TO: Chair and Members General Issues Committee

COMMITEE DATE: March 29, 2021

SUBJECT/REPORT NO: GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (PED17010(j)) (City Wide)

WARD(S) AFFECTED: City Wide

PREPARED BY: Heather Travis (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4168

SUBMITTED BY: Steve Robichaud Director, Planning and Chief Planner Planning and Economic Development Department

SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION

(a) That Council receive the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands), attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j));

(b) That Council receive the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook), attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(j)); and,

(c) That Council authorize staff to commence public and stakeholder consultation, utilizing both digital and non-digital platforms, on the draft evaluation framework and phasing criteria identified in Appendices “A” and “B” attached to Report PED17010(j)), and that staff report back on the results of the consultation prior to final approval of the evaluation framework and phasing criteria.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the final approval of the Land Needs Assessment (LNA), the next phase of GRIDS (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy) 2 and the Municipal...
Comprehensive Review (MCR) will be the evaluation of where and when the City will grow to the year 2051, as noted on the project timeline attached as Appendix “F” to Report PED17010(j). Staff will commence the process of evaluating the implications of alternative scenarios in terms of where growth could occur as a result of an urban expansion, and to develop and assess alternative models relating to the phasing of development of those expansion lands. All alternative growth options are predicated on the City meeting or exceeding provincially mandated residential intensification and density targets (i.e. intensification targets increasing from 50% between 2021 and 2031, to 60% between 2031 and 2041, and 70% between 2041 and 2051, and a planned density of new designated greenfield areas of 77 persons and jobs per hectare).

The attached GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) and Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) have been designed as tools to assist in this evaluation and decision making process.

The framework and principles are reflective of the policy direction of the Provincial Policy Statement, Provincial Growth Plan, and Urban Hamilton Official Plan, the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development endorsed by Council, and address important themes relating to climate change, financial implications, complete community building, and infrastructure requirements.

Staff are requesting Council to receive the draft framework and phasing principles, attached as Appendices “A” and “B” to Report PED17010(j) and authorize staff to consult with the public and stakeholders on the materials. Based on the results of the public consultation, staff will report back to Council on any changes or additions to the framework and phasing criteria resulting from the consultation prior to final approval and application of the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) and Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) to the growth options.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 17

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: N/A
Staffing: N/A
Legal: N/A
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Through GRIDS 2 and the MCR, the City is planning for growth to the year 2051. The Provincial Growth Plan identifies an ultimate 2051 population of 820,000 persons and employment of 360,000 jobs in the year 2051.

In December 2020, Staff presented the GRIDS 2 / MCR draft Land Needs Assessment to General Issues Committee. A Land Needs Assessment (LNA) is a study that identifies how much of the forecasted growth can be accommodated within the City’s existing urban area based on inputted targets, and how much growth may need to be accommodated within any potential urban expansion area. Following public consultation on the draft LNA in January 2021, staff are recommending Council approval of the final LNA through Report PED17010(i) in March 2021.

Staff have recommended Council adoption of the “Ambitious Density” scenario in the final LNA. The “Ambitious Density” scenario results in the lowest land need out of the four scenarios modelled in the LNA, and from a climate change policy perspective, represents the preferred option. This scenario identifies a need of approximately 1,340 gross developable ha of Community Area lands and 0 ha of employment lands to the year 2051. The land need of 1,340 gross developable ha is based on a planned intensification target which increases, over time, from 50% between 2021 and 2031, to 60% between 2031 and 2041 and to 70% between 2041 and 2051, and a density of 77 persons and jobs per hectare (pjh) in new growth areas. The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria has been developed independent of the LNA and growth scenarios.

Following Council receipt of the Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria, the following are the next steps in the GRIDS 2 / MCR process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Key Project Milestones</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>MCR Commencement, Employment Land Review call for requests</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>Growth Plan 2017 released</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>Land Needs Assessment Methodology released by Province</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May / June 2018</td>
<td>First round of public / stakeholder consultation – focus on urban structure (i.e. where should intensification occur?) and major transit station area planning</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Policies at both the Provincial and local level provide direction on criteria and requirements to be considered in advance of a settlement (urban) area boundary expansion. A complete policy review is included in Appendix “D” to Report PED17010(j).

The Province has advised City staff that the City’s Growth Plan conformity (MCR) is to be completed by July 1, 2022 (see Appendix “E” to Report PED17010(j)).

Key policy considerations are highlighted below.

Growth Plan 2019, as amended

Policies 2.2.8.2 and 2.2.8.3 of the Growth Plan identify a series of comprehensive criteria that must be considered prior to expansion of the urban boundary. Policy
2.2.8.2 requires a municipality to demonstrate that sufficient opportunities to accommodate projected growth through intensification and existing designated greenfield area lands are not available, based on minimum intensification and density targets of the Plan. This review has been undertaken through the GRIDS 2 / MCR LNA.

Policy 2.2.8.3 outlines that, where the need for a settlement area boundary expansion has been justified in accordance with policy 2.2.8.2, the feasibility of the proposed expansion will be determined and the most appropriate location for the proposed expansion will be identified based on the comprehensive application of all of the policies in this Plan, including a list of criteria addressing servicing, financial viability, watershed planning and protection of the natural heritage system, and impacts on the agricultural system, amongst other matters. The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands), attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j), has been designed to ensure compliance with the above noted matters. Analysis of how each component above has been addressed can be found in the Analysis and Rationale for Recommendation section of this Report.

Policy 2.2.8.3(k) provides particular direction on potential settlement area boundary expansion within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt. Policy 2.2.8.3(k) restricts expansions into the Greenbelt Protected Countryside to a minor expansion of up to 10 ha (of which no more than 50% may be used for residential purposes) from a defined Town / Village only (in Hamilton, both Waterdown and Binbrook are considered ‘Towns’ in the Greenbelt Plan). Special consideration to policy 2.2.8.3(k) regarding small expansion into the Greenbelt Protected Countryside is also included in this Report, and the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook), attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(j) responds to this policy direction.

Corporate Goals and Areas of Focus for Climate Change

The City of Hamilton has declared a climate change emergency and set a target to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and be carbon neutral by 2050. Land use planning and growth management can play an important role in helping the City achieve that goal. In the City’s Corporate Goals and Areas of Focus for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Goal #4 is related to planning and aims to ensure that a climate change lens is applied to all planning initiatives to encourage the use of best climate mitigation and adaptation practices. In particular, a climate change lens, as part of the GRIDS 2 / MCR evaluation framework, is one area of focus. This direction is also consistent with Direction #1 of the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development. Discussion of the climate change lens as part of the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) attached as Appendix “A” is included in the Analysis / Rationale for Recommendations section below.
Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP)

The Urban Hamilton Official Plan contains policies regarding urban boundary expansion and, specifically, the studies and criteria that must be considered prior to the City expanding its urban boundary (all UHOP policies cited in Appendix “D” to Report PED17010(j) remain under appeal).

The UHOP criteria identifies the need to address similar matters as those identified in the Growth Plan, to be completed as part of a secondary plan and municipally initiated comprehensive review, including the completion of a land needs assessment, sub-watershed plan and environmental impact study, agricultural impact assessment and financing policy. These matters are addressed in the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Public and Stakeholders

Consultation and public engagement has been a fundamental component of the GRIDS and GRIDS 2 processes. Throughout the GRIDS 2 process, staff have strived to both build awareness about growth management planning in general, and to seek feedback about growth planning in Hamilton, through multiple engagement opportunities throughout the process (both in person and virtual), in addition to extensive information, graphics and videos on the project website.

In staff report PED17010(g) (December, 2020), staff reported on the second round of consultation completed for GRIDS 2 / MCR, which was held in November and December of 2019. As one component of the second round of public consultation, members of the public were asked about what criteria would be important for the City to consider in the evaluation phase of GRIDS 2 / MCR. Several themes emerged from these comments, including climate change impacts, affordable housing, protection of green space and agricultural lands, servicing capability, and the provision of a variety of housing types. These comments were summarized in the Public and Stakeholder Engagement Report attached to Report PED17010(g). Many of the themes identified by members of the public are reflected in Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j). Further public consultation on the evaluation framework and phasing principles will be undertaken in late March / early April 2021.

A second GRIDS 2 / MCR stakeholder event was held on December 16, 2019 and focussed on how a climate change lens could be used in the future evaluation of growth options. Ideas that emerged from the discussion included the provision of transit, low impact development for stormwater management, active transportation and walkable
communities, green building standards, protection of natural areas and food security. Consideration of the stakeholder comments has provided input into how a climate change lens can be utilized in the evaluation and phasing of growth. The next phase of public consultation with the public and stakeholders will focus on the GRIDS 2 / MCR evaluation framework and phasing principles. This consultation will occur in April 2021.

Long Range Planners of Ontario (LORAPON) workshop

On February 21, 2020, City of Hamilton staff designed, organized and hosted a workshop on the inclusion of a climate change lens in growth management planning for members of the Long Range Planners of Ontario (LORAPON) to identify and develop capacity and understanding of “best practices”. One of the key discussion topics was the inclusion of a climate change lens in the evaluation of urban expansion areas.

Some of the key themes which emerged from the discussion included:

- Should an urban boundary expansion be undertaken, there are a range of topics and criteria that could be integrated into an evaluation framework using a climate change lens.
- The ability to meaningfully compare the differences between different candidate sites will depend on the granularity of the metrics used and the available data.
- Land fragmentation could be a barrier to the creation of complete communities, for example, due to the need to protect natural heritage systems and the potential impact on the ability to make transportation connections.
- Planning for land use and transportation to prioritize sustainable modes of transportation is one the main opportunities for planners to respond to climate change.
- Prioritizing land use decisions that enable and encourage active modes of transportation and support transit is a key opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Compact built form was largely considered to be a well-accepted key indicator of low-emissions intensification, with a range of potential measures discussed – e.g. the ‘15-minute Neighbourhood’ approach.

Staff Review

Members of the GRIDS 2 / MCR staff working group (including water / wastewater planning, transportation planning, growth management, community planning, public health) have reviewed the draft framework and phasing principles and provided input and commentary on the documents and will continue to be involved in the preparation of the final framework.
ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. Growth Options and Phasing of Development: Where and When Will the City Grow?

The next phase of the GRIDS 2 / MCR project, following the approval of the LNA, is the evaluation of where and when the City will grow. The draft LNA has identified a required Community Area land need ranging between 1,300 and 1,600 ha of lands to be added to the urban boundary for the 2021 to 2051 time period.

The Ambitious Density scenario of the LNA (which is being recommended by staff for endorsement in Report PED17010(i)), identifies a required land need of 1,340 ha to 2051. Under the Ambitious Density scenario, a choice will need to be made through the evaluation and phasing analysis regarding which whitebelt lands are added to the urban boundary and which lands will remain rural, and further, when and how will the lands be phased for development.

Where can the City grow?

In terms of where the City can grow, as has been previously noted in Report PED17010(h), the City’s options for expanding the urban boundary to accommodate population growth are limited. The majority of Rural Hamilton (94%) is within the Greenbelt Plan area. Staff respect and support the Greenbelt Plan and the protections it provides, including the restriction on urban boundary expansion into the Greenbelt Plan area. Staff do not support any removal of lands from the Greenbelt Plan boundary. (The Growth Plan does allow an exception for a minor expansion from Waterdown / Binbrook, which is discussed further below).

Urban boundary expansion is therefore restricted to lands that are referred to as the whitebelt lands (i.e. rural lands that are not within the Greenbelt Plan Protected Countryside). The City has a finite supply of whitebelt lands. The total area of whitebelt lands is approximately 4,320 ha. Of this area, only 2,200 ha can be considered for expansion for Community Area uses due to restrictions from the airport Noise Exposure Forecast contours. Netting out non-developable features, such as natural heritage features, cemeteries and rights-of-way, reduces the developable whitebelt land area for Community Area uses to approximately 1,600 ha. These areas are shown on Appendix “C” to Report PED17010(j). Further delineation of gross developable areas will occur through future planning phases.

The question of ‘where’ the City will grow will be focussed on the four Candidate Expansion Areas shown on Appendix “C” to Report PED17010(j), including various growth options and combinations related to these lands. Under the Ambitious Density scenario of the LNA, which identifies a required land need of 1,340 ha, the
City will not require all of the whitebelt lands to be added to the urban boundary for development prior to 2051.

*When will the City grow?*

The question of phasing of development will be a key consideration in planning the City's growth to 2051. While the LNA has identified an ultimate land need to 2051, it is known that not all the lands will be required for development immediately. Based on the Ambitious Density scenario (which is being recommended by staff for endorsement in Report PED17010(i)), the approximate phasing breakdown of land need is as follows:

**Table 1: Approximate Phasing Breakdown of Land Need Under the Ambitious Density LNA Scenario**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Land Need (ha)</th>
<th>Available Community Area Whitebelt Lands (ha)</th>
<th>Remaining Community Area Whitebelt Lands After Urban Expansion (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2021 – 2031</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031 – 2041</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2041 - 2051</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of when growth will occur amongst the Candidate Expansion Areas is of equal importance as the where growth will occur. The consideration of phasing has significant impacts on the provision of servicing, transportation, and community services as well as the City's ability to pay for and maintain these services.

Further, as shown in Table 1 above, following the determination of when and where the City will grow to 2051, there will be remnant Community Area whitebelt lands in the approximate amount of 300 ha. A recommended direction on the future of these lands from a planning policy perspective will also be an outcome of the phasing analysis.

2. **Structure of Feasibility Evaluation and Phasing Framework**

As noted above, the evaluation has two components: where and when the City will grow. Therefore, the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands), that has been developed by the City's consultant team (Dillon Consulting), is premised on a two-stage evaluation approach, outlined below:
Stage 1: Feasibility Evaluation of Candidate Expansion Areas:

The first phase of the evaluation will include a feasibility analysis of each of the Candidate Expansion Areas against a series of considerations based primarily on the Growth Plan criteria identified in Policy 2.2.8.3. The Growth Plan policy provides a detailed list of criteria to be satisfied prior to urban boundary expansion occurring, including servicing, financial, natural heritage, and agricultural impacts to be accounted for. In addition to the Growth Plan criteria, additional considerations/criteria have been identified resulting from the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development and the Urban Hamilton Official Plan. A summary of the themes and considerations to be evaluated during Stage 1 is described below.

The feasibility evaluation in Stage 1 will identify any Candidate Expansion Areas that do not meet the provincial and local criteria and therefore would not be screened through to the second stage of evaluation. The Stage 1 feasibility evaluation will not prioritize or rank one area against another, rather each Candidate Expansion Area will be assessed individually.

The overall recommendation as to whether a given Candidate Expansion Area is feasible for expansion will be based on the comprehensive application of all of the criteria and the most appropriate areas will advance to the more detailed Phasing Analysis in Stage 2. A Candidate Area may not be carried forward to the detailed phasing analysis in an instance where the evaluation shows that the area addresses none or very few of the considerations. It is also important to note that from a policy alignment perspective, there are a few considerations which must be addressed in a fulsome manner in order to proceed to the phasing analysis. For example, Growth Plan Policy 2.2.8.3(a) states that there is to be “sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities” to accommodate the expansion. Similarly, Growth Plan Policy 2.2.8.3(b) requires that the “infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets”. These considerations differ from others, such as agriculture, where the Provincial direction is to avoid prime agricultural lands where possible and to minimize and mitigate the impact on the agricultural system where prime agricultural lands can’t be avoided. Accordingly, based on the interpretation of Provincial Growth Plan policies, if any one of the Candidate Areas addresses none of the considerations for Infrastructure Services, Transportation Systems or Municipal Finance, then the Candidate Area would likely not be feasible for expansion.

Stage 2: Phasing Criteria and Analysis

The second stage of the evaluation will be focused on determining the preferred order of phasing of future development based on the anticipated land need by decade noted above. The phasing analysis will evaluate a series of growth
scenarios (anticipated to be 4 – 5) against each other to ultimately determine the preferred scenario. For example, a distributed allocation of growth to all candidate areas or an allocation of a quantum of growth to one or more areas by decade could be considered. The scenarios will be identified following the approval of the final LNA including endorsement of the final land needs scenario. The evaluation of each scenario will be undertaken based on a series of considerations identified in the next section.

Modelling of required infrastructure and transportation upgrades, public service facility needs, and financial impacts will be undertaken as part of Stage 2. Staff are investigating opportunities to model greenhouse gas emissions resulting from each scenario with support from the Community Energy & Emissions Plan. Evaluation of climate change risks / opportunities, agricultural impacts, and complete community considerations will also be undertaken (more details below).

It is important to note the phasing evaluation will consider all themes comprehensively, and the scenario that produces the best results overall will be identified as the preferred option. It is possible for a scenario to perform higher in certain areas compared to the scenario chosen as preferred, but the preferred scenario will represent the option that performs best across the greatest number of themes. The preferred scenario must provide for alignment of land use planning, infrastructure planning, and fiscal impacts of growth.

The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) is attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j).

3. Feasibility and Phasing Evaluation Themes and Considerations

Both the Stage 1 – Feasibility Evaluation and the Stage 2 – Phasing Analysis are based on the evaluation of several key themes:

Climate Change

Climate change is a critical part of both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations. While climate change is identified as its own theme in both stages, it is noted that climate change considerations are embedded within many of the other themes as well. Many of the themes / considerations in both stages are complementary and inter-related to each other. Both mitigation and adaptation considerations are addressed in the evaluation framework and phasing criteria.
Climate change considerations in Stage 1 relate to opportunities to reduce GHGs and private automobile use through built form, district energy opportunities, infrastructure resiliency, tree canopy protection and hazard land planning.

Through Stage 2, the phasing analysis will consider opportunities and risks from a climate change lens resulting from the different phasing scenarios. Further, staff are investigating the inclusion of GHG emissions modelling through the Community Energy & Emissions Plan to investigate the impact on GHG emissions resulting from the phasing of whitebelt development.

**Complete Communities**

Complete communities refer to areas that allow people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access the necessities of daily living, including jobs, stores and services and a full range of housing and transportation options. Consideration of how a Candidate Expansion Area can be developed as a complete community, or can contribute to the completeness of the surrounding community is an important factor. Considerations to be evaluated in Stage 1 include the ability of each area to function as a standalone complete community, provision of a range of housing options, access to existing or planned community facilities, and the degree of contiguity with the existing urban area.

Stage 2 will also include an evaluation of complete communities as part of the phasing analysis, including whether or not the phasing scenario contributes to the development of complete communities, responds to market needs and what infrastructure is required to support a complete community.

**Servicing Infrastructure**

Evaluation of servicing requirements to support growth will be a key component of the evaluation of both Stage 1 and 2. GRIDS 2 is an integrated strategy that is being informed by updates to the City’s Infrastructure Master Plans (Water / Wastewater and Stormwater). The Master Plans will, in turn, be updated to the year 2051 based on the identification of the preferred growth option through GRIDS 2 / MCR. Stage 1 of the evaluation will include high level assessment of the capacity in existing and planned water and wastewater distribution and treatment systems to accommodate growth, ability of a growth area to maximize existing capacity within the water / wastewater systems, required expansions or extensions to trunk infrastructure, capacity in existing or planned stormwater management systems, and capacity in existing or planned waste management systems.

Stage 2 will include modelling of the phasing scenarios to identify if the phasing scenario allows for efficient servicing based on existing or planned water,
wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. Efficient servicing can generally mean maximizing existing infrastructure, not needing to build significant new infrastructure, cost effective solutions to accommodate development, and other matters.

**Transportation System**

Evaluation of the impacts of expansion on the transportation system will be undertaken as part of Stage 1 and 2, and will include an evaluation of existing and planned road, transit, sidewalk, and cycling infrastructure. The Stage 1 evaluation will include analysis of each Candidate Expansion Area in relation to existing and planned transit routes/stops and pedestrian/cycling networks. Further, the analysis will review capacity in the existing street network to accommodate the proposed population and job increase. Connection to surrounding street and active transportation networks will also be considered. Staff in the City’s Transportation Planning Section will undertake modelling of the proposed growth areas to determine impacts on the transportation infrastructure.

The phasing evaluation in Stage 2 will consider how phasing of growth areas could prioritize areas that are connected to the BLAST network or planned transit, alignment with the existing road and active transportation network, and phasing impacts on street network capacity.

**Municipal Finance**

Financial impacts resulting from future growth and development is a key consideration in the evaluation of where and when the City will grow. Does the Candidate Expansion Area and/or the proposed phasing of growth have an unreasonable or unanticipated financial impact on the City? The Growth Plan criteria identify the requirement that municipal infrastructure and public service facilities required to support growth must be financially viable over the full life cycle of the assets. The information provided by the modelling and identification of required infrastructure upgrades, transportation improvements and new or expanded public service facilities will be used to inform the completion of a Fiscal Impact Assessment (FIA) to be completed as part of GRIDS 2/MCR by Watson & Associates. The FIA will inform evaluation of both Stage 1 and 2.

In accordance with Council direction approved at the January 15, 2020 GIC meeting, the FIA being completed by Watson & Associates will also evaluate options for the timing of construction and financing of infrastructure related to both intensification/redevelopment, the completion of existing communities and greenfield development (urban expansion). Informed by a best practices review, options to consider will include front ending the cost of infrastructure and facilities by the City and/or developers.
Agriculture

The vast majority of the City’s rural lands area located within the Greenbelt Plan area which provides long term protection of the City’s agricultural land base. Impact on the agricultural system, including the agricultural land base and the agri-food network, will be considered as part of both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluation. The Growth Plan requires that expansion into prime agricultural areas should be avoided where possible, and if avoidance is not possible, alternative locations will be evaluated and prioritized based on minimizing and mitigating impacts on the agricultural system. The City will be completing an Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) to supplement existing information on the Agricultural System within the whitebelt areas. Each Candidate Expansion Area will be evaluated in relation to prime and non-prime agricultural lands, potential impacts on the agricultural system, including the agri-food network, presence of agricultural assets, and compliance with Minimum Distance Separation formula.

As part of the Stage 2 phasing analysis, the AIA will evaluate the proposed phasing scenarios in relation to prioritizing development of non-prime agricultural lands, as well as prioritizing development of areas that contain fewer existing agricultural and livestock operations, and minimizing land fragmentation.

Natural Heritage and Water Resources

Consideration of impacts on the natural heritage and water resource system and the ability to demonstrate avoidance or the minimization / mitigation of impacts will be evaluated as part of Stage 1. As per the direction of the Growth Plan, evaluation of impacts on watershed conditions, key hydrologic areas, and the diversity, connectivity and long term ecological function of the natural heritage system will be considered for each Candidate Expansion Area.

Cultural Heritage

Consideration of cultural heritage and archaeological resources will take place as part of the Stage 1 evaluation and will consider the presence of significant cultural heritage resources and significant archaeological resources within the potential expansion areas, and the ability for these resources to be conserved.

Natural Resources

Natural resources, including mineral aggregate resources and active or abandoned gas / petroleum wells are to be considered in the evaluation as per the direction of the Growth Plan. While it is not anticipated that any of the expansion areas contain
significant resources, this evaluation will be undertaken as part of Stage 1 to identify any areas that require protection or avoidance.

4. Greenbelt Protected Countryside – Waterdown and Binbrook

As noted above in the policy review section, the Provincial Growth Plan includes a special provision for a minor expansion of up to 10 ha into the Greenbelt Protected Countryside from lands identified as a Town or Village within the Greenbelt Plan. Within Hamilton, both Binbrook and Waterdown are identified as ‘Towns’ in the Greenbelt Plan. Therefore, a consideration could be given to permit a 10 ha expansion from each of Waterdown and Binbrook.

If an expansion from one of these areas is to occur, the Growth Plan requires that the expansion be limited to no more than 10 ha in size, and further, that no more than 50% of the expansion area be used for residential purposes. Other criteria identified in the Growth Plan which must be satisfied for such an expansion to occur are the requirement for the expansion to support the achievement of a complete community or support the local agricultural economy, demonstration that the proposed use cannot be reasonably accommodated within the urban boundary, servicing by existing water and wastewater systems, and prohibition of expansion into the Natural Heritage System.

It should be noted that there is no requirement for the City to expand the urban boundary from these two areas, and consideration of such an expansion will only be undertaken if there is a need for a logical rounding out of the boundary or a recognition of existing uses. Further, as the Growth Plan policy restricts the expansion area in not only size but also in use, with a restriction on a maximum of 50% of the expansion area to be used for residential purposes, the City must be satisfied of a need and / or use for the remaining 50% of the lands (non-residential portion) prior to consideration of expansion.

Staff have prepared a modified framework for the evaluation of any requests for expansion from Binbrook or Waterdown; it is based on the criteria identified in Growth Plan policy 2.2.8.3(k), in conjunction with some of the criteria identified in the Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria for the whitebelt lands. A two phase process is proposed.

Phase one will include the evaluation of all expansion requests from Waterdown and Binbrook against a set of screening criteria based on Growth Plan policy 2.2.8.3(k). These criteria are mandatory, and an expansion area will only be screened through to the second phase of evaluation if the mandatory screening criteria are all satisfied.
The second phase will evaluate each proposed expansion area that remains against a series of criteria which represent local and provincial planning priorities, including the GRIDS 2 10 Directions to Guide Development. The criteria identified in the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) were selected to ensure that, in addition to the mandatory criteria identified in the Growth Plan, other local priorities are also evaluated and considered in the decision-making process, including logical expansion, agricultural, fiscal and transportation impacts. Certain criteria that are included in the whitebelt evaluation framework are not appropriate for the evaluation of the small expansion requests for Waterdown and / or Binbrook due to the size restriction, Growth Plan policy direction, and the existing conditions in these areas.

Each expansion area will be evaluated against the criteria in phase 2 and identified as fully addressing, mostly addressing, partially addressing or not addressing the criteria. Following the evaluation, the areas will be ranked against each other, and the expansion area that best satisfies the criteria will be identified as the preferred expansion option. If no expansion requests are put forward which meet the criteria, no expansion from either of these areas will be recommended.

A direction on implementation of the proposed expansion, including requirements for future studies and appropriate land use designations and controls to limit development on the non-residential portion of the lands will also be recommended.

Staff are aware of a number of interested landowners in the Waterdown area that are requesting consideration of lands for inclusion in the urban boundary. To date, no expressions of interest from Binbrook have been received. The evaluation of requests in the Waterdown area (and Binbrook if any are received) will take place concurrently with the evaluation in the whitebelt lands.

The GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook) is attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(j).

5. User-Friendly Format

To ensure that members of the public can participate meaningfully in the next phase of GRIDS 2 / MCR and understand the process and results of the evaluation and phasing analysis, the GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) have been designed to be a user-friendly, easy to understand and graphically pleasing document. The purpose of this tool is to provide a logical and understandable format for evaluating expansion requests against planning priorities to ensure that council, applicants / land owners, members of the public and outside agencies can easily understand the performance of Candidate Expansion Areas as suitable growth areas, and the
preferred phasing order of the growth. The framework has been designed to graphically display complicated information in an accessible manner. Background information and technical reports that inform the evaluation framework will also be available for public review, if interested, but the framework will provide a snapshot of all information in an easy to use format.

6. Next Steps

Public and stakeholder consultation on the framework will take place in the month of April. Staff will report back to Committee with a final framework for endorsement following the consultation period.

The two phase evaluation process will occur over the spring and summer of 2021, concluding in the fall of 2021 with the identification of a preliminary preferred growth scenario. High level evaluation of each whitebelt Candidate Expansion Area in Stage 1 of the evaluation process will be undertaken immediately following the approval the Urban Boundary Expansion - Evaluation and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands).

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Do not endorse the evaluation framework and phasing principles. This option would also have the risk of delaying the GRIDS 2 / MCR process.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Economic Prosperity and Growth
Hamilton has a prosperous and diverse local economy where people have opportunities to grow and develop.

Clean and Green
Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure
Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” – GRIDS 2 / MCR – Planning for Growth to 2051: Draft Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands)
Appendix “B” – GRIDS 2 / MCR – Draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook)
Appendix “C” – Community Area whitebelt growth options
Appendix “D” – Policy Review
Appendix “E” – Letter from Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Ontario Growth Secretariat)
Appendix “F” – Updated GRIDS 2 / MCR Project Timeline
CITY OF HAMILTON GRIDS 2/MCR – PLANNING FOR GROWTH TO 2051:
DRAFT EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND PHASING CRITERIA (WHITEBELT LANDS)

PREPARED BY DILLON CONSULTING LIMITED
URBAN BOUNDARY EXPANSION
WHITEBELT LANDS

Where it has been determined that planned growth cannot be accommodated within the existing urban area, then an urban boundary expansion may be considered. An urban boundary expansion means that whitebelt lands may be added to the urban area, if appropriate and feasible. Figure 1 shows community area and employment area whitebelt lands.

Urban boundary expansions require justification to satisfy a number of Provincial and local policy tests. The land needs assessment for GRIDS 2 provides the overall justification for additional greenfield lands from a land needs perspective and as a next step there is a requirement to assess the feasibility of potential Candidate Expansion Areas to determine which lands are suitable for new urban designation. The Province and the City outline very specific feasibility criteria to be assessed for an urban boundary expansion.

Specifically, Policy 2.2.8.3 of the Growth Plan outlines the policy tests for assessing the feasibility of lands for urban boundary expansion. The City’s Urban Hamilton Official Plan and the GRIDS 10 Directions to Guide Development complement and support the policies outlined in 2.2.8.3 of the Growth Plan.

The overall approach for assessing Candidate Expansion Areas is a two-step process:

1. Evaluation to determine which whitebelt lands are feasible for expansion based on provincial and local criteria; and,
2. Phasing analysis, including more detailed technical analysis and modelling to determine which areas are most suitable for expansion and the associated timing for development.
FIGURE 1: WHITEBELT LANDS IN HAMILTON
PART 1: EVALUATION APPROACH FOR WHITEBELT LANDS

This first part of the document presents the approach to step 1, the evaluation of whitebelt lands. The evaluation criteria outlined in this document will be used to assess the four Candidate Expansion Areas in Hamilton’s whitebelt area. For ease of understanding, the urban boundary expansion evaluation criteria are organized around nine major themes (following page). While the themes have been identified as distinct items for simplicity, it is important to note that they are complementary and sometimes overlap. For example, prioritizing public transit as part of the consideration of the transportation system also supports climate change mitigation.
Evaluation Criteria Themes

1. Climate Change
2. Municipal Finance
3. Servicing Infrastructure
4. Transportation Systems
5. Natural Heritage and Water Resources
6. Complete Communities
7. Agricultural System
8. Natural Resources
9. Cultural Heritage
Each of the evaluation criteria themes includes multiple key considerations. The key considerations are connected to the policy tests outlined in the Growth Plan, Urban Hamilton Official Plan and the GRIDS-2 10 Directions to Guide Development. To assess each consideration, the analysis will draw upon a number of information sources to test the feasibility of each Candidate Expansion Area. The evaluation results will be documented in a detailed Technical Appendix, showing the line-by-line findings for each theme and the associated considerations. A theme-level summary will also be provided to help communicate how well each Candidate Expansion Area addresses the key considerations. Based on the balance of considerations, each Candidate Area will receive a theme-level assessment according to the following categories:

- Fully addresses all considerations
- Address most of the considerations
- Address some of the considerations
- Addresses few of the considerations
- Addresses none of the considerations

The overall recommendation as to whether a given Candidate Expansion Area is feasible for expansion will be based on the comprehensive application of all of the criteria and the most appropriate areas will advance to a more detailed Phasing Analysis in Part 2. A Candidate Area may not be carried forward to the detailed phasing analysis in an instance where the evaluation shows that the area addresses none or very few of the considerations.

It is also important to note that from a policy alignment perspective, there are foundational considerations which must be addressed in a fulsome manner in order for a growth option to proceed to the next steps, including a phasing analysis. For example, Growth Plan Policy 2.2.8.3(a) states that there is to be “sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities” to accommodate the expansion which includes (but is not limited to) consideration of sewage and water systems, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, police and fire protection, and health and educational programs. Similarly, Growth Plan Policy 2.2.8.3(b) requires that the “infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets”. These considerations differ from others, such as agriculture, where the Provincial direction is to avoid prime agricultural lands where possible and to minimize and mitigate the impact on the agricultural system where prime agricultural lands cannot be avoided. Accordingly, based on the interpretation of Provincial Growth Plan policies, if any one of the Candidate Areas addresses none of the considerations for Infrastructure Services, Transportation Systems or Municipal Finance, then the Candidate Area would likely not be feasible for expansion.
Climate Change

Climate change has the potential to have a range of impacts on the City including on infrastructure, the natural environment, and on existing and future residents and their communities. This demands consideration of climate change in the context of long range planning, recognizing both the risks and opportunities for climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation.

What are the key considerations?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduced GHGs and Sustainable Transportation</th>
<th>District Energy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area have the ability to promote a community form that reduces reliance on private automobiles helping to reduce transportation GHG’s?</td>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area provide an opportunity for district energy?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How will we measure this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reduced GHGs and Sustainable Transportation</th>
<th>District Energy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Level of connectivity of Candidate Expansion Area to existing or planned transit and active transportation network</td>
<td>• Input from City staff and electrical distribution providers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What are the key considerations?

#### Infrastructure Resiliency
- Is there sufficient capacity in existing stormwater management systems to manage potential changes in weather patterns and increased climate variability?
- Does the proposed stormwater management provide resilience and consider climate change adaptability?
- Does the proposed stormwater management consider Low Impact Development Best Management Practices

#### Prioritizing Tree Canopy Protection/Enhancement
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area support the maintenance and enhancement of the existing tree canopy?

#### Avoid Natural Hazardous Lands
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area contain any natural hazards?

### How will we measure this?

- Capacity in existing stormwater management system based on population and employment forecast
- Input from City staff

- Assessment of existing tree canopy and potential for maintenance and enhancement should a boundary expansion occur
- Based on input from City with reference to available mapping and data

- Assessment of identified hazardous lands including but not limited to flood plains and other CA regulated areas
- Based on input from City and Conservation Authority staff with reference to available mapping and data
**Municipal Finance**

Municipal Finance involves managing existing and future financial impacts on the City, to ensure that the costs associated with growth are financially viable over the long term.

**What are the key considerations?**

| Does the Candidate Expansion Area have an unreasonable or unanticipated financial impact on the City? |

| Would the municipal infrastructure (water, wastewater and transportation) and public service facilities needed be financially viable over the full life cycle of the assets? |

**How will we measure this?**

| High level assessment of potential financial impacts for Candidate Expansion Areas |

| Based on input from City staff with reference to the Financial Impact Assessment |

| Relative assessment of new infrastructure costs |
Servicing Infrastructure

Servicing Infrastructure includes the physical structures that form the foundation for development and generally include water and wastewater systems, stormwater management systems and waste management systems. Transportation systems are addressed in the following section.

**What are the key considerations?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Infrastructure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Is there sufficient capacity in existing or planned water distribution and treatment systems?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area maximize existing capacity within the available water distribution systems?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will we measure this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• High level assessment of new infrastructure requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment of capacity in existing and planned water/wastewater systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What are the key considerations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wastewater Infrastructure</th>
<th>Stormwater Management</th>
<th>Integrated Waste Management Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Are significant extensions / expansions beyond planned/budgeted trunk infrastructure required in order to service this area?</td>
<td>- Is there sufficient capacity in existing or planned wastewater distribution, collection and treatment systems?</td>
<td>- Is there sufficient capacity in existing waste management facilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Does this option maximize existing capacity within the available wastewater collection systems?</td>
<td>- Is there sufficient capacity in planned waste management facilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Are significant extensions / expansions beyond planned/budgeted trunk infrastructure required in order to service this area?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How will we measure this?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wastewater Infrastructure</th>
<th>Stormwater Management</th>
<th>Integrated Waste Management Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Based on input from City staff and with reference to Water/Wastewater Master Plan</td>
<td>- High level assessment of new infrastructure requirements</td>
<td>- Assessment of capacity in existing and planned waste management facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assessment of capacity in existing and planned water/wastewater systems</td>
<td>- Based on input from City staff and with reference to Water/Wastewater Master Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Based on input from City staff and with reference to Water/Wastewater Master Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Integrated Waste Management Planning

- Is there sufficient capacity in existing waste management facilities?
- Is there sufficient capacity in planned waste management facilities?
Transportation System

Transportation Systems support the movement of residents and goods within the city as well as establishing a connection to the wider regional transportation network. Transportation Systems are comprised of facilities, corridors and rights-of-way and include roads, transit stops and stations, sidewalks, cycle lanes, bus lanes, HOV lanes, rail facilities, park and ride lots and a host of other transportation facilities.

What are the key considerations?

Prioritizing Public Transit
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area contain an existing City transit route or stops?
- Is the Candidate Expansion Area adjacent to an existing City transit route or stops?

How will we measure this?
- Assessment of the location of existing HSR transit routes/stops and planned or funded transit (BLAST) within 800 metres of Candidate Expansion Areas
- Based on reference to applicable UHOP, RHOP, and master plan mapping.
### What are the key considerations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the key considerations?</th>
<th>How will we measure this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Can the Candidate Expansion Area be connected to a planned City transit route or stop in a way that is financially viable?</td>
<td>• Based on reference to the Financial Impact Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Active Transportation Network</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area contain an existing or planned pedestrian or cycling networks?</td>
<td>• Proximity to existing or planned pedestrian or cycling network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can the Candidate Expansion Area be connected to existing or planned pedestrian or cycling networks?</td>
<td>• Based on reference to applicable UHOP, RHOP, and master plan mapping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connected Street Network</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is there sufficient reserve capacity in the existing street network (with consideration to the proposed street network) to accommodate the proposed increase in population and/or employment?</td>
<td>• Assessment of potential street connectivity and block size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is the proposed or potential street network within the Candidate Expansion Area a logical extension of the existing street network? Does it connect the Candidate Expansion Area to surrounding areas and key destinations?</td>
<td>• Based on input from City staff and with reference to the existing street network and applicable UHOP, RHOP, and master plan mapping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Natural Heritage and Water Resources

A Natural Heritage System includes natural heritage features and areas, such as wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitat and the linkages that provide connectivity to support various natural processes. Water Resources are a system of features, such as groundwater features and surface water features, as well hydrologic functions which sustain healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and human water consumption.

What are the key considerations?

Protect Water Resource System

- Does the Candidate Expansion Area demonstrate an avoidance and/or mitigation of potential negative impacts on watershed

How will we measure this?

- Assessment of indicators of hydrologic function
- Based on input from City and Conservation Authority staff
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What are the key considerations?</strong></th>
<th><strong>How will we measure this?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conditions and the water resource system including quality and quantity of water?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoid Key Hydrological Areas</strong></td>
<td>• Assessment of Impacts to key hydrological areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area avoid key hydrologic areas including significant ground water recharge areas, vulnerable aquifers, surface water contribution areas, and intake protection zones?</td>
<td>• Based on input from City and Conservation Authority staff with reference to available mapping and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connected and Protected Natural Heritage System</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area avoid and protect Natural Heritage Systems as identified by the City and the Growth Plan?</td>
<td>• Assessment of the location of Natural Heritage System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Based on input from City and Conservation Authority staff with reference to available mapping and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitigate Impact on Natural Heritage</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area maintain, restore, or improve the functions and features of the area including diversity and connectivity of natural features, the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems?</td>
<td>• Assessment of existing natural heritage features such as significant woodlots, wetlands, and species at risk wildlife habitat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Based on input from City and Conservation Authority staff with reference to available mapping and data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complete Communities

Complete Communities are places within a community that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities of daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities.

What are the key considerations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complete Community</th>
<th>How will we measure this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Can the Candidate Expansion Area function as a complete community including an appropriate mix of jobs, stores, services, housing, transportation options, and public service facilities for all ages and abilities?</td>
<td>• Assessment of the Candidate Expansion Area’s ability to be designed as a complete community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proximity to Existing Community Services and Amenities

| • Based on identified gaps in specific geographies, does the Candidate Expansion Area contribute to the surrounding community’s completeness? | • Consideration of ability to contribute to walkability and access to transit, amenities and park space of adjacent built up area |
| • Is the Candidate Expansion Area contiguous to the existing settlement area boundary? | • Assessment of proximity of Candidate Expansion Area to existing settlement area and any development constraints |

Diverse Range of Housing and Affordable Housing

| • Can the Candidate Expansion Area provide a diverse range and mix of housing options including affordable housing? | • Assessment of Candidate Expansion Area’s ability to physically accommodate a mix of housing options and affordable housing |
| • Does the Candidate Expansion Area have access to existing community facilities? Are there any gaps in the types of facilities currently available? | • Assessment of proximity to existing parks, public facilities |
| • Does the Candidate Expansion Area have access to planned community facilities? | • Potential need for additional community facilities based on relative size of the expansion area |

• Input from City staff
Agricultural System

The agricultural system is the land base used for the purposes of growing food and the raising of livestock, providing a source of food and employment to a community, as well as the agri-food network. The agricultural land base includes prime agricultural areas and specialty crop lands and the agri-food network refers to the elements that support the viability of sector, such as farm buildings, farm markets, distributors, processing facilities and transportation networks.

What are the key considerations? | How will we measure this?
--- | ---
Avoid Prime Agricultural Land / Mitigate Impact on Agricultural System  
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area avoid prime agricultural areas?  
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area provide an opportunity to mitigate or minimize impacts on the Agricultural System? |  
- Assessment of prime agricultural areas and soil classes  
- Based on input from City staff with reference to an Agricultural Impact Assessment and available mapping and data

Minimize Agri-food Network, Agricultural Operations, and Agricultural Systems Impacts  
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area avoid or minimized and mitigate any adverse impacts on the agri-food network, including agricultural operations? |  
- Assessment of agricultural operations within and in proximity to the Candidate Expansion Area  
- Based on input from City staff with reference to the Agricultural Impact Assessment and OMAFRA’s guideline

Minimize Impact on Existing Agricultural Assets  
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area contain existing agricultural operational assets such as barns or processing facilities? |  
- Qualitative assessment of location of existing agricultural assets  
- Based on information provided by the City and available through OMAFRA

Compatibility with Existing Livestock Operations  
- Is the Candidate Expansion Area in compliance with the minimum distance separation formulae? |  
- Assessment of the distance between the Candidate Expansion Area and existing agricultural operations  
- Based on the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) Formula with reference to OMAFRA’s guideline
Natural Resources

Natural resources are to be managed wisely and include mineral aggregate and petroleum resources.

What are the key considerations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregate Resources and Petroleum Resources</th>
<th>How will we measure this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area include any known mineral aggregate resource areas or petroleum resources?</td>
<td>• Assessment of aggregate resource areas and petroleum resource areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there any active mineral aggregate operations within or adjacent to the Candidate Expansion Area?</td>
<td>• Assessment of active mineral aggregate operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the Candidate Expansion Area contain any active or abandoned gas and petroleum wells?</td>
<td>• Assessment of active or abandoned gas and petroleum wells</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage resources and archaeological resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest are to be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities.

What are the key considerations? | How will we measure this?
---|---
**Cultural Heritage Resources**
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area contain significant cultural heritage resources including designated heritage properties and can they be conserved?
- Assessment of existing cultural heritage resources
- Consideration of Policy Framework
- Based on input from City staff with reference to RHOP and UHOP mapping.

**Archeological Resources**
- Does the Candidate Expansion Area contain significant archeological resources and can they be conserved?
- Assessment of potential archeological resources
- Consideration of Policy Framework
- Based on input from City staff with reference to RHOP and UHOP mapping.
PART 2: PHASING CRITERIA, WHITEBELT LANDS

Phasing is about timing of development and determining the appropriate order of development over time. While the Province does not outline specific phasing criteria, both the Growth Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement provide policy direction on efficient development patterns and use of infrastructure in addition to requiring integrated planning to implement the Growth Plan. It is anticipated that the City will require all or a portion of its whitebelt lands to accommodate forecast community growth to 2051. Not all of the lands will be required for development immediately. The use of phasing criteria will allow the City to identify the timing of development for new greenfield areas. It is anticipated that a portion of the expansion lands will be required for development prior to 2031, additional lands between 2031 and 2041, and the remaining lands between 2041 and 2051.

Once the candidate area urban boundary expansion feasibility assessment is complete, all feasible expansion areas will be subject to a phasing analysis based on the criteria outlined in the following pages. To assist with the analysis, the City will identify a variety of alternative phasing scenarios. Each scenario will be tested and ranked based on a scale ranging from Most Preferred to Least Preferred. Detailed technical analysis of future population and employment is required to understand the implications for each scenario.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>PHASING CRITERIA</th>
<th>SCENARIO 1</th>
<th>SCENARIO 2</th>
<th>SCENARIO 3</th>
<th>SCENARIO 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Climate Change</strong></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario present any significant opportunities associated with climate change?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario present any significant risks associated with climate change?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Municipal Finance</strong></td>
<td>What are the cost estimates associated with the phasing scenario?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are there any significant municipal financial risks associated with the scenario?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What is the impact on municipal debt load/capacity?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Servicing Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario allow for efficient servicing based on existing or planned water infrastructure?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario allow for efficient servicing based on existing or planned wastewater infrastructure?</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEME</td>
<td>PHASING CRITERIA</td>
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<td>SCENARIO 2</td>
<td>SCENARIO 3</td>
<td>SCENARIO 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation System</td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario allow for efficient stormwater management based on existing or planned stormwater master plans/Subwatershed studies?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there options which optimize the timing and delivery of servicing infrastructure to reduce the City’s financial exposure?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario prioritize development of areas that would be connected to the planned BLAST network or existing transit?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario align well with existing and planned road network and existing and planned active transportation network?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are the impacts of the phasing scenario on the capacity of the road network?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there options which optimize the timing and delivery of transportation infrastructure to reduce the City’s financial exposure?</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEME</td>
<td>PHASING CRITERIA</td>
<td>SCENARIO 1</td>
<td>SCENARIO 2</td>
<td>SCENARIO 3</td>
<td>SCENARIO 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Complete Communities</strong></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario support the creation of a complete community?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural System</strong></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario prioritize development of areas that are non-prime agricultural?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario prioritize development of areas that have fewer existing agricultural operations or active livestock operations?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the phasing scenario minimize land fragmentation?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
GRIDS 2 / MCR – DRAFT SCREENING CRITERIA AND EVALUATION TOOL

(WATERDOWN AND BINBROOK)
URBAN BOUNDARY EXPANSION EVALUATION – WATERDOWN AND BINBROOK

The Provincial Growth Plan 2019, as amended, allows for minor expansions of a settlement area boundary into the Greenbelt Plan Protected Countryside from areas that are identified as a Town or Village in the Greenbelt Plan. Within the City of Hamilton, both Waterdown and Binbrook are classified as ‘Towns’ within the Greenbelt Plan.

The expansion permitted by the Growth Plan policy in these areas, as noted below, is minor in size, being restricted to only 10 ha of land in total, with a maximum of 50% of that area permitted to be used for residential development. Because of the size restriction on expansions from these areas, the City has developed a special evaluation tool to be used for the consideration of expansions from Binbrook or Waterdown.

Source: Province of Ontario, Greenbelt Plan, 2017

The tool is a scaled down version of the GRIDS 2 / MCR Planning for Growth to 2051: Evaluation Framework and Phasing Criteria being used as part of the evaluation of the City’s whitebelt growth areas. Certain criteria that are included in the whitebelt evaluation are not appropriate for the evaluation of the small expansion requests from Waterdown and / or Binbrook due to...
the size restriction, including the restriction on residential development, the Growth Plan policy direction, and the existing conditions in these areas.

Policy 2.2.8.3 (k) of the Growth Plan 2019, as amended, identifies the following criteria for the consideration of settlement area boundary expansion within the Greenbelt Plan area:

k. within the Protected Countryside in the Greenbelt Area:

i) the settlement area to be expanded is identified in the Greenbelt Plan as a Town/Village;

ii) the proposed expansion would be modest in size, representing no more than a 5 per cent increase in the geographic size of the settlement area based on the settlement area boundary delineated in the applicable official plan as of July 1, 2017, up to a maximum size of 10 hectares, and residential development would not be permitted on more than 50 per cent of the lands that would be added to the settlement area;

iii) the proposed expansion would support the achievement of complete communities or the local agricultural economy;

iv) the proposed uses cannot be reasonably accommodated within the existing settlement area boundary;

v) the proposed expansion would be serviced by existing municipal water and wastewater systems without impacting future intensification opportunities in the existing settlement area; and

vi) expansion into the Natural Heritage System that has been identified in the Greenbelt Plan is prohibited

To assist the City with evaluation requests to expand the urban boundary in Waterdown and / or Binbrook, the evaluation framework on the following pages will be used.

The first phase of the evaluation is a screening tool. Each proposed expansion area will be evaluated against screening criteria based on the Growth Plan policy 2.2.8.3(k). Any expansion areas that cannot meet the screening criteria will not be considered further for expansion.

Expansion requests that pass the screening criteria will be evaluated in phase two against a series of criteria representing both provincial and local priorities to identify the preferred expansion option, if any.

It is noted that there is no requirement for the City to expand the urban boundary from Waterdown and / or Binbrook. Consideration of such an expansion will only be undertaken if there is a demonstrated need for the expansion (eg. logical rounding out of the boundary or recognition of existing uses), including an identified need for the non-residential portion of the expansion area.
PHASE ONE: INITIAL SCREENING:

All potential expansion areas from Waterdown and Binbrook will be screened against the Growth Plan criteria identified in Policy 2.2.8.3(k).

Any areas that do not pass ALL of the screening criteria will be excluded from consideration in the second phase of the evaluation.

This phase of the evaluation is an individual evaluation of each potential expansion area.

PHASE ONE: SCREENING CRITERIA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>SCREENING CRITERIA</th>
<th>AREA 1</th>
<th>AREA 2</th>
<th>AREA 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size / Use</strong></td>
<td>Is the proposed expansion area less than 10 ha in size?</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is residential development restricted to a maximum of 50% of the expansion area?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there a demonstrated use / need for the non-residential portion of the expansion area?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complete Communities</strong></td>
<td>Does the proposed expansion support the creation of a complete community or the local agricultural economy?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has it been demonstrated that the proposed uses cannot be reasonably accommodated within the existing urban boundary?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Servicing Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Can the proposed expansion area be serviced by existing water / wastewater systems without impacting future intensification opportunities in the existing urban area?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Heritage</strong></td>
<td>Does the proposed expansion area avoid the natural heritage system?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PHASE TWO: EVALUATION CRITERIA AND IDENTIFICATION OF PREFERRED EXPANSION OPTION

The second phase of the evaluation will evaluate each proposed expansion area that remains after the initial screening against a series of criteria which represent local and provincial planning priorities, including the GRIDS 2.10 Directions to Guide Development.

Each expansion area will be evaluated against the criteria and identified as fully addressing, mostly addressing, partially addressing or not addressing the criteria. Following the evaluation, the areas will be ranked against each other, and the expansion area that best satisfies the criteria will be identified as the preferred expansion option. If deemed necessary, proposed expansion areas may be divided into smaller areas for the purposes of evaluation.

If no expansion areas perform well against the criteria (i.e. only partially address or do not address all or most of the criteria), no areas will be identified as the preferred expansion area.

Only one expansion may take place from each of Waterdown and Binbrook.

The following is an example of the proposed evaluation tool:

The chart on the next page summarizes the criteria to be considered in relation to the Phase 2 evaluation of expansion areas from Waterdown and Binbrook.
PHASE 2 EVALUATION CRITERIA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Area 1</th>
<th>Area 2</th>
<th>Area 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficient Servicing</td>
<td>Can the expansion area be efficiently serviced based on existing water / wastewater and stormwater infrastructure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Does the expansion area align well with existing and planned road and active transportation networks?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the impact of the expansion area on the capacity of the road network?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete Communities</td>
<td>Does the expansion area contribute to the surrounding area’s completeness?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the expansion area represent a logical rounding out of the urban boundary and / or recognize existing uses?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate Change</td>
<td>Does the expansion area present any significant opportunities or risks associated with climate change?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Area 1</td>
<td>Area 2</td>
<td>Area 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Heritage and Water Resources</strong></td>
<td>Does the expansion area demonstrate avoidance and / or mitigation of potential negative impacts on watershed conditions?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the expansion area avoid key hydrologic areas?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the expansion area maintain, restore or improve the functions and features of the area including diversity and connectively of natural features?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
<td>Does the expansion area minimize / mitigate impacts on the agricultural system, including the agri-food network?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the expansion area minimize land fragmentation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the expansion area in compliance with MDS guidelines?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finance</strong></td>
<td>Does the expansion area have an unreasonable or unexpected financial impact on the City?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: gross and net land areas are approximate. Developable land area will be determined through future study.
Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides direction on the considerations that a municipality must undertake prior to expanding a settlement area (urban area) boundary:

“1.1.3.8 A planning authority may identify a settlement area or allow the expansion of a settlement area boundary only at the time of a comprehensive review and only where it has been demonstrated that:

a) sufficient opportunities to accommodate growth and to satisfy market demand are not available through intensification, redevelopment and designated growth areas to accommodate the projected needs over the identified planning horizon;

b) the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available are suitable for the development over the long term, are financially viable over their life cycle, and protect public health and safety and the natural environment;

c) in prime agricultural areas:

1. the lands do not comprise specialty crop areas;

2. alternative locations have been evaluated, and

   i. there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid prime agricultural areas; and

   ii. there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in prime agricultural areas;

d) the new or expanding settlement area is in compliance with the minimum distance separation formulae; and

e) impacts from new or expanding settlement areas on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the settlement area are mitigated to the extent feasible.

In undertaking a comprehensive review, the level of detail of the assessment should correspond with the complexity and scale of the settlement boundary expansion or development proposal.”

The PPS requires municipalities to assess availability of infrastructure and public service facilities including financial viability, and impacts on agricultural lands, prior to expansion of the urban boundary.
**Growth Plan 2019, as amended**

The Growth Plan identifies a series of comprehensive criteria that must be considered prior to expansion of the urban boundary:

“2.2.8.2 A settlement area boundary expansion may only occur through a municipal comprehensive review where it is demonstrated that:

a) based on the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan and a land needs assessment undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.1.5, sufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan are not available through intensification and in the designated greenfield area:

   i. within the upper- or single-tier municipality, and
   ii. within the applicable lower-tier municipality;

b) the proposed expansion will make available sufficient lands not exceeding the horizon of this Plan, based on the analysis provided for in policy 2.2.8.2 a), while minimizing land consumption; and

c) the timing of the proposed expansion and the phasing of development within the designated greenfield area will not adversely affect the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan.”

2.2.8.3. Where the need for a settlement area boundary expansion has been justified in accordance with policy 2.2.8.2, the feasibility of the proposed expansion will be determined and the most appropriate location for the proposed expansion will be identified based on the comprehensive application of all of the policies in this Plan, including the following:

a) there is sufficient capacity in existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities;

b) the infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets;

c) the proposed expansion would be informed by applicable water and wastewater master plans or equivalent and stormwater master plans or equivalent, as appropriate;

d) the proposed expansion, including the associated water, wastewater and stormwater servicing, would be planned and demonstrated to avoid, or if
avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and the water resource system, including the quality and quantity of water;

e) key hydrologic areas and the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan should be avoided where possible;

f) prime agricultural areas should be avoided where possible. To support the Agricultural System, alternative locations across the upper-or single-tier municipality will be evaluated, prioritized and determined based on avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impact on the Agricultural System and in accordance with the following:
   i. expansion into specialty crop areas is prohibited;
   ii. reasonable alternatives that avoid prime agricultural areas are evaluated; and
   iii. where prime agricultural areas cannot be avoided, lower priority agricultural lands are used;

g) the settlement area to be expanded is in compliance with the minimum distance separation formulae;

h) any adverse impacts on the agri-food network, including agricultural operations, from expanding settlement areas would be avoided, or if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment;

i) the policies of Sections 2 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the PPS are applied;

j) the proposed expansion would meet any applicable requirements of the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation, Niagara Escarpment, and Lake Simcoe Protection Plans and any applicable source protection plan; and

k) within the Protected Countryside in the Greenbelt Area:

   i. the settlement area to be expanded is identified in the Greenbelt Plan as a Town/Village;

   ii. the proposed expansion would be modest in size, representing no more than a 5 per cent increase in the geographic size of the settlement area based on the settlement area boundary delineated in the applicable official plan as of July 1, 2017, up to a maximum size of 10 hectares, and residential development would not be permitted on
more than 50 per cent of the lands that would be added to the settlement area;

iii. the proposed expansion would support the achievement of complete communities or the local agricultural economy;

iv. the proposed uses cannot be reasonably accommodated within the existing settlement area boundary;

v. the proposed expansion would be serviced by existing municipal water and wastewater systems without impacting future intensification opportunities in the existing settlement area; and

vi. expansion into the Natural Heritage System that has been identified in the Greenbelt Plan is prohibited.”

The criteria identified in the Growth Plan requires a municipality to consider a wide range of potential impacts of urban boundary expansion including servicing, financial viability, watershed planning and protection of the natural heritage system, and impacts on the agricultural system, amongst other matters. The draft Urban Boundary Expansion - Evaluation and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands), attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED17010(j), has been designed to ensure compliance with the above noted matters. Analysis of how each component above has been addressed can be found in the Analysis and Rationale for Recommendation section of this Report. Special consideration to policy 2.2.8.3(k) regarding small expansion into the Greenbelt Protected Countryside is also included in this Report, and the draft Screening Criteria and Evaluation Tool (Waterdown and Binbrook), attached as Appendix “B” to Report PED17010(j) responds to the policy direction above.

Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP)

The Urban Hamilton Official Plan contains policies regarding urban boundary expansion and, specifically, the studies and criteria that must be considered prior to the City expanding its urban boundary. Note that all policies cited below remain under appeal, and policies noted in bold or strikethrough are the subject of Ministry modifications to the UHOP.

B.2.2.22.2.1 The exact limits of the lands to be included as part of the urban boundary expansion shall be determined as part of a municipally initiated comprehensive review and secondary plan.

B.2.2.32.2.2 No urban boundary expansion shall occur until a municipally initiated comprehensive review and secondary plan have been completed.

B.2.2.42.2.3 Prior to the initiation of an urban boundary expansion, the City shall undertake a municipally initiated comprehensive review and secondary
plan, in accordance with the policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. As part of these processes, the City shall complete background studies and conduct community planning and public consultation events including the establishment of a community liaison committee. The background studies and consultation processes shall assist in identifying the layout of future land uses, determining more precise needs, land supply and infrastructure requirements, and development of community growth management policies and designations. More specifically, a municipally initiated comprehensive review and secondary plan shall include the following elements:

a) a comprehensive review and land budget analysis is required to determine the need for an urban boundary expansion, which includes an assessment of occupied and vacant urban land, brownfield availability, greenfield densities, and intensification targets to determine if sufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth contained in Policy A.2.3.1 and Policy A.2.3.2 are not available [Mod 4(b)];

b) a sub-watershed plan to address storm water infrastructure and natural heritage system impacts, in accordance with Section F.3.1.6 – Watershed and Sub-watershed Plans;

c) Environmental Impact Statement(s) pertaining to the natural heritage system, as required by applicable Official Plan and provincial policies;

d) an assessment of agricultural capability which considers directing urban growth onto those lands which are or are not on lower priority lands, which are designated Agriculture in prime agricultural areas, the lands do not comprise specialty crop areas, there are no reasonable alternatives that avoid prime agricultural areas and there are no reasonable alternatives on agricultural lands [Mod 4(c)];

e) demonstrating that impacts from new or expanding urban areas on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the urban areas are mitigated to the extent feasible; and,

i) the designation of appropriate land uses and policies pertaining to the design and density of such uses;

ii) completion of Class Environmental Assessments for major urban servicing infrastructure deemed to be essential for commencement or completion of development of all or part of the lands; and,
iii) an urban development staging, phasing or implementation strategy in keeping with City-wide master plan priorities and secondary plan objectives.

iv) the timing of the urban boundary expansion and the phasing of development within the greenfield areas shall not adversely affect the of the residential intensification target and Greenfield density targets [Mod 4(d)].

f) completion of a financing policy for urban services and other community infrastructure; and,

g) other studies and policies which the City deems necessary for the development of the future urban growth district as a sustainable transit oriented urban community.

h) the urban boundary expansion makes available sufficient lands for a time horizon not exceeding 20 years, based on the analysis provided for in Policy B.2.2.4 a) B.2.2.3 a) [Mod 4 (e)]

The UHOP criteria identifies the need to address similar matters as those identified in the Growth Plan, to be completed as part of a secondary plan and municipally initiated comprehensive review, including the completion of a land needs assessment, sub-watershed plan and environmental impact study, agricultural impact assessment and financing policy. These matters are addressed in the draft Urban Boundary Expansion - Evaluation and Phasing Criteria (Whitebelt Lands) attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED17010(j).
February 23, 2021

Jason Thorne
General Manager of Planning and Economic Development
City of Hamilton

Dear Jason Thorne:

As part of Ontario’s COVID-19 economic recovery efforts, this past summer changes were made to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to help increase housing supply, create more jobs, attract business investments, and better align infrastructure while protecting what matters most, including the Greenbelt.

I am writing to you today in follow up to our discussions this past summer regarding the proposed and final changes to the Plan and the upcoming requirements for Municipal conformity. The date by which upper and single-tier municipalities must update their official plans to conform with the policies in A Place to Grow is July 1, 2022. This can be achieved through phasing a series of official plan amendments or a single official plan amendment.

As you know, the Plan’s policies require municipalities to designate all land required to accommodate the Schedule 3 growth forecasts to the 2051 planning horizon. We encourage you to work with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff at the various stages as you work towards meeting conformity. As a reminder, Official Plans/Official Plan Amendments must be submitted by end of 2021 or early 2022.

Continued engagement with our Indigenous partners helped inform the changes to A Place to Grow. As part of these changes, a reminder that municipalities have a requirement to work with Indigenous communities in recognition of the unique relationship that all levels of government have with Indigenous Peoples.

We are committed to continue working with you and our inter-ministerial partners to achieve balance that ensures local decision-making that better reflects local realities. Should you or your staff have any questions about A Place to Grow, its implementation criteria, or matters related to conformity, please feel free to contact the Ontario Growth Secretariat at growthplanning@ontario.ca.
Thank you for your ongoing commitment to your community and for your ongoing collaboration and engagement in support of effective growth management in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Cordelia Clarke Julien
Assistant Deputy Minister