



## Questions & Answers Document

**File:** Z01-2026 Z (Proposed Private College)

**Location:** 279 St. Vincent Street – Former Site of Georgian Bay Community School

The following Q&A was prepared based on the questions submitted by the public and council on this Zoning Application. Staff put together the answers to help the public better understand this proposal.

(up to date as of May 7, 2026)

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### **Q1. What exactly is being proposed for this site?**

**A:** The owner proposes to reuse the former Georgian Bay Secondary School as a privately operated post-secondary college and to add three on-site dormitory buildings to house students and staff. The proposal builds on the site's previously established educational use.

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### **Q2. Is this a public college run by the Province of Ontario?**

**A:** No. This would be a privately operated college. For planning purposes, it is treated as a private institutional or educational use.

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### **Q3. Is the Municipality approving or regulating the college itself?**

**A:** No. The Municipality does not regulate educational institutions or their operations.

Council is only considering a zoning by-law amendment, which determines how the land may be used. This does not include approval of:

- academic programs

- credentials
- tuition
- recruitment practices
- business operations

These matters fall under provincial jurisdiction, not municipal planning.

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#### **Q4. Who regulates private colleges in Ontario?**

**A:** Private colleges are regulated by the Province of Ontario. Provincial oversight may include program approvals, licensing, inspections, and student protections.

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#### **Q5. Does zoning approval mean the college can operate right away?**

**A:** No. Even if zoning is approved, the operator must still obtain:

- Provincial approvals (if required)
- Building permits
- Site plan approval

Zoning approval is only one step in the overall process.

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#### **Q6. Why would this be considered in an Urban Living Area designation?**

**A:** The application is under review. The site has historically been used for educational purposes, and the proposal aims to continue that institutional role. Compatibility with surrounding uses is a key consideration.

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#### **Q7. What impacts is the Municipality reviewing?**

**A:** Staff and Council are reviewing:

- Traffic and parking
- Building size, height, and setbacks
- Compatibility with nearby homes

- Servicing and access
- On-site housing

These are standard land use planning considerations.

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**Q8. Will students living on site affect nearby neighbourhoods?**

**A:** The proposed dormitories are intended to accommodate students on-site. Potential impacts such as noise, lighting, parking, and site layout are addressed through zoning standards and site plan review.

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**Q9. Can Council refuse the application because the college is private or unfamiliar?**

**A:** No, not for those reasons. Council decisions must be based on land use planning considerations and applicable policy. Decisions cannot be based solely on whether an institution is new, private, or unfamiliar.

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**Q10. What happens after the public meeting?**

**A:** After the public meeting:

- Staff review public input
  - A recommendation report is prepared for Council
  - Council makes a decision at a future meeting
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**Q11. Has there been consultation with local healthcare providers about potential impacts?**

**A:** No there hasn't. Consultation with healthcare providers is not typically part of the zoning process. Healthcare services are planned and managed by provincial and regional authorities and in most cases, based on population size and community need. The Municipality focuses on land use planning matters.

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**Q12. Can zoning be approved if the college is not yet operating or licensed?**

**A:** Yes. Before approving a zoning change, Council will consider whether a proposed land use is appropriate. This happens prior to a use being established.

Any required provincial approvals must still be obtained before operation.

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**Q13. Is the proposed college currently approved by the Province?**

**A:** The Municipality does not confirm or regulate provincial approvals. Any private college must meet provincial requirements before it can legally operate.

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**Q14. Does the Municipality evaluate the college's business model, programs, or reputation?**

**A:** No. As outlined in Q3, the Municipality's role is limited to land use planning. These matters fall outside municipal jurisdiction.

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**Q15. Why is the Municipality considering this application given broader changes in the post-secondary sector?**

**A:** The Municipality is required to accept and process complete applications submitted under the Planning Act.

When making a decision, Council must focus on land use compatibility and conformity with provincial and municipal planning policies, rather than market conditions or sector trends. Broader changes in the post-secondary sector do not determine zoning decisions.

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**Q16. How was the public notified about this application?**

**A:** Public Notice was provided in accordance with the Planning Act about this application and public meeting. This includes circulation by mail to property owners within 120 metres of the subject lands and posting two large notice signs on the property.

Additional information has been made available through the Municipal website through both the Council calendar and the Current Developments Page.

Opportunities for public input are ongoing.

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**Q17. Will additional public input be considered before a final decision is made?**

**A:** Yes. Public comments remain part of the record and are considered by staff in preparing the recommendation report to Council.

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**Q18. What happens if the college does not proceed after zoning is approved?**

**A:** Zoning applies to the land, not a specific project or owner. This means the zoning would remain on the property until changed and any future use must comply with the zoning by-law and all applicable approvals at that time.

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**Q19. Could the approved zoning allow other uses beyond a college?**

**A:** Yes. Zoning establishes permitted uses for the land and in this case additional uses have been proposed in the application.

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**Q20. Can the uses proposed in the application be limited or modified?**

**A:** Yes. As part of the review, staff and Council consider the scope of requested uses and may recommend refining them to better reflect the intended development. Staff will be working with the applicant by providing feedback on the proposal as part of the application review.

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**Q21. Will this development place pressure on water and wastewater services and is there capacity in the system?**

**A:** Servicing capacity is a key consideration in development review. Development can only proceed where adequate services are available or can be provided in accordance with municipal and provincial requirements.

It is noted that the previous Georgian Bay Community School used these services and number of students was around 1000 at peak numbers. The new school is not proposed at the same level. While staff continue to

monitor available capacity in the system, current review indicates capacity is available.

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**Q22. How are cumulative growth impacts considered?**

**A:** The Municipality considers infrastructure capacity, traffic, and long-term planning policies when evaluating development proposals. Meaford's Official Plan sets out long-range policy and goals.

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**Q23. How are traffic impacts evaluated, including future or seasonal conditions?**

**A:** Traffic studies are reviewed by staff and the municipal traffic engineer, and may be updated as needed.

Considerations may include seasonal variations, surrounding developments, and overall road capacity.

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**Q24. Will there be enough parking onsite and is it possible there will be parking spillover into nearby neighbourhoods?**

**A:** The amount of parking is under review by staff.

New developments outside of the downtown area are expected to have no impact to surrounding neighbourhoods and new uses are not permitted to rely on street parking. The potential for spillover is something under review by staff.

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**Q25. Could the development impact neighbourhood character?**

**A:** Development can impact neighbourhood character. This is why compatibility with surrounding land uses is a key consideration in staff's review, including building scale, density, and overall site design.

In this case, only the dormitories are new to the site. Staff are reviewing the compatibility of the proposed dorms within the neighbourhood.

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**Q26. How will lighting, noise, or activity affect nearby properties?**

**A:** Proposals should have limited impacts to nearby properties and these impacts are addressed through zoning standards and site plan review.

For example, at the Site Plan Review stage, staff ensure that lighting is compatible with nearby properties by requiring low, downcast lighting. Applicants are required to provide a photometrics plan demonstrating there will be no light cast onto adjacent properties.

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**Q27. What impacts could construction have on nearby residents?**

**A:** Construction impacts are temporary and regulated through building permits and applicable by-laws.

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**Q28. Can Council turn down a Zoning Application because construction activities could be a nuisance for residents?**

**A:** No. Council cannot turn down an application for this reason. This is because these activities are temporary. The Municipality is required by the Province to have policies to accommodate growth which means some construction activities are expected. This includes larger scale buildings.

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**Q29. Has the condition of the existing building, including asbestos, been reviewed? Didn't the public school leave because of the condition of the building?**

**A:** During the zoning application process, the condition of a building is not reviewed because the application is seeking permission for a use on the whole property, regardless of the buildings.

Building condition and hazardous materials are addressed through building and environmental regulations. Any renovations must comply with applicable provincial requirements.

Regarding Georgian Bay Community School moving to the new location, this was done because of changing student numbers, not because the school building condition. The school moved to a new site to accommodate a combined school for JK-12 students.

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**Q30. Could the building be demolished?**

**A:** Yes, the building could be demolished. However, this application is proposing to retain the school building.

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**Q31. Why are dormitories included in the proposal and are they necessary?**

**A:** Dormitories are proposed to accommodate staff and students associated with the institutional use. Their appropriateness, scale, and compatibility are evaluated as part of the planning review.

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**Q32. Will this affect local housing availability?**

**A:** Providing on-site housing may reduce demand for off-site rentals. Broader housing trends are influenced by multiple factors.

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**Q33. What supporting studies are required for this application?**

**A:** Staff requested supporting materials in the form of a Planning Justification Report and a Traffic Impact Assessment with Parking Management Plan.

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**Q34. Why was the application submitted after the owner had already invested in the property?**

**A:** The timing of an application is determined by the property owner. The Municipality reviews the application once it is formally submitted.

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**Q35. Why is zoning being considered if details of the project are still evolving?**

**A:** The public meeting is part of the process to gather input. Additional information is reviewed before staff make a recommendation to Council.

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**Q36. Will safety impacts be considered?**

**A:** Safety is considered through site design, traffic analysis, and compatibility review.

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**Q37. Is the Municipality coordinating with the Province on college approvals?**

**A:** Municipal zoning and provincial licensing are separate processes. The Municipality may seek information where possible, but decisions are made independently.

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**Q38. Will increased population affect local services such as roads and businesses?**

**A:** Population increases are considered within infrastructure and planning reviews, but broader economic impacts are influenced by many factors beyond a single development.

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**Q39. Are there still opportunities to stay informed or involved?**

**A:** Yes. Members of the public can:

- Submit additional comments
- Request notice of Council's decision
- Review materials on the Municipal website and subscribe to the project updates (email subscription – scroll to the red Subscribe button on the right side of the page)