

Frequently Asked Questions

355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle Planning Applications

City File R14/20 – Last Updated April 7th, 2021

Q1 – What was proposed for the development originally?

- A. The applicant originally proposed to develop the subject lands with nine (9) three-storey street-fronting townhouse units. Four of the townhouse units are proposed to front onto Guelph Avenue, and the remaining five units will front onto Fletcher Circle. The townhouse units are proposed to include individual private garages (one per unit), as well as a driveway parking space in front of each unit. To the rear of each residential unit, a second storey deck and a backyard amenity space is proposed.

The property at 355 Guelph Avenue currently contains an existing single detached dwelling, along with a small shed in the northeast corner of the property. The existing structures are planned to be demolished to accommodate the proposed street-fronting townhouse units. 11 Fletcher Circle is currently vacant.

In order to proceed with the proposed development, the applicant applied to amend the Zoning By-law. A Zoning By-law Amendment application was required to rezone the properties from R2 and R5 (single detached residential) to the RM4 (multiple residential) zone. Site-specific zoning provisions were also requested that sought the following:

- To permit nine attached townhouse dwelling units on the subject lands, whereas only six attached units are permitted;
- To permit a reduced minimum lot area of 164.4 square metres (1,772 square feet), whereas a minimum lot area of 165 square metres (1,776 square feet) is required; and,
- To permit a reduced minimum exterior side yard of 5.6 metres (18.37 feet), whereas a minimum exterior side yard of 6 metres (19.68 feet) is required.

The proposal was considered at the March 2nd, 2021 Public Meeting and Council referred the application back to staff for a subsequent report and staff recommendation.

For further information about the application, visit: **[Link to Studies and Reports in Support of 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle Application](#)**

Q2 – What is proposed for the development currently?

- A. The applicant is currently preparing a revised concept plan based on the comments received at the Public Meeting from members of Council and those members of the public in attendance. In addition, staff have provided comments on the original submission to the applicant, which are also being taken into consideration to complete a revised concept. A revised concept will be provided presented at the Neighbourhood Meeting on Wednesday, April 7th, 2021. The revised concept will require additional City staff and external agency review after the neighbourhood meeting.

[Link to Studies and Reports in Support of 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle Application](#)

Q3 – What is the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and how does it govern land use and density for the lands

- A. The A Place to Grow Act, 2020 allows the Province of Ontario to designate growth plan areas and prepare regional growth plans. Growth plans are long-term plans intended to manage growth, build complete communities, curb urban sprawl and protect the natural environment. They identify where and how growth should occur. The A Place to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“the Growth Plan”) designates the subject lands as a “Built-Up Area”. Built-Up Areas are those areas that are intended to accommodate a minimum of 50 percent of all residential development within the Region of Waterloo. Intensification within the Built-Up Area is encouraged by the Growth Plan.

For further information about the A Place to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe visit: **[Link to the Provincial Growth Plan](#)**

Q4 – What are Official Plans and what are the key policies of the Region of Waterloo and City of Cambridge Official Plans that apply to 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle?

- A. Official Plans are legal documents, required by the Provincial Planning Act, that describe a municipal council’s vision, goals, objectives and policies on how land should be used through text, mapping and other figures. They are long-term plans that generally cover a 20-year period. Official Plans are prepared with input from a range of stakeholders (e.g. government agencies, community groups and the public). The Official Plan affects all land in the City.

Official Plans for upper-tier municipalities (e.g. Regional Municipality of Waterloo) deal with broad planning issues that affect more than one municipality. The

Official Plans and Zoning By-laws of lower-tier municipalities (e.g. City of Cambridge) must conform to the upper-tier plan. All Official Plans must conform to the provincial Growth Plan.

Official Plans are “living documents” that do change as a region or municipality evolves, either through Official Plan Amendments (OPA) or through comprehensive updates. The Planning Act requires that municipalities undertake a review of the Official Plan within 10-years of completing a comprehensive update of the Official Plan.

For further information about Official Plans Visit: **[Link to a Citizens Guide to Official Plans](#)**

Waterloo Regional Official Plan (adopted in 2009 and approved 2015)

The Regional Official Plan applies to the seven lower-tier municipalities, which comprise Waterloo Region, one of which is the City of Cambridge. It includes estimates of population and employment growth by local municipality and provides direction on where and how future growth should be accommodated. According to the ROP, the City of Cambridge is forecasted to grow from 123,900 to 176,000 by 2031.

The Regional Official Plan designates 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle as “Urban Area” and “Built-Up Area”. The Regional Official Plan directs that 45 percent of new residential development should be directed to the Built-Up Area by the local municipalities in order to support the efficient use of land and physical community infrastructure/services.

For further information about the Waterloo Region Official Plan visit: **[Link to Regional Official Plan](#)**

Cambridge Official Plan

The City of Cambridge Official Plan is a policy document providing direction for general land use in the City and affects all land. The Plan provides policy requirements on matters relating to the natural environment, built heritage, urban design, parks and open space and infrastructure. Private development and public works are required to conform to the policies of the City’s Official Plan. The Plan supports long-term growth and development. It also provides a way to manage issues related to land use, while still meeting the interests of the City, and achieving conformity with the Region of Waterloo Official Plan and the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Cambridge Official Plan designates 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle as “Built-Up Area” on Map 1A (Urban Structure) and “Low/Medium Density Residential” by Map 2 (General Land Use Plan). The “Low/Medium Density Residential” designation permits a maximum density of 40 units per hectare. Given the combined lot area of 0.239 hectares, a proposed development containing 9 units would provide for a maximum density of 38 units per hectare, which is in conformity with the Official Plan.

Q5 – What is a Zoning By-law? How 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle currently zoned?

- A. A Zoning By-law is a regulatory document that implements the policies of an Official Plan by outlining specific development requirements and standards for all properties in the City. Zoning By-laws give a land use classification to each property, a specific list of permitted uses and parking requirements and provide minimum and maximum building sizes to regulate built form and massing (e.g. lot size, lot coverage, building height, density, setbacks from the property lines, etc.). A landowner may submit an application to amend the Zoning By-law.

The Cambridge City-wide Zoning By-law (150-85, as amended) currently zones the subject lands “Residential – R2” (355 Guelph Avenue) and “Residential – R5” (11 Fletcher Circle). The southern portion of the subject lands (11 Fletcher Circle) is also subject to site-specific provision S.4.1.227, which applies site-specific development regulations to that portion of land with respect to the development of single detached dwellings, including:

Zone Standards	Single Detached Dwellings in R5 zone
Minimum Lot Frontage	13.1 metres
Corner Lot Frontage	14.3 metres
Minimum Lot Area	320 square metres
Minimum Corner Lot Area	350 square metres
Minimum Front Yard to Garage	5.8 metres
Minimum Front Yard to House	3 metres
Minimum Interior Side Yard (1)	1.2 metres
Minimum Exterior Side Yard	2.4 metres
Minimum Rear Yard	7.5 metres
Minimum Gross Floor Area	75 square metres
Maximum Lot Coverage (2)	52 percent of lot area
Minimum Landscaped Area	30 percent of lot area
(1) Minimum interior side yard may be reduced on one side of a detached dwelling in an R5 zone to 0.6 metres where no doors, windows or other openings are provided on that side of the building where the yard is	

reduced.
(2) Assumes porch included in lot coverage.

The R2 and R5 zone both permit a single detached dwelling as the only form of residential development, as well as a residential special care facility, a use permitted in any zone in accordance with section 2.1.1 of the Zoning By-law, and an accessory use, building or structure in accordance with section 2.1.11 of the Zoning By-law. The applicant is proposing to amend the zoning on the subject lands to permit townhouse dwellings, as well as to permit additional site-specific provisions for the land to accommodate the proposed development.

A Zoning By-law Amendment application is required to rezone the properties from R2 and R5 (single detached residential) to the RM4 (multiple residential) zone to permit the development of street-fronting townhomes. Site-specific zoning provisions are also requested that seek the following:

- To permit nine attached townhouse dwelling units on the subject lands, whereas only six attached units are permitted;
- To permit a reduced minimum lot area of 164.4 square metres (1,772 square feet), whereas a minimum lot area of 165 square metres (1,776 square feet) is required; and,
- To permit a reduced minimum exterior side yard of 5.6 metres (18.37 feet), whereas a minimum exterior side yard of 6 metres (19.68 feet) is required.

For further information about the Zoning By-law No. 150-85 visit: [Link to Zoning By-law No 150-85](#)

Q6 – What is Site Plan Control / Approval and does it apply to the proposed development of 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle?

A. Generally, Site Plan Control or Site Plan Approval is a specialized authority granted under the Planning Act that allows municipalities to review and approve technical and design details of individual development proposals in a comprehensive and coordinated manner. These technical and design details may include, but are not limited to:

- Site design
- Building massing
- Relationship of the proposal and surrounding land uses
- Grading and site engineering
- Road widenings

- Driveways, curbing and traffic directional signs
- Loading and parking facilities
- Emergency vehicle routes
- Pedestrian accesses and circulation
- Landscaping fencing and lighting
- Garbage storage facilities

The City of Cambridge Site Plan Control By-law exempts street-fronting townhouse units from the site plan approval process if the development has been subject to another planning application within the past two years. As such, should the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application eventually be approved, the applicant would not be required to submit a Site Plan Control/Approval application. They will instead be able to proceed directly with an application to obtain building permits for the proposed development.

Q7 – Why are Amendments to the City of Cambridge Zoning By-law Required?

A. Any property owner can make an application to amend the zoning on their property. This is a public process that includes consultation with the neighbourhood. Based on the most recent submission, a Zoning By-law Amendment is required for this development to rezone the subject lands from R2 and R5 to the RM4 zone to allow for the development of street-fronting townhouse units. The proposed zoning amendment also seeks the following site-specific provisions:

- To permit nine attached townhouse dwelling units on the subject lands, whereas only six attached units are permitted;
- To permit a reduced minimum lot area of 164.4 square metres (1,772 square feet), whereas a minimum lot area of 165 square metres (1,776 square feet) is required; and,
- To permit a reduced minimum exterior side yard of 5.6 metres (18.37 feet), whereas a minimum exterior side yard of 6 metres (19.68 feet) is required.

Q8 – What is the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT)?

A. The LPAT is an independent administrative tribunal responsible for hearing appeals and making decisions on municipal planning matters. The LPAT is similar to a court of law, but with less formality. Tribunal members are appointed by the Ontario Cabinet and include lawyers, accountants, architects, planners and public administrators. It deals with appeals of land use planning matters

under the Planning Act. Its main role in community planning is to hold public hearings on:

- Land use planning applications, such as land severances and minor variances; and
- Planning documents and applications, such as official plans and zoning by-laws

Site Plan and subdivision applications can only be appealed by developers – usually due to a municipality not making a decision about the application within the required time period under the Planning Act, or a developer appealing a condition(s) of approval on a site plan that they are not in agreement with.

For further information about the LPAT visit: [**Link to Local Planning Appeal Tribunal**](#)

No appeal to the LPAT has been made for the requested amendment applications at this time and therefore the decision on the application remains with Cambridge Council at this time. Appeals can only be submitted once a notice of decision has been issued by Cambridge Council. Prior to a notice of decision being issued, no appeals can be submitted. Appeals to a decision made by Council must be made within 20 days of Council giving its notice of decision on the planning proposal.

Q9 – What are the Next Steps for the review of the applications?

A. City Staff – Review of Revised Application

Once a revised application is finalized and submitted to the City of Cambridge for processing, City Staff will re-circulate the application to various City departments and external commenting agencies for review and comments. Any comments received from Staff or external commenting agencies will be shared with the applicant to be addressed. Once all comments have been addressed, City staff will proceed with the preparation of a recommendation report to be presented to City Council for review and decision.

B. City Council

The public meeting for this application was held on March 2nd, 2021. The public meeting provides members of the public with the opportunity to provide Council with comments on the applications.

Following the review of the revised application submitted by the applicant, a recommendation report will be prepared by staff. The recommendation report will

include consideration of comments received from the public, agencies and Councillors during the neighbourhood meeting and the public meeting. The recommendation report will be considered by the City's Planning and Development Committee/Council at a future meeting.

If the Zoning By-law Amendment is approved, the developer will be required to received additional approvals from the City, outlined below:

Building Permit:

The developer is required to submit a building permit application demonstrating building design compliance with the Ontario Building Code.

Q10 – How is compatibility evaluated?

A. The City of Cambridge Official Plan provides compatibility criteria that is required to be met for any infill, intensification and redevelopment proposal within a residential designation. The criteria provided in the Official Plan for assessing the compatibility of development includes:

- The density, scale, height, massing, visual impact building materials, orientation and architectural character of neighbouring buildings and of the proposed development;
- The conservation, protection, maintenance and potential enhancement of the natural environment and cultural heritage resources;
- The continued viability of neighbouring land uses;
- Pedestrian and vehicular movement and linkages, as well as parking requirements and design in both existing and proposed developments;
- Landscaping, setbacks, sun and shadow effects, wind effects, signage, lighting and buffering of existing development and proposed development;
- Noise attenuation;
- Odour, dust and emission impacts;
- Transportation implications;
- Transitions between different land uses and between sites having varying permitted uses; and,
- Infill, intensification and redevelopment within existing neighbourhoods will be minor in nature and will be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood character.

Further investigation will be required by City staff to determine whether the proposed development is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood and existing development.

Q11 – Is there a maximum height requirement for the subject lands?

- A. No, the City of Cambridge Zoning By-law does not impose a maximum height requirement on the subject lands. Maximum height requirements are only applicable to lands located within the Core Areas (i.e. Galt, Preston and Hespeler) or within the vicinity of the Waterloo Regional Airport. As such, the proposed three-storey height for the townhouse units at 355 Guelph Avenue and 11 Fletcher Circle is permitted.

Concerns were raised at the public meeting regarding the proposed height of the townhouse units. The applicant has been made aware of the concerns regarding the height. However, there is no provision in the Zoning By-law that would restrict the height to two storeys on the subject lands.

Q12 – Concern about traffic.

- A. The proposed development of nine townhouse units is not anticipated to generate a significant amount of traffic in the area. As such, a Traffic Impact Study was not required as part of a complete application for this development.

Traffic Impact Studies are typically only required where there will be a significant increase in traffic due to the development. The City of Cambridge classifies significant as a development that generates more than 75 trips in the peak hour. A general guide is that a residential development will typically generate around 0.5 trips/unit. As such, a residential development would require around 150 units before it would generate significant traffic concerns that would require the submission of a Traffic Impact Study for review.

Q13 – Concern about parking.

- A. The proposed development will provide two parking spaces for each residential unit, with the exception of the townhomes that front onto Guelph Avenue, which will be able to accommodate 3 parking spaces. One parking space is proposed within the provided individual private garage and one space will be available on each individual driveway, with the exception of units 5 and 9, which can accommodate two vehicles within their provided garages. The private driveways associated with the townhomes that are proposed to front onto Guelph Avenue can accommodate two parking spaces. The proposed number of parking spaces meets the requirement of the Zoning By-law for parking.

Concerns were raised at the public meeting on March 2nd, 2021 regarding the lack of available visitor parking and on-street parking on surrounding streets. The

proposed development does provide sufficient parking to comply with the requirements of the Zoning By-law in this regard. The By-law requires that one parking space be provided for the first four bedrooms in each dwelling unit plus one space for each additional 2 bedrooms. As the proposed townhomes are not intended to exceed four bedrooms, the requirement is for the applicant to provide one parking space.

The proposed townhome units that front onto Guelph Avenue can accommodate one space within each individual garage, as well as two parking spaces on each individual driveway. The proposed townhome units that front onto Fletcher Circle can accommodate one parking space within each individual garage and one space in each individual driveway. Units 5 and 9, which front onto Fletcher Circle can accommodate two vehicles within the provided garages. As such, the applicant exceeds the required parking for the site.

Q14 – Can the proposed garages accommodate a large vehicle?

- A. The garages that are proposed for the townhouse units can accommodate a large vehicle. The proposed units provide two separate garage sizes depending on the unit. The two double car garages provided on Units 5 and 9 are 20' x 20' (6.09 m x 6.09m). The single car garages proposed provide a garage size of 11' x 20' (3.35 m x 6.09 m).

Typically, an average truck will measure between 5.2 m (17.06 feet) and 5.7 (18.70 feet) metres in length and a width of approximately 2 metres (6.56 feet). As such, based on these average measurements, a large vehicle could comfortably fit within the proposed garages.

Q15 – Concern about the removal of existing trees.

- A. A total of 27 trees currently exist on the subject lands. 21 of the existing trees are planned for removal to accommodate the nine proposed street-fronting townhouse units. The remaining 6 trees are planned to be maintained as part of the proposal. Should the Zoning By-law Amendment application eventually be approved, the applicant has proposed the planting of an additional 14 trees on the subject lands through a submitted proposed landscaping plan for the subject lands.

Through the public meeting held on March 2nd, 2021, concerns were raised regarding the removal of the mature trees. Given the existing planning framework applied to the lands, the subject lands are intended for residential purposes. As a result, the removal of the existing trees would be permitted. The concerns raised regarding the removal of the trees were shared with the applicant and a request

to attempt to revise the application to maintain more of the existing trees was provided. Similarly, should the removal of the trees continue to be required, the applicant will review the possibility of planting more than the 14 additional trees proposed.

Q16 – Will a retaining wall be proposed on the property?

- A. One short retaining wall is proposed alongside a portion of the proposed driveway of Unit 9. Further investigation into the details of the retaining wall are to be collected from the applicant.

Q17 – What is an Infiltration Gallery and is one proposed on the lands?

- A. An infiltration gallery is a horizontal drain that is made from open jointed or perforated pipes, or a block drain, which is laid below the water table and is used to collect groundwater.

Two infiltration galleries are proposed on the subject lands. One 18.5 metres (60.69 feet) long and 2.5-metre (8.20 feet) wide by 1.2 metre (3.94 feet) deep infiltration gallery will be located along the rear of the townhomes proposed to front onto Guelph Avenue. A second infiltration gallery is proposed along the rear of the townhomes to front onto Fletcher Circle. This proposed infiltration gallery is 29.8 metres (97.76 feet) long by 2.5 metres (8.20 feet) wide and 1.2 metres (3.94 feet) deep.

This system will help collect groundwater on the subject lands and will eliminate potential adverse drainage impacts to surrounding adjacent properties. Future homeowners will be required to maintain these infiltration galleries on their properties.

Q18 – Where will construction parking be located and how will safety be maintained during this time?

- A. Further information regarding construction parking will be collected and shared should the proposed zoning amendment be eventually approved. The developer will be required to follow all safety procedures with respect to construction within residential areas. Further information on safety procedures for construction can be provided should the application be approved.

Q19 – Concern about property values.

- A. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) assesses the value of a property based on as many as 200 different factors. Five major factors usually account for 85% of a property's value including: 1) location 2) lot

size/dimensions; 3) living area; 4) age of the house and; 5) quality of construction. Property taxes are not calculated based on market value but rather the assessed value of the property. The market value of a property depends on a host of factors including the state of the economy and the individual purchaser's preferences. Note that property values are not a consideration in land use planning recommendations.

Q20 – Affordable Housing.

- A. The applicant is not proposing affordable housing as part of the proposal for the development of the subject lands. However, townhome units are typically more affordable than single detached dwellings. Further review will be considered with respect to a potential contribution by the developer to the City's affordable housing reserve fund for the upcoming recommendation report.

Q21 – Shadowing.

- A. A shadow impact study is typically requested by the City of Cambridge for developments proposing a height of 6 storeys or higher. Concerns over shadowing from the proposed townhomes were brought to the attention of the applicant at the public meeting on March 2nd, 2021. A shadow diagram was requested from Staff after the public meeting to provide a visual representation of the potential shadow impacts on adjacent properties.

Q22 – How many units could fit on the site without site specific amendments?

- A. If the subject lands were to be developed in compliance with the current zoning applied to the lands, a maximum of two single detached dwelling units would be permitted. A single detached dwelling on 11 Fletcher Circle may be subject to a minor variance application if the minimum requirements of the R5 zone cannot be accommodated. Provisions such as minimum lot area, required setbacks, and lot coverage are examples of regulations that may require relief if the property were to be developed as such.

Q23 – How does access to the site work?

- A. Each proposed dwelling unit will be accessed via individual private driveways. The proposed townhouse units that front onto Guelph Avenue will have driveway access of Guelph Avenue, while those townhouses that front onto Fletcher Circle will have driveway access via Fletcher Circle.

Q24 – How will servicing work?

- A. The development is proposed to be connected to existing municipal water, sewer and stormwater services. These services are to be provided off of Guelph Avenue and Fletcher Circle.

Q25 – If the developer makes changes to the development, will residents be notified?

- A. Any changes to the proposal prior to a recommendation report will be documented in the final recommendation report. Residents who have requested in writing to be informed about future meetings on the proposal will be notified when the recommendation report is going to the City's Planning and Development Committee/Council. Site details may change through the detailed site plan review process if the Zoning By-law Amendment is approved, but are still required to comply with the final approved zoning. Site plan review is not a public process unless Council specifically requires consultation.

Q26 – What is the tenure of the development?

- A. The applicant has indicated that the proposed tenure is freehold. Freehold tenure refers to when the owner of the property owns the property, including the land it is built on. Should the proposed zoning amendment application eventually be approved, the applicant intends to submit an application to the Committee of Adjustment to divide the lands into 9 individual lots.

Q27 – Where can I find the studies that were submitted?

- A. The studies that were submitted with this planning application can be found on the City of Cambridge's Current Development Applications Page: **[Link to Current Development Applications](#)**

Note: This Frequently Asked Questions document is intended to provide a short summary of a number of complex planning policies, regulations and processes. This document should be considered a working document which may be revised to incorporate questions and feedback as the processing of this application continues. Please refer to the provided links for additional information.