

REPORT TO: Climate Change and Environment Committee

DATE OF MEETING: May 16, 2024

SUBMITTED BY: Natalie Goss, Manager Policy & Research, 519-741-2200 ext. 7648

PREPARED BY: Carrie Musselman, Senior Env. Planner, 519-741-2200 ext. 7068
Matthew Rodrigues, Senior Planner, 519-741-2200 ext. 7433

WARD(S) INVOLVED: Ward 3

DATE OF REPORT: May 2, 2024

REPORT NO.: DSD-2024-215

SUBJECT: Hidden Valley Land Use Implementation Project – Technical Studies

RECOMMENDATION:

That report DSD-2024-215, regarding the Hidden Valley Land Use Implementation Project, be received for information.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- City staff initiated the Hidden Valley Land Use Master Plan process in 2018 to review the in-effect land use and zoning within Hidden Valley.
- Technical Studies are being completed to support the proposed city-initiated Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendments that will ultimately update land use in the Hidden Valley area.
- The outcomes of the Project will guide future development applications within Hidden Valley, and will address important environmental, social, health, transportation, infrastructure, and heritage impacts.

BACKGROUND:

Development in Hidden Valley has been contemplated in different forms since the 1980s and 1990s. Since the existing Community Plans and zoning for Hidden Valley were brought into place, there have been many changes to the Provincial, Regional, and City policy framework. Additionally, major infrastructure and servicing initiatives have advanced – namely the River Road Extension and Stage 2 ION Light Rail Transit (LRT).

City staff initiated the Hidden Valley Land Use Master Plan (the “Master Plan”) process in 2018 to review the in-effect land use and zoning within the Hidden Valley Study Area (the “Study Area”).

In June 2019, City Council approved the Master Plan to update the area’s planning framework in response to emerging issues and opportunities (Attachment A). The Master Plan in general, proposed a variety of land use typologies, such as:

- Low rise residential - estate
- Low rise residential - detached dwellings on large lots
- Medium rise residential buildings
- High Rise residential
- Mixed-use (urban corridor)
- Commercial (urban corridor)
- Business Park Employment (General Service)
- Major infrastructure and Utility
- Natural Heritage Conservation; and
- Open Spaces

The Master Plan also included a series of implementation recommendations for further study and policy changes.

REPORT:

The Hidden Valley area comprises approximately 183 hectares of land bound by the Grand River, Highway 8, Wabanaki Drive and the rail corridor near Fairway Road. The area is characterized primarily by rolling topography, including several agricultural fields, with large lot estate residential dwellings towards the river. By far, one of the greatest and most noteworthy features of this area is the significant natural environmental system.

The Project is the next step to prepare policies and land uses that would be incorporated into the Official Plan, along with implementing zoning.

Technical Studies

A range of technical studies are being completed to inform the proposed policies and land uses, the Master Plan will be used as guidance and direction during the completion of the studies.

The technical studies will verify:

- The suitability of Master Plan land uses with respect to environmental, social, health, transportation, water management, urban design, and heritage impacts.
- Any technical standards required for implementation of the Plan including applying zoning and processing future development applications.
- An overview of considerations related to natural heritage conservation, climate adaptation and mitigation, municipal infrastructure, and flooding based on the technical analysis and work completed since Council's endorsement of the Master Plan.

The following information may be of particular interest to the committee:

Natural Heritage Conservation - An Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is nearing completion and will determine the limits of development, buffers from natural features, and guide the application of appropriate land uses and zoning. The EIS builds on the significant amount of study that has been completed in the area as part of the River Road Extension and Stage 2 LRT projects. As an outcome of the EIS, large portions of the Study Area will have land use designations and zones which protect these features over the long-term and promote their enhancement.

Climate Adaptation and Mitigation - Section 7 of the City of Kitchener Official Plan (2014) outlines policies related to topics such as sustainable development, water conservation, energy conservation and generation, and waste reduction and management. All future development within Hidden Valley will be guided by the policies of this section. Additionally, the City is preparing a new Official Plan and will be reviewing and updating its climate adaptation and mitigation policies city-wide.

Health Impact Study – City of Kitchener Council requested to have a Health Impact Assessment to be completed as one of seven concurrent technical studies for the Hidden Valley Secondary Plan.

Staff from City of Kitchener and Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services worked in partnership to complete a Health Impact Assessment.

A Health Impact Assessment process provides a structured approach for planners and policymakers to objectively evaluate the potential health-related outcomes of an activity or development before it is built or implemented. Positive and negative health outcomes are identified as well as recommendations to leverage positive health outcomes and prevent or mitigate negative health outcomes.

Section 6 of the City of Kitchener Official Plan (2014) contain policies that ensure that land use planning decisions promote and protect the health and well-being of people and achieve a complete and healthy community.

Municipal Infrastructure - The Upper Hidden Valley Sanitary Pump Station and Forcemain Environmental Assessment was completed in 2022 to identify the preferred alternative to service these lands. The pumping station is required to provide sanitary servicing and associated forcemain route for the undeveloped portions of the Study Area. The preferred design concept includes constructing a pumping station in the north portion of the Study Area, with a forcemain discharging to the trunk sewer at Wabanaki Rd. and Hidden Valley Rd.

Flood Risk Reduction - The Hidden Valley Flood Risk Reduction Environmental Assessment was completed in 2024 to identify ways to reduce existing flood risks and support future development in the Study Area. There are several flood vulnerable areas and erosion vulnerable areas in the downstream portion of the Hidden Valley Creek subwatershed close to Hidden Valley Road. The area downstream has experienced past flood and erosion impacts. These are related to specific rainfall or runoff events and the release of natural debris (examples: beaver dams or natural debris jams). The preferred design concept includes replacing the culvert at Hidden Valley Road to increase the conveyance capacity, lower the water surface elevation upstream and reduce the frequency of floods overtopping the road.

Conclusion

The Technical Studies completed up to now, support the proposed city-initiated Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment, and will implement the land use direction established by the Council approved 2019 Master Plan.

With the consideration of the proposed amendments, the existing Hidden Valley Industrial and Residential Community Plans will be repealed.

PREVIOUS REPORTS:

- [DSD-19-133](#) – Neighbourhood Planning Review: Hidden Valley Land Use Master Plan
- [DSD-2022-258](#) Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for Upper Hidden Valley Pumping Station and Forcemain
- [DSD-2024-119](#) Hidden Valley Flood Risk Reduction Environmental Assessment

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Hidden Valley Land Use Master Plan