



Committee Report

To:	Deputy Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	May 12, 2022
Subject / Report No:	Addendum to PDR-CW-06-22 / University of Guelph Student Projects
Title:	'Grey County Green Development Standards' and 'Density is Not a Dirty Word Guide' Student Reports
Prepared by:	Linda Swanston and Scott Taylor
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All Municipalities in Grey County
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented; Endorsed by County Council May 26, 2022 per Resolution CC47-22

Recommendation

1. That Addendum to Report PDR-CW-06-22 regarding the two University of Guelph student projects entitled 'Grey County Green Development Standards' and 'Density is Not a Dirty Word Guide' be received; and
2. That staff be directed to utilize the two student reports as resources to inform future planning and climate change policies and project implementation; and
3. That the two student reports be shared with member municipalities across Grey County.

Executive Summary

The County partnered with students from the University of Guelph Masters of Rural Planning and Development program to undertake two projects in Grey County. The first project, Grey County Green Development Standards, takes direction from the County's Climate Change Action Plan to explore options for a green development standard in Grey. A second project, Density is Not a Dirty Word Guide, examines approaches to implementing additional density in our communities, including educational and financial components. These student reports were being completed as part of the students' course work for their Masters of Rural Planning and Development program and will benefit the County and member municipalities. As part of the reports, the students conducted background research (including some stakeholder interviews), and a review of other municipal approaches. The Green Development Standards and Density is

Not a Dirty Word Guide recommendations are summarized in this report and will be further examined by County Planning staff and shared with member municipalities.

Background and Discussion

From January – April 2022, County Planning staff partnered with students from the University of Guelph Masters of Rural Planning and Development program on two new student projects:

1. Green Development Standard (GDS) completed by Benito Russo and Anab Siraj, and
2. Density is Not a Dirty Word Guide completed by Shivani Chopra, Andrea Torok, Maria Cristina Ciotti, and Abigail Miller.

Links to both of these studies can be found in the Attachments section of this report.

Green Development Standards Summary

One of the recommendations from the County's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) is to create a GDS. In preparation for the County's future GDS, this student team undertook valuable research on;

- the legislative framework that would apply to the GDS,
- current climate change policies and initiatives in Grey's member municipalities,
- the benefits to be provided from a GDS,
- a review of other green development certifications (e.g. federal, provincial, and third-party approaches),
- the role of density in overall greenhouse gas emissions intensity, and
- a summary of existing municipal GDS's in Ontario outside of Grey County.

Following the above-noted research, the student team provided recommendations for creating a Grey County GDS, including extensive consultation with local municipalities, as well as providing implementation approaches County staff can consider.

On May 3, 2022, the students presented the attached report findings to the County's Municipal Climate Change Community of Practice for information and discussion. The report and presentation were generally well received by this group.

Now that the student team has completed their work, County staff will use this report to inform the creation of a 'made-in-Grey' GDS. County staff will be issuing a request for proposal (RFP) for the creation of a GDS. Both the RFP, as well as future GDS prepared by a consultant in consultation with local municipalities, will be informed by the student report. This approach is similar to the methods utilized by the County's Age-Friendly Action Plan which first started as a student report, and then informed the future RFP and Age-Friendly Plan recently completed by WSP.

Based on the time and budget limitations on the student team, a fulsome stakeholder consultation was not undertaken. The student team has however provided some survey questions that could be used to guide a future stakeholder consultation in this regard. County staff will work with the successful RFP respondent and the Climate Change Community of Practice to provide robust consultation on the County's future GDS.

Density is Not a Dirty Word Guide Summary

Based on the direction from the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the County's own Official Plan, Recolour Grey, the County is promoting a wide range of housing types at densities which make efficient use of land and servicing infrastructure. To support the County and member municipal initiatives with respect to density, this student team undertook valuable research on;

- social, environmental, and economic aspects of residential density,
- current issues, solutions, and misconceptions surrounding density, and
- best practises to be considered when implementing density policies.

The student team not only reviewed literature and other municipal approaches to residential density, but also interviewed planners, municipal staff, and developers in Grey, to get their perspectives on density and policy implementation.

The Density is Not a Dirty Word Guide contains a number of recommendations that Grey County and municipal staff can consider with respect to density in our communities. These recommendations include;

- updating official plans and zoning by-laws,
- further education for residents, developers, and politicians,
- aligning density policies with the CCAP,
- adopting a housing for all approach, and
- defining community consultation guidelines to shape productive community conversations.

The Guide provides some useful graphics, photos, and a 'myths and facts' section that will be useful in future policy and implementation discussions on density.

County staff will share this Guide with municipal planning staff and other stakeholders to help inform future policy efforts and conversations on density. County staff also see merit in further refining some of the materials in the Guide, as public resource and educational tools to support density efforts and ultimately a housing for all approach.

Both of these student projects were conducted in a remote fashion to ensure that all public health requirements are complied with. The student teams worked within a very limited timeframe (the projects needed to be completed by early April 2022) and had no allocated budget for their projects. Grey County staff wish to extend a sincere thank you to the two student teams and the University of Guelph for partnering with the County on these projects.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

None.

Financial and Resource Implications

The work completed by the student consulting teams is without cost to the County and done as part of the coursework for their master's degree. County staff are grateful to the students' efforts in this regard and would note that having to pay a consultant to complete similar work would likely cost between \$25,000 - \$35,000 for each project.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Planning staff
- External: Municipal staff, developers, consultants

Appendices and Attachments

[PDR-CW-06-22 University of Guelph Student Project Staff Report](#)

[Density is Not a Dirty Word Student Report](#)

[Green Development Standards Student Report](#)