

Frequently Asked Questions - Downtown Secondary Plan

The Ward - redeveloping the Woods 1 Site



Background Information

[Provincial Growth Plan](#)
[Provincial Places to Grow Urban Form Case Studies](#)

What is the Downtown Secondary Plan – Envision Guelph Downtown?

Envision Guelph Downtown will set a long term vision to guide future development within the study area over the next 20 years. It will focus on how change should occur downtown with an emphasis on land use and urban design. It will become part of the City's Official Plan, which is the document that manages land use policy and change.

How was the boundary for the Secondary Plan established?

The boundary of the Downtown Secondary Plan was established through the 2006 Provincial Growth Plan. The City's Official Plan has been updated to incorporate the boundary through Official Plan Amendment 39. The boundary recognizes the opportunity to accommodate population and job growth downtown and on older, large industrial sites in the Ward community.

[Guelph's Official Plan – Envision Guelph](#)
[Provincial Growth Plan](#)

How much growth is planned downtown?

Currently, there are approximately 3,200 people living and 7,000 people working in the area. This represents a density of approximately 95 jobs and people per hectare.

The growth targets for Envision Guelph Downtown are 6,000 new residents and 1,500 new jobs. This growth would significantly enhance the vitality of downtown and would meet the density target of 150 people and jobs per hectare, set by the Provincial Growth Plan.

Is the City planning for this kind of growth in other areas?

In order to achieve a more sustainable city and satisfy the policies of the Provincial Growth Plan, growth is planned within built-up areas and at the city's edges.

In 2009, Council approved a Growth Management Strategy (GMS) to accommodate growth within the current City boundaries. The GMS demonstrated that the City should plan for a total population of 175,000 people and approximately 100,000 jobs by 2031—this will mean adding 54,000 people and 32,400 jobs.

The GMS identified opportunities for intensification throughout the City in order to meet the Provincial

Growth Plan's 40% intensification target within the built-up area of the City by 2015 including the Woods 1 site as well as other opportunities in the existing Downtown and across the entire City.

Guelph's Growth Management Strategy

Redeveloping the Woods 1 site

What is currently permitted on the Woods 1 Site?

The existing Official Plan and Zoning By-law regulations for the site were established in the 1990s. The current Official Plan Designation for the Woods 1 Site (west of Arthur Street) is High Density Residential which permits apartments. The minimum density is 100 units per hectare and the maximum density is 150 units per hectare.

The existing Zoning By-law permits up to 150 units per hectare and a maximum height of 6 storeys subject to a number of other regulations. The existing Zoning By-law is subject to holding provisions which require a number of planning and technical studies be completed before residential development could proceed.

Why is the City reconsidering the existing policies for the Woods 1 site?

It is a Provincial requirement for a municipality to review its Official Plan at least every five years to ensure it reflects current City and Provincial objectives. Since the 1990s, the Provincial Growth Plan, the City's response to the Growth Plan (Official Plan Amendment 39), the City's Growth Management Strategy and Community Energy Plan have come into effect. In addition, major investments are being made in public transit facilities downtown, including an inter-modal transit hub on Carden Street, within walking distance of the Woods site. As part of Envision Guelph Downtown, the designations and densities throughout the area, including this site, are being reviewed.

What are the potential benefits of high density development on the Woods 1 site?

Redevelopment of the Woods 1 site can provide more housing choices in the neighbourhood, improve access to the river, increase the amount of public open space, support the environmental clean-up of the site, support investments in public transit and optimize the use of existing infrastructure. It can also support a healthy and vibrant community by supporting local schools, shops, services and other amenities.

Where is the Woods 1 site in the planning process?

The new owner, Kilmer Brownfield Equity Fund, has applied for and obtained Council approval for financial incentives under the City's Brownfield Community Improvement Plan, which encourages the clean-up and redevelopment of contaminated sites. Envision Guelph Downtown provides the opportunity to establish principles, policies and guidelines to guide the preparation and review of future proposals and planning applications. As of June 2010, the City has not received a development application for the Woods 1 site.

What planning applications will the owner of Woods 1 site submit?

If the applicant wishes to alter the existing planning permissions on the site a planning application is required. If this occurs, surrounding residents will be notified as required by the Planning Act. Supporting technical reports, such as a traffic impact study, would be required. As previously mentioned, the existing Zoning By-law is subject to holding provisions which require a number of reports to be completed before development could begin. Site plan approval would also be required.

How big is the site?

The Woods 1 site west of Arthur Street is approximately 3.2 hectares. It is approximately 100 metres wide

(measured from the river to Arthur Street) and 340 metres long (measured from Neeve Street to Elizabeth Street).