

City of Guelph

Introduction to Green Development Standards

Public Presentation

April 24, 2025

Presented by:

**URBAN
EQUATION**

 **The Planning
Partnership**

Statement of acknowledgement

As we gather, let us take time to reflect on our privilege to live and work in Guelph; a city built over rich Indigenous histories. We are guests here, and we should reflect upon the responsibility to care for this land, the people who live here today, and the generations to come. If our actions today can move us towards reconciliation, we should take pause and make those decisions with intention and gratitude.

This place we call Guelph has served as traditional lands and a place of refuge for many peoples over time, but more specifically the Attiwonderonk, and the Haudenosaunee. This land is held as the treaty lands and territory with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Guelph lies directly adjacent to the Haldimand Tract and is part of a long-established traditional hunting ground for the Six Nations of the Grand River. Many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples who have come from across Turtle Island call Guelph home today.

Structure of the session

- The session will begin with a presentation.
- Questions and discussion will follow. Please post a question to the chat box or raise a “hand”. You will be asked to turn your mic on.
- Questions will be addressed one at a time based on the sequence showing in the list of participants

Guidelines for Participation

- As a courtesy, please keep your microphone off during the presentation.
- This must remain a place where everyone is comfortable to bring their ideas.
- We respect each other's viewpoints even if we don't agree. There is no debating.
- We want to hear your ideas about the Green Development Standards, but this session is not the place to discuss issues outside this scope.
- Contact information is available to provide comments via email

Agenda

1. Guelph Green Development Standards

- a. Project Team
- b. Project Timeline
- c. Engagement Activities
- d. Project Objectives

2. Green Development Standards Basics

- a. What are Green Development Standards?
- b. Why are they important?
- c. What are their benefits?
- d. How does the Planning Act support GDS?
- e. What are the typical components?
- f. How is a GDS created?
- g. Do similar municipalities have a GDS?

3. One Planet Living – A Framework for Creating Green Development Standards

4. Question Period

5. Next Steps

Project Team

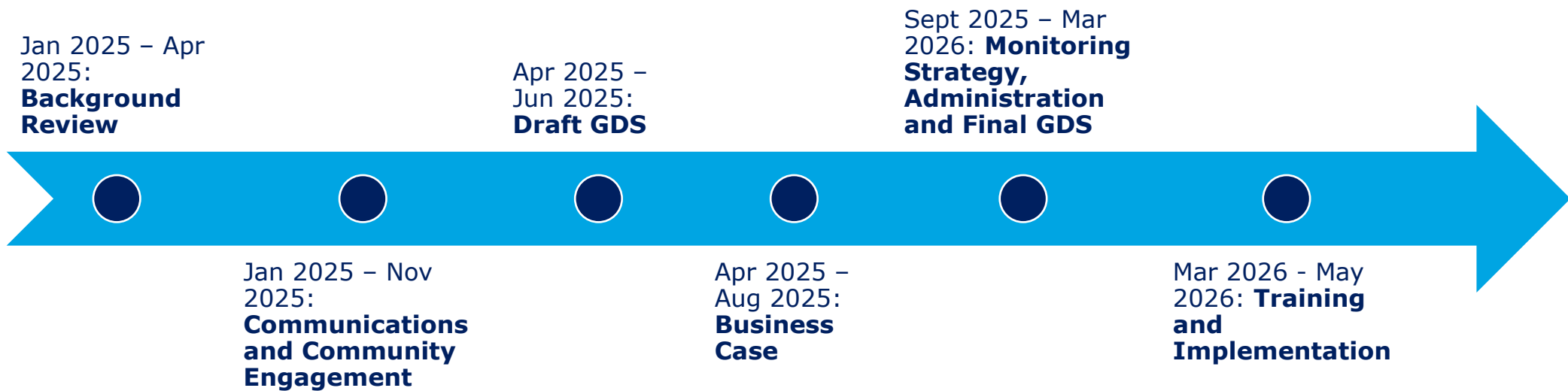
Municipal Project Manager

- Malik Majeed – City of Guelph
 - Email: malik.majeed@guelph.ca

Consulting Team

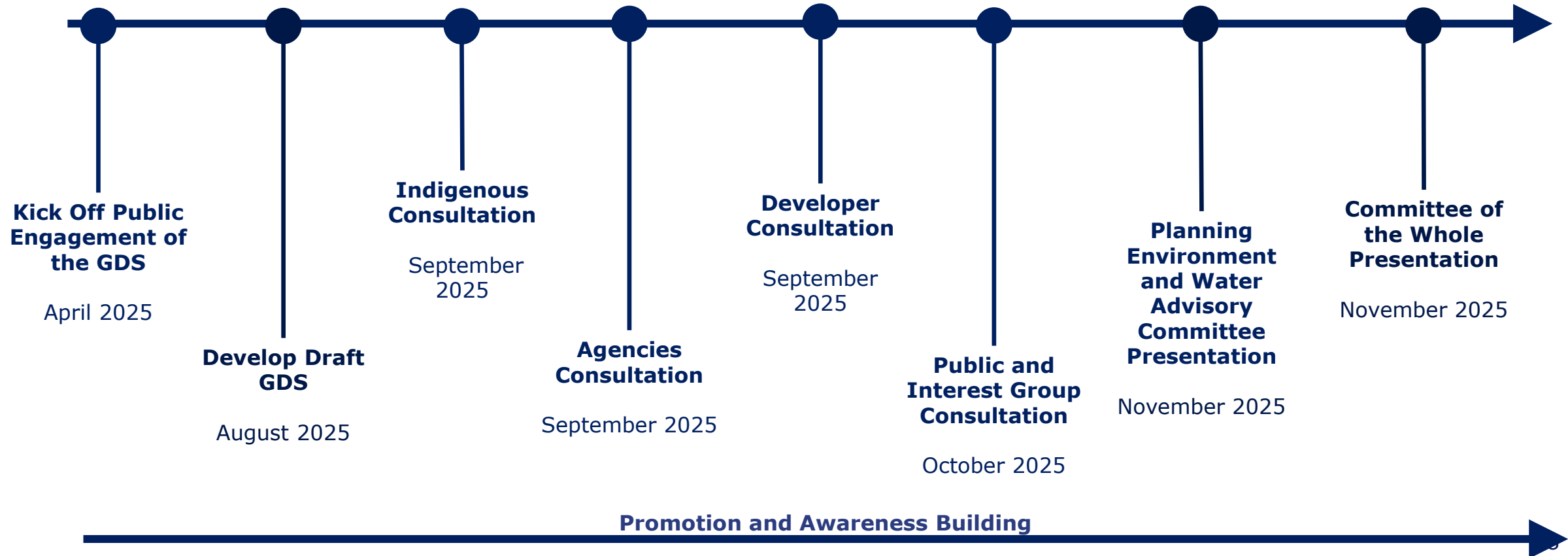
- Fin MacDonald, Project Manager – Urban Equation
 - Email: fin.macdonald@urbanequation.ca
- Donna Hinde, Engagement Lead – The Planning Partnership
 - Email: dhinde@planpart.ca
- Sarah Hasan, Project Analyst – Urban Equation
- Stacey McCulloch, Planning Lead – The Planning Partnership

Project Timeline

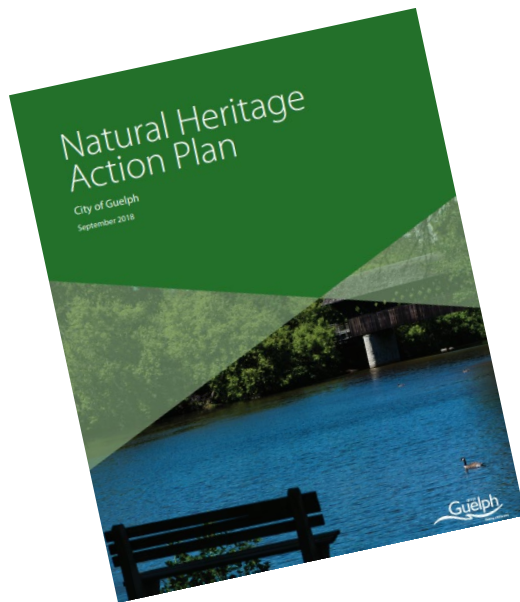


Engagement Activities

Community and Industry Engagement



Why is the City preparing GDS?



- Action #29 of the City’s Natural Heritage Action Plan directs the City to prepare green development standards.
- This is to be completed within the 2022-2025 period.
- The GDS is to assist in evaluating the environmental sustainability of development proposals and capital projects using sustainability metrics.

- Council motioned on April 8, 2025 that staff report back to Council by the end of Q4 2025 on potential regulatory options to require higher energy standards for tall buildings within the Downtown Height Study area, including:
 - Mandatory net zero energy requirements
 - Energy efficiency measures
 - Distributed energy systems, and;
 - Prohibition on the installation of new fossil gas infrastructure.

Project Objectives

- Develop GDS that will apply to appropriate development and redevelopment proposals.
- Ensure GDS aligns with City's Official Plan, Community Plan, other master plans and sustainability targets and improves resilience to climate change.
- Comprehensively demonstrate the qualitative and quantitative benefits of GDS.
- Engage Guelph residents, industrial, commercial and institutional sector, development industry, community groups, local Indigenous governments and other interest holders to improve understanding of the need to address the City's sustainability targets as part of growth and seek input to the development of the GDS.
- Receive Council approval and support from staff, key interest holders, the development community and the public.
- Integrate the GDS into the City's relevant planning documents that may require updates; and,
- Ensure that staff and developers are adequately trained to navigate the GDS.

What Are Green Development Standards

Green Development Standards (GDS) are:

Voluntary and/or mandatory measures developed by municipalities to **encourage developers and builders** to create sustainable communities through thoughtful and innovative design.

Comprehensive **principles** to guide development at a level of **planning and design** that focuses on the community as a whole.

Critical **policy tool** for municipalities to achieve their GHG reduction targets, Official Plan goals, and sustainability goals.



Adapted from: Clean Air Partnership

Why are GDS Important?

As communities face the challenges of a **changing climate**, municipalities are **uniquely positioned** to lead local climate action through GDS—helping build healthier, more resilient, and sustainable communities.

We now now have the opportunity to put **cost-effective** policies in place that will **benefit** the **taxpayers** in the future.

With GDS in place, they can ensure that newly built **buildings and infrastructure are more resilient** to disruptions from extreme weather events from the start.

The GDS can help Guelph meet its **climate and housing goals** by guiding the development of 18,000 units that it has pledged to build by 2031 to be low or net-zero carbon, while supporting key city strategies like Affordable Housing, and the Circular Economy.

Adapted from: Clean Air Partnership



What Are the Benefits of GDS

GDS can provide **Environmental**, **Social**, and **Economic** benefits to the City and the Community.



Potential Environmental Benefits

- Reduces energy consumption
- Reduces vehicle dependency
- Improves water management
- Increases green space and biodiversity
- Increases climate resilience



Potential Social Benefits

- Improves air quality
- Promotes healthier more active lifestyles
- Increases access to outdoor greenspace
- Promotes the development of affordable and mixed-used housing
- Promotes community design that embraces heritage and culture



Potential Economic Benefits

- Increases property values
- Reduces municipal infrastructure costs
- Extends life of building stock
- Improves energy affordability
- Creates jobs

GDS Are Used for New Developments



Municipalities can review new subdivision applications against the GDS requirements.



The GDS will replace the City's existing Sustainable Design Checklist for Site Plan Approval applications



Municipalities can review new site plan applications against the GDS requirements. This includes:
Commercial and industrial properties, or
Residential developments including 10 units or more.



Municipalities will not use the GDS to review the performance of existing buildings, including homes that are already occupied.

The Planning Act Enables Municipalities to Implement GDS to Address Matters of Provincial Interest such as:

the protection of ecological systems

the protection of the agricultural resources

the efficient use and conservation of energy

the efficient use of transportation, sewage and water services

the minimization of waste

the orderly development of safe and healthy communities

the protection of public health and safety

the appropriate location of growth and development

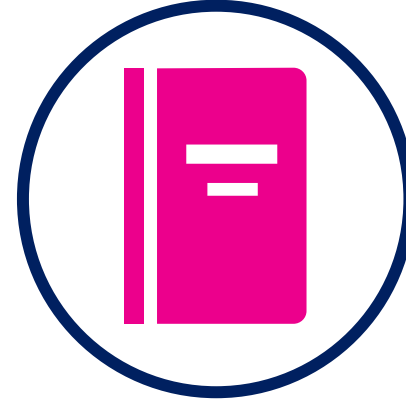
the promotion of development designed to support public transit and pedestrians

the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate

Typical Steps in the GDS Process

Checklists

Tool used by developers to organize and demonstrate performance measures and for the city to review compliance.



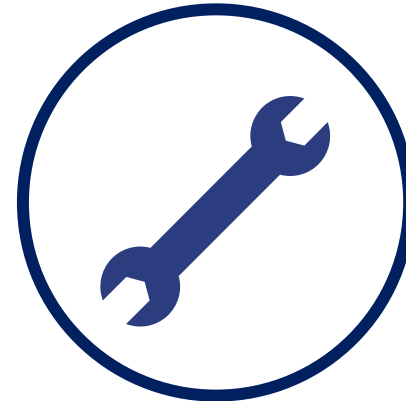
Reference Guide

Tool to help inform developers how to use the standards.



Engagement

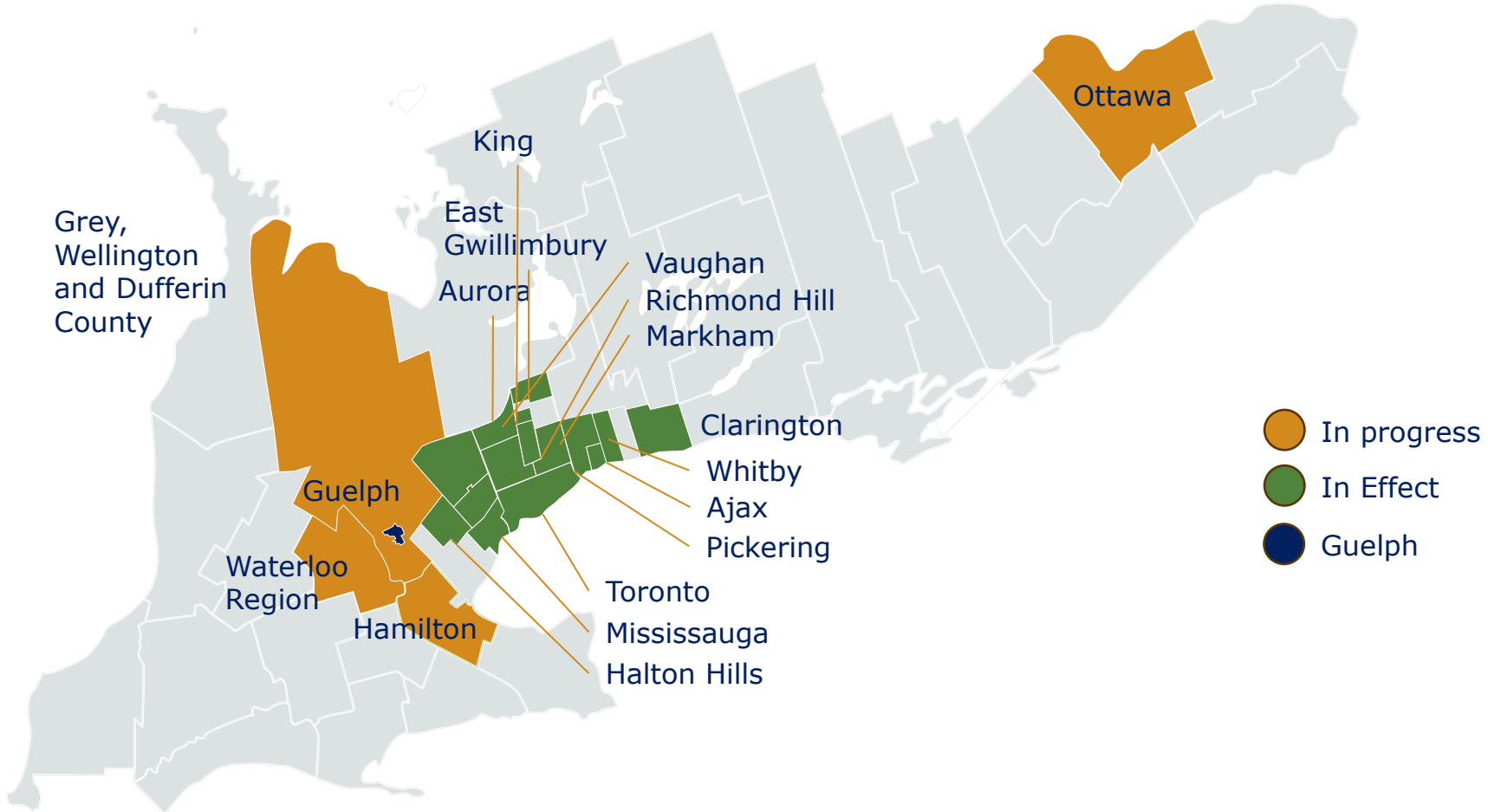
Internal and external feedback on priorities and feasibility of the standard. Provide project updates.



Staff Training

Tools to support municipal staff in implementing the standards.

Municipalities in Ontario with GDS



Preliminary Key Themes Proposed for Guelph's GDS Based on Background Review

- Affordable / Attainable Housing
- Biodiversity
- Building Energy Performance
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- Environmental Stewardship
- Stormwater Management
- Sustainable Transportation
- Urban Forest
- Waste Reduction
- Water Conservation



One Planet Living – A Holistic Framework for Creating Green Development Standards

Our team uses the One Planet Living framework to guide a project vision that broadens sustainability through background research to cover environmental, social and economic sustainability.

One Planet Living is made up of 10 organizing principles



One Planet Living Principles



Health and Happiness:
Encouraging active and social lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Sample topics:

- Active Spaces.
- Social spaces.
- Enhanced air quality.
- Thermal comfort.



Equity and Economy:
Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity.

Sample topics:

- Accessible design.
- Local Materials.



Culture and Community:
Empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Sample topics:

- Social gathering spaces.
- Public art spaces.
- Occupant education.



Land and Nature:
Protecting and restoring land and aquatic systems for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Sample topics:

- Biophilic design.
- Wildlife habitat protection.
- Resilience.



Sustainable Water:
Using water efficiently and protecting local water resources.

Sample topics:

- Outdoor and Indoor water Efficiency.
- Stormwater management.
- Rainwater capture.

One Planet Living Principles



Local Sustainable Food: Promoting sustainable and healthy diets and minimizing food waste.

Sample topics:

- Space for Urban agriculture.
- Building Level Composting.



Travel and Transport: Reducing the need to travel by car, and encouraging walking, cycling and low-carbon transport.

Sample topics:

- Electric Vehicles Infrastructure.
- Cycling infrastructure.



Materials and Products: Using materials from sustainable sources.

Sample topics:

- Low-embodied carbon materials.
- Bio-based materials.
- Material reuse.



Zero Waste: Reducing consumption and promoting reuse and recycling to eliminate waste and pollution.

Sample topics:

- Circular economy.
- Construction waste.
- Space for Recycling and Community sharing.



Zero Carbon Energy: Making buildings energy efficient and supplying energy with renewables.

Sample topics:

- Building energy performance.
- Energy storage.
- Geothermal heating and cooling.
- Solar readiness.

Questions

One of the first steps the project team will take is to create a vision for the Green Development Standards. The vision will establish the ultimate purpose for the project.

1. What words or phrases should be captured in a vision statement for the Green Development Standards?

Questions

2. What do you hope that the Green Development Standards will have the opportunity to change in your community?

Questions

3. What are some challenges you see with implementing Green Development Standards?

Questions

4. Environmental categories include:

- low-carbon energy.
- building materials and products.
- waste reduction.
- transportation.
- land and nature.
- water efficiency.

Based on your understanding of the opportunities and challenges, what are some key elements that are important in these categories?

Questions

5. Social sustainability categories include:
- health and happiness.
 - equity and local economy.
 - local and sustainable food.
 - culture and community.

Based on your understanding of the opportunities and challenges, what are some key elements that are important in these categories?

Questions

6. In 2050 the Green Development Standards have been in place for a long time. What does a headline about Guelph say about the changes seen in the community?

Next Steps

Next Steps

- The project team will be drafting the GDS and developing a business case over the spring/summer.
- The public will be re-engaged in September when a draft is ready.
- Comments or questions may be sent to:
 - Malik Majeed, Project Manager, City of Guelph, malik.majeed@guelph.ca
 - Fin Macdonald, Project Manager, Urban Equation, fin.macdonald@urbanequation.ca
 - Donna Hinde, Engagement Lead – The Planning Partnership dhinde@planpart.ca

Thank You

Malik Majeed, Project Manager, City of Guelph, malik.majeed@guelph.ca

Fin Macdonald, Project Manager, Urban Equation, fin.macdonald@urbanequation.ca

Donna Hinde, Engagement Lead – The Planning Partnership
dhinde@planpart.ca