

Regional Official Plan Proposed Option #4

No farmland loss through an increased
intensification target

May 30, 2022
Kevin Thomason



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Current Situation

- The Waterloo Regional Official Plan Update is currently underway to determine our vision, priorities, and the form of our community for the next 30 years.
- Our last ROP created our Countryside Line Concept, Protected Countryside, Light Rail Transit, Core Renewal, and so many other bold, innovative concepts that we now take for granted and can't even imagine our community without.
- This ROP Update needs to be just as bold and visionary if Waterloo Region is to compete globally in the years ahead.



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

However,

- Planning for the future in a rapidly changing world is not easy.
- Climate Change is the most significant threat facing our community today with every decision carrying an important message and having potential impact.
- There has been a fraction of the public engagement, public consultation, and media coverage on this ROP Update compared to previous Regional Official Plans. We need far more public input and time to understand the implications of the feedback and ideas being proposed.



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Current Situation

- Regional Staff are proposing 3 Growth Options however, all may be overly complicated and insufficient to meet future needs - particularly in light of the climate change commitments to reduce our GHG by 80% within the timeframe of this Official Plan.



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Growth Option Issues

- **Option #1 - Significant Farmland Loss** - massive amounts of urban sprawl, huge farmland loss, likely breaches Countryside line in numerous places, and abandons the goals of sustainability and leadership,
- **Option #2 - Some Farmland Loss, Inequity** - still destroys almost 1,000 acres of local farmland and creates complex inequity issues between area municipalities,
- **Option #3 - No Farmland Loss, High Density Challenges** - is overly complex, difficult to achieve and places too much density at the periphery rather than core of our communities.



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Growth Option #4 - Intensification, No Farmland Loss

- Citizens and community groups concerned about the three proposed growth options are suggesting:
- A simpler, more congruent fourth growth option based on current trends and rates of intensification,
- No boundary expansion, no farmland loss,
- Buys time to see how post-pandemic world unfolds without locking us into sprawl that may not be needed or wanted,
- Treats all area municipalities equally.

**Read the detailed report on Community
Proposed Option #4 at
www.smartgrowthwaterloo.ca**



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

New Proposed Option #4

	Historical Rate (past 10 years)	Current Rate (past 5 years)	Option #1 Provincial minimum, significant farmland loss	Option #2 Some farmland loss	Option #3 No farmland loss, high density challenges	Option #4 No farmland loss, closest to current trends
Intensification Rate	59%	64%	50%	60%	60%	65%
Density Target	54	54	50	60	66	60
Total Farmland/ Greenfield Required			2,208 hectares (5,456 acres)	376 hectares (929 acres)	0 hectares (0 acres)	0 hectares (0 acres)

- New Proposed Growth Option #4:
 - a 65% intensification target very congruent with current rates of 64% to 70%,
 - 60 people/jobs per hectare density (DGA) that is more achievable,
 - 0 hectares of farmland or greenspace loss to urban sprawl.



Why Intensification vs. Density?

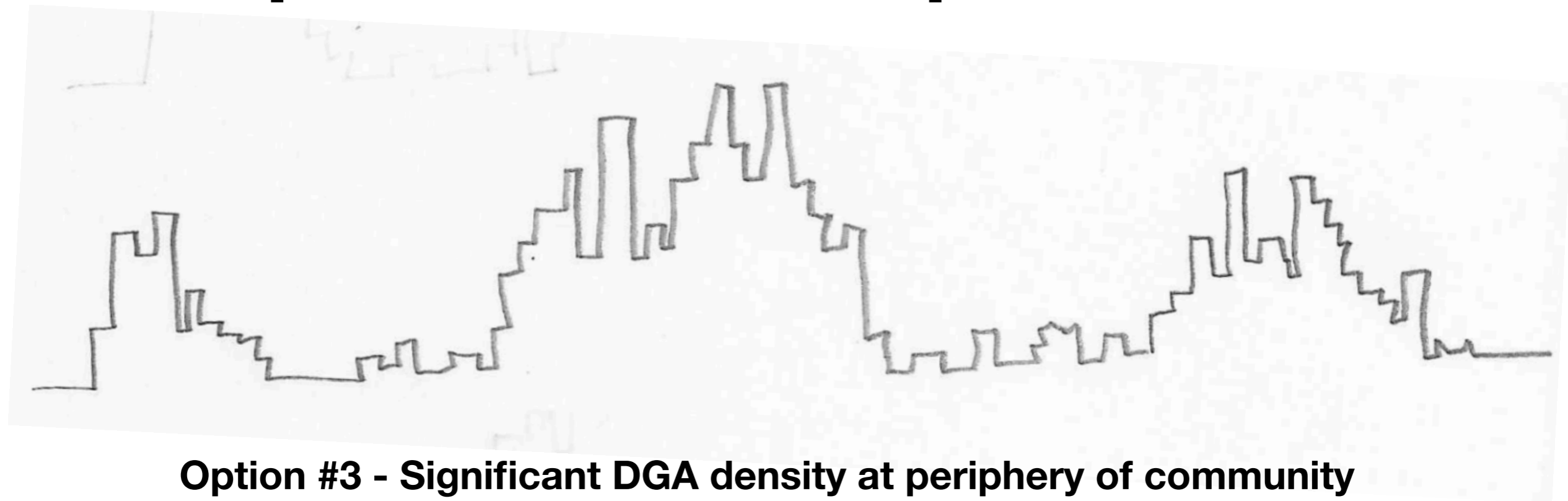
- Density is measured over time including retroactively over lands already built.
- Thus to achieve Option #3's DGA density of 66 pj/ha, it will require all new development to actually achieve about 73 pj/ha in order to compensate for recent development achieving only 54 pj/ha.
- Achieving such a significant density increase on new Greenfield Designated Areas (DGA) at the edges and most distant parts of our communities will not be easy or appropriate.



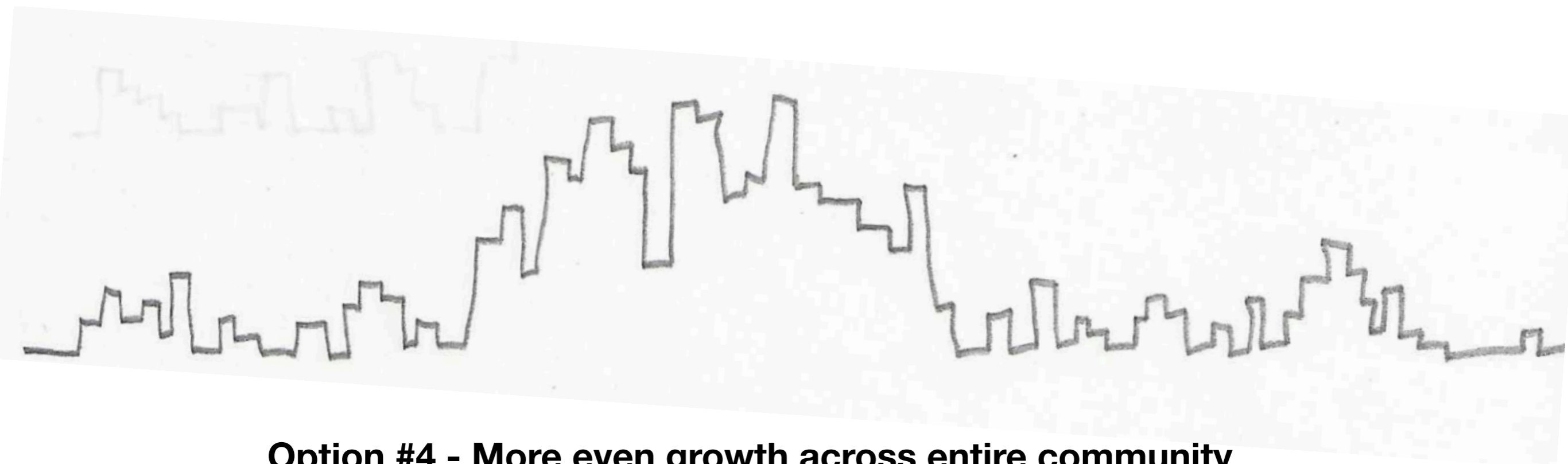
SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Option #3 vs Option #4



Option #3 - Significant DGA density at periphery of community



Option #4 - More even growth across entire community

Why Intensification vs. Density?

- Whereas achieving an intensification rate of 65% as we are proposing in Option #4 is very congruent with current regional intensification rates,
- Thus, intensification is a far simpler and better metric than density for our Regional Official Plan.



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Option #4 Advantages

- Community Proposed Option #4 has clear advantages over Option #1, #2 and #3:
 - It is not perfect however, it's the simplest, most consistent, and most easily achievable,
 - It best continues Waterloo Region's innovation and planning leadership on the current trajectory,
 - It demonstrates climate leadership and that we are serious about achievable solutions to meet our Paris Accord commitments,



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Option #4 Advantages

- Option #4 best supports expansion of iON LRT and public transit, and other sustainability initiatives,
- It buys time and delays decisions on future boundary expansions until we see how:
 - the post-pandemic world,
 - the missing middle,
 - soft intensification,
 - new accessory units,
 - age-in-neighbourhood initiatives,
 - and climate change unfolds over the coming years,



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Option #4 Advantages

- It avoids the myriad of issues with Option #2 allocating greenfield expansions to only some area municipalities and all the efforts required now to mitigate battles over land and urban boundary expansion that likely won't even be needed for years,



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Conclusion

- We urge you to recommend and support the Community Proposed Growth Option #4 and its principles as the preferred option.
- While not perfect, it's the simplest, most achievable, and most congruent option that best prepares everyone for a rapidly changing future, while protecting our thriving countryside and creating more dynamic, complete, sustainable, and affordable communities.

**Learn more and read the detailed report on
Community Proposed Option #4 at
www.smartgrowthwaterloo.ca**



SMART GROWTH
Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

Questions?

Kevin Thomason

kevinthomason@mac.com

(519) 888-0519



SMART GROWTH

Waterloo Region

Growing our cities, protecting our countryside

