

**Date:** 2020-01-29

**Subject:** **Sustainability Metric Program Update**

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**Report Number:** Public Works & Engineering-2021-442

**Recommendations:**

1. That the report titled: **Sustainability Metrics Program Update** to the Planning and Development Committee meeting of April 26, 2021, be received;
2. That Council endorse the updated Sustainability Metrics in principle; and
3. That staff be directed to develop updated Sustainability Thresholds and report back to Planning and Development Committee with the final updated Sustainability Metrics and Sustainability Thresholds, as well as enhanced performance requirements for urban and town centres.

**Overview:**

- In 2015, the City of Brampton commenced the implementation of the **Sustainability Metrics and Sustainability Score Thresholds** to evaluate the sustainability performance of new development.
- The **Sustainability Metrics** were developed in partnership with the Cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan, and are currently applied to **Block Plan, Draft Plan of Subdivision, and Site Plan** applications across all three municipalities.
- Sustainability, particularly as it relates to best practice regarding the design and construction of buildings and neighbourhoods, is an area of rapid change.
- In 2018, the Cities of Brampton, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill collaboratively embarked on an update to the **Sustainability Metrics**, and in 2019 the City of Markham also joined the partnership.

- **A revised suite of Sustainability Metrics have been drafted in consultation with internal staff and external stakeholders.**
- **The purpose of the report is to seek Council endorsement of the revised suite of Sustainability Metrics and direction to proceed with establishing updated Sustainability Score Thresholds and enhanced performance requirements for urban and town centres.**

## **Background:**

Municipalities play a pivotal role in responsibly managing growth and facilitating the development of communities that are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable. The planning, design, construction, and management of new development has a significant impact on matters ranging from public health, climate change, resource use, social equity, and local economic development.

Provincial legislation, plans, and policies encourage the establishment of sustainable, complete communities, including, but not limited to, the *Municipal Act*, *Planning Act*, Provincial Policy Statement, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and A Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. This is further supported by regional and local plans, such as the Region of Peel's Official Plan and Healthy Development Framework, as well as the City of Brampton's Official Plan, Brampton 2040 Vision, Brampton Grow Green Environmental Master Plan, and Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.

In response, between 2013 and 2015, the City of Brampton in partnership with the Cities of Richmond Hill and Vaughan developed Sustainability Metrics and Sustainability Score Thresholds to guide, measure, and evaluate the sustainability performance of new development. The Sustainability Metrics and associated tools outlined below were recognized by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) through its Research and New Direction: Excellence in Planning award, as well as the American Planning Association through its Award of Excellence in Sustainability:

- **Sustainable Community Development Guidelines (SCDGs):**  
A chapter within the City's Development Design Guidelines, the SCDGs provide recommended design approaches for the built environment to establish more vibrant and environmentally sustainable new development.
- **Sustainability Metrics (Metrics):**

A set of indicators to evaluate the sustainability performance of new development, organized around the categories of Built Environment, Mobility, Natural Environment and Open Space, and Green Infrastructure and Building. Each of the approximately 50 Sustainability Metrics available are assigned a point value, and the combination of Metrics selected by the development proponent results in a final Sustainability Score. Development proponents are able to select any combination of Metrics to achieve the minimum required Score. This enables the proponent to choose Metrics that best suit their individual property, project, and level of sustainability aspiration.

- **Sustainability Assessment Tool (SAT):**  
An online platform that development proponents use to calculate their Sustainability Score by answering a series of questions regarding the Metrics achieved through their development proposal. When a development proponent submits their planning application to the municipality, they must include the Sustainability Score/Summary produced by the SAT alongside other prescribed studies, drawings, and materials required for a complete application.
- **Sustainability Score Thresholds (Thresholds):**  
Performance levels achieved by the Sustainability Score of a development proposal, and categorized as Bronze, Silver, or Gold. As of July 2018, the City of Brampton requires development proposals to achieve a minimum Bronze level Sustainability Score. In July 2020, the City's Planning and Development Committee requested that City staff report back on increasing the minimum Sustainability Score Threshold required for new development (Resolution PDC083-2020).

Sustainability, particularly as it relates to best practice regarding the design and construction of buildings and neighbourhoods, is an area of rapid change. As such, in 2018, the Cities of Brampton, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill collaboratively started a process to update the existing Sustainability Metrics, and in 2019 the City of Markham also joined the partnership. This comprehensive update to the Sustainability Metrics program was driven by (refer to Appendix 1 for more details):

- amendments to the *Planning Act*;
- other changes to Provincial legislation and plans;
- updates to the Ontario Building Code; and
- revisions to City plans, policies, and guidelines.

This Sustainability Metrics Update Project is comprised of the following phases:

<b>Phase 1:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update the current Sustainability Metrics.</li> </ul>
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(Q4 2018 - Q1 2021)	
<b>Phase 2:</b> (Q2 2021 - Q4 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop updated Sustainability Score Thresholds.</li> <li>• Explore enhanced performance requirements for urban and town centres.</li> <li>• Update the Sustainability Assessment Tool to reflect revised metrics and thresholds.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3:</b> (Q4 2021 - Q1 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh program outreach and education materials.</li> <li>• Develop new training videos to improve program knowledge and compliance.</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 4:</b> (Q2 2022 - Q4 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate potential incentives to increase uptake of specific metrics and encourage development proposals to exceed the minimum required sustainability score.</li> </ul>

### Phase 1: Comprehensive Update of Sustainability Metrics

The City of Richmond Hill retained consultant Morrison Hershfield to assist with the review and update of the Sustainability Metrics, guided by a Technical Advisory Team comprised of staff from all four partner municipalities.

The partners developed a robust engagement process with the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) throughout 2020 and into 2021 and included the establishment of a working group between the partner municipalities and BILD that would regularly meet to discuss final refinements to the Metrics to ensure that they are clear, measurable, and implementable.

Based on the initial research and feedback received through the stakeholder consultation, a report was prepared by Morrison Hershfield outlining their recommended updates to the metrics for consideration by the partner municipalities (refer to Appendix 2).

### **Current Situation:**

### Proposed Updates to the Sustainability Metrics

Morrison Hershfield and the partner municipalities have completed the major revisions to the Metrics, achieving a key milestone in the collaborative Sustainability Metrics Update Project. The comprehensive updates, which are detailed in the Sustainability Metrics Update Report prepared by Morrison Hershfield (refer to Appendix 2), maintain a menu of over 50 metrics that the development industry can choose from. Provided below is a summary of the recommended updates.

### *Metrics Recommended for Removal*

Several Metrics are recommended for removal due to a number of factors. In particular, many of these Metrics are redundant because their requirements are now covered by the City's Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and other municipal standards, and/or by the Ontario Building Code. In addition, some of the Metrics are no longer relevant due to shifts in industry practice. Some Metrics were either removed entirely or incorporated into new or revised Metrics, where appropriate.

### *Metrics Recommended to be Carried Forward with Changes*

A majority of the existing Metrics were confirmed to still be relevant and contribute to the Metric variety and flexibility requested by the development industry since the launch of the Sustainability Metric Program. Changes to these Metrics range from minor to major, were informed by research and stakeholder feedback, and focus on:

- improving clarity;
- addressing new sustainability standards and best practices;
- adjusting point allocations; and/or
- advancing municipal sustainability priorities.

### *New Metrics Recommended*

Through the update process, 14 new metrics are proposed to be added. They seek to add more variety to the suite of Metrics, and represent avenues of best practices in sustainability that have gained traction since the program was introduced. Several of the proposed new Metrics recommended focus on encouraging energy efficiency, GHG emission reduction, as well as climate change adaptation and resilience.

A new "Innovation" Metric provides additional flexibility and encourages creativity by allowing applicants to present new ideas beyond what is identified in the program that result in significant sustainability benefits.

### Next Steps:

- City of Brampton staff will proceed with Phases 2 and 3 of the project, which includes developing updated Sustainability Score Thresholds, and exploring enhanced performance requirements for urban and town centres.
- City staff will report back to Planning and Development Committee with recommended updates to the Thresholds that reflect the revised suite of Sustainability Metrics, as

well as an approach for enhanced sustainability performance requirements for urban and town centres.

- The City of Richmond Hill also retained Morrison Hershfield to research potential incentives that could be provided to development proponents that would encourage achievement of higher Sustainability Score Thresholds. The resultant report will be used by City of Brampton staff as part of its exploration of potential incentives tailored to the context, needs, and goals of our city (Phase 4).

### **Corporate Implications:**

#### Financial Implications:

There are no immediate direct financial implications resulting from the approval of the recommendations of this report.

#### Other Implications:

There are no other implications resulting from the approval of the recommendations of this report.

### **Term of Council Priorities:**

The Sustainability Metric Update Project directly fulfills the “Brampton is a Green City” Term of Council Direction, in particular Council Priority “Sustainable Growth” that includes the Key Initiative to “continue the development and implementation of the Development Guidelines and the Sustainability Assessment Tool”.

The Sustainability Metric Update Project also contributes to the Term of Council priorities of “Brampton is Healthy and Safe City” and “Brampton is a Well Run City”.

### **Conclusion:**

Green development standards, such as the Sustainability Metrics and associated Sustainability Score Thresholds, are a critical tool for municipalities to encourage and accelerate the delivery of complete communities that foster public health, protect nature, and bolster local economies, while also supporting municipal, provincial, and federal climate change goals. The Sustainability Metrics Update Project is a collaborative endeavour that will help elevate the sustainability performance of new development across four of the fastest growing municipalities of Greater Toronto Area. With a revised suite of Metrics, the City will undertake the next phase of modernizing the Sustainability

Metrics Program through an update of the Sustainability Thresholds and Sustainability Assessment Tool, and report back to Planning and Development Committee.

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**Attachments:**

Appendix 1 – Summary of Key Legislation and Policy Changes Since the Development of the Original Sustainability Metrics

Appendix 2 – Sustainability Metrics Update report prepared by Morrison Hershfield