

Regional Official Plan Proposed Option #4

No farmland loss through an increased
intensification target

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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.



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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 today.



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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.



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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 regional 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.



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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**



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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 intense density on new Greenfield Designated Areas (DGA) at the edges and most distant parts of our communities will not be easy.
- Pushing so much density to the periphery is less than ideal as density should soften at the edges of our communities and not be one of the most built up areas.



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Why Intensification vs. Density?

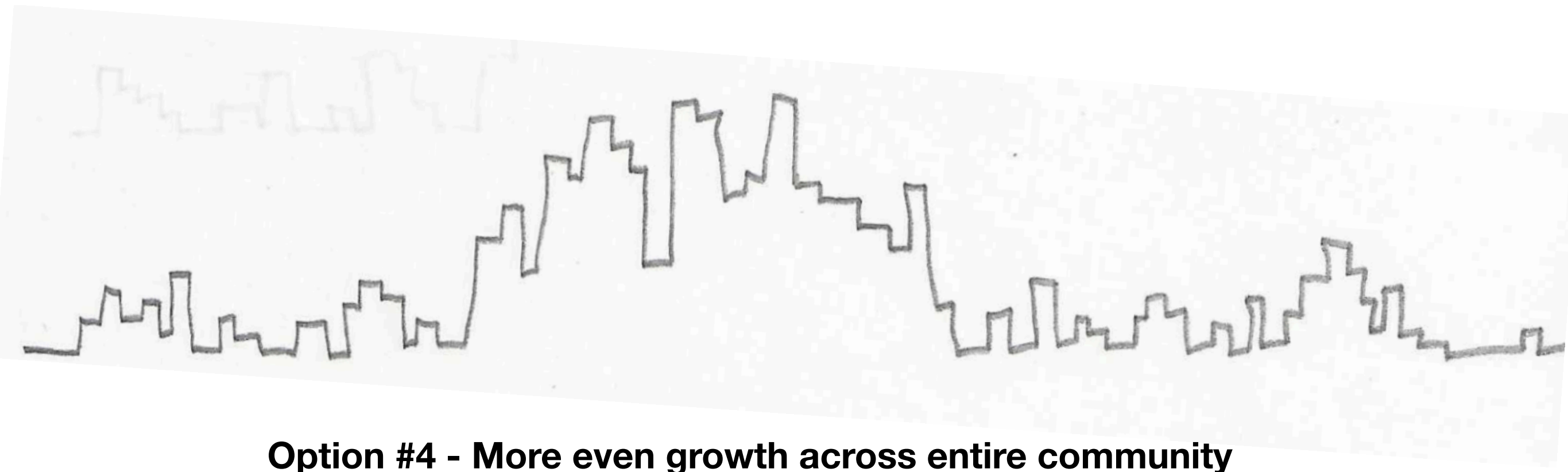
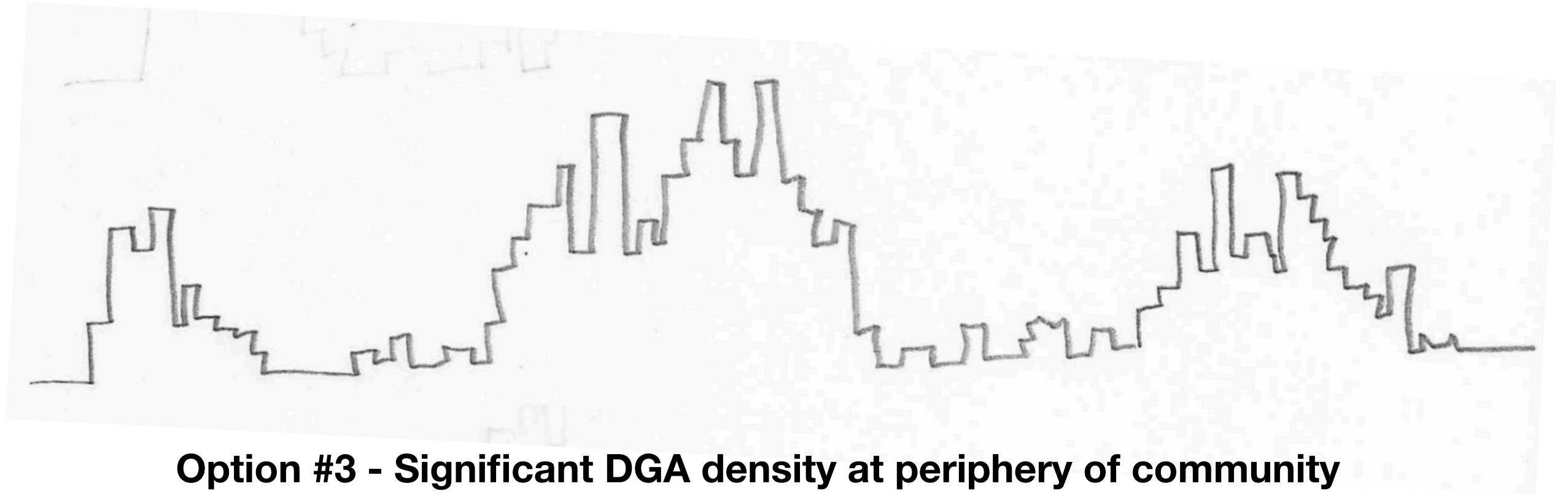
- Whereas achieving an intensification rate of 65% as we are proposing in Option #4 is very congruent with our current intensification rates,
- Thus, intensification is a far simpler and better metric than density for our Regional Official Plan.



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Option #3 vs Option #4



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 Regional Council is serious about achievable solutions to meet our Paris Accord commitments,



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Option #4 Advantages

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



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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 that likely won't even be needed until 2047 or later,



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Conclusion

- We urge you to recommend and support the Community Proposed Growth Option #4 as the preferred option.
- While not perfect, it's the simplest, most achievable, and most congruent option that best prepares Waterloo Region 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**



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Questions?

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