

To:	Warden Matrosovs and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	February 26, 2026
Subject / Report No:	PDR-CW-06-26
Title:	Growth Management Strategy Update – Final Report
Prepared by:	Liz Buckton, Senior Policy Planner
Reviewed by:	Scott Taylor, Director of Planning
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All Grey County Member Municipalities

Recommendation

1. That report PDR-CW-06-26 regarding final report on the County’s Growth Management Strategy Update, be received; and
2. That Council directs staff to incorporate the 2026 Growth Management Strategy forecasts into the Grey County official plan via the County’s official plan review, scheduled to commence in 2027.

Executive Summary

In early 2025, the County began updating its Growth Management Strategy (GMS) in alignment with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) 2024. As an upper tier municipality, the County is required to forecast growth in accordance with the Ministry of Finance (MOF) projections and allocate that growth out to the County’s member municipalities. These growth allocations are then used for planning purposes, including but not limited to updating County/Municipal official plans, infrastructure planning, development charges (DCs) background studies, etc.

This report is intended to provide Council with the final forecasts and allocations identified through this GMS update exercise. This work has been informed by MOF projections, local development trends/statistics, land utilization/supply, infrastructure data, and via outreach to member municipalities as well as other public sector stakeholders across the County, such as school boards, public health, and hospitals.

Background and Discussion

Staff Report PDR-CW-71-25 (Appendix 1) was shared to County Council in December 2025 to offer an update regarding the GMS work, and to share the draft local municipal growth

allocations as have been developed through this process. The draft GMS work was also shared with municipal staff and other public sector partners. Feedback received through and following this presentation has been directed to the County's GMS consultant, Hemson Consulting. Hemson has now prepared a final summary report and forecast. This report is linked herein, as Appendix 2.

Staff would direct the reader to the above-noted report, for details relating to this exercise and nuanced information relating to the direction offered via the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024) and recently updated provincial projection methodology guidance.

Growth Figures & Land Supply Findings

Staff would highlight that as per the updated final summary report offered by Hemson, the County's population is expected to grow to approximately 148,000 people by the year 2051. Over that same time horizon, Grey's employment is expected to also grow to approximately 60,000 jobs. Local municipal growth allocations are included within the final GMS report, at Appendix 2.

Staff note that via the land supply analysis element of this work, it is confirmed that all member municipalities currently have adequate supply of designated lands to support this forecasted growth, save and except for the Town of Hanover. The Town's Mutual Prosperity work with the Municipality of West Grey, is expected to address this land shortage, should the municipal boundary change be approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and subsequent official plan amendments be initiated to re-designate a portion of those lands for development purposes.

Staff would emphasize that despite this overall adequate land supply, the Secondary Settlement Areas and Inland Lakes and Shoreline Settlement Areas (which are privately or partially serviced) have been included in the net land supply tally together with the Primary Settlement Areas (which are fully serviced) across the County. Both the PPS and the County official plan direct most new growth to fully serviced settlement areas, and a smaller portion of growth to those privately or partially serviced settlement areas. As such, where growth within the County's fully serviced settlement areas outpaces growth in privately/partially serviced settlements, municipalities still may need to consider expansions to their Primary Settlement Areas. Any such expansion planning would need to be concurrent with related infrastructure planning, to maintain an appropriate designated supply.

As such, local municipalities are encouraged to continue to monitor serviced land supply over time. The PPS requires that planning authorities maintain designated lands to accommodate a minimum of 15 years of residential development, with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units, on such suitably designated and zoned lands.

The County regularly reviews its growth forecasts and allocations, through growth management studies, and updates the numbers approximately every five years.

Future OPA and Interim Use

As has occurred with prior GMS exercises, the arising forecasts and local allocations of growth are to be embedded within the County's official plan. Local official plans are also brought into

conformity through local amendments, usually at the time of the next official plan review exercise.

In this case, staff are anticipating that the growth forecasts will be embedded into the County official plan as part of the official plan review scheduled to commence in 2027. This means that for an interim period, the County and municipal official plans will continue to reflect forecasts from the prior 2021 GMS exercise. That said, the updated 2026 GMS figures and forecasts, as outlined in the appended summary report, reflect the current growth outlook for the County and member municipalities. The PPS 2024 requires the use of Ministry of Finance projections as a basis for growth planning. All planning decisions shall be consistent with the PPS. As a result, it would be appropriate that the County, municipalities, and applicants rely on the updated 2026 GMS figures as are consistent with PPS, albeit not yet embedded in the County official plan. This ensures that applications are evaluated using current growth assumptions, while recognizing that formal conformity with the County official plan will be addressed through the subsequent official plan review. County staff recommend that the same approach be applied to County and municipal development charges (DC) background studies as well (i.e., use the 2026 GMS numbers to feed into those DC studies in this interim period).

Legislated Requirements

Section 3 of the *Planning Act* provides the province with an ability to issue policy statements. Municipal planning decisions are then required to be consistent with those policy statements. The Provincial Planning Statement 2024 requires Grey County to allocate population and employment growth to its member municipalities.

Financial and Resource Implications

The GMS Update project has been completed using budgeted funds from the 2025 budget. This update is directly growth related and therefore is primarily financed by the development charges reserves.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: CAO/Deputy, Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Planning
- External: Member municipalities, school boards, hospitals, public health.

Appendices and Attachments

Appendix 1 – [Staff Report PDR-CW-71-25 \(Status Update on the Growth Management Strategy\)](#) and [Appendix to PDR-CW-71-25](#)

Appendix 2 – [Growth Management Strategy – Hemson – February 2026](#)