



City of Guelph

Community Planning Permit System

Information Memo

October 2024





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Addressing housing challenges in Guelph

The City of Guelph is facing challenges with housing supply and affordability. In 2024, Guelph received federal funding through the [Housing Accelerator Fund \(HAF\)](#) to help boost the housing supply. The City is using this funding to explore new methods to speed up development, encourage the construction of more homes quickly, support additional dwelling units, and make it easier to build and incentivize affordable housing.

As part of the HAF, Guelph identified eight initiatives to tackle these challenges. One key initiative is the creation of a new Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) Pilot Project. This project focuses on the Downtown and the Stone Road / Edinburgh Road Area, which are seen as prime locations for supporting growth.



Downtown Study Area



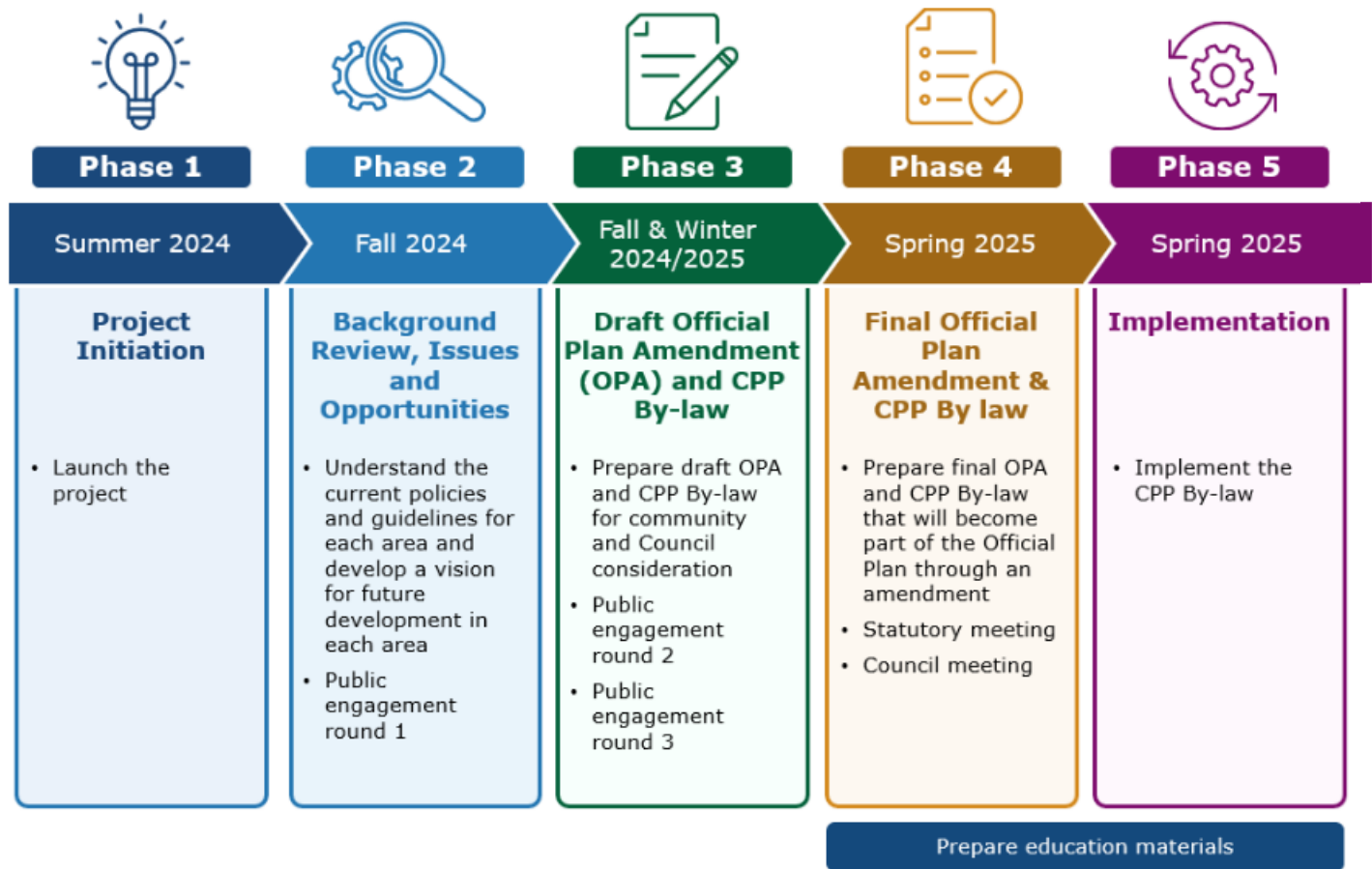
Stone Road / Edinburgh Road Study Area



Project purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop and implement a CPPS for these two areas that supports a growth in housing supply, provides opportunities for affordable housing, promotes complete community elements, and incentivizes 35 affordable housing units in these areas by the end of 2026.

Project process





What is a Community Planning Permit System?

The current process

The Provincial Planning Act guides land use and development in Ontario. In Guelph, our Official Plan and Zoning By-Law provide local rules for development. where landowners are proposing development that doesn't meet the policies of the Official Plan or rules of the Zoning by-Law, they can apply for an amendment to permit their development.

Some of the application types include:

- **Zoning by-law amendments** - Zoning By-laws set rules for how land can be used and what can be built on it. If a proposed development doesn't fit these rules and the change is not minor enough, an application to change the development standards within the Zoning By-law to accommodate the development is needed, which is called a Zoning By-law Amendment.
- **Minor variances** - a Minor Variance allows a property owner to make a small change to the zoning rules. This lets them use or build on their land in a way that doesn't exactly follow the rules but still fits the general intent.
- **Site plan approval** - Site Plan is a tool used to address site design elements such as the location of buildings and structures, parking, landscaping and site layout of new developments or redevelopments.

Together, these processes can take approximately 180 days for the municipality to review and approve a development application.

The Community Planning Permit System (CPPS)

A [CPPS](#) is an alternative to the planning approval process outlined above. It replaces the Zoning By-law and creates rules for how land can be used and a new application process that is more streamlined and efficient by combining Zoning By-law Amendments, Minor Variances, and Site Plan Applications into a single development application and approval process. The CPPS can be applied to a specific area or city-wide.

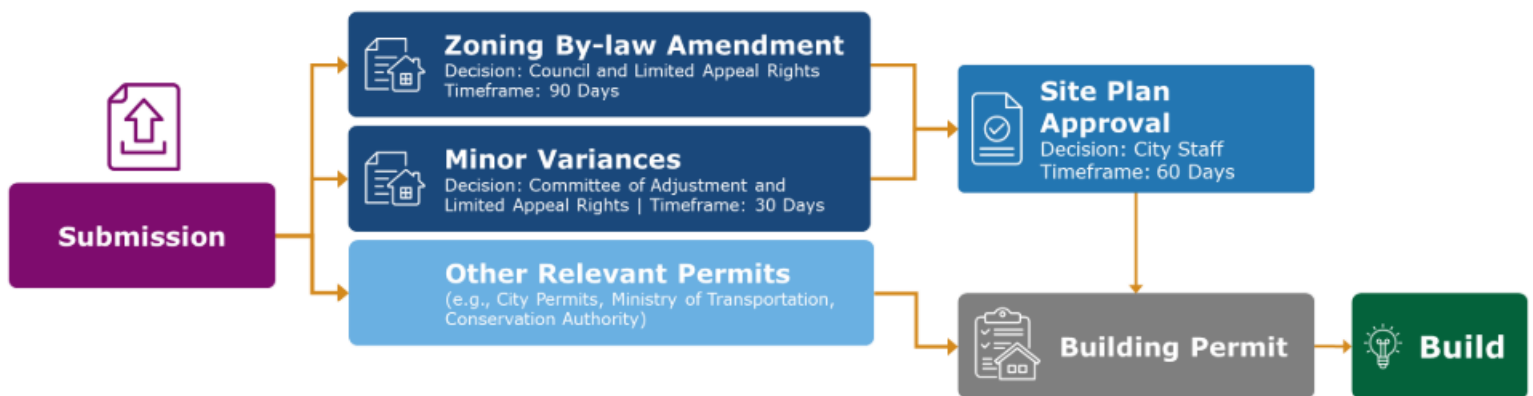


It takes about 45 days to review a development application through the CPPS process, speeding up the approval process.

The CPPS is also more flexible than the traditional zoning by-law as it can identify how land can be used if certain criteria or conditions are met.

How does the CPPS process compare to the current process?

Current Approvals Process



CPPS Process



Community engagement for the CPPS takes place while the tool is being created. This means that your input during this project will help shape the development rules for each of the two areas.



The benefits of a CPPS

A CPPS is just one of the tools the City can use to shape development. There are many benefits of the CPPS, which include:



Develop a custom approval framework that focuses on affordable housing and the key priorities of the community.



Make the development approval process faster by combining three separate applications into one so housing can be approved and built more quickly.



Provide clear guidelines on what can and can't be done so everyone knows the rules.



Ensure that new developments fit well within the existing community by incorporating design standards into the CPP By-law.



Create certainty and transparency for the community, landowners, and developers.



Provide residents with an opportunity to have a say on how these areas develop upfront.



Secure community needs, such as affordable housing and parkland, through tradeoffs like allowing a developer to build taller buildings in exchange for including affordable units.



Plan for long term growth comprehensively within two priority growth areas.



Why are we implementing a CPPS in these two areas?

The City of Guelph Official Plan sets out the long-term planning framework for the entire city. The Official Plan designates the Downtown and Stone Road / Edinburgh Road as Strategic Growth Areas. This means that **these areas are planned to accommodate growth with more housing, jobs, infrastructure, and public amenities in the future.** These areas are well-positioned to support growth as they are already connected to transit, roads, and other important infrastructure.

Overview of the Downtown

Vision

The vision for the Downtown is outlined in the Downtown Secondary Plan. The plan supports a diverse range of uses to reinforce the Downtown as the core of the city.

The vision for the Downtown includes:

- **Variety of uses:** a mix of activities and businesses to make Downtown the heart of the city.
- **Sustainable growth:** a way to grow and develop that is environmentally friendly and sustainable.
- **More people and jobs:** a bustling urban area with more people living and working there.
- **Walkable and bike-friendly:** easy and safe to walk and bike around.
- **Better infrastructure:** improvements to roads, utilities, and other infrastructure to support more people.
- **Connected to transit:** promote transit services to connect people locally and regionally.
- **Increased density:** by 2051, the aim is to have 200 people and jobs for every hectare of land in Downtown.

Existing and planned conditions for the Downtown

The following section outlines the existing and planned conditions for the Downtown.



Land use framework

The Downtown CPPS Pilot Project Area is located within the Downtown Secondary Plan as identified on Schedule C of the Guelph Official Plan. These lands are designated as Residential, Mixed-use, Major Transit Station, Institutional or Office, Parks and Open Space, Future Park Policy Area, Significant Natural Area within the City of Guelph Official Plan.



Transportation network

The Downtown CPPS Pilot Project area is designated as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA). An MTSA refers to an area within a 500 to 800 metre walking distance of a transit stop serviced by light rail or rapid transit. In the context of Guelph, the Downtown provides major local and regional transit connections with Guelph Transit, VIA Rail and GO Transit. As an MTSA, this area has been planned to increase transit-ridership through increased density and removal of parking minimums to support existing and planned transit investments. The Guelph Transportation Master Plan (2022) identifies the Downtown as a focus point to enhance the pedestrian realm and on-street cycling facilities on some streets to promote active transportation.



Infrastructure

The Downtown is serviced by municipal water, wastewater, and storm water networks. Infrastructure in the Downtown is currently being reviewed and renewed through the [Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program](#), which will improve key infrastructure elements needed to unlock growth and development.



Development considerations

A key feature of downtown Guelph is the Speed River, which flows along the northeastern border of the CPPS Pilot Project Area and Wellington Street East. Development in the floodplain is restricted to prevent and mitigate risks such as property damage and loss of life during heavy rain events.



Overview of the Stone Road / Edinburgh Road Project Area

Vision

The vision for Stone Road / Edinburgh Road is outlined in the Official Plan and includes enhancing the area into a lively, compact community. The vision for the area includes:

- **Variety of uses:** a mix of uses within a compact urban form and development of a vibrant main street area, and affordable housing.
- **Amenities and infrastructure:** inclusion of parks and community spaces.
- **Transportation connections:** infrastructure to support active transportation (walking, cycling), and more homes and businesses connected to bus routes.
- **Increased density:** by 2051 the aim is to have 160 people and jobs for every hectare of land.

Existing and planned conditions for the Downtown

The following section outlines the existing and planned conditions for the Stone Road / Edinburgh Road.



Land use framework

Lands within the Stone / Edinburgh Road area are designated as Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Mixed-use Corridor 1, Neighbourhood Commercial Centre, Institutional / Research Park, Major Institutional, Open Space and Park, and Significant Natural Areas and Natural Areas within the City of Guelph Official Plan.



Transportation network

The Stone Road/ Edinburgh Road area has a diverse road network, and this area is well connected by transit, with bus routes connecting to Stone Road Mall from Stone Road and Edinburgh Road. The Transportation Master Plan identifies Stone Road and Edinburgh Road for frequent transit service, an improved pedestrian realm, and on-street cycling facilities along Stone Road to enhance and promote active transportation in the area. In addition, opportunities exist for active transportation facilities and a transit facility enhancement located behind Stone Road Mall.



Infrastructure

The Stone Road / Edinburgh Road area is serviced by municipal water, wastewater and stormwater networks.



Development considerations

Adjacent to Edinburgh Road South is an area identified as a Natural Heritage System (Significant Woodlands). Future plans will continue to protect Significant Woodlands.

Next steps

In the current phase of the project is to understand the current policies and guidelines for each area and develop a vision for future development in each area through community engagement. In the next phase, the draft policies will be presented for community engagement.

Get involved



For more information and learn about engagement opportunities please visit www.haveyoursay.guelph.ca/community-planning-permit-system

