

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 10/19/21

Subject: Galt Core Area Draft Height Guidelines - Recommended Next Steps

Submitted By: Lisa Prime, Chief Planner

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Report No.: 21-206(CD)

File No.: D00-01

Recommendations

THAT Council receive report 21-206(CD) - Galt Core Area Draft Height Guidelines - Recommended Next Steps - as information;

AND THAT Council direct staff to continue work to complete the draft guidelines and conduct public consultation on the draft guidelines in Fall/Winter 2021.

Executive Summary

Purpose

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council endorsement to continue work with the Galt Height guidelines and proceed to conduct the public consultation for the guidelines concurrently with the public consultation for the Galt Core Heritage Conservation District Plan in the Fall of 2021.

Key Findings

- The Galt Height Guidelines project was put on hold in 2020 to allow the Galt Core Heritage Conservation District Study to proceed and help inform the Height guidelines.
- The Galt Core Heritage Conservation District study is now complete which defines the district boundary and was presented to Council on August 10, 2021. The matter was deferred to allow Council more time to review and was presented to Council for a second time on October 5, 2021 (Report 21-184(CD) Proceeding from Study to Plan Phase for the Galt Core Heritage Conservation District Study). The next step is to conduct the Galt Core Heritage Conservation District

Plan. Staff are recommending that the public consultation for the height guidelines be conducted concurrently with the consultation for the Heritage Conservation District to ensure a coordinated approach which balances heritage and development.

- The combined outcomes of the Galt Height Guidelines, Growth and Intensification Study and city-wide Zoning by-law are intended to provide a geographic-specific, focused vision and framework as building blocks for future growth.
- The outcomes of the height guidelines will be Official Plan policies, zoning regulations for heights, building step backs, preservation of key views along public property and acknowledgement of key heritage sites in conjunction with the Galt Heritage Conservation District Plan.
- The draft Galt Height Guidelines prepared by the Planning Partnership are included in Appendix 1.

Financial Implications

- The capital project for Urban Design Guidelines was approved in 2016 for \$50,000. An additional \$30,000 was added to the budget from the Region of Waterloo for visualizations to support the densities required for the future Light Rail Transit.

Background

A capital project for urban design guidelines in the amount of \$50,000 was approved in the Planning budget in 2016 and had been carried forward for several years due to advancing other projects. This project was never intended to be city-wide guidelines and the scope of the work changed over the years to align with other planning work. In 2019, staff narrowed down the focus to just the Galt core area due to:

- the budget;
- the need to align with work underway for the city-wide zoning by-law which includes new regulations and for the core and would carry forward the existing outdated height schedule if this work is not completed;
- accommodating the height and density required to meet the Provincial, Regional and Official Plan policies for the area to support future Light Rail Transit.

The Growth and Intensification study with the Major Transit Station area project will identify the areas where significant density can be accommodated. The heights determined through the Galt Height Guidelines will provide a framework to determine what the coverage of a site must be in order to meet the density required for the area

and how the height can be accommodated while addressing significant public views and heritage. Preserving key views along public property and acknowledging key heritage sites are important considerations for preparing the guidelines. This information will be used to create a cohesive set of policies and zoning regulations to provide certainty for the development industry, landowners and the public rather than incremental changes.

Location

The Galt Height Guidelines will apply only to the existing Galt core area boundaries as shown on Appendix 2. This boundary is established in the City of Cambridge Official Plan and zoning by-law. A portion of the study area is also designated the Urban Growth Centre by the Province. Significant public viewsheds and heritage buildings are being considered as part of this work to focus increase densities in ways that protect these structures and views. The Galt Heritage Conservation District Study identifies the boundaries of the district which lay within the Galt Height Guidelines boundaries.

Analysis

Strategic Alignment

PROSPERITY: To support and encourage the growth of a highly competitive local economy where there is opportunity for everyone to contribute and succeed.

Goal #1 - Community Wellbeing

Objective 1.4 Promote, facilitate and participate in the development of affordable, welcoming and vibrant neighbourhoods.

The Galt Height Guidelines will provide clarity and direction for future development to ensure that appropriate heights and density can be accommodated and also provide guidelines for design to address significant views and the character of a vibrant downtown core.

Having additional housing units in the core, as well as other commercial space will contribute to a vibrant core, increase supply of housing, support cycling/public transit and provide a range of housing options and affordability.

Comments

The combined outcomes of the Galt Height Guidelines, Galt Heritage Conservation District, Growth and Intensification Study and city-wide zoning by-law update will provide a framework as building blocks to then guide development in the Galt core. The Galt core is the location of the Urban Growth Centre as defined by the Province and two light rail transit (LRT) stations are planned for the area. The City is now in a position where the planning framework needs to be in place for future development of the area. The City is already receiving enquiries and applications for significant development in

the core. The goal of Planning staff is to have the planning framework in place to guide how the area is developed prior to developers submitting new applications. Following the height guidelines, the next step will be completion of the Growth Management Strategy which will further inform the City Official Plan Update and will commence in 2022 in accordance with Planning Act requirements.

The Galt Core Heritage Conservation District Study phase is now complete with recommendations for the study area boundary coming to Council on July 27, 2021. Additional heritage work for the East Galt neighbourhood Area is commencing in 2022. The intent of the heritage studies is to help implement the recommendations of the City's Heritage Master Plan and increase inventory of cultural heritage resources. As part of this Galt Heights, study height guidelines will address heritage and character of the core area and will continue to limit height in the central areas of the core where significant heritage resources and views along publicly owned property exist. The guidelines will provide direction for elements such as height, built form, compatibility, massing, step backs, significant views and shadowing impacts. The Galt Height Guidelines are needed to provide an overall vision for the development in the Galt Core area which will lead to studies with a narrow focus on heritage. This work needs to progress in advance of the heritage work to develop this vision. The guidelines will include input from representatives from the heritage community.

Staff initiated the background work to start the Galt Height Guidelines and retain a consultant in 2019 and a report came to Council in 2020 with the Terms of Reference. At this time Council put a hold on the study to allow the City to conduct the Galt Heritage Conservation District Study. Continuation with this project now is very important to establish the framework and proceed with other upcoming planning work. Delay of the project would create a gap in information needed to complete other planning work scheduled and provide uncertain information to landowners and developers in the area. This could result in developments which do not account for significant public views and heritage. A delay could also result in limitations on developments where increased height is appropriate therefore limiting the ability to accommodate required density on appropriate sites.

Existing Policy/By-Law

City of Cambridge Official Plan (2012)

Policy 2.8.3.3 in the 2012 City of Cambridge Official Plan sets out that in the Galt Core, including the Provincially defined Urban Growth Centre, the minimum building height of 2 storeys and the maximum height of 5 storeys are permitted. In addition, policy 2.8.3.4 permits consideration of development at a higher height and density provided the Official Plan's compatibility and bonusing policies are followed. Maximum height with bonusing would be determined through a negotiation with the City in exchange for community benefits.

City of Cambridge Zoning by-law 150-85

Currently the City of Cambridge Zoning by-law 150-85 includes height limits in the Galt Core which are included in Appendix 3. These heights were put in place in 2007 prior to the location of the major transit station areas being determined which require minimum densities to support the future LRT stations.

Financial Impact

The capital project for Urban Design Guidelines was approved in 2016 for \$50,000. An additional \$30,000 was added to the budget from the Region of Waterloo for visualizations to support the densities required for the future Light Rail Transit.

Public Input

With the endorsement of Council, the next steps in the process is to consult the public on the draft guidelines for their input.

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

Internal/External Consultation

Feedback from the development industry has indicated that providing a clear planning framework is important for investment in the Galt Core.

A stakeholder list has been identified by the steering committee consisting of representatives from the following:

- Developers with interest in the Galt core;
- Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee;
- Architectural Conservatory of Ontario Cambridge (ACO Cambridge);
- University of Waterloo;
- Grand River Conservation Authority;
- Downtown Cambridge BIA;
- Consultants conducting work for the City on other projects.

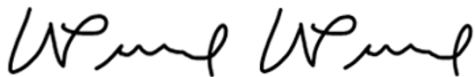
Stakeholders were contacted by the Planning Partnership to determine the key messages which are included in Appendix 4.

Conclusion

Continuation with the Galt Height guidelines is important to ensure coordination with other scheduled Planning work and provide guidance to the development industry, landowners and the public within the Core area, Urban Growth Centre and the Main Street Heritage District. This project was paused to allow the Galt Heritage Conservation District study to proceed and to allow a coordinated approach to address heritage and heights. This work will develop the vision for the area to allow intensification to achieve provincial targets and also protect the heritage in the area. Delay would result in uncertain information for landowners and developers in the area and could produce developments which do not meet the goals for the core area in addressing significant public views and heritage and directing significant density to appropriate sites.

Signature

Division Approval



Reviewed by the CFO

Reviewed by Legal Services

Name: Lisa Prime

Title: Chief Planner

Departmental Approval



Name: Hardy Bromberg

Title: Deputy City Manager, Community Development

City Manager Approval



Name: David Calder

Title: City Manager

Attachments

- Appendix 1 – Draft Galt Height Guidelines
- Appendix 2 – Study Area
- Appendix 3 – Core Area Height schedule in by-law 150-85
- Appendix 4 – Stakeholder Key Messages