



Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number: PLAN2025-012
Meeting Date: February 4, 2025
Title: **Growth Management Strategy (2025)**
Description: To bring forward the completed Growth Management Strategy (2025) for the City of Kawartha Lakes prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. in association with Dillon Consulting Limited
Author and Title: Leah Barrie, Director of Development Services

Recommendations:

That Report PLAN2025-012, **Growth Management Strategy (2025)**, be received;

That the **Growth Management Strategy (2025)**, substantially in the form attached as Appendix A to Report PLAN2025-012 be endorsed, as input into the City's Official Plan review, and updated population and employment forecasts for the City of Kawartha Lakes to 2051; and,

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The City's first Growth Management Strategy ('GMS') was completed in 2010, and updated in 2011 for a growth horizon to 2031. The current GMS (2025) project is the City's second exercise and was included in the approved City budget starting in 2021.

The purpose and intent of this GMS (2025) is to provide the City with a long-term assessment of future growth and subsequent residential and employment urban land needs to 2051. The completion of the project marks a significant milestone for the City as the GMS (2025) will inform the Official Plan review, complement the City's companion long-term master plans, and provide technical rationale to growth management policies.

Timeline:

2021

- March: City of Kawartha Lakes retained Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. in association with Dillon Consulting Limited to develop the GMS.
- May: Council approved a Terms of Reference for a GMS Task Force to help guide the project.
- September: Council appointed a GMS Task Force.

2022

- January: GMS team released the Discussion Paper detailing the provincial policy framework, population and growth trends, and key growth management themes.
- September: GMS team launched the project Jump In webpage to engage with the public, invited participation in surveys and submission of growth consideration requests.

2023

- January: GMS team delivered to Committee of the Whole their overall project approach, methodology, summary of findings to date, and approach to determining land needs.
- April: Council supported a project pause due to significant provincial policy changes (detailed in next section).
- September: GMS team reactivated the project and updated the scope of work.
- December: GMS team released the year-end project update.

2024

- May: GMS team delivered to Committee of the Whole information on the settlement area hierarchy, growth scenarios, draft land needs, and growth analysis.
- October: GMS team released the technical analysis summarizing growth forecasts, phasing development lands in Lindsay, location options for community and urban area expansions, and employment area land needs.
- November: GMS team delivered to Committee of the Whole the technical analysis.

2025:

- January: GMS Task Force endorsed the Draft GMS.
- February: GMS team delivered to Committee of the Whole the Final GMS (2025).

Significant provincial policy changes occurred throughout the duration of the project. These include:

- Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022
- Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022
- Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2023
- Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers and Protecting Tenants Act, 2023
- Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024
- Provincial Planning Statement, 2024
- Repeal of Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019
- Minster Zoning Orders being issued in the City of Kawartha Lakes for substantial residential development

A proposed Provincial Planning Statement in April of 2023 included significant changes that would affect the purpose and outcomes of the GMS. Due to the uncertainty and risk associated with continuing with a provincial policy framework that was subject to potentially significant change, work on the GMS was paused between April 2023 and September 2023. The scope of work was re-examined at the time of reactivation in September 2023 to better reflect the new Provincial Policy reality. This proved to be prudent as the approved 2024 Provincial Planning Statement included significant changes in direction on growth management and effectively deleted the Growth Plan,

which had been the central growth management policy document on Ontario for nearly 20 years.

Engagement:

Public

Ongoing consultation was conducted during the development of the GMS. Public consultation was administered through the City’s Jump In platform. The public was invited to take a survey to understand growth preferences for residents. Project updates, resources, and important information were posted throughout the duration of the project. Stakeholders were notified of any updates via email and news releases were made through the City Newsroom. The public was invited to submit growth proposals reflecting their development interests through September 30, 2022. Some requests were received after the due date and were still accepted for consideration by the project team. The public was notified when project updates were provided to Council and the Task Force, and deputations were received.

Task Force

Council appointed a GMS Task Force to provide input to the project team, comprised of nine members (five stakeholders, three public, one Council representative). The GMS Task Force met throughout the project to provide feedback and offer direction to the project team, staff and Council on matters of strategy, policies and public consultation. A total of eleven meetings were held in just over three years as outlined below:

Meeting Number	Meeting Date	Meeting Topic
1	Oct 14, 2021	Introduction and project background
2	Nov 30, 2021	Follow-up on key issues/questions
3	Feb 14, 2022	Presentation of Discussion Pape
4	Apr 22, 2022	Discussion of Minister Zoning Orders ('MZO')
5	Apr 29, 2022	Discussion of work plan
6	Feb 3, 2023	Growth forecast scenarios and options
7	Feb 17, 2023	Growth forecast and options follow-up
8	Mar 24, 2023	Growth forecast and options follow-up and questions
9	Jan 29, 2024	Project reactivation preliminary Phase 2 analysis

10	Jun 19, 2024	Employment Area conversions, removals and location options for Urban Community and Employment Area expansion
11	Jan 9, 2025	Review of Draft GMS – Stakeholder inputs and draft policy recommendations

At their January 9, 2025 meeting, the GMS Task Force approved the final draft Growth Management Strategy (2025) through resolution GMS2025.066.

Staff and Agencies

City of Kawartha Lakes staff were consulted throughout the project. Regular meetings occurred between Development Services and the consulting team to respond to requests and provide guidance. Meetings with other internal staff teams and external agencies occurred to gather input and present findings:

Meeting Group	Meeting Date	Meeting Topic
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	Apr 14, 2022	Project introduction, framework, schedule, summary of discussion paper
Senior Management Team (Directors and Chiefs)	Sep 28, 2022	Project introduction and draft forecast / Land Needs Assessment (Growth Plan Reference Scenario)
Technical Advisory Team (Management Staff)	Nov 28, 2022	Project introduction and draft forecast / Land Needs Assessment (Growth Plan Reference Scenario)
EMS Consulting Team	Jul 14, 2023	Project overview and demand forecasts for response times
Engineering Services	2022 (Aug, Oct); 2023 (Oct); 2024 (Jan, Apr, Dec)	Draft growth scenarios and Land Needs Assessment; MZOs; Phase 2 technical analysis

Council

The GMS project team regularly presented its progress and findings to City of Kawartha Lakes Council, where opportunities arose for Council to ask questions and provide guidance to the project team. The project team delivered a total of four presentations to Council (through Committee of the Whole meetings):

Meeting Number	Meeting Date	Meeting Topic
1	Jan 10, 2023	Project introduction and draft forecast (Growth Plan Reference Scenario)
2	May 21, 2024	Project update with forecast scenarios and Land Needs Assessment (high/recommended scenario)
3	Nov 5, 2024	Project update with summary of technical findings
4	Feb 4, 2025	Project summary with technical and strategic policy recommendations

Growth Management Strategy (2025) Final Report Summary

The GMS (2025) final report is attached at Appendix A to this report, detailing for the City:

- Long-term population, housing, and employment growth forecast scenarios;
- Long-term community and employment land needs to 2051;
- Potential location options for urban settlement area expansions within Bobcaygeon and Fenelon Falls to accommodate projected future growth;
- Potential employment land expansion options for Lindsay; and,
- Strategic policy recommendations to consider now and through the forthcoming Official Plan review.

The GMS (2025) final report is summarized below.

Policy Context and Process

Sections 1 and 2 provide the background to development of the GMS, the provincial policy and local planning context, and an overview of the process and feedback received from consultation.

Trends and Background

Sections 3 and 4 detail the research undertaken to support and inform the subsequent technical analysis. This includes:

- A review of global economic trends and the economic recovery after the pandemic with the changing nature of work evaluated (Sections 3.1 & 3.2);

- A review of the provincial economic outlook such as the overall growth outlook, regional economic trends, immigration targets, and outlook for the manufacturing sector (Section 3.3 & 3.4); and,
- Profile of the City of Kawartha Lakes housing, employment, and other growth trends (Section 4).

Technical Analysis

The technical analysis is the core of the GMS (2025). Sections 5 through 10 provide a growth forecast to 2051 for housing and employment. An urban land needs analysis results in projected growth allocated by urban settlement area. Highlights of the findings of the analysis are provided below.

Policy and Strategic Recommendations

The final section of the report provides recommendations for actions to implement the GMS (2025), such as direction for future updates to the Official Plan to align with a changing provincial policy context, proactively planning for the phasing of Lindsay's development, and tracking and monitoring growth. Policy recommendations have been formulated for Community Areas as well as for Employment Areas:

Community Areas:

1. Update long-term population, housing and employment projections and density targets in the Official Plan to reflect the High Growth Scenario
2. Update the residential intensification target to 20%
3. Proactively plan for urban expansion areas in Bobcaygeon and Fenelon Falls
4. Phase urban expansion lands in Lindsay
5. Review rural development in accordance with the PPS2024 and the Official Plan
6. Update and strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigation policies
7. Track and monitor growth

Employment Areas:

1. Phase development of Employment Areas; expand new Employment Areas
2. Align Industrial Official Plan designation with PPS2024 definition
3. Proactively support economic development and protect Employment Areas

4. Intensify Employment Lands
5. Encourage eco-industrial development approach and strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigation policies
6. Encourage rural industrial clusters

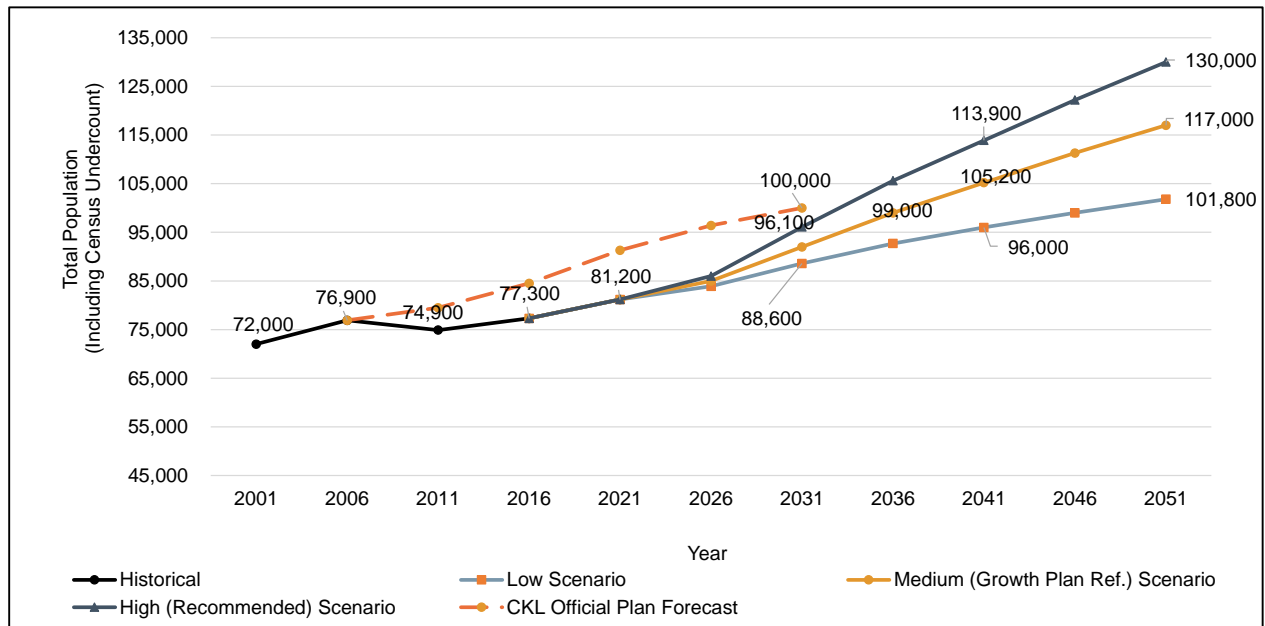
Growth Management Strategy (2025) Final Report Highlights:

Population projections, residential land needs and employment land needs are amongst the highlights from the GMS (2025) final report.

Population Projections

Figure 1 summarizes three long-term population forecasts for the City of Kawartha Lakes. The GMS (2025) recommends the high growth scenario, which sees the City’s population increase by 48,800 people to a total of 130,000 by 2051. Details of this projection are found in Section 6 of the GMS (2025) report.

Figure 1: Long-term Population Forecast



Residential Land Needs

A key take-away from the GMS (2025) is that only Bobcaygeon and Fenelon Falls are projected to require expansion to accommodate residential development.

Figure 2 (being Figure 8-8 in the GMS (2025)) shows the forecast population for each urban settlement area, and breaks down how much area is currently within the settlement boundaries (or Designated Growth Area 'DGA'), and how much area is then required to accommodate the forecast population. Only Bobcaygeon and Fenelon Falls are projected to have a land deficit to accommodate forecast growth to 2051. Conversely Lindsay and Omemees are projected to have a land surplus.

Figure 2: Forecasted Land Needs

	Lindsay	Fenelon Falls	Bobcaygeon	Omemees	Overall City of Kawartha Lakes
Forecast Population and Jobs in City's D.G.A. in 2051	36,770	3,860	4,870	750	46,280
Total D.G.A. Area in Hectares (including M.Z.O.s)	1,105	64	106	75	1,349
Density Target (people and jobs per hectare)	47	38	38	30	45
D.G.A. Land Demand to Achieve 45 People and Jobs per Hectare (hectares)	776	102	128	25	1,030
D.G.A. Land Needs (hectares)	329	-38	-23	50	318

Lindsay

In 2022 and 2023, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued a series of MZOs for lands just outside of Lindsay that total 1,105 hectares (2,730 acres). Provincial policy requires that these MZO lands be brought inside the settlement boundary of Lindsay at the time of the City's next Official Plan update and related infrastructure plans. These MZOs mean Lindsay will accommodate the forecast population beyond

2051, with a land surplus of 329 hectares (813 acres), and there is therefore no need to further expand the boundary of Lindsay.

Omemee

Similarly, Omemee is also projected to be able to accommodate the forecast population within the current settlement boundary, with a land surplus of 50 hectares (124 acres), and there is therefore no need to further expand the boundary of Omemee.

Boundary Expansions – General

The GMS (2025) concludes that Bobcaygeon will have a land deficit of 23 hectares (57 acres) and Fenelon Falls will have a land deficit of 38 hectares (94 acres) – both communities need to expand their urban settlement boundaries by these deficit amounts to accommodate their forecast populations. Details of this analysis is found in section 9 of the GMS (2025) Report.

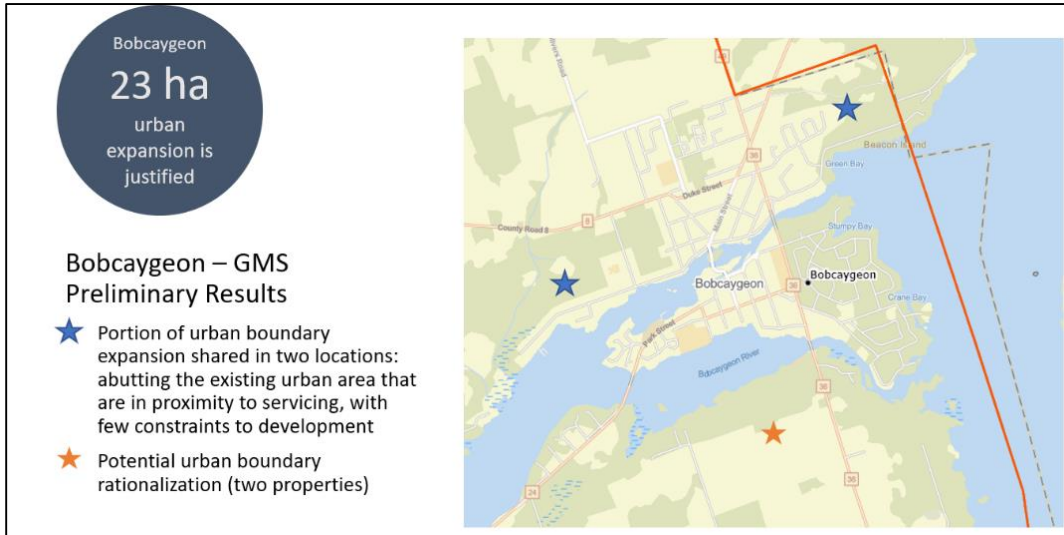
Where these urban settlement boundary expansions ultimately occur are not determined by the GMS (2025). Instead, the GMS (2025) identifies the projected land surpluses (too much land) and land deficits (too little land), and suggests where expansions could occur based on a number of considerations. These suggestions will be evaluated during the forthcoming Official Plan review, which will include a comprehensive public consultation process.

By endorsing the GMS (2025), Council is not approving or supporting specific urban settlement boundary expansion areas.

Boundary Expansions – Bobcaygeon

Figure 3 identifies two potential expansion areas in Bobcaygeon (blue stars); and, one potential area of adjustment (orange star) where a boundary 'rationalization' could occur to accommodate future development, but that would not result in a net increase in the overall size of the settlement area:

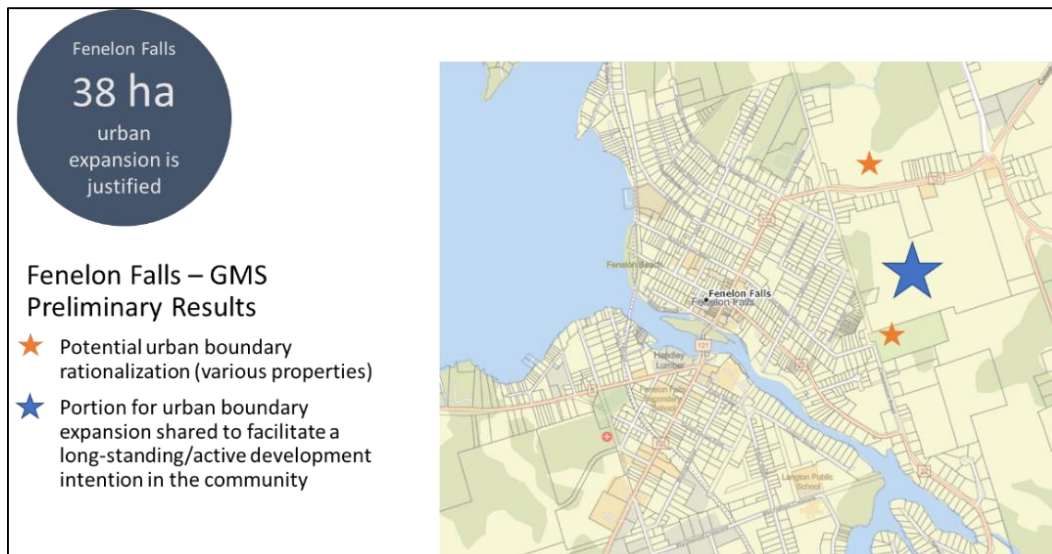
Figure 3: Bobcaygeon Potential Expansions and Rationalization



Boundary Expansions – Fenelon Falls

Figure 4 identifies one potential expansion area in Fenelon Falls (blue star); and, two potential areas of adjustment (orange stars) where boundary 'rationalizations' could occur to accommodate future development, but that would not result in a net increase in the overall size of the settlement area.

Figure 4: Fenelon Falls Potential Expansion and Rationalizations

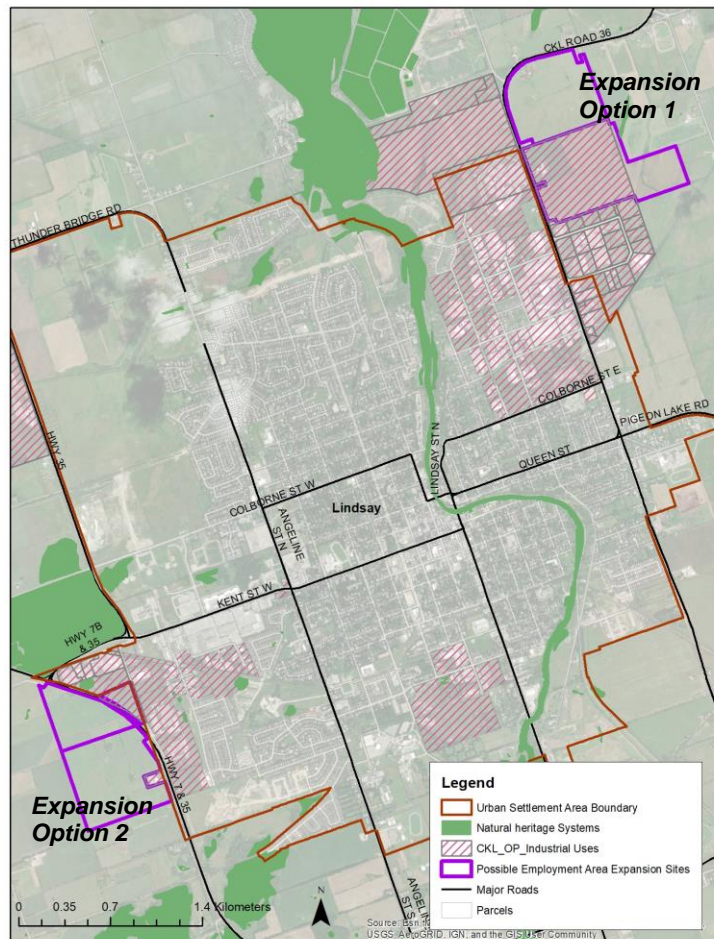


Employment Land Needs

Section 6 of the GMS (2025) identifies that the City's employment base is forecast to increase by 16,500 jobs to reach a total of 40,600 jobs by 2051. To accommodate these new jobs, Section 9 of the GMS (2025) concludes the need for an additional 41 hectares (101 acres) of Employment Lands within Lindsay.

After reviewing various land options through a set of evaluation criteria, the GMS (2025) recommends two potential expansion areas be considered as new Employment Areas. Both potential expansion areas have proximity to main highways, are adjacent to existing employment lands, and do not introduce land compatibility issues.

Figure 5: Draft Expansion Options for Employment Lands (being Figure 9-2 in the GMS (2025))



Employment area expansion Option 1 is currently designated Rural Employment in the City of Kawartha Lakes Official Plan.

During the forthcoming Official Plan review, both expansion options will be evaluated against the province's new policies for Employment Areas, which seek to reserve these areas exclusively for manufacturing and warehousing, and restrict office and commercial uses to only those directly related to a manufacturing or warehousing use.

Rationale:

Up until last year's changes to provincial policy, a GMS was a required technical analysis as part of a Municipal Comprehensive Review ('MCR'). While the province no longer requires municipalities to undertake MCRs, having a detailed GMS ensures the City is planning for an appropriate amount of land to be made available, in order to accommodate residential and employment growth in a cost effective manner. The GMS (2025) further guides capital infrastructure planning and investment, in alignment with the City's Water and Wastewater Servicing and Capacity Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

The GMS (2025) will also provide the necessary background to help inform future land use planning decisions on proponent-initiated development applications concerning rural lands and urban area changes, subject to consultation, and Council decision.

The forthcoming Official Plan review and update is needed to ensure the City's land use and development policies conform to new provincial policies and better reflect the City's current state and future vision, goals and objectives. The GMS (2025) will inform the Official Plan review and update, through its technical analysis and strategic policy recommendations.

Other Alternatives Considered:

None.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities:

The GMS (2025) aligns with all four strategic priorities within the 2024-2027 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan.

A Healthy Environment

The GMS (2025) Strategic and Policy Recommendations provide for developing and strengthening policies for climate change adaptation and mitigation. This includes wise management of land, and actions such as encouraging sustainable design principles, reducing emissions, and promoting intensification to optimize infrastructure.

An Exceptional Quality of Life

The GMS (2025) supports the creation of conditions for the City to grow in a sustainable manner that allows for the proper provisioning of infrastructure and other growth-related supportive services. The GMS (2025) recommendations will help inform future policies which will protect agricultural lands, enhance the economy, and allow for the efficient use of land.

A Vibrant and Growing Economy

Implementing the GMS (2025) Strategic and Policy Recommendations into City policies will add new residents, attract a larger local consumer base, and ensure available employment lands are development-ready for job creation.

Good Government

Long-term planning through the GMS (2025) will allow the City to achieve cost-effective development supportive infrastructure to accommodate growth and meet provincial priorities. This may include water and wastewater servicing, road infrastructure, community services, and other amenities. Budgeting, location, capacity, and construction of infrastructure can be better anticipated as a direct result of the GMS (2025).

Financial/Operation Impacts:

The GMS (2025) sets the foundation for future land use decisions of Council to be fiscally responsible.

Servicing Implications:

The GMS (2025) is a significant data input for the City's infrastructure master plans.

Consultations:

A Communications Framework was developed early in the GMS project (April, 2021) to guide the consultation process, and ensure that the GMS work considered and incorporated input from the community and stakeholders. It was designed to be dynamic and responsive as the project advanced, and involved both direct engagement outreach (i.e. surveys, meetings, presentations) as well as ongoing communications (i.e. Jump In, media releases, e-mail blasts).

Consultation and communication objectives and approaches were established, target audiences were defined, key messages were developed, communication tools were applied, and engagement activities were documented. The consultation and communication objectives included the following:

- Educational and community building
- Inclusive and interactive
- Meaningful
- Positive experience and innovative
- Transparent and timely
- Useful

Consultation has taken place with the public, a Task Force, City staff, external agency partners, and Council.

Attachments:

Appendix A – Growth Management Strategy (2025)



City of Kawartha
Lakes GMS_January

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Department Head: Leah Barrie, Director of Development Services

Department File: Special Project D00-99-001