



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT P2018-43

To: Committee of the Whole Council
Date: May 15, 2018
Subject: Review of the “Thinking Green! Development Standards” Program
Origin: Development Services, Planning Branch

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **THAT** Development Services, Planning Branch Report P2018-43, dated, May 15, 2018, regarding the Review of the “Thinking Green! Development Standards” Program, be received; and
2. **THAT** Council endorse the May 2018 Thinking Green! Development Standards Program (Appendices 1 through 6) and that this Program replace the 2012 Thinking Green! Development Standards Program.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to respond to the motion passed by Council at its meeting on March 20, 2018 with respect to the Thinking Green! Development Standards Program review, and to receive endorsement of the May 2018 Thinking Green! Development Standards (TGDS) Program to replace the 2012 TGDS Program.

BACKGROUND

The Town’s current TGDS Program was adopted by Council in February of 2012. The 2012 TGDS Program was developed in the form of a checklist of measures used to evaluate the sustainable elements of new development proposed in the Town. The TGDS Program plays an important role in furthering the Town’s ability to work toward its sustainability goals and commitments, as outlined in the Town’s Strategic Plan 2015-2018, the York Region Official Plan and Town’s Official Plan, as well as York Region’s New Communities Guidelines and the Town’s Community Energy Plan.

In May of 2017 Planning staff initiated a review of the 2012 TGDS. Since that time, staff have prepared three drafts of the revised TGDS Program (October 2017, January 2018 and March 2018). Each of the drafts have been circulated to and reviewed by internal departments and stakeholders, presented to Council, and posted on the Town’s website for public review and comment.

At its meeting on March 6, 2018 Committee of the Whole Council adopted staff’s recommendation to receive the March 2018 TGDS Program and replace the 2012

TGDS Program. On March 20, 2018 the recommendation was defeated and Council passed a motion to refer the March 2018 TGDS Program back to staff, so that additional Council input could be taken into consideration.

DISCUSSION

Following the March 20, 2018 Council meeting, Planning staff met with the members of Council that wished to provide additional feedback on the TGDS Program. This feedback generally focused on increasing the overall strength or difficulty level of the standards, as well as clarification on the implementation of the TGDS Program. Planning staff then met with internal Town staff from the Parks, Engineering and Building branches to discuss this feedback. As a result, staff have prepared the May 2018 TGDS Program, which is attached as Appendices 1 through 6.

Strength of Standards

Building on the vision of the Town's Official Plan, the TGDS Program takes a holistic approach to sustainability. The Program's measures fall under three key theme areas that cover a range of elements of a development application, including those internal and external to both buildings and sites. The TGDS Program challenges thinking around sustainability to extend beyond the building envelope.

The measures are expressed as three different target levels:

- Level 1 represents the minimum expectations of the Town
- Level 2 represents an improved standard
- Level 3 represents an optimal achievement

Through the review process, the "required" 2012 measures have been updated. This includes changes in the language, combining measures where possible, and including more specific wording, in an effort to clarify and strengthen the minimum expectations of the Town. In some cases, previously "required" measures from the 2012 Program have been removed where they are no longer considered a best practice, or where there are significant challenges to the verification and implementation of the measure, which threatens the credibility of the TGDS Program.

Similar to the 2012 TGDS Program, the division between minimum requirements and elevated "optional" standards allows for the Program to realize sustainable development outcomes in a flexible way. This ensures that the Program can apply Town-wide by recognizing site specific constraints, where they exist, including the needs and realities of constructing for different uses. This was echoed by the TGDS Review Working Group and development community, as individual aspects of a development including the location of a site, the type of use proposed, and the size of buildings contemplated will

have a significant impact on the ability to meet each of the proposed measures and target levels. For example, sites that are located in urban areas may easily achieve measures that promote connectivity and a mix of uses, but may find it challenging to provide abundant landscaping and meet higher stormwater management targets due to smaller site areas. Alternatively, it may not be realistic for uses such as a commercial storage facility to achieve LEED Certification due to the minimal operating requirements of these buildings, and doing so may not achieve the desired “green” impact of significantly reducing energy and water consumption. In these circumstances, the Program provides for alternative measures that will achieve other “green” outcomes, which may include significant efforts to enhance the natural heritage system, reduction of urban heat island effects through cool or green roofs, and contributions to the energy grid through the installation of solar panels. The May 2018 TGDS Program is designed to challenge applicants to implement and achieve sustainable development in a holistic way while also recognizing and accounting for site specific considerations.

In response to the feedback provided by members of Council, staff have revisited each of the measures and target levels proposed in the March 2018 draft TGDS and made additional changes with the aim of further strengthening the measures, where possible. These changes include:

Type of Change	Measures and Target Levels Affected	
	Draft Plan of Subdivision	Site Plan
Revised language to remove redundancies and add clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #1 – L1 • Measure #3 – L1, L2, L3 • Measure #4 – L2 • Measure #6 – L2, L3 • Measure #7 – L1 • Measure #11 – L1 • Measure #15 – L1, L2 • Measure #17 – L2 • Measure #25 – L2 • Measure #28 – L1, L3 • Measure #29 – L3 • Measure #31 – L1 • Measure #33 – L1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #1 – L1 • Measure #3 – L1, L2, L3 • Measure #4 – L2 • Measure #6 – L3 • Measure #7 – L1 • Measure #14 – L1 • Measure #19 – L3 • Measure #21 – L2 • Measure #22 – L2 • Measure #26 – L2 • Measure #32 – L1, L3 • Measure #33 – L3 • Measure #34 – L2 • Measure #36 – L1 • Measure #38 – L1
Added details to enhance standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #16 – L1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #19 – L1 • Measure #31 – L2, L3

Increased or heightened numeric standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #5 – L1 • Measure #6 – L2 • Measure #20 – L1, L2 • Measure #21 – L2 • Measure #26 – L2, L3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #5 – L1 • Measure #6 – L2 • Measure #15 – L2, L3 • Measure #27 – L2, L3
Added new target levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #12 – L2 • Measure #16 – L2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure #19 – L2

Implementation of the TGDS Program

How the TGDS Program is implemented was a key component of the review of the 2012 TGDS Program. Staff recognize that there have been on-going challenges with respect to some areas of implementation in the 2012 TGDS Program, many of which have been updated for the May 2018 TGDS Program. The following are being proposed to streamline and support implementation of the May 2018 Program:

- Focused Applications: The Program will apply to applications for draft plan of subdivision and site plan, with the exception of site plan applications submitted for single-detached dwellings on the Oak Ridges Moraine. This ensures that all large-scale or non-residential development will be subject to the Program, and at a scale where meaningful green measures can be secured.
- 'Thinking Green' First: The Program will be a formal requirement of both the Town's pre-consultation meeting and all complete applications. This will ensure that the TGDS Program is truly integrated into developments and actively shapes their design from the outset.
- Plain Language: Where possible, direct language and quantitative targets have been integrated into measures and target levels to provide clarity about what applicants must address and the benchmarks for staff's review.
- Matrix Format: The Program's checklist has been upgraded to a detailed matrix. This puts the onus on applicants to provide all background information and documentation as to how each measure and target will be achieved. These details, including specific plan numbers/report names, will assist staff in their review of the application.
- Department Assignment: The review and verification of individual measures has been explicitly assigned to specific Town departments. This will ensure that the review and verification of each measure is accounted for internally.

- Staff Reports: All Planning staff reports related to the introduction and recommendations for applications will include a separate section that highlights the measures and target levels committed to in the submitted TGDS. This is intended to heighten awareness around the TGDS Program, elevate its importance publicly, and increase accountability to the public.
- Development Agreements: All measures and targets will be incorporated into the associated conditions of Draft Plan Approval, Subdivision Agreement and/or Site Plan Agreement for an application/development. This allows for additional opportunities for enforcement, including requirements to fulfil obligations that are registered on title, letters of credit/securities that can be taken by the Town, and conditions that require works to be completed prior to final approvals and/or registration.
- Sustainability Handout: The Program will require all applicants to create and distribute a Town-approved sustainability handout to all new building owners/tenants outlining the sustainability features, “green” technologies and programs that the applicant has committed to undertake through the TGDS Program. This requirement will increase awareness of the Program, educate residents/tenants of the sustainable elements of their development, and lead greater accountability for the TGDS Program through public verification of green items that are included in the handout.

On-going Tracking, Review and Updates

Similarly to the 2012 TGDS Program, staff believe that on-going reviews and updates to the May 2018 TGDS Program will be necessary to ensure its on-going relevance and success. The evolution of the Program is critical to its ability to continue to be effective in implementing the Town’s vision and realizing sustainable development. Staff will actively track the commitments made under the TGDS Program, and will use this information as part of continued reviews and future updates to the TGDS Program to further strengthen the Program’s measures and improve the ways in which the Program’s commitments are secured and implemented.

As noted in the staff report P2018-20 Review of the “Thinking Green! Development Standards” Program, received by Committee of the Whole Council on March 6, 2018, future reviews of the TGDS Program may include the introduction of incentives to promote commitments of more or higher quality sustainable measures as well as to further the Town’s ability to verify and implement the Program.

NEED FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In addition to the October 2017 and January 2018 drafts, the March 2018 TGDS Program has been posted on the Town's website for public review and comment. Feedback received on each of the drafts have been integrated into the May 2018 TGDS Program. All agendas, reports and minutes on the TGDS Program are made available to the public through posting on the Town's website.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications that will result from the recommendations contained within this report. All costs to implement the TGDS Program are included as part of the development review process and are collected through Planning Application fees.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

The recommendations of this report align with the following Strategic Pillar(s):

- #2 Building a complete community that provides healthy places to live, work, play and learn

CONCLUSION

The May 2018 TGDS Program responds to the feedback received by members of Council regarding the strength/difficulty of the standards and how they will be implemented/enforced. Staff recommend that Council endorse the May 2018 TGDS Program and approve the replacement of the 2012 TGDS Program with the May 2018 TGDS Program.

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix 1 – May 2018: TGDS User Guide
- Appendix 2 – May 2018: TGDS Application Information Form
- Appendix 3 – May 2018: Pre-Consultation TGDS Checklist – Draft Plan of Subdivision
- Appendix 4 – May 2018: Pre-Consultation TGDS Checklist – Site Plan
- Appendix 5 – May 2018: TGDS Assessment – Draft Plan of Subdivision
- Appendix 6 – May 2018: TGDS Assessment – Site Plan

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