

**Municipal Conformity to the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*:
An Evaluation of Future Density Potential Along the
Fairview Street Intensification Corridor in Burlington, Ontario**

The Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) is one of the fastest growing regions in North America and if low-density development trends are to continue, its cities and population will suffer. Cities must act now or the damaging effects of sprawl will worsen and contribute to the irreversible destruction of agricultural land and open spaces, unviable public transit systems, and increased automobile dependence and its damaging effect on quality of life.

The Government of Ontario has enacted legislation through the Places to Grow Act (2005) which requires municipalities to grow inward and upward rather than outward. This plan, entitled the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe designates “intensification corridors” as growth areas which are required to carry a high concentration of residents and jobs by 2031. Intensification corridors are intended to be transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly corridors that provide a focus for higher density mixed-use development.

Municipalities face several challenges in achieving provincial growth targets along intensification corridors. This is because intensification corridors throughout the GGH are typically auto-oriented and underdeveloped. In addition, there are several barriers towards successfully implementation intensification corridor strategies, such as the need for sustained interest and consistent interventions over a long development period and NIMBY (not in my backyard) reactions often being triggered due to the large interface most corridors have with established residential areas. The City of Burlington in particular must act without further delay to ensure its intensification corridors are planned to accommodate sufficient growth. This is because the northern half of the City is protected under the Greenbelt Protection Act (2005) and its greenfield areas will soon be built-out.

This study evaluates future density along the Fairview Street Intensification Corridor in Burlington, Ontario to assess whether current municipal policies allow for sufficient development to meet Growth Plan density objectives for intensification corridors. The analytical framework developed for this study has four components:

- 1) evaluating existing built use and form with GIS maps and photographs;
- 2) calculating existing gross employment and residential density;
- 3) calculating future gross employment and residential density to 2031 under a “maximum build-out” scenario assuming future development will occur at the maximum density permitted by the Zoning By-law and a “business as usual” scenario assuming future growth will occur at densities consistent with existing development trends; and
- 4) comparing future gross density along the Fairview Street Intensification Corridor with Growth Plan density objectives.

The results of this study confirm that existing development along the Fairview Street Intensification Corridor currently underutilizes the corridor’s density potential and that existing gross densities (38 employees and residents per hectare) are low Growth Plan density objectives (minimum 80 employees and residents per gross hectare). Future gross density

calculations demonstrate that under existing municipal policies, it is possible that the Fairview Street Intensification Corridor will reach growth and density objectives by 2031, however, the

MAP E-1. LAND USES IN THE FAIRVIEW STREET INTENSIFICATION CORRIDOR



MAP E-2. SITES WITH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE FAIRVIEW STREET INTENSIFICATION CORRIDOR

