



REPORT

REPORT TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

REPORT FROM: Michael Dean, Senior Climate Change & Energy Planner

DATE: June 1, 2021

REPORT NO.: PD-2021-0024

RE: Town of Halton Hills Green Development Standards Update
(Version 3)

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2021-0024, dated June 1, 2021, regarding the “Town of Halton Hills Green Development Standards Update (Version 3)”, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council approve the Town of Halton Hills Green Development Standards version 3, dated May 31, 2021, and attached to this report as SCHEDULE 2;

AND FURTHER THAT the Green Development Standards version 3 be implemented as of June 15, 2021;

AND FURTHER THAT as the Town enters the implementation phase of the Green Development Standards version 3 Town staff be delegated the authority to make minor adjustments to the Standards’ criteria and/or the proposed implementation process, if necessary, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Planning & Development.

BACKGROUND:

Initially adopted in 2010, and then updated to the current version (version 2) in 2014, the Town’s Green Development Standards have been an important tool in elevating the sustainability of new development in Halton Hills.

Green development standards are a tool that municipalities can use to require developers to implement measures that increase the sustainability of new construction. As one of the first municipalities to adopt a mandatory green development standard, the Town of Halton Hills took a leadership role in advancing sustainability in new construction in Ontario. To date, at least 1,400 residential units and 200,000 m² of commercial/industrial space have been covered by the Town’s Standards. Following adoption of the 2014 update, the standards were intended to be continuously updated

periodically, as needed, with the first update scheduled for 5 years. This report is the result of that update process.

In 2019 The Town retained RWDI to initiate the planned update to the Green Development Standards; this update will be considered version 3. GDS v3 is intended to be applicable to all development proposals and major additions that submit a rezoning, subdivision, or site plan control application and any development within greenfield urban expansion lands. GDS v3 has been a joint project managed by Planning & Development and the Climate Change & Asset Management departments of the Town of Halton Hills.

The development of the GDS v3 was completed through 3 stages:

- Document Review: background analysis, including a review of exiting industry standards and municipal green development guidelines;
- Stakeholder Engagement: multiple rounds of consultation with industry stakeholders; and
- Deliverables: consolidation of findings into 2 key deliverables - the standards themselves and the Background Report.

Below is a summary of the process and methodology followed to prepare the final GDS v3 and accompanying Background Report.

Document Review:

The first step in creating GDS v3 was to review and gain a complete understanding of the following:

- applicable provincial and municipal policies and guidelines;
- comparable municipal and provincial green building standards (e.g. Town of Oakville, Town of East Gwillimbury, City of Pickering, City of Toronto, Town of Whitby, City of Brampton, City of Vaughan and the Town of Richmond Hill);
- non-governmental green building standards and certifications (e.g. LEED, CAGBC's Zero-Carbon Building Standard, Living Building Challenge, Passive House);
- best practices in high performance construction; and
- the Town's development application review procedures.

At the beginning of this effort, a preliminary list of documents was identified based on the experience and knowledge of the Town and RWDI; this list was then expanded as various stakeholders were engaged in the process (the Background Report attached as Schedule 1 provides a complete list of the studies and documents that were reviewed). This document review was a critical step in the development of GDS v3 to ensure the new standards supplemented existing municipal plans and policies, without redundancy or contradiction of existing development requirements. Through this process, GDS v3 aims to build on all existing legislation, plans, and procedures – thereby raising the bar for new developments moving forward.

Stakeholder Engagement:

Following the extensive document review and analysis, stakeholder engagement was conducted through a variety of techniques to reach both broadly and deeply. The engagement targeted individuals and groups who have a stake in the outcome of the study and resulting GDS. The intent was to identify stakeholders who will play an active, formal role in implementing the GDS (i.e., primarily Town staff, other interested authorities having jurisdiction, developers, designers, and consultants). The engagement techniques used included one-on-one stakeholder interviews, presentations with long Q&A sessions, and collaborative working sessions.

The main engagement activities and events, including key feedback received at each stage, are summarized below (and described in more detail in the Background Report).

- **Early Engagement Calls:** early engagement involved nearly 30 phone interviews in Fall 2019 with individuals that represent, or that can be categorized within, the following groups:
 - Town departments that could be impacted by, or could be responsible for enforcing, the Standards;
 - leaders from other towns and municipalities in Ontario that have in place, or that are currently working on, similar green development requirements; and
 - leaders from other agencies that have complementary policies or overlapping interests (e.g. Halton Region, Credit Valley Conservation, Halton Hills Hydro).
- **Steering Committee Meeting:** a two-hour Steering Committee meeting was held in January 2020 to present the initial direction of the GDS update. Steering committee members included Town departments and external commenting agencies involved in the development review process.
- **Industry Consultation:** Town staff and RWDI attended two meetings with the Halton Hills Chapter of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) and three meetings with the Southwest Georgetown Landowners Group (SWGLG), as well as conducting an online presentation and Survey aimed at members of the local development industry. The goal of these discussions was to understand development industry concerns about various drafts of the proposed standards and gauge industry readiness to comply with the proposed measures. BILD and SWGLG also provided written responses at various times throughout the process, which have been appended to this report (Schedules 3 to 5).

Deliverables:

The process and methodology outlined above led to the preparation of the final Green Development Standards version 3 update, which this Staff Report is recommending adoption of. The update consists of two documents presented here as appendices:

- Schedule 1 – Town of Halton Hills Green Development Standards v3: Background Report; and
- Schedule 2 – Town of Halton Hills Green Development Standards v3.

The Background Report outlines the methodology, context, and justification for the updated standards; much of the content in the Background Report is summarized in this staff report.

The Green Development Standards v3 includes a detailed description of the standards themselves, as well as the checklist, calculation examples, and other information to assist with the completion of the GDS checklist. This document is intended to be used by applicants in preparation of their GDS submissions.

COMMENTS:

1. Importance of Green Development Standards:

When appropriately managed, development can result in thriving complete communities that provide a broad range of housing, shopping, recreation, and employment opportunities. Development can also contribute to the Town's short and long-term economic and fiscal viability and sustainability.

At the same time, buildings are major consumers of energy, natural resources (e.g. wood products, steel, aggregates) and water. They also generate landfill waste, air-pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Development may also negatively impact the natural environment, while placing demand on municipal infrastructure (e.g. stormwater management and roads). By applying a practical set of Green Development Standards, the Town can maximize development's many positive attributes while minimizing its potentially negative impacts.

2. Legislative & Policy Considerations:

In the Province of Ontario, the *Municipal Act*, the *Planning Act*, and the Building Code provide the underlying policy framework that supports the development and application of green development standards at the municipal level. Relevant legislation applicable to the Town's GDS is outlined below, and explored in more detail in the Background Report:

- **Ontario Planning Act:** The *Planning Act* provides a framework and legislative authority for municipalities to engage in land-use planning by creating Official Plans, Zoning By-laws, and Community Improvements Plans. Section 41 of the *Planning Act* also provides municipalities with authority to mandate sustainable urban design, including exterior sustainable design features, through the site plan control application process.
- **Municipal Act:** The primary piece of legislation that sets out the roles and responsibilities of Ontario's municipal governments, giving municipalities a broad range of powers. Recent updates to the *Municipal Act* (e.g., Section 97.1) have provided additional clarity on a municipality's ability to develop green development standards, and to pass by-laws around environmental well-being and climate change.

- **Ontario Building Code:** The Ontario Building Code (OBC) establishes technical requirements and minimum standards for building construction.
- **Official Plans:** For municipal level green development standards to be put in place, it is required that language on these standards is included in a municipality's Official Plan. In 2014, the Town of Halton Hills incorporated language into the Official Plan to require the submittal of the Green Development Standards Checklist as part of certain development applications.

Town of Halton Hills Policy Framework and Strategic Goals:

The Town of Halton Hills Official Plan outlines the strategic vision for the development of the community out to 2031 and highlights the community's priorities for development and municipal planning. It is of course critical that the GDS v3 align with these priorities, and that the measures within GDS v3 help the community achieve these strategic goals. Some key goals included in the Official Plan which the GDS v3 align with include:

- The protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features, and functions;
- The supply, efficient use, and conservation of energy and water;
- The adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services, and waste management systems;
- The orderly development of safe and healthy communities; and
- The promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit, and to be oriented to pedestrians.

Climate Emergency Declaration and Net-Zero Target:

In May of 2019, the Town of Halton Hills joined many municipalities across Canada in declaring a climate emergency, and at that time formalized its commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Town's Community Energy Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan outline the specific goals sought by the Town, including the desire to be a Net-Zero community by 2030.

In response to this goal, the GDS v3 seeks to reduce greenhouse gas intensity, promote energy efficiency, and encourage on-site renewable energy generation by specifying minimum energy performance levels that new developments must meet. The GDS v3 measures currently balance aggressive emission reductions with feasibility; they lay out the steps towards improving energy efficiency towards the Net-Zero goal, but the anticipated trajectory of the energy requirements within it are not yet targeting the Town's goal of Net-Zero by 2030. While the measures aid in the overall goal of reducing the community's greenhouse gas footprint, their success depends on both: putting in place suitable economic incentives to encourage, and make feasible, the levels of performance that would be needed; and, the subsequent enforcement and verification of those energy performance thresholds.

3. Final Green Development Standards version 3:

GDS v2 versus GDS v3 Structure and Measures:

The second version (v2) of the GDS was structured as a 'LEED-like' points-based system with points allocated for implementing measures selected from the following categories:

- Energy Conservation
- Water Conservation & Quality
- Community Design
- Air Quality
- Innovation & Green Features

There were also three versions of the v2 checklists applied to different development types: Low-Rise Residential; Low-Rise Non-Residential; and Mid to High Rise Residential. Each checklist had between 80-88 available points, with a minimum of between 32-36 required to achieve compliance.

Some of the major changes to the structure proposed for v3 of the GDS include:

- maintaining the points-based structure, but instead prioritize fewer measures that are anticipated to have the greatest positive impact to the Town's built and natural environment. Higher weight is now applied to measures that reduce emissions, while also allowing for more flexibility for the development community;
- prioritizing the use of performance over prescriptive measures, wherever feasible, to ensure that innovation is not stifled; and
- moving away from three version of the GDS to just one set that can be universally applied to the Town's diverse development locations, sizes and typologies.

Description of GDS v3 Measures:

The GDS must continue to be a mechanism to reduce energy and water use, promote low impact development, nurture, and protect natural ecological systems, and create a built environment that is more resilient to the shocks and stresses of climate change. The GDS must also support the diverse goals of the community, including the targets established in the Official Plan and Council's May 2019 Climate Emergency declaration. The measures selected for GDS v3 all support these goals. Crucially, however, the measures must also strike the right balance between the needs of improved sustainability, and those of feasibility, economics, and affordability. With this aim, the GDS v3 consists of 12 measures, that are organized into 5 categories:

1. Energy & Water
2. Ecology
3. Resiliency
4. Transportation
5. Innovation

Each measure has points associated with it. To be compliant with GDS v3, all developments and major additions that submit a rezoning, subdivision, or site plan control application must demonstrate achievement of at least 20 points. The point scores assigned to measures under each category are weighted to reflect their alignment with and contribution to achieving the Town’s climate change mitigation targets.

The GDS v3 will continue to be implemented through the Town of Halton Hills’ development review process led by Planning & Development. The Climate Change & Asset Management department will review development applications and verify compliance with the standard.

Table 1, below, summarizes all measures included in the GDS v3 checklist, the submission requirements, relevant performance thresholds, and available point totals. This table forms part of the GDS v3 document and would be submitted by applicants with points targeted in each category, alongside associated submission requirements and other documentation. Further information on each measure, including background materials, justification, and calculation assistance is provided both in the Background Report and the GDS v3 checklist document.

	Submission Requirements	Theshold & Potential Points			Targeted Points
Energy & Water					
1.1: Energy Use Reduction Demonstrate reduction in energy use over code minimum with an energy model reflecting the proposed design. Low-rise residential (i.e. OBC’s Part 9) minimum is 10%. Minimum for everything else is 15%.	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy report <input type="checkbox"/> Energy model file <input type="checkbox"/> Envelope design brief <input type="checkbox"/> Mech. & elec. design brief	Part 3	Part 9	Pts	
		15%	10%	5	
		25%	20%	8	
		40%		11	
		Net-Zero		14	
1.2: Low Carbon Energy Utilize low emission mechanical systems, and/or install onsite renewables, to achieve an incremental percent CO2e reduction beyond the percent energy use reduction demonstrated for measure 1.1.	<input type="checkbox"/> All above items <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting CO2e calculations <input type="checkbox"/> Renewable energy calculations (if applicable)	+ 5%		1	
		+ 10%		2	
		+ 15%		3	
		+ 20%		4	
1.3: Water Use Reduction Specify maximum water fixture	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed water reduction	30%		1	

flow rates that achieve potable water consumption reductions over OBC maximum rates.	calculator	40%	2	
1.4: Energy & Water Reporting Report key performance characteristics for development. Declare that this data can be made publicly accessible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Signed declaration letter listing all performance metrics	If provided	1	
Ecology				
2.1: Minimum Soil Depth Preserve or re-instate a minimum depth of at least 30cm of high-quality topsoil across the site.	<input type="checkbox"/> Signed narrative describing strategy	30cm	1	
2.2: Minimum Planter Soil Volume Provide a minimum of 30m3 of soil volume per tree.	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping drawings noting strategy	30m3	1	
	Submission Requirements	Threshold & Potential Points		Targeted Points
2.3: Native & Drought Resistant Vegetation Demonstrate that there is no need for site irrigation, or that at least 75% of vegetation will be native and/or drought tolerant.	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping drawings noting strategy	75%	1	
Resiliency				
3.1: Stormwater Quantity Retain run-off from a minimum of 10-mm depth of rainfall from all site surfaces through infiltration, evapotranspiration, and reuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater management plan and supporting calculations	10mm	2	
		27mm	3	
3.2: Stormwater Quality Remove at least 85% of total suspended solids from run-off	<input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater management plan and supporting	85%	1	

leaving the site.	calculations			
3.3: Resiliency Checklist Complete resiliency checklist to demonstrate awareness of site climate change risks.	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed climate change resiliency checklist and supporting narrative	If provided	1	
<u>Transportation</u>				
4.1: TDM Plan & Electric Vehicles Demonstrate a percent reduction in fossil fuel single occupancy vehicle trips for the site through: cycling, walking, transit, and/or electric vehicle infrastructure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation demand management plan with supporting calculations	30%	4	
		50%	5	
		70%	6	
		90%	7	
<u>Innovation</u>				
5.1: Innovation Quantitatively demonstrate that another strategy achieves environmental benefits equal or greater than other GDS measures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrative and calculations supporting the case	Case for number of eligible points to be made by applicant	1	
			2	
			3	
			4	
			5	

Table 1. GDS v3 Checklist and Summary of Measures

As mentioned previously, throughout the process to prepare the final GDS v3 Town staff and RWDI met with BILD and the SWGLG multiple times. Both development groups also submitted letters providing comments on the proposed updates (the letters are attached to this report). Where appropriate, the Standards have been modified and revised to address some of their concerns and comments.

However, it is anticipated that the Green Development Standards v3 may be challenged by SWGLG before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) as part of their appeals of Official Plan Amendment 32 (Vision Georgetown Secondary Plan) and their private Official Plan Amendment application for the same lands.

GDS v3 Tiers and Updates:

Another significant change between v2 and v3 of the GDS is the introduction of a tier system. The 20-point threshold is the minimum with which all developments must demonstrate alignment with. This mandatory minimum point threshold can be referred to as “Tier 1”, and development which achieves 20 to 27 points will be deemed to have

attained “Tier 1”. If a development achieves between 28 and 34 points, it will have achieved “Tier 2”; and if a development achieves 35 points or more, it will have achieved “Tier 3”.

These Tiers have been put in place for several reasons:

- to provide recognition for developments that voluntarily achieve higher levels of performance;
- to set the Town up for the potential future roll out of programs to incentivize pursuit of higher tiers; and
- to provide transparency as to how the Town currently intends to ratchet up the GDS requirements every 4 - 5 years (with the Tier 2 and Tier 3 point thresholds anticipated to become the new minimums as of 2025 and 2030, respectively).

4. Next Steps:

If adopted the Town of Halton Hills GDS v3 will apply to all developments and major additions that submit a rezoning, subdivision, or site plan control application and any development within greenfield urban expansion lands effective June 15, 2021.

As part of the early adoption and implementation phase, the Town will be organizing a series of workshops and webinars intended to provide information and resources on the GDS v3. These events will have two streams:

- one aimed at current and potential residents of Halton Hills, to educate about the benefits and objectives of the GDS program; and
- the second aimed at industry professionals, with the intent of providing guidance and resources for compliance with the standards, as well as generally advancing the practice of sustainable construction in Halton Hills.

These workshops will be funded in part through a grant awarded to the Town by The Atmospheric Fund, a regional climate agency that invests in low-carbon solutions for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and helps scale them up for broad implementation. The Town is working with the Halton Environmental Network to create the materials for the workshops.

Incentives:

Because these current standards have mandatory minimum requirements that do not meet the levels that would be required to align with the Town’s climate emergency declaration, it is likely that additional incentives will be required in order for the Town to further advance the sustainability of new construction. As a result, Town staff has been investigating potential incentive programs that could support the adoption of Tiers 2 and 3 of the GDS. Staff intend to return with a report to Council at a later date with a recommendation for such a program if GDS v3 is adopted.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The proposed update to the Town of Halton Hills Green Development standards furthers the Town's strategic plan by contributing to environmental sustainability and reducing our impact on the climate through decreasing community GHGs and supports Council priorities of addressing climate change and reducing our environmental impact.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

CONSULTATION:

Climate Change & Asset Management staff, along with Planning & Development, consulted with relevant departments in the preparation of this report, including Transportation & Public Works, Recreation & Parks, Building Services and the Town Solicitor. Staff from Halton Region, Conservation Halton and Credit Valley Conservation were also consulted in the development of the updated GDS.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

As described in this report, the Town Conducted extensive consultation with stakeholders impacted by this report and plans to continue to engage in a communication strategy to raise awareness about the Town's GDS, their benefits and functions.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

The report's recommendations advance the Strategy's implementation.

This report supports the environmental pillar of Sustainability.

COMMUNICATIONS:

If Council directs staff to adopt the updated GDS standards it will be necessary to communicate the update to the development industry, Town departments involved in the Development Review process, and other relevant stakeholders.

CONCLUSION:

Town staff are recommending that Council approve the Green Development Standards version 3 update attached as Schedule 2 to this report. It is intended that the GDS v3 apply to all developments and major additions subject to an Official Plan and/or Zoning

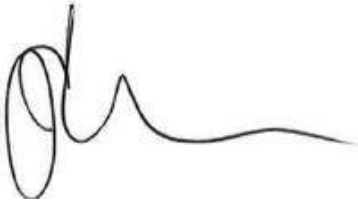
By-law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision or Site Plan approval as of June 15, 2021.

The GDS v3 represents a meaningful advancement on previous versions and will bring new development in Halton Hills closer to alignment with the Town's climate change mitigation goals.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Markowiak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jeff Markowiak, Director of Development Review

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Linhardt". The signature is cursive and features a prominent, looping initial "J".

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Development

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Mills". The signature is cursive and includes a horizontal line that crosses over the name.

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer