

PAUL REALE | PLAN FIRST. BUILD BETTER.

A proposed growth framework for the Town of The Blue Mountains

“The Blue Mountains is going to grow. The question is whether we plan that growth or react to it.”

2021 Dwelling Units	2024 Dwelling Units	2025 Dwelling Units	2026 Dwelling Units*
394	111	151	57

*2026 figure is through August 2026. Figures are dwelling units issued through building permits.

1. Complete neighbourhood plans and zoning

Complete priority secondary plans before major applications arrive, setting out housing, roads, drainage, parks, connections, servicing and natural constraints. Update the Town's comprehensive Zoning By-law to implement the new Official Plan and put the rules for growth in place up front.

Plan the community first. Then build within the plan.

2. Expect developers to engage from the start

Make early community engagement a clear Town expectation. Developers should meet with planning staff, affected residents and community groups before major design decisions are locked in, and show how concerns were addressed as the proposal moves forward.

Developer certainty and meaningful public engagement can go together.

3. Build environmental protections into growth plans

Map wetlands, watercourses, drainage, groundwater, significant trees and natural corridors before roads, lots and buildings are laid out. Set clear environmental planning and design standards or best practices. Treat natural assets as fundamental infrastructure, and examine alternatives before accepting significant or irreversible losses.

Know what needs preserving before deciding what can be built around it.

4. Revise Water and Sewage Services Allocation Policy

Move away from first-come, first-served allocation while addressing concerns from developers that the current draft is too restrictive. Manage limited capacity strategically while giving good projects a clear, predictable path to allocation.

Find the balance between managing capacity and allowing good projects to move.

5. Know who pays for growth - and when

Before growth infrastructure proceeds, show when development charges are expected to arrive, who pays the financing costs while the Town waits for that revenue, what happens if growth is slower than forecast, and whether construction can be phased.

Growth has to come with a financing plan, not a hope that the money arrives later.

6. Bring development-charge funding forward

Offer developers an incentive to pay development charges earlier when the Town saves more in borrowing costs than the incentive costs. Use front-ending and credit agreements to allow developers to advance shared infrastructure, with clear servicing commitments and a fair sharing of risk.

Bring the money forward when the numbers work.

7. Explore shared water and wastewater infrastructure

Compare building alone with sharing water and wastewater infrastructure or services with neighbouring municipalities. Compare options including a publicly owned municipal services corporation and the Ontario Clean Water Agency through a business case looking at long-term costs, rates, risks and accountability, including different growth, cost and financing scenarios before we commit.

Share where it works. Keep the public interest first.

8. Make affordable/attainable housing easier to build

Turn the Town's 215-unit target into a delivery plan. Create a fast-track Additional Residential Units (ARU) process and expand financial incentives for qualifying units. Work directly with builders on smaller homes, rentals and affordable or attainable projects.

Make the housing we need easier to build.

Sources: Town of The Blue Mountains Monthly Building Permit Activity reports; Official Plan; Water and Wastewater Servicing Allocation Policy; Housing Needs Assessment.