



Residential Intensification in the City of Hamilton

Park St. & Robinson St.
Photo Credit: Tom Flemming

What is Intensification?

Intensification occurs when an existing building, site or area within the existing urban area is developed or redeveloped at a density higher than what currently exists. This can occur through:

- Redevelopment of sites, including the reuse of brownfield and greyfields sites;
- Development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- Expansion or conversion of existing buildings, such as office buildings to residential buildings; and the
- Construction of new developments that combine a mix of uses for a more efficient use of land.

WHAT IS RESIDENTIAL DENSITY?

Density = the number of dwelling units per hectare.



Herkimer St.
Photo Credit: Tom Flemming



Main St. W. & Queen St.
Photo Credit: Indrah Jacobus

What is the goal of Residential Intensification?

The goal of residential intensification is to incorporate additional residential units into an existing neighbourhood in a way which does not cause an unacceptable negative impact. With this in mind, residential intensification will likely occur at densities that are higher than the surrounding area.

WHAT IS REDEVELOPMENT?

Redevelopment is the creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in existing communities, including brownfield and greyfield sites.



King Street Redevelopment, Hamilton

Where can Residential Intensification occur?

While residential intensification can occur anywhere within the urban boundary, Hamilton's goal is to distribute residential intensification in an appropriate manner with approximately 20 per cent occurring in the downtown, 40 per cent in the nodes and corridors and 40 per cent in existing neighbourhoods. View the Urban Structure Plan available online at www.hamilton.ca/newurbanop for more information on nodes and corridors.

WHAT IS A MIXED USE BUILDING?

A Mixed Use building or development is made up of a variety of mixed land uses either in the same building or in separate buildings. A mixed use residential building may include commercial or institutional uses, in addition to residential units.



Mixed Use Building, Ottawa, Ontario

What does “compatible” mean?

While residential intensification should be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood, compatibility should not be narrowly interpreted to mean “the same as” or even as “being similar to”. The term “compatible” refers to forms that are mutually tolerant and capable of existing together in harmony within an area.

WHAT IS A BROWNFIELD SITE?

A Brownfield site refers to an undeveloped or previously developed property that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial sites that may be underutilized, abandoned or vacant.



Example of Brownfield: Former Gas Station Site

Can residential Intensification be successful in Hamilton?

Yes, the City's Residential Intensification Study, a major background study for the Growth Related Integrated Growth Strategy (GRIDS) process and new Official Plan, has identified that:

- Citizen's demand a choice of different housing types within walking distance of urban amenities such as shops and transit
- There are areas within the City with existing mixed use that could accommodate further intensification.
- Residential Intensification is already happening in Hamilton (see centerfold).



What are the benefits of Residential Intensification?

Residential Intensification helps to manage the growth of the City's Urban Area and to protect natural heritage green space features and rural areas from urban expansion.

Further Benefits of Residential Intensification:

Land

- Better way to contain the urban expansion.
- A more efficient use of land which can result in cost savings.
- Reduces development pressure in farm land and natural areas.



Community

- Increases the housing options within some neighbourhoods.
- Attracts new residents to support the revitalization of downtowns and areas in decline.
- Maintains the population in existing communities to prevent community service declines (schools, recreations facilities, etc.).
- Moves towards the goal of complete communities.



Servicing

- Makes a more efficient use of the existing infrastructure which can result in cost savings (roads, sewers and water services, etc.).
- Increases transportation choices for access to work, retail and recreation.
- Supports alternative transit options.



Intensification is Happening Now in The City of Hamilton

Urban Area

Rural Area

Lake Ontario

Hamilton Harbour

Escarpment

N.T.S.

Projects:

- Redevelopment Main St W & Osler Dr
- Adaptive Reuse Highway No.5 E and Hamilton St S
- Adaptive Reuse Hunter St W and Locke St S
- Redevelopment Park St S and Robinson St
- Adaptive Reuse James St S and Bold St
- Redevelopment Queenston Rd and Nash Rd N
- Brownfield Hatt St and Ogilvie St
- Infill Housing Cedardale Ave and Lincoln Rd
- Brownfield Mohawk Rd W and West 16th St
- Redevelopment Lake Avenue and King St E
- Redevelopment West 5th Ave and Stone Church Rd
- Adaptive Reuse King St E and Rosslyn Ave S
- Infill Housing Christie St and Kennedy Ave
- Redevelopment Upper Wellington St and Fennell Ave E
- Redevelopment East 45th St and Kathleen Ct
- Brownfield Cumberland Ave and Gage Ave S

Are there different kinds of intensification? If so, what does it look like?

Residential intensification can take place in a variety of forms, however not all forms are appropriate or compatible with certain communities. The form of intensification depends on the local characteristics and opportunities. The following examples illustrate what residential intensification can look like.

Type of Residential Intensification	What Intensification Looks Like
<p>Infill Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves the development of housing units on small parcels of vacant or under-utilized land. • Includes the creation of additional units within existing structures. • Can occur on lots that were never developed, such as under-utilized parking lots or large lots that have been severed from existing properties. 	 <p><i>West 2nd St.</i></p>
<p>Redevelopment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves replacing an existing use with new or additional housing units. • Can occur by redeveloping brownfield sites (former industrial sites) and greyfield sites (older shopping centres) to residential or mixed use buildings. 	 <p><i>City Places, King William St.</i></p>
<p>Adaptive Reuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves converting former industrial, commercial or institutional buildings to residential units. • For example, a former office building or school being converted to lofts. 	 <p><i>Core Lofts, former offices, Bay St.</i></p>
<p>Extensions/Additions to Existing Buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves creating more residential units through extensions and/or additions to existing buildings. • This type of intensification is typically small in size and blends into the established streetscapes and communities. 	 <p><i>Dundas St. Apartments above</i></p>
<p>New Developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves combining a variety of compatible uses to create a mixed use building. • Commonly occurs as residential units above commercial uses, and as live-work units. 	 <p><i>Locke St. South</i></p>



How can residential intensification be incorporated into existing neighbourhoods?

Each individual proposal for intensification will be evaluated against a variety of criteria to determine its compatibility with the existing neighbourhood. Some criteria includes: building height, size of setback, architectural design, integration with existing streetscapes and impacts to local traffic and servicing. It is important to note that residential intensification projects should only be permitted if they are compatible with the existing area/neighbourhood.



Redevelopment - Gore Building on King St. E.
Photo Credit: Matthew Meier

Does high density mean high rise?

No, it is possible to achieve high densities in low rise apartment and/or townhouse developments. For example, the 5 storey building on Strathcona Ave. N. (on left below) is more dense than the 22 storey apartment building on Queen St. N. (below right).



Height: 5 storeys
Density: 243 units/hectare

37 Strathcona Ave. N.

Height: 22 storeys
Density: 213 units/hectare



75 Queen St. N.

Before and After: An Artist's Conception



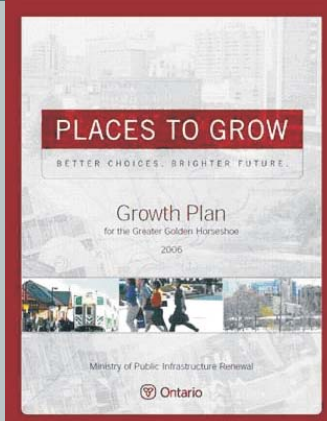
University Plaza, as it exists



University Plaza, with possible intensification

WHAT IS PLACES TO GROW?

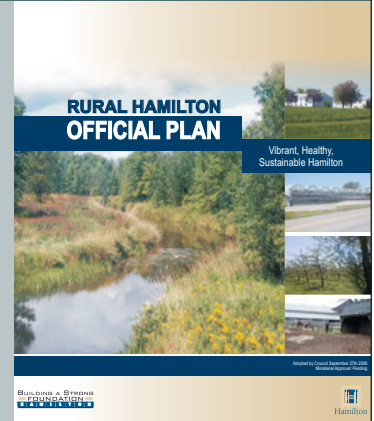
Places to Grow (P2G) is the Ontario government's initiative to manage growth and development in Southern Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe for the next 25 years. The Plan provides direction to help guide municipalities on a range of issues such as transportation and urban form.



Places to Grow - Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL PLAN?

An Official Plan is a planning document that projects a long term vision for the physical development of the City over the next 30 years. Its policies provide the direction for managing long term development to meet social, economic and environmental objectives of the City's vision.



Rural Official Plan

What is the role of the Province?

The Province of Ontario, through the Growth Plan, requires that municipalities accommodate a minimum of 40 per cent of their forecast population growth through residential intensification within the urban area by 2015 and for each year thereafter. In Hamilton, this translates into approximately 26,500 new housing units to be added to Hamilton's current built-up area between now and 2031.

Other Reference Brochures available include:

- Financial Incentive Programs for Downtown and Community Renewal
- GRIDS (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy)
- Brownfields/ERASE Program

What is the role of a City Planner in Residential Intensification?

The role of the Planner is to use a variety of tools to involve the local community and to ensure that the proposed intensification project is compatible with the existing community.

Examples of such tools are:

- Information and education programs;
- Official Plan Policies;
- Zoning Bylaws;
- Design guidelines;
- Site plan process that enforces the guidelines; and,
- Incentive programs.

For more information, please contact:

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