



Subject: *Lantz GRA - Secondary Planning Strategy Scoping Study*
To: CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, December 14, 2021
Date Prepared: December 6, 2021
Related Motions: PAC17(69) December and C17(286) December
Prepared by: Rachel Gilbert, Manager of Planning
Approved by: John Woodford, Director of Planning & Development

Summary

The Planning and Development Department has completed a scoping study of key items for consideration in the development of a secondary planning strategy for the Lantz Growth Reserve Area. The requirement for the completion of the study stems from Policy GM25 of the Municipal Planning Strategy. Information that has informed our study includes needs assessments from the Municipal Departments of EBD, I&O and PRC, as well as a limited desktop review of the topography and possible boundary of the proposed study area.

Financial Impact Statement

The secondary planning strategy recommended in this report is expected to cost \$130,000, subject to approval in the 2022/23 budget.

Recommendation

Direct staff to include funds in the 2022/23 budget for a Lantz secondary planning strategy.

Recommended Motion

Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council direct staff to include \$130,000 in the 2022/23 draft budget for the completion of a secondary planning strategy as described in the scoping report.

Background

As part of the 2016 East Hants Official Community Plan, Council approved Policy GM25 which requires a planning document to be developed for the Lantz Growth Reserve Area (Lantz GRA) prior to the subject lands being developed. The Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy has also been identified in the 2021 Strategic Plan as an example of a future initiative.

A staff report requesting approval for the Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy was previously presented to Council in December 2017. At that time there had been no official announcement from the provincial government on the interchange location. Council decided not to pursue the project at that time and required that developers be informed that proposals for development in Lantz GRA will not be entertained until a secondary planning strategy is completed at a future date.

The new Lantz interchange is expected to be completed by the end of December 2021 and staff feel that now is the right time to move forward with developing the secondary planning strategy. Staff have prepared this scoping document and is requesting approval be given for the budget to complete the plan for the Lantz GRA in the next fiscal year. Failure to have a plan for this land prior to considering new development may lead to missed opportunities and a reactive, instead of proactive response to future development.

In addition to the new Lantz interchange nearing completion, two large areas of land in the serviceable boundary have received approval for development and the developers have ambitious timelines for development. Other vacant parcels of land within the serviceable boundary are being developed or proposed for development. Planning staff believe that there may be pressure on the Municipality by large developers to permit development in the Lantz Growth Reserve Area, once the interchange is completed and land within the servable boundary continues to be developed at an increased rate. Therefore, staff feel that having a plan in place would lead to a better built form than addressing development from a piecemeal approach. This is why Planning staff are recommending proceeding with the proposed Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy at this time.

A first step in the development of the Secondary Planning Strategy, Planning staff have reviewed the current Lantz GRA boundary and have extended the boundary for the proposed study area to include lands adjacent to the Garden Meadows subdivision and Garden Road. Maps have been included as Appendix A showing the Lantz GRA and the study area. Reasons for enlarging the study area include a possible future connection to Garden Road and to allow for an active transportation connection from Belnan and Garden Meadows. In addition, there is a large amount of land in the study area that is zoned High Risk Floodplain (HF) or has been identified as wetlands by the province. There are approximately 905 acres in the proposed study area with approximately 100 acres identified as wetlands.

Land owners within the study area have not yet been contacted about this study.

Discussion

The Municipal Departments of I&O and PRC, plus EBD staff were asked to contribute to the scoping study and to provide an idea of future needs that should be taken into consideration with the development of a Lantz GRA Secondary Planning Strategy. Following is the list of considerations from each of the departments.

Desktop and Land Survey Analysis

1. Secondary Planning Strategy Boundary Delineation: The boundary for the Lantz Growth Reserve Area (Lantz GRA) was developed as part of the 2000 East Hants Official Community Plan. Staff at East Hants have been aware of the need, and possible development, of a new interchange in the Lantz area for approximately 20 years. The Lantz GRA was as a recognition of development pressures that may come about with the construction of an interchange. Policy GM25 of the 2016 East Hants Official Community Plan was added to the document in anticipation of a future interchange announcement. After reviewing the current Lantz GRA boundary, it is recommended that the boundary of the study be expanded to include a much larger

area, see appendix A. As part of the development of the Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy, changes to the boundary may be proposed to avoid wetlands, work with existing geology, to maximize servicing, and to adapt to other findings.

2. Wetland Delineation: Mapping from Nova Scotia Environment indicates that there are wetlands within the study boundary. As part of the development of the Secondary Planning Strategy, it would be prudent to get a true understanding of the wetlands and identify constraints and opportunities in relation to their locations. Based on further study of the wetlands the boundary of the study area may be adjusted.
3. Geology and Topography: Karst geology (potential for sinkholes) exists in East Hants, as part of the Secondary Planning Strategy, geological issues need to be identified and those areas of karst geology need to be avoided. The potential location of Further information on the location of karst geology has and continues to be researched by the Nova Scotia Government. Depending on the outcome of the NS karst geology locations further study may be required.

I&O Needs Assessment

Once the consultant has completed their analysis of the land, and understands the background of the site, they will have the ability to make knowledgeable recommendations on the creation and location of Municipal Services.

1. Critical Road, Bike and Pedestrian Connections: Discussion around a collector road or a main street to connect the future interchange with Garden Road. This will involve discussions with Nova Scotia Public Works to identify the best location to connect with Garden Road. Considerations and recommendations will also be required from the consultant on how Garden Meadows connects with the Secondary Planning Strategy Area and eventually to the interchange. Emphasis shall be placed on making all connections active transportation friendly, with the goal to arrive at the East Hants Sportsplex from Garden Meadows and Belnan on a safe and kid friendly active transportation route.
2. Waste Water Servicing: The consultant will need to determine best servicing catchment areas, potential routes to flow waste to the existing Regional Wastewater Management Facility, and potential volume of expectant effluent. There will likely have to be a new WWTP for this area with Nine Mile River as the receiving water.
3. Water Requirements: The consultant will need to determine the potential volume of water required by future development and analyse the results with current withdrawal permits and capacity of the Regional Water Treatment Facility and make recommendations. If a new water tower is needed and if that tower should be located on the north side of Highway 102 then a potential location should be identified.
4. Stormwater Management: Investigate stormwater management needs and options based on current and anticipated regulations. Stormwater Management to allow for Post Development Flows to equal Pre-Development Flows.

PRC Needs Assessment

1. Active Transportation Network: Active Transportation paths are not only required along traffic corridors but they are also required to connect possible neighbourhoods, parks, and commercial areas together to allow for easy connections to new and old neighbourhoods and amenities outside of the proposed study boundary.
2. River Access: Ensure access to the Nine Mile River to allow for canoes/kayaks and pedestrian walkways.

EBD Needs Assessment

1. Market Outlook: What does the market outlook indicate about future residential and commercial requirements. Development in the Lantz GRA should complement and improve existing development.
2. Economic and Social Infrastructure Development: Continued community growth will require specific land to develop strategic economic and social infrastructure. Identifying future locations for this type of infrastructure, which may include hospitals and health care, schools, colleges, affordable housing, seniors housing, larger library, government services, businesses and offices. These uses should take advantage of active transportation routes and open spaces.
3. Commercial and light industrial land use: Identifying commercial and light industrial lands for future economic and employment growth in the area has become extremely important as continued residential activity and increasing market demand has decreased the availability of commercial ready properties in East Hants.
4. Inclusive Transit and Active Transportation: Future land use planning for this area should consider a mix of community uses that is enabled by residents participation in inclusive active transportation and transit opportunities for mobility between home, work, consumer, recreation, and cultural locations.
5. Green and circular economies: Future planning should consider the enablement of increased commercial service, repair and repurposing land uses. This is a trend we are already seeing. As well as the promotion of environmentally resilient clean energy and technology solutions in building and infrastructure design.

Planning & Development Needs Assessment

1. Development Pattern & Zoning: Enable a new urbanist style of development on a modified grid pattern with few curvilinear streets. Short blocks with good connectivity, street trees, and important pedestrian connections. Use suggestive zoning to create areas for exclusively commercial uses, exclusively residential uses, and mixed uses. The percentage for each area will depend on a complete market analysis. Density is key to reduce servicing costs.
2. Design: If possible, within the study budget create street designs and cross sections that would support the proposed outcomes. Also suggest new policies or policy changes, such as height requirements or requiring front porches.
3. Landowner and Community Engagement: Land within the Lantz GRA is in private ownership; therefore, as part of the secondary planning strategy preparation, consultations will need to be held with land owners in the study area. In addition, public engagement will be an important part of the process.
4. Final Document: The final plan will be a guiding document and a physical plan. The plan will be used to shape the community and allow developers to propose alternatives that are in keeping with the plans purpose. Amendments to the Official Community Plan may be required as a result of the outcomes identified in the proposed Secondary Planning Strategy.

Staff suggest that the work be done in two phases. The first phase will identify the constraints on the study area and the second will complete the remainder of the work. If the first phase identifies that there are significant barriers to development then the second phase may not be undertaken.

Estimated Cost

There is a large amount of technical work that will need to be completed in association with the Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy. As identified in the previous section, precise wetland delineation, servicing requirements, and housing and market analysis are just some of the items that are required to inform the Secondary Planning Strategy. As a method of determining the costs associated with completing such a large study, Planning staff have reviewed the Nova Scotia Tender Services website and have sought to find similar projects that have been awarded by other Municipal units. There was only one tender awarded which was similar to the proposed Lantz Plan.

Municipal Unit	Tender Details	Tender Amount Award
Municipality of Kings County	Project management and land use planning services for New Minas secondary planning strategy	\$129,240

In addition to this, staff reached out a consultant to get an estimated costing for such a study. The consultant estimated a minimum of \$115,000 and maybe as high as \$165,000

Based on this information, Planning staff are recommending that \$130,000 be included in the 2022/2023 Draft Budget for the completion of the Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy.

Alternative Option

There is a significant number of residential units which have recently received approval or are proposed for the serviced area of Enfield, Elmsdale and Lantz which will supply the market with residential development for several years. Some highway commercial land is also planned for the Clayton Developments land. Council may consider that at this time they are not ready to pursue a Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy due to a significant supply of housing coming forward. If Council decides not to proceed with the secondary planning strategy at this time, staff recommend that developers be informed that proposals for development of the Lantz GRA not be entertained until a secondary planning strategy is completed at a future date.

Conclusions

In response to Policy GM25 of the East Hants Official Community Plan, staff are proposing to engage a consultant to assist in the preparation of the Lantz Secondary Planning Strategy. As part of the scoping process for this document, staff have discussed with other departments their needs through the study of the land.

Planning staff are recommending that \$130,000 is included in the 2022/2023 Draft Budget.

Recommendations

Direct staff to include funds in the 2022/23 budget for a Lantz secondary planning strategy.

Appendix A - Lantz Growth Reserve Area Boundary and Proposed Study Area of the Secondary Planning Strategy.



