



VISION, PRINCIPLES & BASIS



CHAPTER 2 VISION, PRINCIPLES AND BASIS OF THE PLAN

2.1 CITY OF WATERLOO COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

This Official Plan is based on achieving the following community vision statement:

In 2031, the City of Waterloo has enhanced its friendly feel, welcoming and accommodating a diversity of people. Waterloo is a caring community where people support each other; a green City with healthy green spaces, land, water and clean air; an economic leader with a strong diverse economy; a community of vibrant neighbourhoods and a range of housing options; a learning community with strong ties to its schools, universities and college; an exciting City with abundant recreation, leisure, arts and cultural opportunities; and a City that is accessible to all. Waterloo is a better place to live, work, learn, shop and play than ever.

2.2 PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN

The City will strive to achieve a healthy and sustainable community by adopting the following four principles for growth that aim to provide for a balance of social, cultural, environmental, and economic interests. The principles reflect the long range direction for the City, are broad in a nature and are the foundation for the objectives and policies found in subsequent chapters of this Plan.

- (1) **Diversity and Adaptability** – Natural, social and economic systems are strongest when they incorporate diversity. This Plan emphasizes diversity within the physical form of the City, the natural systems, the social and cultural systems, and the local economy. Within the principle of diversity is the idea of adaptability. A system that has diversity is more adaptable to change than a system that lacks diversity. Adaptability also incorporates the idea of future orientation. The Plan will strive to balance the needs of today's population with the needs of future generations.
- (2) **Accessibility and Equity** – All members of the community have access to the goods and services they require in their daily lives. This does not necessarily mean that all neighbourhoods must be the same or include the same numbers of amenities. Rather, it means that the overall organization of the City and the transportation system shall allow all people equitable access to goods and services.
- (3) **Connectivity** – Connectivity has two elements: physical and non- physical. Physical connectivity refers to the linking of space, both built spaces and natural

spaces. Connectivity to places outside the City is also important. Connectivity should not favour efficiency over effectiveness and equity.

The non-physical element of connectivity refers to connecting people and information. The Plan is based on the principle that communities thrive and prosper when people can communicate, interact, exchange ideas, and share in community decision making. This Official Plan will be used as a tool to plan for, encourage, and in some cases provide opportunities that improves communication and interaction.

- (4) **Health and Vitality** – The principle of health is based on the idea that in order to succeed, a community must have the basic elements of physical safety and healthy air, water, and land. The principle of vitality means a city that is socially and culturally vibrant and diversity is desired and supported. Community vitality is most often expressed in the public spaces of the city including neighbourhoods, streets, squares, parks, community centres and other spaces. The Plan shall be based on the principle that public space is necessary to the establishment of community. To reflect the principles of health and vitality, our public spaces need to be comfortable, safe, beautiful, accessible, suitable, and convey a sense of identity. Public spaces provide the forum for public interaction, which is the key ingredient to the formation of a strong community.

2.3 BASIS OF THE PLAN

The development of this Plan has been based on an understanding of the local and broader context as well as anticipated trends and factors that may have an influence on growth and change in Waterloo. The purpose of this Section is to provide an overview of trends and factors that are considered to have a significant influence on the land use policies and designations of this Plan. The overview relates to, and should be read in conjunction with the remaining chapters of this Plan.

Growth and City Form

- (1) There is a limited supply of vacant land for future urban growth. To ensure that population and economic growth can be accommodated; land within the City must be used more efficiently. A significant proportion of the City's population and employment growth is expected to be accommodated through *intensification* within the existing Built-up Area, resulting in changes to height and density in existing areas. Focal points for *intensification* include the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre, *Major Transit Station Areas* and other designated Nodes and Corridors.

Further, the City will rely on *Designated Greenfield Areas* to accommodate a significant portion of population and employment growth. Using land more intensively within *Designated Greenfield Areas* may result in new communities that have higher densities than other suburban areas of the City.

- (2) The Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre is a focal point within the City, and Waterloo's Primary Node. The Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre will be planned to permit cultural facilities, recreational uses, institutional uses, public open spaces, residential, employment and commercial uses that collectively create a vibrant, human-scaled Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre. This form of growth will support transit and *active transportation* modes, reduce the need for automobile travel and commuting times to and from the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre, and support a *pedestrian*-oriented streetscape. In preparing this Official Plan, regard has been had to "Uptown Vision 2025".
- (3) The Region is planning to implement *rapid transit*. This Plan includes policies that support rapid transit and recognize it as being consistent with the City's policies for *intensification* within designated Nodes and Corridors. *Major Transit Station Areas* will be planned to support existing and planned transit service levels and will accommodate high density, *mixed-use*, transit-supportive development, where appropriate.
- (4) Waterloo will be planned as a *complete community* that provides opportunities for people at all stages of life to live, work, learn, shop, and play in close proximity. Planning for compact, *mixed-use* communities helps to reduce *infrastructure* and service duplication costs, preserves rural lands, encourages social interaction and a greater sense of community, supports alternative transportation modes, and reduces travel needs and commuting times.
- (5) A high standard of urban design supports a memorable, attractive, and livable city. To achieve this, policies of this Plan define key urban design elements to be applied generally across the City and more specifically within the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre and other designated Nodes and Corridors.

Networks and Transportation

- (6) Active forms of transportation provide alternatives to the automobile and this Plan places a high priority on encouraging *active transportation*. Objectives and policies in this Plan recognize the strong relationship between transportation and land use

by planning for a transportation network that supports designated Nodes and Corridors and their planned *intensification*, thereby providing people with the opportunity to live closer to where they work, learn, shop and play.

- (7) It is desirable to plan for and support a shift in focus from providing *roads* to move cars, to providing streets where people can interact and travel on, whether by foot, bicycle, transit or other motorized vehicle. *Roads* under the City’s jurisdiction will be planned to serve as a network of *complete streets*, facilitating the movement of, and interaction between, all travel modes – *pedestrians*, bicycles, transit and motorized vehicles – within and throughout the City. The *complete streets* concept recognizes that the streets within the road network provide meeting places for social and business interaction and as such, need to provide access for a full range of citizens within the community.
- (8) The City will support and contribute to the success of the public transit system. Policies in this Plan address the application of Transit-Oriented Development principles, integrating transit with other travel modes and supporting *rapid transit*.
- (9) Bicycle and vehicular parking are an integral component of the City’s transportation system. Policies outline the City’s expectations regarding the design and development of future parking areas to meet community needs and seek to ensure that parking areas balance the needs of motorists with the needs of users of active travel modes such as walking, or cycling.
- (10) The City will plan for the extension or expansion of existing services to ensure contiguous growth, minimize the under-utilization of municipal services and to support the achievement of minimum *intensification* targets within the Built-up Area. Where it is determined that adequate municipal water, sanitary or storm sewer capacity does not exist to support proposed development, the City shall not be obligated to provide such services in advance of available budget resources.
- (11) The City will plan for trails and open space networks and supporting facilities that are interconnected and serve transportation, recreation and leisure, and environmental functions.

Arts, Culture, Heritage, Recreation and Leisure

- (12) Healthy social and cultural systems contribute to a healthy, sustainable and economically vibrant community. This Plan also recognizes the importance of planning for the provision of a wide range of arts, culture, heritage, recreation and

leisure facilities, programs and services to meet the needs and contribute to the future quality of life of the community.

- (13) The City will plan to maximize the use of existing facilities and community resources in the provision of arts, culture, heritage, recreation and leisure facilities, services and programs.
- (14) In acknowledgment of the expanded powers and responsibilities provided to municipalities by the Province of Ontario, the *conservation of cultural heritage resources* is required. The Heritage policies of this Plan provide a detailed framework for *conservation of the City's cultural heritage resources*.

Economy

- (15) A strong, diverse economy is a pillar for a healthy, sustainable community. Policies recognize that Waterloo's economy is transitioning from one based on manufacturing and industrial activity to a more post- industrial economy with a greater focus on technology and knowledge industries and institutions. Further, this Plan contains policies that recognize Waterloo's diverse economy and protect Waterloo's *employment* areas from conversion to non-employment uses.
- (16) Creative, sustainable cities are supported by strong and interconnected social, cultural, economic and environmental systems. This Plan seeks to strengthen relationships between these systems, and recognizes that creative, sustainable cities will be competitive in the knowledge economy. This Plan recognizes that the City will play an active role in ensuring that Waterloo displays characteristics of a creative and sustainable city.
- (17) The City will play an important role in planning for and supporting efficient land use patterns that support a strong, sustainable economy.
- (18) The City will plan to support the growth and development of a well- educated workforce. Policies place a continued emphasis on collaboration and sharing of information and ideas between business, government and non-government organizations on issues of shared interest, including economic issues.
- (19) Research, academic, and other learning institutions are an important element of Waterloo's economy. Policies provide support for growth in research institutions and think tank clusters and recognize the planned growth of the three post-secondary educational institutions. The role of libraries is recognized in terms of facilitating access to information and lifelong learning opportunities.

Environment and Energy

- (20) A healthy, diverse environment is a pillar for a healthy, sustainable community. Policies are intended to protect significant environmental features and functions from *development* and *site alteration* that will have an *adverse environmental impact*.

- (21) The supply and efficient use of energy is critically important to the future of all residents, businesses and other institutions within Waterloo. Policies in the Plan encourage the efficient use of energy resources through community and site design as well as building techniques designed to conserve energy.