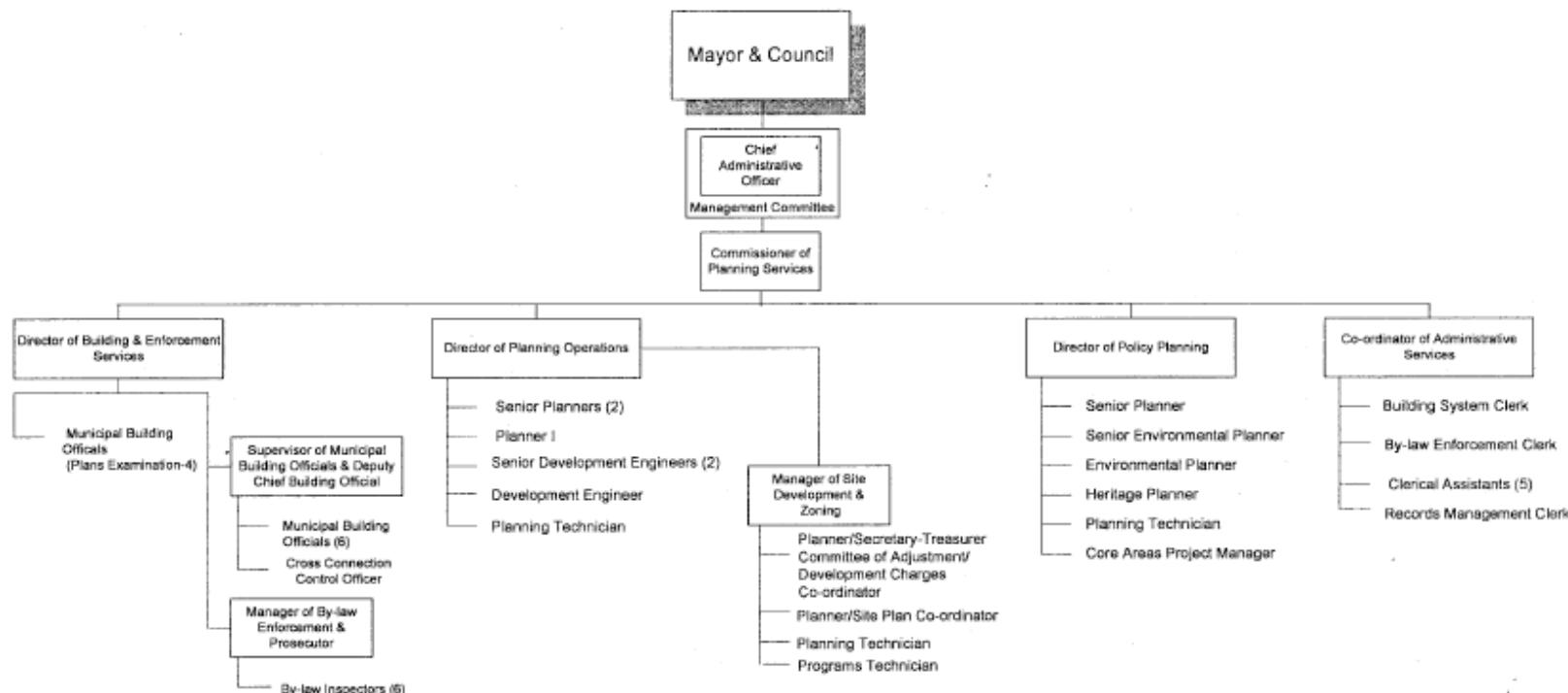
### **Community Services--Planning**



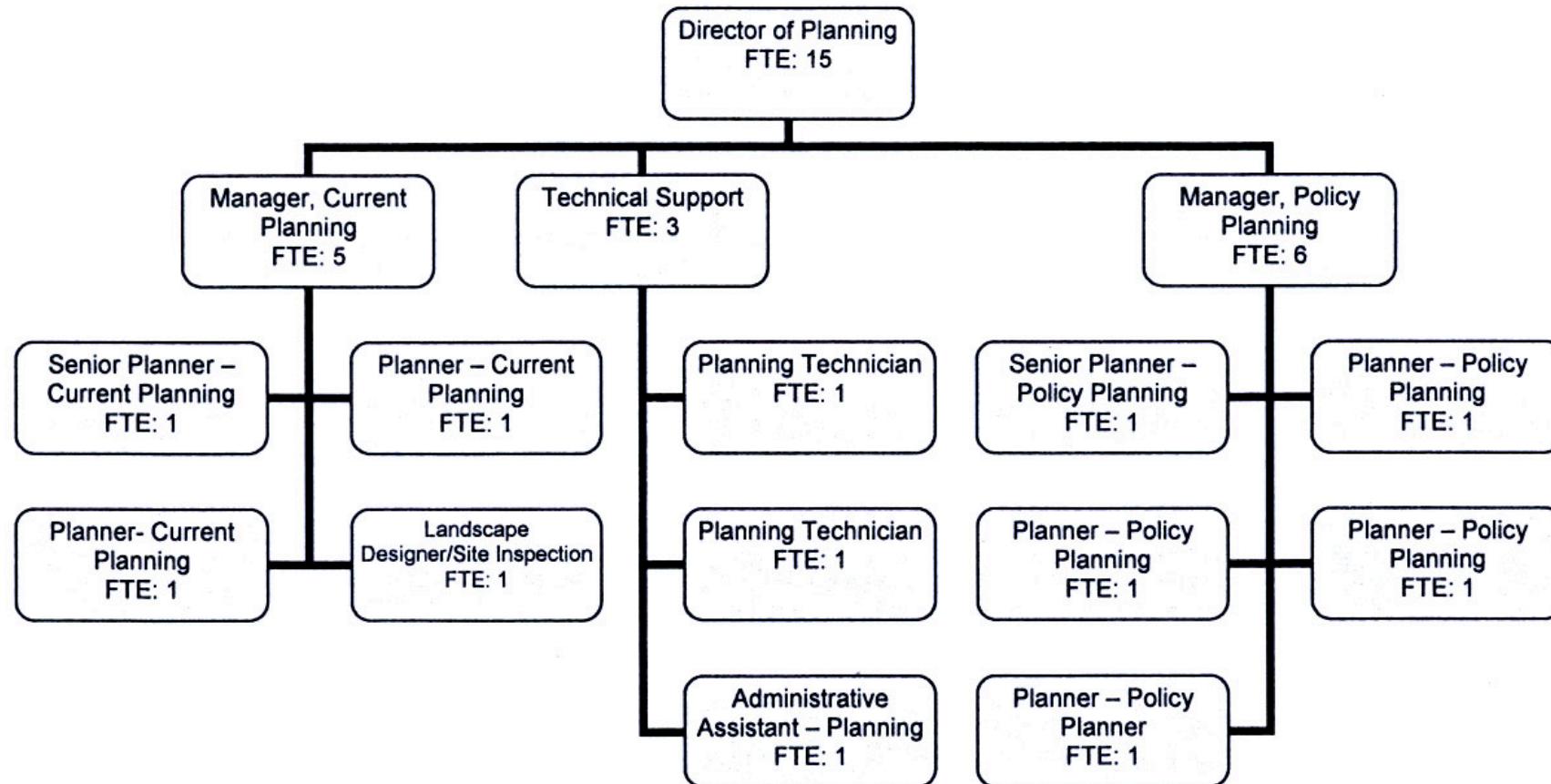
## **City of Cambridge**



## **PLANNING SERVICES DEPARTMENT**



## **City of Brantford**



## **Appendix C: Benchmarking & Best Practices – Other Municipalities**

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We would like to thank the following individuals and their staff who provided information which benefited the benchmarking review:

Matt Reniers  
Director of Planning  
Community Services Commission  
**City of Brantford**

Lucy Hives, MA, MCIP, RPP  
Manager, Current Planning  
Planning Department - Community Services  
**City of Brantford**

Janet Babcock, Commissioner of Planning Services  
Bo Densmore, Economic Development  
George Elliott, City Engineer  
Dennis Purcell, Chief Building Inspector  
**City of Cambridge**

Alain Pinard, MA, MCIP, RPP  
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**City of Kitchener**

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Director, Planning Division  
**City of Hamilton**

Joe Gravina  
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Planning Division  
**City of Hamilton**

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John Fleming, Director of Land Use Planning and City Planner  
Peter White, President & CEO of London Economic Development Corporation  
George Kotstifas, Director of Building Control (Chief Building Official)  
**City of London**

Mike Williams  
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Economic Development & Culture  
**City of Toronto**

Catherine Cieply  
Senior Business Development Officer  
Economic Development & Culture  
**City of Toronto**

Carleton Grant  
Development Application Review Project (DARP)  
City Planning  
**City of Toronto**