Executive Summary

In 2005 the Places to Grow Act was enacted by the Government of Ontario. From this Act, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GPGGH) was created and implemented in 2006 to guide development within the Greater Golden Horseshoe under existing planning frameworks. One of the major tools of the GPGGH was the establishment of Urban Growth Centre's (UGC's) which are delineated urban areas deemed appropriate for significant intensification. Three density target classifications were established for the identified UGC's under the GPGGH. These classifications prescribed specific gross combined density targets for each identified UGC.

This report examined the UGC in the City of Brantford, Ontario which is targeted to achieve a gross combined density of 150 residents and jobs per hectare by 2031. The UGC in the City of Brantford is approximately 110 hectares and contains the entire downtown core and immediate surrounding area. The downtown in Brantford has experienced a period of significant decline from the 1980's to the early 2000's after many of the City's largest employers closed and left the City. Throughout the 1990's the City tried to re-establish itself as a manufacturing destination. This endeavour was successful, however most new manufacturing facilities were located in the suburban periphery of the City which did not help invigorate the downtown. In the early part of the previous decade, the City shifted focus towards downtown rejuvenation. The arrivals of the Wilfrid Laurier University and Nipissing University satellite campuses in the downtown have been a major catalyst for the rejuvenation process that has begun to take place.

The purpose of this report was to determine if the current municipal policies in the City of Brantford, and the physical UGC site itself, are conducive to meeting the gross density target of 150 residents and jobs per hectare as stipulated in the GPGGH. By determining the existing density of the UGC, a baseline was established against which an estimate of potential future density could be measured. The potential future density was determined through a build-out analysis of the UGC site.

Through an examination of Municipal documents such as *A Master Plan for Downtown Brantford*, the official Zoning Bylaw, *An Analysis of Intensification Potential in the City of Brantford* and the *City of Brantford Growth Management Strategy* as well as onsite field visits, the required growth needed to meet the density target was determined and areas of potential new development were identified as well as buildings that could be adaptively reused.

Based on this information a figure ground model was constructed using SketchUp to illustrate a realistic maximum build-out scenario subject to all conditions of the Zoning Bylaw. This model was then used to calculate potential residential and employment growth based on person per unit estimates and employment densities from the *Development Charges Background Study Growth Forecasts* for the City of Brantford.

The build-out analysis determined that the UGC has a potential to achieve a gross density of 116 residents and jobs per hectare by 2031. This would not achieve the GPGGH density target. The major recommendation to help overcome this shortfall in potential future density is to amend the Zoning Bylaw to increase maximum allowable building heights and reduce parking requirements in the UGC.

A major limitation of the research method is the variability of employment density estimates by study and region. Changing the estimate of gross square meter per employee by employment sector can drastically change the estimate of employees in the study area, or how much future employment space is required to accommodate a certain number of employees.

Wilfrid Laurier University is continuing to have a strong positive influence on the UGC. Many developments by the University, both new and through adaptive reuse, have been completed since the GPGGH was enacted in 2006. The adaptive reuse of the former Expositor Building into a student residence with ground floor commercial units will accommodate 215 students. If residential development in the UGC takes this form in the future, which is much higher in density than what was modelled in the build-out analysis, than the potential future density could be higher than what was calculated in

this study. Wilfrid Laurier University projected that full time enrolment will more than double by 2023 which will create a high demand for future residential development.