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DRAFT NEW COMMUNITIES GUIDELINES

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends:

- 1. Receipt of the presentation by John Waller, Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning; and**
- 2. Adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated December 16, 2011, from the Executive Director, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The draft *New Communities Guidelines*, included as *Council Attachment 1* to this report be endorsed for external consultation with stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry.
2. Long Range and Strategic Planning staff circulate this report to all stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry.

2. PURPOSE

This report presents the draft *New Communities Guidelines*. The draft guidelines will be used for extensive and on-going consultation with stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry. Once finalized, the *New Communities Guidelines* will be a helpful tool to assist local municipalities and the development community in successfully implementing the Sustainable Buildings and New Community Areas policies of the approved Regional Official Plan, 2010.

3. BACKGROUND

York Region committed to sustainable development in New Community Areas

In 2006, Council received the final report of the *Towards Sustainability in York Region (TSYR) Advisory Group* on how to make the Regional Official Plan (ROP) more sustainable. The report recommended that York Region explore the opportunities around developing new communities in a sustainable way to accommodate growth.

There has been extensive consultation on the development of New Community Areas and the policies in the Regional Official Plan

An extensive consultation and engagement process was undertaken through the Planning for Tomorrow exercise and adoption of the Regional Official Plan (see Figure 1). To date, two workshops have been held with our external stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry, specific to development in new community areas. The first workshop was held in November 2006 in response to recommendations arising from the Sustainability Strategy; the second was held in December 2008 following the release of the *New Communities Best Practices Discussion Paper* to determine the criteria for developing new community areas.

Figure 1: New Communities Strategy Workplan



Through these discussions, it was determined that New Community Areas would be planned to be vibrant, inclusive, healthy, walkable, energy efficient and green. These compact and complete new communities will be designed with a priority on people and liveability, offering a variety of housing and transportation choices by promoting walkability and transit. They will also be compact, mixed use, live-work communities with employment and retail opportunities integrated throughout.

Council has endorsed a number of documents and reports dealing with development in New Community Areas that have led to the preparation of these guidelines including workshop reports, a best practices discussion paper and a draft new community criteria report.

In March 2009, Council endorsed the draft criteria for building new communities in York Region for discussion and inclusion in the Regional Official Plan update. Extensive discussion with the development industry was conducted focusing particularly on the energy and water performance of buildings. The final criteria developed through this consultation process are reflected in the Sustainable Building and New Community Areas sections of the approved Regional Official Plan.

Implementation of New Community Areas will occur through a comprehensive and integrated Secondary Planning process

There are three New Community Areas that have been identified in York Region including areas in the Town of East Gwillimbury, City of Vaughan and Town of Markham (Regional Official Plan Amendments 1, 2 and 3). It is in these areas that the *New Communities Guidelines* will apply. Key to the implementation of these new state-of-the-art communities is an innovative and collaborative secondary plan process. These secondary plans, which will be led by the local municipalities, will utilize an integrated design approach directed by multi-disciplinary teams including landowners, planners, public health professionals, development industry representatives, ecologists, engineers and architects. The Town of East Gwillimbury has already started the secondary plan process for the New Community Area along the Green Lane corridor.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Preparation of Community Development Guidelines is required by the Regional Official Plan

The Regional Official Plan calls for the preparation of Community Development Guidelines that address the Sustainable Building and New Community Areas policies. Specifically, the Guidelines will provide a detailed explanation and identify a range of strategies that can be employed to successfully implement these policies.

The *New Communities Guidelines* provide detailed information on implementing the Sustainable Buildings and New Communities Areas policies

There are approximately 40 policies in the Regional Official Plan directly related to Sustainable Buildings and New Community Areas. Each of these policies are addressed comprehensively in the *New Communities Guidelines*, including examples like stormwater management, community walkability and the provision of human services. These are discussed in detail below.

The guidelines address storm water volume, contaminant loads and infiltration by utilizing an integrated treatment train approach. The guidelines identify a range of the stormwater management techniques, including low impact development techniques such as rain gardens, bioswales, and constructed wetlands that can be utilized to achieve the objectives of this policy.

The *New Communities Guidelines* also address walkability by identifying the design attributes that contribute to a walkable community. The guidelines identify criteria such as: accessibility, a community core area and mixed-use land uses, access to amenities such as street furniture, connectivity including a fine-grain street pattern, aesthetics that

help create unique and identifiable places and safety such as lighting, to consider in the community design process.

In developing new communities, we also need to consider the provision of human services that support a safe and healthy community and maintain a high quality of life.

The *New Communities Guidelines* identify some of the considerations that should be considered in undertaking a human service needs assessment including expected demographic characteristics, likely and future needs for social infrastructure, the type of facility and service provision, potential locations for the provision of these services, and phasing and staging requirements.

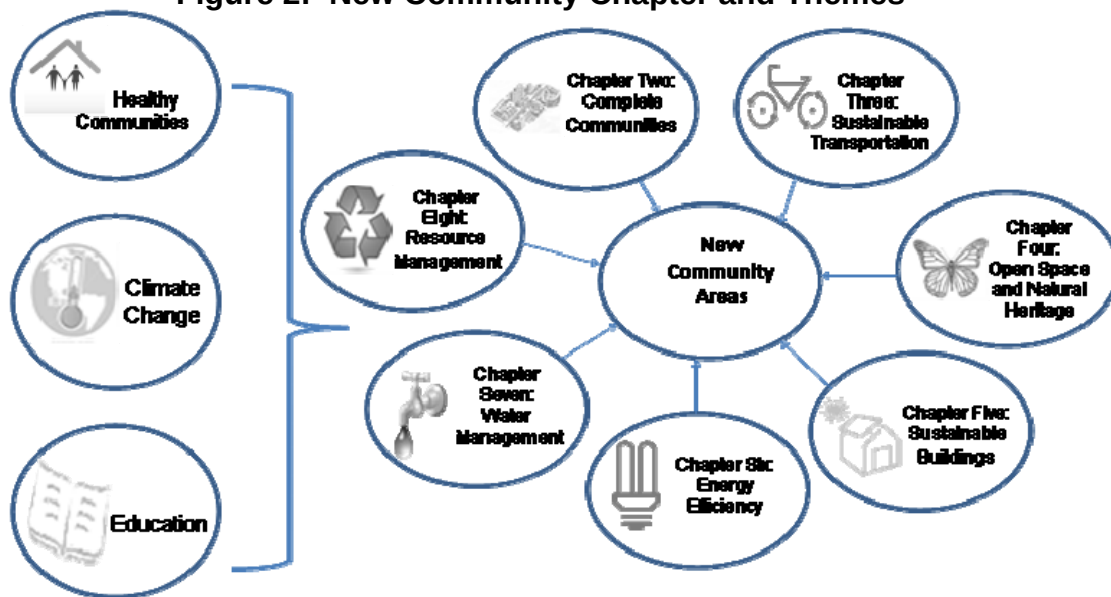
The *New Communities Guidelines* have been designed to be a helpful tool for development of new community areas

The *New Communities Guidelines* will be organized into two parts: a checklist and the guidelines. The checklist is intended to provide an overview of the ROP policies addressed through the *New Communities Guidelines*. It will also identify which policies are mandatory and which are encouraged. The checklist can be used to assess and ensure that planning applications with New Community Areas are in keeping with the relevant ROP policies.

Each guideline will provide information including an objective, the ROP policy reference, detailed information and requirements necessary to achieve the stated policy objective and additional resources. Additionally, the guidelines will be provided as a published document, as well as a web-based document, that can be readily updated as new information becomes available.

The *New Communities Guidelines* are organized into chapters addressing Complete Communities, Sustainable Transportation, Open Space and Natural Heritage, Sustainable Buildings, Energy, Water Management, and Resource Management.

Figure 2: New Community Chapter and Themes



In addition to the chapters outlined above, the *New Communities Guidelines* also address the underlying themes of health, climate change and education (Figure 2). Each of these themes will be incorporated in the secondary plans which will be managed by the local municipalities. Many local municipalities are already doing many of the things addressed through these guidelines. As an example, East Gwillimbury is currently managing the secondary plan process, for the New Community Area along the Green Lane corridor, including preparation of a Community Energy Plan and Sustainable Development guidelines.

Evidence supports the relationship between land use planning decisions, community design and human health

There is increasing evidence of the link between the built environment and human health. Research has shown that the built environment impacts a number of risk factors and illnesses of public health importance such as air quality, climate change, physical inactivity, obesity, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and injuries. The *New Communities Guidelines* will help assist in building healthy and complete communities by:

- designing communities that are interconnected, high density, mixed use and walkable with a variety of housing choice
- designing buildings that are energy and water efficient, and climate resilient
- providing for accessible, active and sustainable modes of transportation such as public transit, cycling and walking

- ensuring that sensitive land uses are adequately separated from sources of pollution, such as industrial areas and high traffic corridors
- providing access to healthy fresh foods, open public spaces and natural environments

Increasing awareness of the health impacts of the built environment, and working with community partners to influence the development of healthy policies related to the built environment, is a board of health mandate under the Ontario Public Health Standards. To meet this mandate, York Region Public Health will be participating in the stakeholder consultation and workshop for the *New Communities Guidelines* and developing a strategy to increase awareness among key stakeholders about the relationship between health and the built environment.

The *New Communities Guidelines* contribute to increased resiliency to Climate Change for New Community Areas

Increased resiliency to climate change is essential to protect human health and ensure the social, economic and environmental sustainability of a community. The *New Communities Guidelines* address many climate change measures that improve resiliency. Examples include:

- Sustainable building requirements that reduce demand for resources or utilizing local sources of energy
- Encouraging cool roofs, green roofs and provision of shade as strategies to reduce the urban heat island
- Innovative stormwater management techniques that utilize the natural environment to control the quantity and quality of water resulting from more intense storms

York Region has a leadership role to play in education to ensure the successful implementation of the *New Communities Guidelines*

The guidelines will serve as an education tool on how to implement Regional Official Plan policy. The consultation and engagement process will bring together a group of multi-disciplinary stakeholders and provides opportunities for mutual learning.

Further consultation and engagement will inform preparation of final guideline document for approval by Council

The development of the *New Communities Guidelines* includes several key steps:

- Endorsement of the draft *New Communities Guidelines* for consultation in January 2012
- Focused consultation with our external stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry, in Q1 2012
- Workshop with our implementation partners in Q1 2012
- Final Guidelines to Planning and Economic Development Committee and Council in Q2 2012

Relationship to the Regional Official Plan appeals

The Sustainable Building and New Communities Guidelines polices of the ROP have been identified as the basis of appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board. Currently, some members of the development industry are awaiting the content of the *New Communities Guidelines* and are concerned that it might contain requirements above and beyond those found in the ROP. The *New Communities Guidelines* will help provide clarity and perhaps address some of these concerns. Regional staff have ensured that the guidelines are reflective of the polices in the ROP and do not introduce new policy. Further on-going consultation and engagement with the development industry is critical to addressing these concerns.

Link to Key Council-approved Plans

The *New Community Guidelines* address several action areas in the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan, including supporting healthy communities, increasing intensified mixed-use development, reduction in solid waste, water conservation, and improved mobility for users of Regional transportation systems, including increased transit ridership and non-auto modes of travel.

These guidelines also address several goal areas in the draft Vision 2051, including “A Place Where Everyone Can Thrive: “Liveable Cities and Complete Communities, “A Resilient Natural Environment”, “Appropriate Housing for All Ages & Stages”, and “Living Sustainably”.

This staff report also addresses several goal areas in Vision 2026, including “Enhanced Environment, Heritage and Culture”, “Responding to the Needs of Our Residents”, “Managed and Balanced Growth” and “Infrastructure for a Growing Region.”

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The development of the *New Communities Guidelines* will be undertaken within the existing staff complement and 2012 budget allocation.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The local municipalities are key partners and will work with the development industry to implement development in New Community Areas. The Local Official Plans will be brought into alignment with polices of the Regional Official Plan through local conformity exercises. As a result, the next generation of local Official Plans will contain Sustainable Building and New Community Areas policies similar to those in the ROP.

Many local municipalities are already doing many of the things addressed through these guidelines. As an example, East Gwillimbury is currently managing the secondary plan process for the New Community Area, along the Green Lane Corridor including preparation of a Community Energy Plan and Sustainable Development guidelines. The *New Communities Guidelines* represents a base guideline. It allows room for those municipalities that have, or will be creating their own development guidelines that are more detailed and specific than the Regional guidelines.

The local municipalities will be circulated the draft *New Communities Guidelines* for review and comment. These comments will be incorporated into the final document to ensure that the guidelines provide clarity and are implementable.

7. CONCLUSION

The *New Communities Guidelines* will ensure that new communities in East Gwillimbury, Vaughan and Markham will be state-of-the art and planned as healthy, inclusive and sustainable. These compact and complete communities will be designed with a priority on people and liveability, offering a variety of housing and transportation choices and supported by mixed land uses and high quality, attractive urban design.

These guidelines will assist in the implementation of the Sustainable Buildings and New Community Areas sections of the ROP through the secondary plan process which will be led by the local municipalities. The guidelines are intended to be a helpful tool that provides clarity for local municipalities and the development community in implementing the policies of the Regional Official Plan.

Regional staff will be consulting extensively on the draft *New Communities Guidelines* with our implementation partners, including local municipalities and the development industry, from January to March 2012. Feedback from these consultations will inform a final version of the *New Communities Guidelines* which will be brought back to Planning and Economic Development Committee and Council by the end of 2012.

For more information on this report, please contact Paul Bottomley, Manager Growth Management, Long Range and Strategic Planning at 905 830-4444, Ext 1530.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause was included in the agenda for the January 11, 2012, Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting and is not re-printed for this agenda. Please bring the attachment from the January 11, 2012 Committee meeting to Regional Council.)

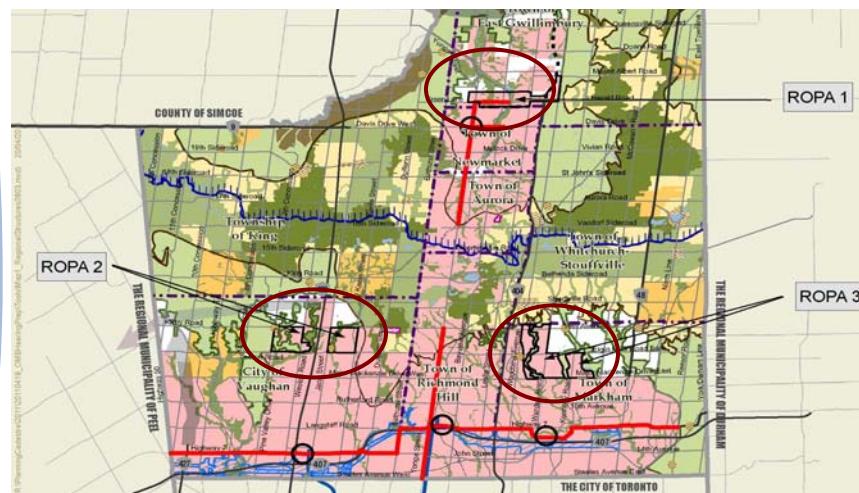


Draft New Communities Guidelines

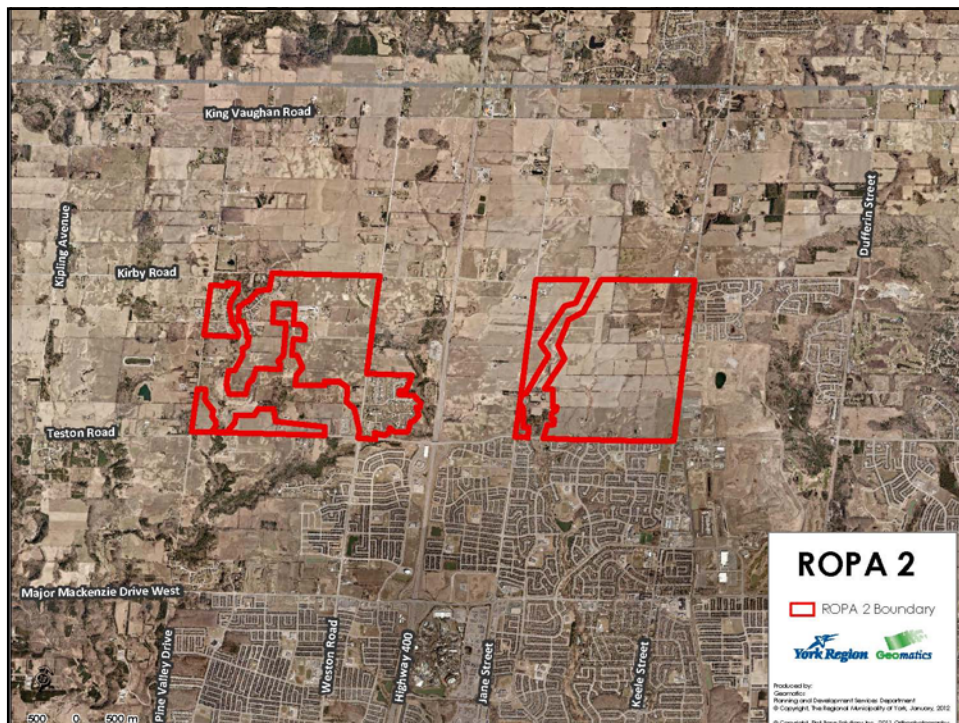
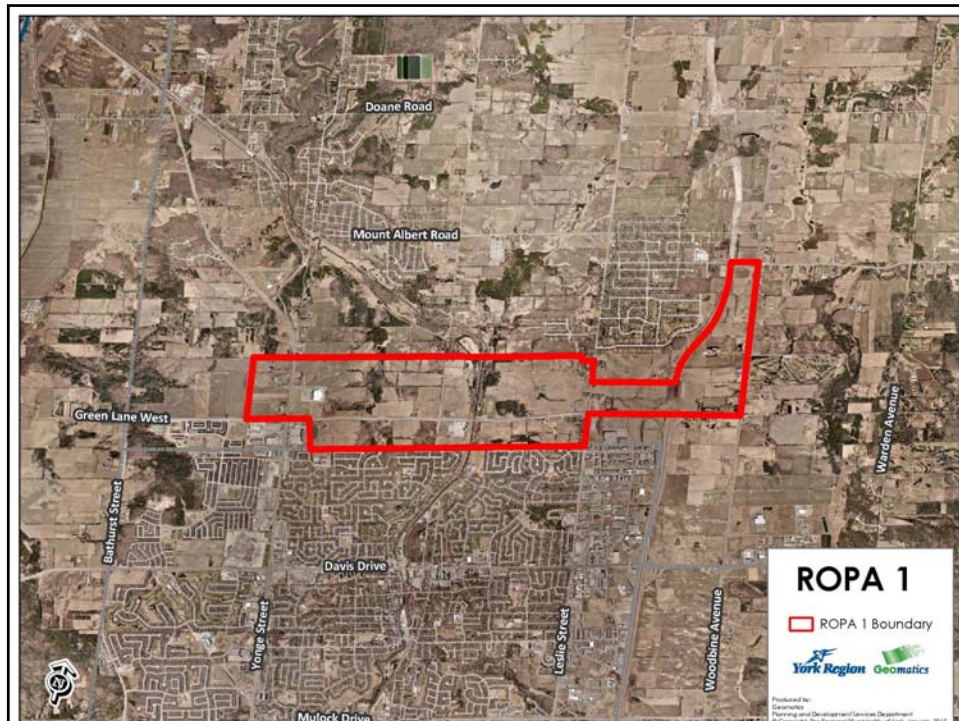
Presentation to Planning and
Economic Development
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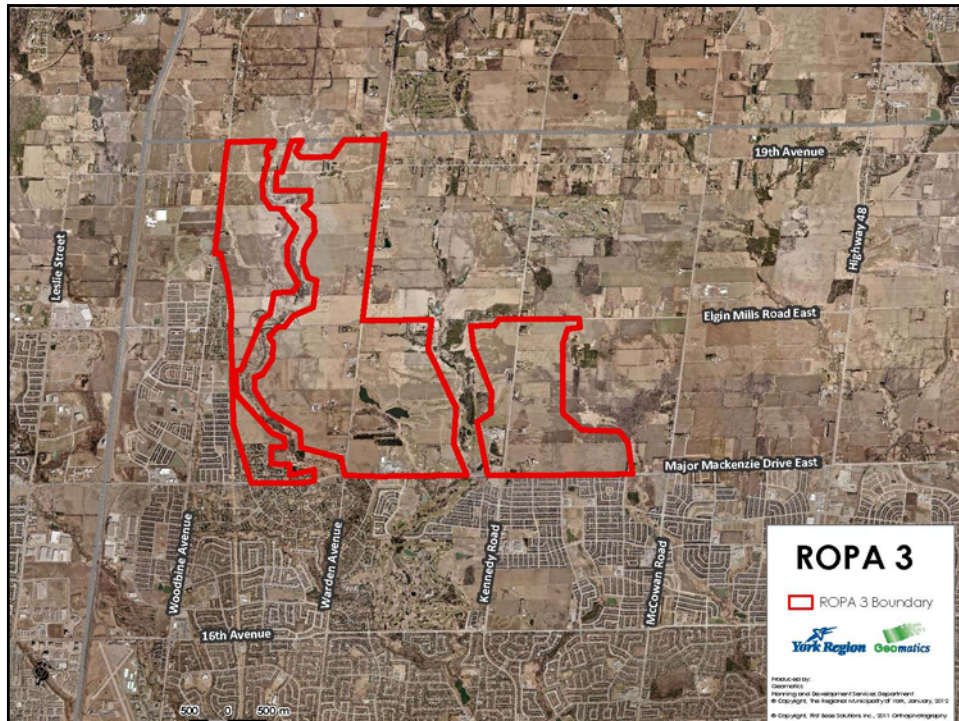
John B. Waller, MCIP, RPP
January 11, 2012

New Community Areas



Town of East Gwillimbury has initiated Secondary Plan for ROPA 1 area

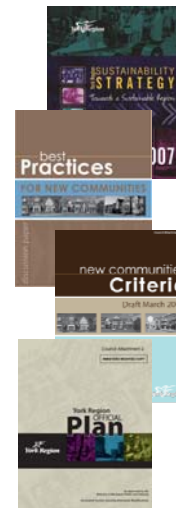




Background



- 2006 - New Communities Workshop
- 2007 - Best Practices for New Communities Discussion Paper
- 2008 - Best Practices for New Communities Workshop
- 2009 - New Communities Criteria
- 2010 – Sections 5.2 and 5.6 in ROP

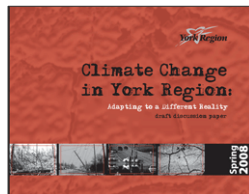


The York Region Official Plan was approved September 7, 2010

Implementation of ROP



1. Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2012)
2. New Communities Guidelines (2012)
3. Archaeological Management Plan (2012)
4. Centres and Corridors Best Practices (2012)
5. Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2014)



Purpose of Guidelines



To provide guidance on the development of the next generation of new communities with the following attributes:

- state-of-the-art, compact, vibrant;
- inclusive, healthy and diverse;
- wide range of housing and transportation choice; and
- prioritizes people, sustainability and resource efficiency.

New Community Area Policies in ROP

Mandatory

- Integrated Secondary Plans
- Community Energy Plans
- Community Design Standards
- Sustainable Transportation
- Water Management
- Open Space and Natural Heritage
- Building Performance

Encourage

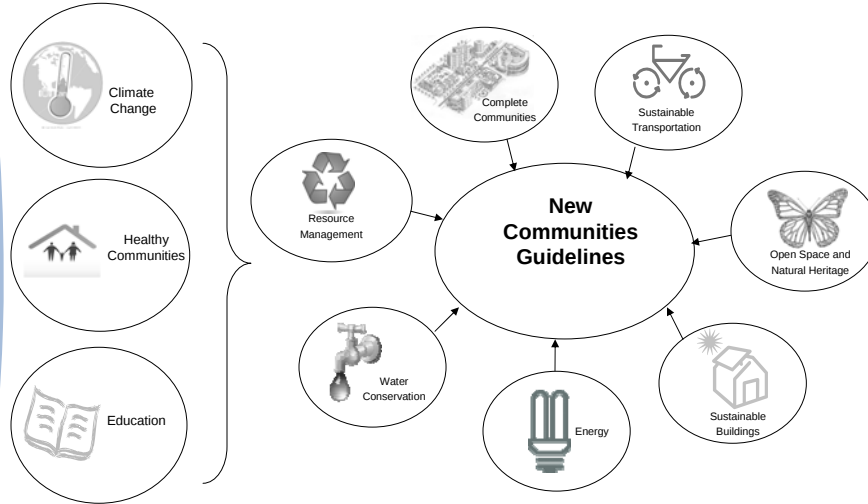
- High Building Performance
- On-site Renewable Energy/District Energy
- Environmentally Preferable Products
- Construction Waste Management
- Water Efficient Landscaping
- Education

Objectives of the Guidelines



- ❑ Supports implementation of ROP
- ❑ Provides clarity through explanatory text, examples and additional resources
- ❑ Helpful tool for local municipalities and development community

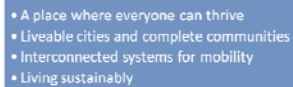
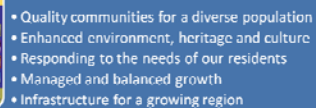
Supporting Themes and Chapters



Checklist



Category		Guideline	ROP Policy	Required	Optional
Water Management	WM1	That a comprehensive master environmental servicing plan is prepared	5.6.11 (a - c)	☐	
	WM2	That innovative techniques for stormwater management are utilized	5.6.11 (c)	☐	
		That development have an integrated and innovative approach to water management	5.2.11	☐	
	WM3	That the use of potable water for outdoor watering is restricted	5.2.31	☐	
	WM4	That the installation of rainwater harvesting systems is required	5.2.32	☐	
	WM5	That the use of water conserving, drought resistant landscaping is encouraged	5.2.33 (a - d)		☐
	WM6	That all development is encouraged to incorporate green roofs	5.2.34		☐



Next Steps



Step 1 - Consultation on Draft Guidelines (on-going)

Stakeholder
Consultation

Local Municipal
Consultation

BILD/Development
Industry Consultation



Step 2 - Workshop (March 2012)

Workshop with all stakeholders on proposed Final Guidelines



Step 3 - Final Guidelines (Q2- 2012)

Final Guidelines to Regional Council for approval

Committee report recommendations



1. The draft New Communities Guidelines, included as Attachment 1 to this report be endorsed for external consultation with stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry.
2. Long Range and Strategic Planning Branch staff circulate this report to all stakeholders, local municipalities and the development industry