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Feb 11, 2025 · 100 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1889417187355513158](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1889417187355513158)

Coming up at 4 pm, it's this month's planning meeting. This is what's on that agenda:



#### City Council Preview – What's on the Agenda for the February 11, 2025...

This month's planning meeting features no new developments, but it does lay the potential ground work for future developments. Coming up at this meeting is the first phase of how high we can ...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2025/01/31/city-council-preview-whats-on-the-agenda-for-the-f...>

There are some logistical concerns, timing with transfers in Guelph, parking concerns around the Cambridge station, and other potential stops, but Aguas notes that these things can be worked out through planning.

Next steps:

## Next Steps

Region of Waterloo's Council approved report TSD-TRP-24-012 dated August 13, 2024:

1. Endorse the IBC and Concept Design Study
2. Direct staff to forward the Council report to Area Municipal partners to create a unified voice to support the project
3. Request that Metrolinx:
  - Adopt the project in the Regional Transit Plan,
  - Continue the project under its leadership (Preliminary Design Business Case and CN negotiations),
  - Provide GO Bus service between Cambridge and Guelph in the interim.

Allt/Busuttil move recommendation:

**Recommendation:**

1. That Report 2025-16 Cambridge to Union Passenger Rail Connection Initial Business Case and Concept Design be received.
2. That Mayor Guthrie submit a letter to Metrolinx, on behalf of the City of Guelph, supporting the Initial Business Case in principle.

Allt says that this is a good foundation for reinforcing the need for 2WADGO, but has concerns about crossing at Silvercreek. Anderson says there's no need for grade separations, but City would have to follow Transport Canada guidelines.

Gibson asks why not go through to Milton. Aguas notes that there was a feasibility study in 2021 that showed the travel time both ways is about equal, but there are more midpoint destinations through Guelph, plus its better for regional connectivity.

Also, there's more willingness by the track's owners in Guelph to allow GO to use them for passenger rail.

Gibson asks if the business case depends on 2WADGO. Aguas says yes, in part, and also notes that the Milton line is at capacity now so pushing Cambridge users there would flood capacity.

Caton asks about healthcare impacts, a lot of specialists in Cambridge. Aguas says that could be noted in future business cases, but they haven't looked at that yet.

O'Rourke asks if there's any additional land planning or infrastructure. Aguas says that the track will need some upgrade and if there's a need, they might have to buy a second track. EA only needed at road crossings if changes needed.

O'Rourke: Financing thru Metrolinx?

Aguas: RoW point of view is to have Metrolinx take the wheel on this. This is regional transit after all.

O'Rourke asks about bus connection timeline.

Aguas says that's Metrolinx's decision, the RoW is trying to package the endorsements and present the need for a bus connection. In other words 🙌.

Billings asks if Metrolinx is paying? Aguas says they don't know, sometimes there are partnerships with the Federal government. Anderson adds that they're asking to endorse business case for 100% Metrolinx funding for this.

Guthrie asks that the City be kept in the loop, and council unanimously supports the business case.

Next, 37 Christie Lane – Objection to Notice of Intention to Designate. Jack Mallon, Heritage Planner, notes that the U of G has objected to the designation passed by council noting that the demo permit makes heritage designation moot.

Mallon says that staff are pushing for the designation to stand anyway. The designation ensured the careful deconstruction of the conservatory and the preservation of the steel frame. He says the U of G has been given flexibility.

Downer/O'Rourke move recommendation.

**Recommendation:**

1. That the Notice of Objection to the intention to designate 37 Christie Lane dated December 19, 2024 from the University of Guelph be received.
2. That the designation by-law for 37 Christie Lane be approved.

O'Rourke asks about the relationship with U of G on comparative garden. Mallon says intention is to not be heavy handed, they want to see what U of G is cooking and they've pledged to bring it to heritage committee.

Chew says relationships are fragile at the moment, U of G in transition, so he wants assurances. Mallon says the bylaw only lists salvageable steel as protected, so U of G has "wide degree" of flexibility. Chew encourages staff to find a champion.

Council approves the recommendations unanimously.

Next, Public Meeting report for Downtown Building Heights draft Official Plan Amendment.

Presenting are:

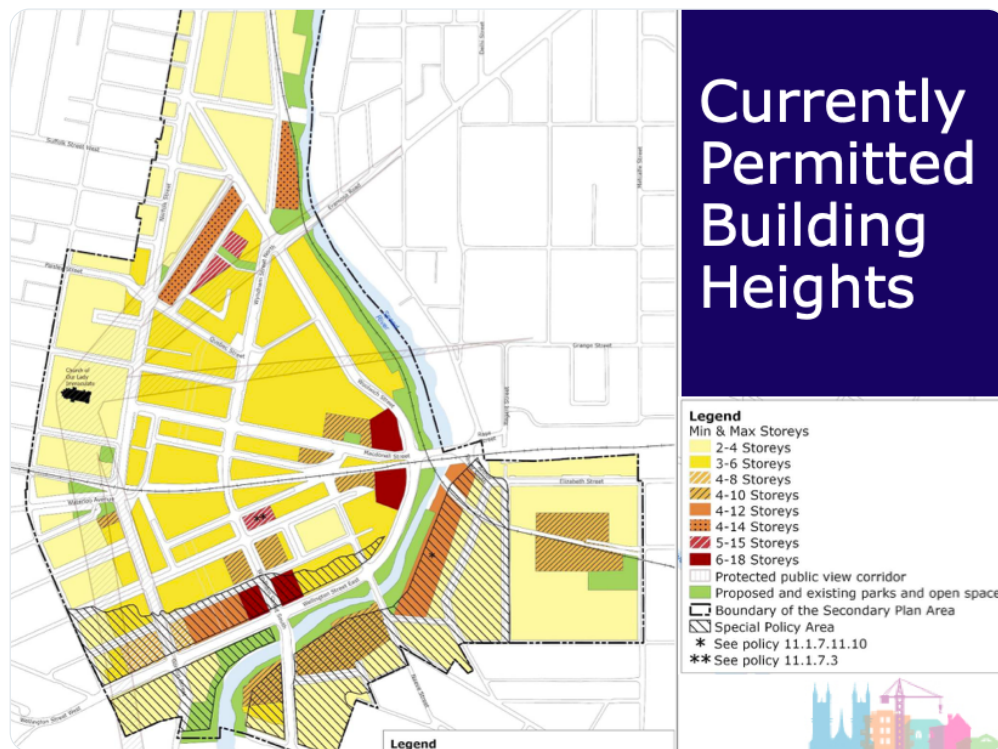
Brenna MacKinnon, Project Manager, Policy Planning

Stacey Laughlin, Downtown Revitalization Advisor

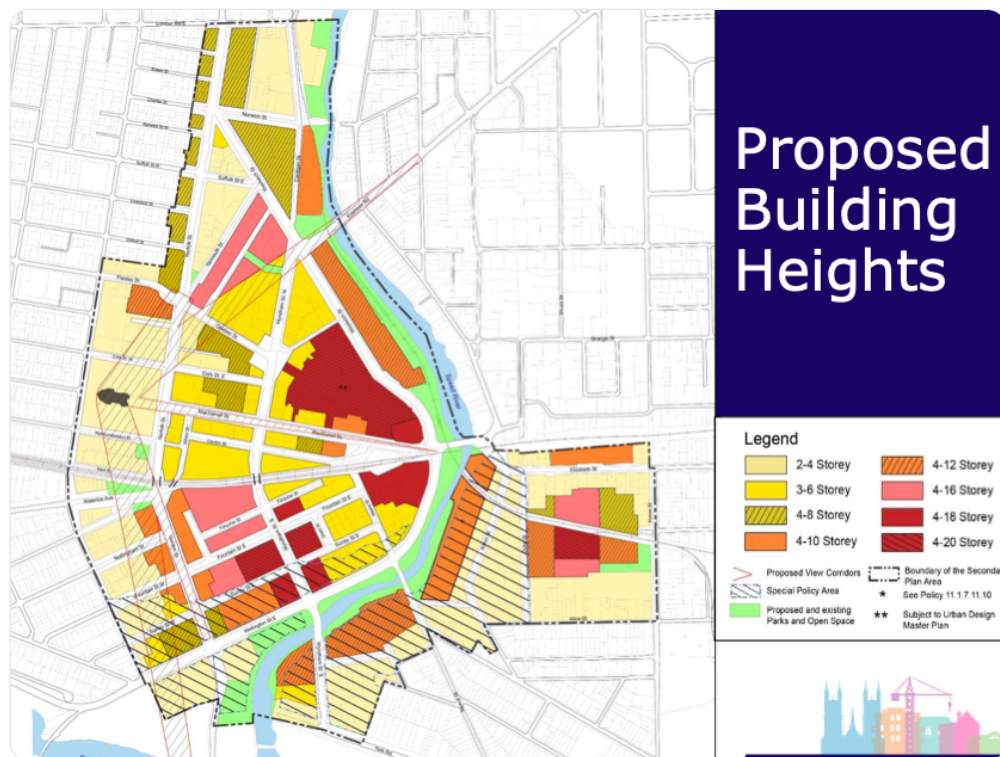
What are we doing:

- Present the proposed OPA to Council and the public for comments and feedback
- Study Purpose: review the permitted building heights in the Downtown and make recommendations for changes
- Develop built-form standards for tall buildings that would apply city-wide

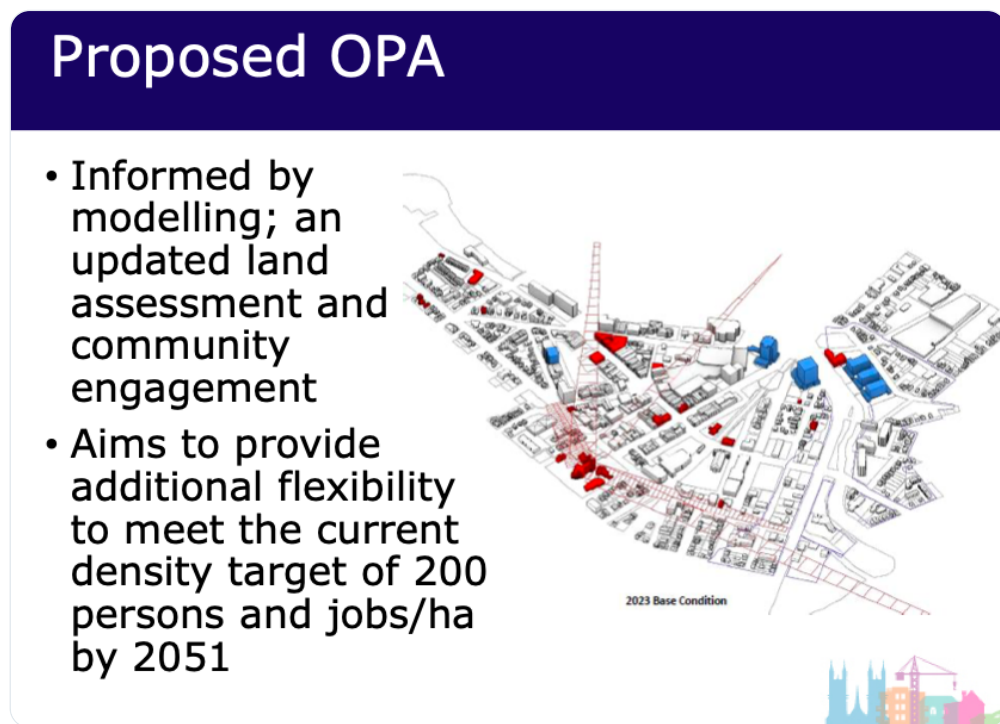
These are the current height limits downtown...



...And these are the proposed height limits!



The consultant says that this all came together quickly and is one of several height studies they're doing. The work started with looking at existing policy, and that meant looking at, among other things, the view corridor of the Basilica of Our Lady.



The proposed OPA will

- Strategically locates taller buildings throughout Downtown to limit direct impacts on existing neighbourhoods and public spaces
- Aim to permit context- sensitive higher density development while protecting significant cultural heritage resources

Taller buildings will be around the edge while also being mindful of the surrounding neighbourhoods and projecting the build heritage in the core it's self. The model is called an "urban amphitheatre".

The OPA will also:

- Recognize that the Basilica should retain visual prominence as a landmark in the City but will permit buildings to exceed its height
- Shift one protected public view corridor to protect the view of the Basilica along Macdonell Street

Apparently, developers told staff that 20-storeys is a "sweet spot" that makes some project viable, but they they had to balance that with concerns from the public about too much height and too much concentration of height.

According to staff this OPA will:

- Balance opportunities for short-to-long term intensification
- Aims to effectively and efficiently utilize investment
- Recognizes that a CPP Bylaw is proposed for DT and will consider the potential for additional height beyond what is proposed.

Next steps:

- February 2025 Open House & Public Meeting
- February 2025: Community Engagement – OPA/ Built Form Standards
- March 2025 : Revisions to OPA/Built Form Standards
- April 2025: Council Decision Meeting

Guthrie throws it to delegations starting with Christian Tsimenidis from UP consulting representing Skyline Retail Real Estate Holdings Ltd who want to develop their Carden/Macdonell project. They've paused development to take part in this study.

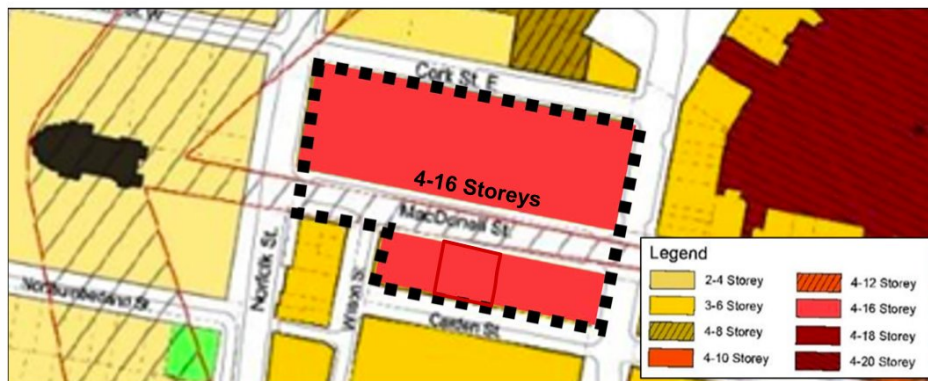




Tsimenidis is proposing this change for their property, which will obviously make it easier for their project to proceed.

## ● Recommendations

- Permit "4-16 Storeys" designation on the subject lands (and lands between Cork St and Macdonell St)



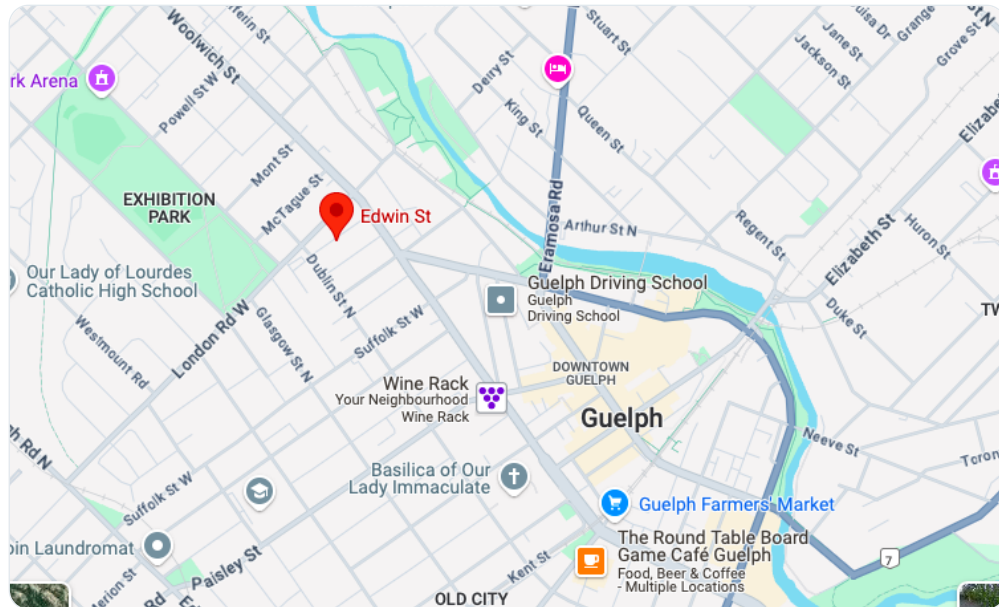
Rendering of the proposed building.



Guthrie asks if Tsimenidis reached out to neighbours to get their temperature. Tsimenidis says no, but hey the view corridor is protected so it shouldn't be a problem, right?



Next, Bruce Ysselstein who is speaking for the residents on Edwin Street. He says at the open house it was made clear that London/Woolwich would be made problematic for anything built on that corner, which is why he's concerned.



Ysselstein says an 8-storey building there would mean 40 vehicles excluding deliveries or visitors. Where will those cars go? Edwin is already under traffic pressures, and he says that they've seen too many near misses.

Mitch Baker from Vive Development is next. He represents 36-50 Wellington Street, where the KFC and Wendy's present sits. Could be replaced by this though?

## ● Vision

- 29-storey mixed-use building with ground floor commercial
- 4-storey podium with parking
- 10-storey mid-rise section and 29-storey tower to ease the buildings transition
- Major arterial roadway meant to accommodate additional traffic, servicing, volume, etc.
- Provides outside view corridors and is not adjacent to any sensitive uses

At issue, Baker says the sites selected for increased density seems kind of willy-nilly, especially since many of the properties which have received new height limits but probably won't be redeveloped. For his client's site, he wants 4-35 storeys(!).

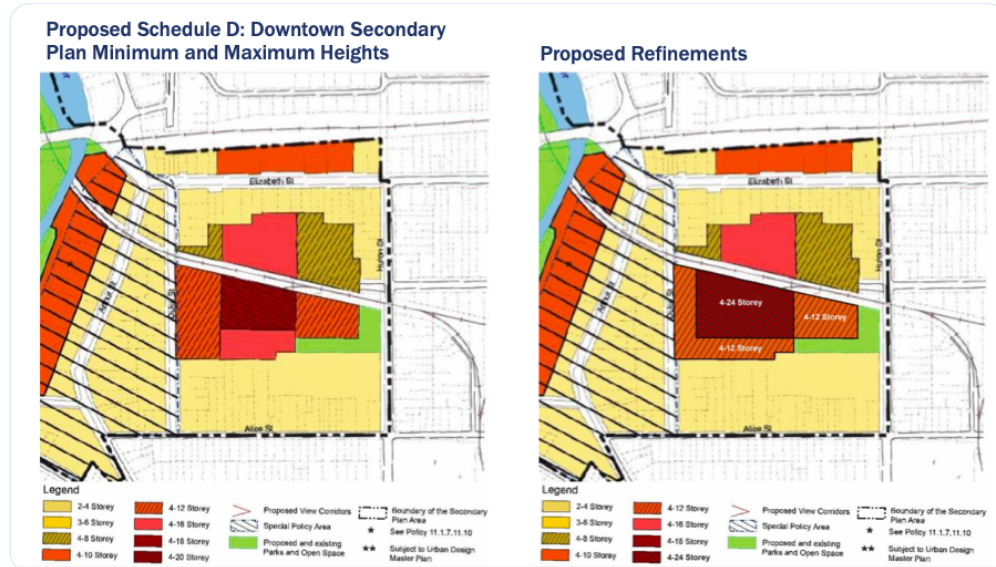
Goller asks what kind of justification Baker wants. Baker says the background study would have been helpful, not just the draft amendment. Goller asks about 35 storeys: Does he now what kind of massing that needs? Baker says they haven't gone in-depth.

Last, Tim Smith from Wood Development Group. He's representing the Plant 2 plan, and notes his experience helping to develop Downtown 2ndary Plan and says that while it served Guelph well, it needs an update.



The height needs to unlock "some of the challenging sites" in the core, Smith says. He urges the City to take more time to get it right, and there needs to be more engagement. City has bold lifting 6-storeys, but then need to be bolder now with 20+.

Smith says they're looking for some adjustments to allow for more height in the centre of their development, up to 24 storeys for one building. He notes that they're not maxing out height at the rest of the site.

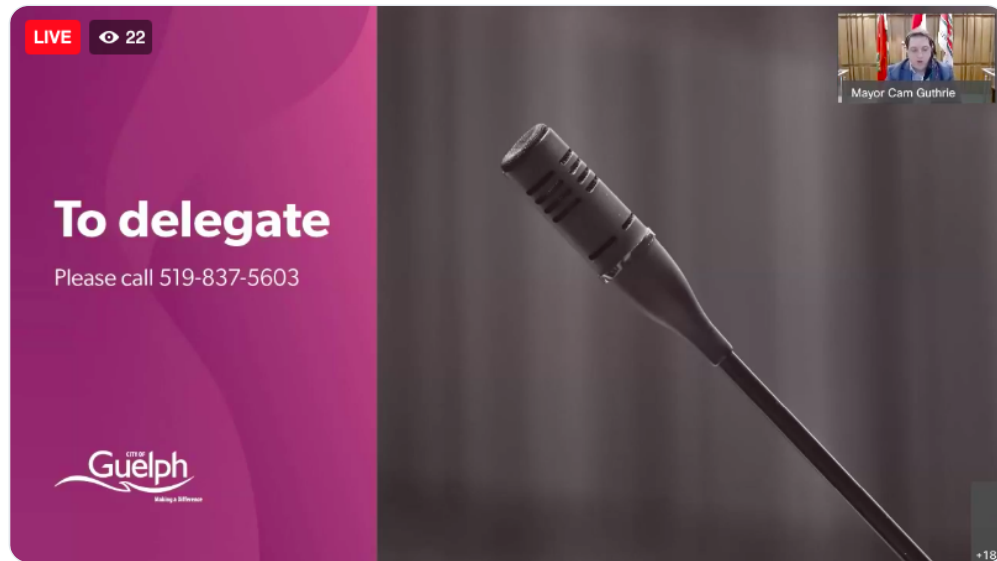


O'Rourke asks if the community permit plan will allow for extra height with the enhance of community space? Smith says maybe, b/c they don't know what the permit bylaw will allow. (Work on that will begin as soon as the height study is complete.)

O'Rourke asks about preventing corridors of tall building without being prescriptive. Smith says we can all agree not enough development is happening south of the tracks, so this could be an option. This is why seeing a rationale is important for each site.

Allt asks about 4-6 storeys for Elizabeth, why a better fit there at the north end of the site? Smith says they need to respect low scale of that road, and they don't think 6 storeys will work for the image they have on the site.

We will now pause to see if anyone else wants a piece of this action. Call in if you do:



And we're back, and there are two additional callers.

Irene Bliss (sp?) is first and she notes the many complicated concerns about building taller and more densely from possible flooding to messing with the birds.

Next, is S\*san W\*tson. She says she's dismayed by the new height maps, and the reason why the 2ndary plan won awards is because it limited really tall buildings to perimeter, and it also added parkland too.

So we now turn to council for questions and comments.

Chew/Richardson move rec:

That the report titled Downtown Heights Study Proposed Official Plan Amendment Statutory Public Meeting Report from Infrastructure, Development and Environment dated February 11, 2025 be received.

Gibson says he would like to see some rationale like the 20 storeys max for the Fountain parking lot and lower down hill. Not casting aspersions, but wants to understand why decisions were made.

Allt says the one delegate raised some important points about Woolwich-Paisley corridor, and wants to know what it means that increased height was "strategically located". Worried about a "wall of buildings" being a challenge.

Caton asks how many floors a building has to have before mandatory elevator. GM of Planning Walkey says she's not sure, it's either four or six.

Caton asks about 15 per cent barrier-free number for multi-unit buildings, is there a minimum size for that to apply or is it all multi-unit buildings. Walkey says she will also have to look that up too.

Caton asks about environmental impacts of height versus sprawl. 14-15 acres = 20-storey building.

Caton notes that there's only so much Guelph, and thinks that this might actually increase the number of accessible units, which we will have an increasing need for.

Goller also asks for the rationale, and asks if it would be possible to see what it would like if all the sites went to their max height in order to visualise that. He also appreciates the person who raised the environmental concerns.

Goller asks if increasing density downtown means sparing density elsewhere. MacKinnon says this isn't about density, the OPA 80 establishes those targets, this is about the best places to allow for extra height.

O'Rourke asks if there's been a financial analysis on whether these buildings are subject to CBCs and do we get that 5% dedicate affordable units? MacKinnon says that's being done through CPPS process for downtown, not proposing inclusionary zoning (the 5%).

O'Rourke: So no requirement for 5%, will we get that bylaw before the height is permitted? MacKinnon: The CPP bylaw only looks at more units, not more parkland.

O'Rourke asks about line in one letter about 25 storeys to break even, does that including parking? Consultant says it might, but it's a tricky balance between what you can sell and what you can build.

The consultant says that they've heard from many developers that it's in the 20-30 range. He doesn't think they've got it perfect the first time, and it's a work in progress.

Downer asks if parking exemptions are not included in this study because there's also a need to look at public parking. She calls it an offloading of costs. Staff says that they're trying to build in assumptions, there will be some parking built, but they'll need a new plan soon.

Busuttil says that the lack of green public spaces in downtown Toronto is a concern when thinking about heights. Also concerned about the future demand on water. Also, what does city need for infrastructure.

Busuttil asks about timelines for downtown community plan. MacKinnon says a draft bylaw should come by early summer and a decision will need to be made by the end of the year.

Billings asks why the current main library sites isn't target for more storeys. Consultant says that some of the lot structure is problematic in this area, too triangular in places. Thinks they've heard that they need a re-examination. Billings agrees.

Guthrie says that this is a key moment for council to embrace this opportunity. Be bolder, as a delegate said, sure. He says we're 85% there and can get more. Not just height, which he's for, but it could be getting rid of density cap on two sites mentioned.

Guthrie says he's not a fan of the "wedding cakes" meaning the setbacks. He says they're ugly and it takes away housing, and more cities aren't doing it. \*But\* maybe that's where better urban design comes in (?).

On view corridors, even the ONgov kept them when they re-wrote the OP. Guthrie says he's not in favour of \*all\* view corridors, but this is a step in the right direction.

On the floodplain, Guthrie wants certainty when it comes to planning, so what's holding that up? Is it the GRCA? Walkey says the GRCA has advanced work and the study should come back by the end of 2025, and then City will follow up. It's a big technical report.

Guthrie says his instinct is to just give the Woods project 24, it's already at 20. He also says that this is a good balance, and no one here tonight said heritage was in the way and is glad that it's not 23 everywhere.

Report received unanimously.

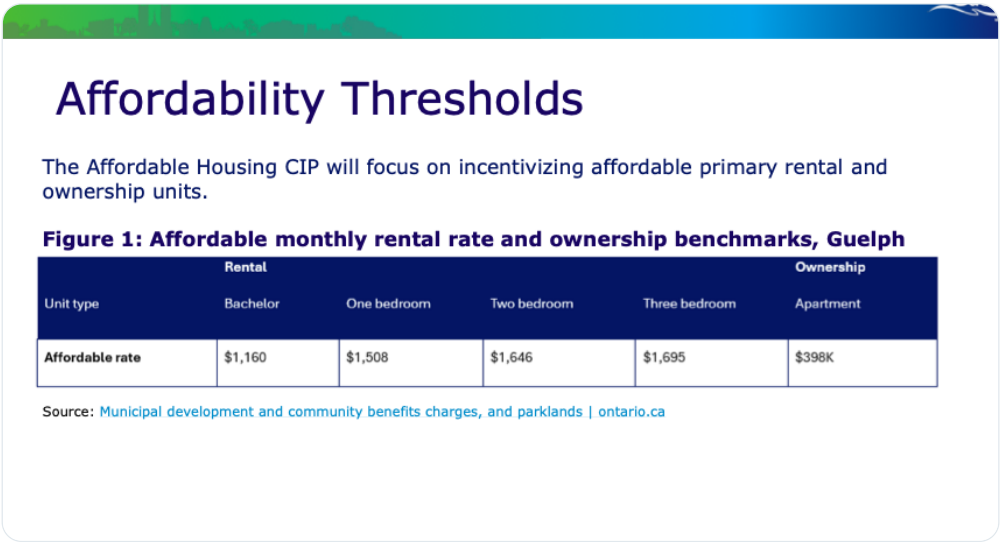
Guthrie calls for a 10-minute break before tackling the last item.



And we're back for the last item, the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan.

Christine Chapman, Manager of Economic Development, will present. The focus on this presentation will be update since this was first presented in November and next steps.

Affordability benchmarks:



The plan is made of up 3 programs: 1) to turn a vacant space – residential, commercial or office – into new affordable units 2) new affordable housing unit grant for new purpose-built affordable units for rent or ownership 3) ADU grant w/ 2 streams for homeowners and developers.

Deets:



## Vacant Unit Renewal Grant

(Previously Vacant Residential Unit and Vacant Space Conversion Grant)

To encourage the conversion and rehabilitation of underutilized existing building stock into affordable rental residential units.

Up to \$100K per affordable unit and up to an additional \$20K for accessibility features. Grant paid at the time of building permit approval.

### Eligible projects

- Renovation of existing residential unit(s) that are not currently habitable into affordable rental unit(s)
- Conversion of vacant existing commercial or office space in a multi-unit building into affordable rental unit(s).
- Unit(s) must contain full private culinary, washroom, sleeping and living area space.
- A unit must remain affordable for 25 years

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## New Affordable Housing Unit Grant

(Previously New Affordable Residential Unit Grant)

To encourage the inclusion of affordable rental and ownership units in new mid-rise, multi-unit residential or mixed-use developments. This program targets mid-rise new-build projects.

Up to \$25K per new affordable unit. This grant is not funded by HAF, grant applications are received at the time of site plan application and paid at the time of occupancy approval.

### Eligible projects

- New mid-rise, multi-unit or mixed-use buildings that include purpose-built affordable rental or ownership residential units.
- Unit(s) must contain full private culinary, washroom, sleeping and living area space.
- A unit must remain affordable for 25 years.

## Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU) Grant

### Homeowner Stream

Up to \$20K grant with up to an additional \$20K if infrastructure upgrades. An additional \$10K for accessibility features.

New construction only and applicant must live on the property

Must remain affordable for 15 years.

### Project/Developer Stream

Up to \$10k grant per unit with an additional \$20k for infrastructure upgrades and \$10k for accessibility features.

New construction only, maximum six units per applicant

Must remain affordable for 15 years.

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Follow up from Nov13 Planning Meeting:

- Removed minimum unit size requirements from all programs
- Removal of minimum number of ADUs required to participate in the developer/project stream of the Additional Dwelling Unit Grant

(cont'd)

- Review of the affordability length requirements
- Review of the differences between the federal and provincial approach to affordability
- Confirm that the Guelph Greener Homes Grant can be stacked with the ADU grant

Council asked for a couple things: 1) a deferral of Property Tax through incremental tax financing (TIF) program. Grant #2 accounts for this, and it's all up front not over time.

2) Request for "a program for non-profit affordable housing developers that allows a no interest deferral of municipal application and permit fees prior to building permit". Staff are looking at this thru affordable housing strategy.

Ensuring Compliance?

- Annual affordability declaration by grant recipient, verified by staff
- A registration on the title of the property for all grants
- A collateral mortgage for grants \$100K or more
- Penalties and repayment requirements for non-compliance

If this is approved today, there will be a 20-day appeal period but if there's no appeal this could be in business in early March and a comms plan is underway.

Two delegates on this one starting with Chad McBain, OnePoint Association of Realtors. We now pause to see how long the delegation can be. This is under the stat meeting agenda, so they should get 10 minutes. Mayor says 5.

Clerks win! It's a 10-minute presentation.

We now turn to McBain!

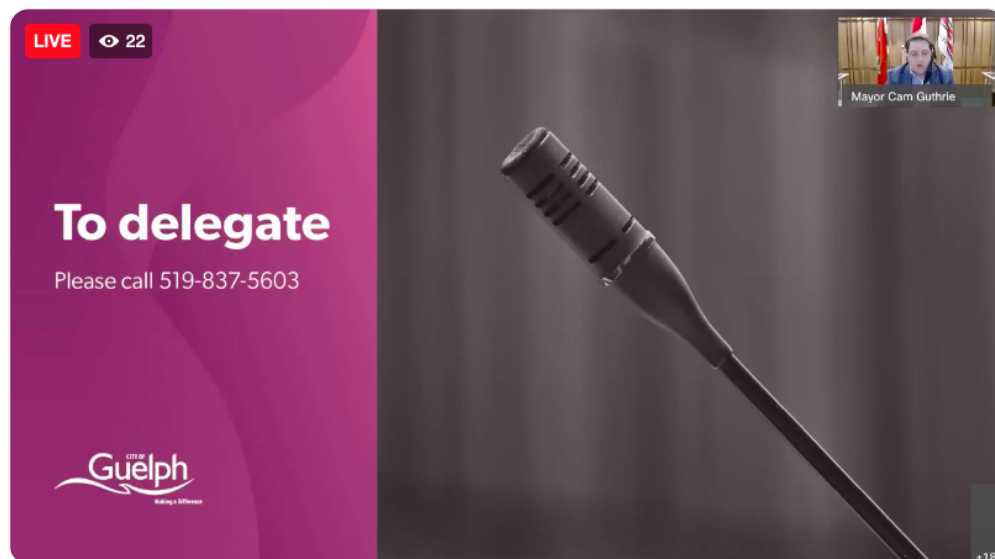


McBain says that the housing affordability crisis is not impacting one demographic, but it's impacting everyone. He says he need 8700 affordable units by 2051 for a growing population. Calls the CIP a step in the right direction.

O'Rourke asks how this will play out on the ground, will OnePoint talk to buyers about this? McBain says there are a number of ways, but they also work with people who rent properties so it would be great marketing opportunity.

Next, Morgan Dandie. She says that she hopes Guelph will have more than enough uptake to mitigate any change in government at the federal level. She looks forward to seeing what success comes out of this.

Apparently, this is a Statutory Meeting because they only had 18 days notice the last time this came up in November and then need to do 20. So you can still comment. Call in now!



One additional delegate, and it's Eric Martin (sp?). He hopes council approves it and he feels heard from when he delegated in November. He called in to say thanks, and he's not sure if anyone's done that before.

Busuttil/Downer move Recommendation:

That the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan as described in report 2025-75, be approved.

O'Rourke asks about measures to ensure that a unit becomes a short-term rental. James Goodram, GM of Economic Development and Tourism says that there will be annual

declaration that the unit is in compliance, including confirmation from the tenant...  
...the property owner will get a chance to get back into compliance, but if they don't they'll have to pay back the entire loan. It stays not he title too.

Goodram adds that they've been getting a lot of interest and thinks this will be an easy sell in March.

Motion approved unanimously.

Bylaws of the week approved.

**\*5.1 By-law Number (2025) - 21026**



A by-law to designate portions of the buildings and property municipally known as 37 Christie Lane and legally described as PT LOT 6, CONCESSION 2, DIVISION G CITY OF GUELPH , (FORMERLY TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH) ; PT LOT 7, CONCESSION 2, DIVISION G CITY OF GUELPH , (FORMERLY TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH) ; PT LOT 8, CONCESSION 2, DIVISION G CITY OF GUELPH , (FORMERLY TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH) ; PT LOT 9, CONCESSION 2, DIVISION G CITY OF GUELPH , (FORMERLY TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH) ; PT LOT 6, CONCESSION 1, DIVISION G , PT LOT 7, CONCESSION 1, DIVISION G , PT LOT 8, CONCESSION 1, DIVISION G , CITY OF GUELPH (FORMERLY TOWNSHIP OF GUELPH) ; LOTS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 & 21 & PT LOTS 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 & 27, PLAN 409 ; BLOCK A, PLAN 409 ; BLOCK B, PLAN 409 ; COLLEGE CRESCENT, PLAN 409 ; LANE, PLAN 409 ; CITY OF GUELPH (BEING ALL OF PIN 71235-0003)

**\*5.2 By-law Number (2025) - 21035**



A by-law to designate portions of the buildings and property municipally known as 22 James Street East and legally described as Part Lot A, Plan 302, designated as Part 3, Reference Plan 61R-5259 and Part Lot A, Plan 302, as in RO799193, City of Guelph

**\*5.3 By-Law Number (2025) - 21036**



A by-law to designate portions of the buildings and property municipally known as 19 Fountain Street West and legally described as Part Lot 173, Plan 8, AS IN RO786757; CITY OF GUELPH

**\*5.4 By-law Number (2025) – 21042**



A by-law to designate a Community Improvement Project Area within the City of Guelph for purposes of Affordable Housing.

**\*5.5 By-law Number (2025) – 21043**



A by-law to adopt the City of Guelph Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan dated February 11, 2025.

**\*5.6 By-law Number (2025) - 21046**



A by-law to correct an administrative error in relation to bylaws (2025) – 21024 and (2025) - 21025 previously passed by City Council at the January 28 City Council meeting.

**\*5.7 By-law Number (2025) - 21049**

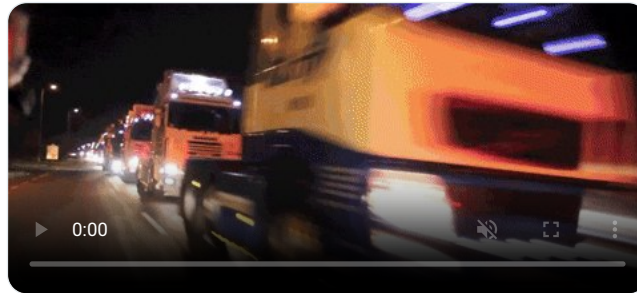


A by-law to confirm the proceedings of a meeting of Guelph City Council held February 11, 2025.



Mayor's announcement: Guthrie wants to ask everyone to think local, shop local. Guelph is coming together to weather the storm south of the border. On procurement, the exec team is looking to re-align priorities, but 98.5% of purchasing is already Canadian, 29% local.

And that's a wrap for this meeting! Keep on trucking!!!



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

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