



Committee Report

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| To: | Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council |
| Committee Date: | July 22, 2021 |
| Subject / Report No: | Update to the County's Growth Management Strategy / Addendum to PDR-CW-28-20 |
| Title: | Final Report on the Updated Growth Management Strategy |
| Prepared by: | Scott Taylor |
| Reviewed by: | Randy Scherzer |
| Lower Tier(s) Affected: | All Municipalities within Grey County |
| Status: | Adopted as presented by Committee of the Whole through Resolution CW124-21; Endorsed by County Council CC59-21 |

Recommendation

1. That Addendum to Report PDR-CW-28-20 regarding the Update to the County's Growth Management Strategy be received;
2. That the 2021 Growth Management Strategy prepared by Hemson Consulting Ltd. be received;
3. That staff be directed to prepare a County Official Plan Amendment to update the growth projections and allocations in the County Plan, in addition to any additional housekeeping matters; and
4. That 2021 Growth Management Strategy be shared with member municipalities in Grey County and other community partners such as school boards, the health care sector, and other groups who could utilize this data.

Executive Summary

The Province released a new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) which took effect May 1, 2020. Under the new PPS, municipalities can now plan for a 25-year growth horizon, whereas previously that was limited to a 20-year horizon. In 2020 the County hired Hemson Consulting Ltd. to update the County's 2018 Growth Management Strategy (GMS), and subsequently the County Official Plan's growth projections and allocations to extend both to a 25-year horizon. County staff and member municipalities have been working with Hemson to provide input and data into the new GMS. The Updated GMS found that the County is growing more rapidly than previously expected. This report summarizes the results of the GMS Update and provides a recommendation to update Recolour Grey, the County Official Plan accordingly.

Background and Discussion

On July 9, 2020 County staff presented Report PDR-CW-28-20 to Committee of the Whole outlining the need for the GMS Update. A copy of that staff report can be found [here](#). Following Council's endorsement of that staff report, Hemson Consulting Ltd. was hired to complete the GMS Update. The 2021 GMS Update is comprised of a slide deck and memo, both of which are included in the Attachments section of this report. For reference purposes a link to the 2018 GMS has also been included in the Attachments section.

Hemson and County staff worked closely with each of Grey's member municipalities in order to update this document. Municipalities provided information on building permits, municipal planning applications, servicing, background studies, planned infrastructure upgrades, and any trends being observed locally. Uniformly all nine member municipalities reported being busier than ever, with lots of interest in development in their communities. Municipalities provided input on two drafts of the GMS Update, before this final draft was arrived at. County staff would like to thank municipal staff for all their valuable input into this project.

The 2021 GMS Update found that Grey County, including all nine member municipalities, are growing more rapidly than forecast in 2018. This is consistent with growth trends in other outer-ring Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) municipalities. Grey's permanent population is expected to increase by approximately 23,810 people between 2021 and 2046. During that same time period Grey's employment is expected to grow by approximately 8,680 jobs. Both the population and job growth rates will be variable over the forecast period as our population ages and demographics change over time.

Council also directed staff to consider the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic on the County's growth and development forecasts. The GMS Update was completed entirely under pandemic conditions. Throughout the pandemic Grey saw sustained interest in growth. Section D of the GMS Update Memo provides some commentary on the pandemic related impacts. At this stage it is unknown if some of the trends witnessed during the pandemic will become long-term trends (e.g. working from home, people living more permanently in their seasonal homes, etc.), or if they will return to pre-pandemic conditions following the pandemic. Although there were job losses stemming from COVID 19, Hemson has forecasted these sectors to rebound following the pandemic. Hemson has also pointed out that the increased growth and development interest in Grey began before the COVID 19 pandemic and noted that this does not appear to be a pandemic related phenomenon.

A number of the County's member municipalities are now in the process of completing their own official plan updates. The County's Updated GMS and the ability to plan for 25 years will be important to these municipal plans and processes. County staff will also be sharing the GMS Update with school boards, health services, and other community organizations or economic development organizations that may be able to use this data. The GMS Update is also crucial to the completion of the County's Development Charges Background Study, which Hemson is also currently working on. Information from the GMS Update will also inform other County projects including but not limited to; the long-term care redevelopment projects, the Climate Change Action Plan, and the Age-Friendly Community Strategy and Action Plan.

County staff are recommending that Recolour Grey be amended to include the new population and employment forecasts and allocations from the 2021 GMS. Staff have also flagged a few

additional housekeeping items to be included in the official plan update. An official plan amendment, including a public consultation period and public meeting will be undertaken, should the GMS Update be received.

Once the County Plan is updated, it may trigger the need for some municipalities to complete comprehensive reviews as part of their official plan updates, should they seek to expand these settlement areas. As municipalities undertake their own official plan reviews, County staff are happy to assist and facilitate boundary adjustments as justified through those processes. Further updates would be required to the County Official Plan at that time once the boundaries to those expansions are defined.

Finally, it is important to note that the 2021 GMS Update represents a 'snapshot in time'. Just as we've seen changes between the 2008, 2015, and 2018 versions of the GMS, we expect to see further changes in the future. Furthermore, it is too early to determine the total impacts of the pandemic and whether there will be any short or longer term trends stemming from that. Other factors such as the climate emergency, housing affordability and availability, and changes to economic drivers could also impact the viability of these forecasts over the 25-year horizon. As a result, the GMS is a document that needs to be regularly monitored and updated. Additionally, one of the key data inputs to a document of this nature is the information derived from the census. County staff have targeted a future GMS review in approximately 2023, when the full datasets from the 2021 census have been released. Following that 2023 GMS, further changes may be needed to the official plan.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The new 2020 Provincial Policy Statement came into effect on May 1, 2020. Although upper tier municipalities are required to allocate population and employment forecasts to member municipalities, there are no legislative requirements for how those forecasts and allocations are arrived at. The pending County official plan amendment will be completed in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no further financial or resource implications to be considered stemming from this report. The GMS Update was funded from the Planning – ArcGIS Reserve, and the proposed County official plan amendment will be funded from existing funds within the approved 2021 budget.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Economic Development, CAO
- External: Member municipalities within Grey

Appendices and Attachments

[Draft 2021 Growth Management Strategy Memo](#)

[Draft 2021 Growth Management Strategy Slide Deck](#)

[Growth Management Strategy 2018](#)

[PDR-CW-28-20 Update to the County's Growth Management Strategy](#)