



# ECONOMY





## CHAPTER 7 ECONOMY

This chapter includes objectives and policies that recognize the importance of a diverse, strong, sustainable economy as addressed in several key areas outlined below.


**Employment Areas:** This section outlines the City’s employment growth forecast, and sets the framework for ensuring that the long-term supply of *employment areas* will meet future needs by limiting conversions of *employment areas* to non-employment uses.

**Planning for a Strong, Sustainable Economy:** Waterloo’s future economy will increasingly rely on the service sector and particularly knowledge industries, business services and technology companies. Advanced manufacturing will play an important supporting role to the local economy. Supporting a strong, sustainable economy will involve collaboration, the use of strategic land holdings to increase the supply of available employment lands, and supporting a range of lot sizes for employers. An Economic Development Strategy will facilitate an Employment Land Strategy for the City’s land holdings and place a focus on economic expansion and business retention. Further, efficient land use patterns, which are critical to a strong, sustainable economy, will be supported by a series of initiatives and other policies of this Plan.

**Waterloo as a Creative and Sustainable City:** A community’s quality of life, supported by healthy economic, environmental, social and cultural systems, is becoming increasingly important in attracting and retaining a skilled and knowledgeable work force. To ensure the City can continue to attract an educated and skilled workforce, policies within this section support strategies that position Waterloo as a creative and sustainable City that:

- Features high quality employment opportunities;
- Is comprised of a range of high quality arts, culture, heritage, recreation and leisure features, resources and/or opportunities;
- Supports social interaction and inclusion;
- Promotes and exemplifies leadership in environmental initiatives;
- Requires a high standard of urban design; and,
- Features an Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre that serves as a community destination and supports social interaction.

**Tourism:** Tourism is important to Waterloo’s future, as it stimulates the local economy and raises the City’s profile throughout the world. Official Plan policies identify a series of initiatives that are designed to support the tourism industry, with a focus on linkages between post-secondary educational institutions, think tanks and research institutes, as well as recreational, cultural, commercial and entertainment activities.



**Knowledge and Technology:** The local economy is transitioning from one based on manufacturing and industrial activity to a more post-industrial economy with a greater focus on technology companies and knowledge industries and institutions. To support this trend, Official Plan policies place emphasis on collaborations as well as planning for the sharing of information and ideas, with the latter being supported by telecommunications *infrastructure* as well as land use provisions that support innovation clusters and corridors. Policies recognize the planned growth of the three post-secondary educational institutions and define the City’s role in helping to meet their growth/expansion needs by planning for academic expansion, housing, activities and opportunities for faculty, staff and students. Objectives and policies relating to libraries recognize their role in a knowledge-based economy in terms of facilitating access to information and lifelong learning opportunities.

## 7.1 OBJECTIVES

- (1) Encourage a well balanced and diverse economy to serve the employment needs of existing and future residents, while planning for an increased focus on the service sector and particularly knowledge industries, business services and technology companies.
- (2) Develop a strong economic base that supports sustainability as a means to ensure long-term prosperity.
- (3) Plan for and encourage a more intensive built environment which makes efficient use of land.
- (4) Plan for and encourage *mixed-use* development and home-based businesses in appropriate locations.
- (5) Support and encourage entrepreneurship, creativity, connectivity and sharing of ideas.
- (6) Support, encourage, and where appropriate, participate in collaboration between public, private, non-profit sectors and all levels of educational institutions.
- (7) Provide a range of commercial opportunities that are well distributed throughout the community to meet the needs of consumers.
- (8) Position Waterloo as a creative, sustainable City by:



- (a) Supporting a vibrant, active, safe and stable Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre which serves as an economic, entertainment, administrative, social, cultural, and tourism focal point for the entire community; and,
  - (b) Supporting development which promotes environmental innovation and green technology.
- (9) Enhance and promote tourism opportunities.
- (10) Support methods to ensure the City of Waterloo maintains a strong position in the knowledge economy by:
- (a) Collaborating with post-secondary educational institutions to accommodate future enrollment growth and expansion by planning for academic expansion, housing, activities and opportunities for faculty, staff and students;
  - (b) Attracting and retaining a skilled and knowledgeable work force to support Waterloo’s post-industrial economy;
  - (c) Encouraging research clusters within the City to foster the sharing of ideas and experiences;
  - (d) Planning for spaces, services and activities that encourage interaction and creativity, support innovation, and contribute to a high quality of life;
  - (e) Investing in innovation, technology and communication infrastructure in order to foster knowledge, innovation and ideas; and,
  - (f) Supporting lifelong learning by providing appropriate opportunities, including libraries, for Waterloo residents.


## 7.2 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

- (1) Council may approve, and update as appropriate, additional documents to provide further direction with regard to the policies of this chapter. Such documents may include, but not be limited to:
- (a) Economic Development Strategy; and,
  - (b) Employment Lands Strategy.

## 7.3 EMPLOYMENT AREAS

- (1) The City will plan for an adequate supply of lands that is sufficient to accommodate an employment forecast of 23,930 additional jobs from 2006 to 2029.

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- (2) *Employment areas* are designated on **Schedule ‘A2’ - Employment Areas**. Policies describing the land use designation for properties identified as *employment areas* on **Schedule ‘A2’ - Employment Areas** are included in Chapter 10.
  - (3) Employment areas are critical to the local economy, and are anticipated to accommodate a significant share of employment growth to 2031. Policies 10.3.1(4) through 10.3.1(7) of this Plan address the protection of employment areas from conversion to non-employment uses.

## 7.4 PLANNING FOR A STRONG, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The City’s future economy will increasingly rely on the service sector, particularly knowledge-based industries, business services and technology companies. Advanced manufacturing will play an important supporting role for the local economy. A diverse, sustainable economy buffers communities and/or regions from single-sector economic downturns, while also reducing the community’s ecological footprint.

- (1) The City of Waterloo will plan for and support a well balanced, diverse, and sustainable economy as part of the City’s commitment to act as an effective environmental leader, while ensuring meaningful employment opportunities are available. In planning for and supporting a well balanced, diverse, and sustainable economy, the City will:
  - (a) Encourage, support and promote development that features *sustainable design*;
  - (b) Plan for a wide range of business clusters and economic activities that are directed to appropriate locations across the City;
  - (c) Continue to collaborate with and support economic development entities in an effort to attract sustainable growth that provides high- quality jobs, supports a diverse economy, and contributes to Waterloo’s future prosperity;
  - (d) Strategically use appropriate City land holdings to increase the supply of available *employment areas*, and increase the City’s reputation as a centre for knowledge-based institutions and industries;
  - (e) Support and plan for an appropriate range of lot sizes in the *employment areas* located in the City, while recognizing the constrained land supply in the City; and,
  - (f) Make strategic investments, or provide support to other public agencies and/or private entities, to provide key competitive *infrastructure* that supports sustainable business development and activity, including sewage and water systems, stormwater systems, utilities (such as electricity, natural gas and telecommunications), and the transportation system.

- (2) The City will approve and update an Economic Development Strategy in order to plan for a strong economy. The Economic Development Strategy will be used to:
  - (a) Develop an Employment Lands Strategy which seeks to plan strategically and effectively for the City's employment land holdings;
  - (b) Focus efforts toward economic expansion and business retention;
  - (c) Develop strategies to support sectors of the economy that are critical to the City's future competitiveness;
  - (d) Make measurable progress on the objectives and policies within this chapter; and,
  - (e) Provide, support, and reinforce other municipal goals and objectives.
  
- (3) A strong, sustainable economy that features efficient land use patterns will be achieved by:
  - (a) Encouraging a mix of uses within Nodes and Corridors as defined in the land use policies of this Plan;
  - (b) Planning for and developing, where appropriate, a transportation system that complements and facilitates the achievement of planned land use patterns, supports *rapid transit*, and the development of designated Nodes and Corridors as *mixed-use* areas;
  - (c) Planning for the provision of a range of appropriate *community infrastructure* within each Planning District with the goal of reducing automobile travel, encouraging a *sense of place* by reinforcing neighbourhood focal points;
  - (d) Supporting options to work from home by planning for an appropriate range of home-based occupations within residential land use designations;
  - (e) Planning for commercial land uses in accordance with a commercial land use hierarchy, as defined in the Land Use Policies of this Plan. The commercial hierarchy includes a range of commercial centres and areas of varying sizes and planned functions;
  - (f) Applying, where appropriate, minimum density targets for development occurring within land use designations that are anticipated to accommodate higher density employment uses; and,
  - (g) Using incentives that are appropriate to the local context, including Community Improvement Plans, to support land use patterns and a built form that are components of a strong, sustainable economy.
  
- (4) The City will continue to collaborate with business, government, non-profit groups, all levels of educational sectors, and community organizations or agencies on issues of shared interest, including:

- (a) Attracting and retaining a skilled labour force, including recent post-secondary graduates that support the City's key economic sectors;
  - (b) The continued promotion of the City as an intelligent community;
  - (c) Arts and cultural initiatives;
  - (d) Joint-service initiatives, joint-use facilities initiatives, and other innovative methods of facility, service and program delivery; and,
  - (e) Initiatives designed to protect, maintain, or enhance the natural environment.
- (5) The City will continue to actively support economic growth through a series of initiatives, which may include:
- (a) Support for organizations that promote advanced manufacturing;
  - (b) Support for appropriate small business networks; and,
  - (c) Strategic disposition of appropriate City land holdings.

## 7.5 WATERLOO AS A CREATIVE, SUSTAINABLE CITY

The policies of this Plan recognize that creative, sustainable cities that are supported by strong and interconnected social, cultural, economic and environmental systems will be successful attractors of new business, residents and visitors in the post-industrial economy.

- (1) The City will continue to position itself as a creative and sustainable community through the policies of this Plan that:
- (a) Promote Waterloo as a vibrant community, with a high quality of life and high quality employment opportunities;
  - (b) Plan for a wide range of land uses within the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre that support the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre as a community destination for people of different ages and backgrounds, with opportunities for social interaction in the public realm;
  - (c) Plan for arts, culture, heritage, recreation and leisure opportunities that serve a population of increasing cultural diversity, and support social interaction, inclusion, and community building through various City facilities, services and programs;
  - (d) Require a high standard of design for development, with an emphasis on encouraging the use of *sustainable design*. The City will approve and update Urban Design Guidelines to provide direction regarding the implementation of this Plan;
  - (e) Plan for a range of transportation modes through:
    - (i) Design, operation and maintenance of the road network as well as the parks, trails and open space network; and,

- (ii) Requiring development to contribute to, and support pedestrian, bicycle and transit as preferred forms of travel.
- (f) Protect *natural features* and the *ecological functions* they perform, and where appropriate, ensure such features are conveyed to, or acquired by the City;
- (g) In keeping with the City's Environment First Policy, position the City as a progressive environmental leader in the community; and,
- (h) Recognize that the City may create a strategy to encourage and support the growth of research institutions and think tanks in the community, particularly within the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre.

## 7.6 TOURISM

This Plan recognizes that tourism is an important component of the local economy. Visitors are attracted to the City by the post-secondary educational institutions, including think tanks and research institutes, recreational events and facilities, and the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre as a destination for shopping, entertainment, dining, major arts and festivals/events, and cultural facilities.

- (1) The City will continue to support tourism activities and future growth of tourism facilities and activities by:
  - (a) Continuing to support the maintenance and enhancement of tourism through participation and improvement of appropriate tourism initiatives, in collaboration with all partners, including neighbouring Municipalities and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo;
  - (b) Continuing efforts to improve and enhance the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre in order to facilitate investment and strengthen its economic viability, and improve the ambiance, aesthetics and function of the area as a tourist destination;
  - (c) Facilitating the safe, efficient and deliberate movement of *pedestrians* between major tourist facilities within the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre and major tourist facilities located between the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre and the Universities;
  - (d) Continuing to support and promote self-guided walking tours, the production of education and informative materials, and other public awareness tools related, but not limited to: local commercial retail and service businesses, heritage, recreational facilities, urban amenities, including local environmental features, and other exceptional attributes found within the City. This Plan recognizes that such material is a valuable component in an overall tourism development framework; and,



(e) Developing innovative information delivery modes to target and reach increasingly technology-oriented audiences for the purposes of promotion of tourism activities within the City.

(2) Consistent with the policies in the Arts, Culture, Heritage, Recreation and Leisure Chapter of this Plan, the City's history and heritage is valued by this community. *Cultural heritage resources* will be *conserved*, and where appropriate, historical artifacts will be highlighted and/or displayed.

## 7.7 WATERLOO IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

### 7.7.1 Post-Secondary Educational Institutions

Post-secondary educational institutions are critical to the City's strength within the knowledge-based economy. In planning for a strong knowledge economy, the City will continue to assist, where appropriate, the post-secondary educational institutions in achieving their long-term goals.

- (1) The City will work with post-secondary educational institutions to help accommodate campus growth needs.
- (2) Post-secondary educational institutions are encouraged to create campus master plans in consultation with the City, surrounding neighbourhoods, and other stakeholders, provided further that campus master plans should:
  - (a) Identify land use scenarios that are in keeping with this Official Plan;
  - (b) Identify and promote opportunities for intensification of the main campus lands;
  - (c) Focus growth to *Major Transit Station Areas*, Corridors and Nodes, including the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre;
  - (d) Create visual and physical connections to adjacent neighbourhoods;
  - (e) Enhance pedestrian connectivity, and contribute to an attractive, animated streetscape;
  - (f) Minimize traffic infiltration on adjacent neighbourhood streets;
  - (g) Promote *transportation demand management* strategies for staff, faculty, and students; and,
  - (h) Feature a high standard of urban design, including *sustainable design*.
- (3) The City prefers and encourages the development of housing on post-secondary institutional campuses for the use by students, staff and faculty of such institutions.
- (4) Post-secondary educational institutions are encouraged to focus growth within their existing campus lands, as a first priority. Should additional lands be required,

the City will plan for the expansion of post-secondary educational institutional uses in a manner that protects the character of abutting low-density residential neighbourhoods, or the function of other land use designations, through the identification of expansion areas. Expansion areas are identified in *Specific Provision Areas* on **Schedule 'A6' – Specific Provision Areas**, and include the following:

- (a) With respect to the University of Waterloo, lands identified in Specific Provision Area 34 and Specific Provision Area 35.
- (b) With respect to Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo, lands identified in Specific Provision Area 20.
- (c) With respect to Conestoga College, lands immediately adjacent to Marsland Drive, as identified in Specific Provision Area 36.
- (d) The Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre.

### 7.7.2 High Tech and Innovation Clusters

- (1) The City encourages the creation of high-tech and innovation clusters among similar and complementary businesses in order to foster the sharing of ideas, information, and to facilitate interactions.
- (2) High-tech and innovation clusters shall be located:
  - (a) Within *employment areas*;
  - (b) Within the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre, where appropriate; and/or,
  - (c) In designated Nodes and/or Corridors, where land use designations permit uses associated with high-tech and innovation clusters.
- (3) This Plan discourages high-tech and innovation clusters from locating on lands designated Flexible Industrial, given that lands designated Flexible Industrial are interior to employment areas and do not have convenient access to public transit.
- (4) The City encourages the further development of the University of Waterloo's Research and Technology Park as an opportunity for the knowledge-based and technology industry to locate within the City.
- (5) New Research and Technology Parks on lands designated "Academic" will be comprehensive developments and shall:
  - (a) Be multidisciplinary and incorporate academic, private business and government agencies;
  - (b) Contain *mixed-uses*, where appropriate, that include spaces for academic, office, and residential uses;

- (c) Offer an appropriate range of complementary commercial, recreational, and leisure amenities to support and serve the employees, and on-site population;
- (d) Demonstrate environmental leadership through sustainable design; and,
- (e) Be encouraged to develop at a high density with shared, structured, or underground parking.

### 7.7.3 Telecommunications

- (1) Recognizing that telecommunications *infrastructure* are important to Waterloo's current and future economy, the City:
  - (a) Is supportive of developing, maintaining, and extending, where appropriate, a system of information and communications technology *infrastructure* that contributes to the City's identity as an intelligent community;
  - (b) Is supportive of initiatives that provide residents and businesses with wireless internet access in the City, such as the Uptown Waterloo Wi- Fi Zone, in order to leverage the City's reputation as a centre for excellence in the technology sector; and,
  - (c) May approve and update, as appropriate, a Telecommunication Tower Policy to address location and height issues surrounding wireless transmission towers and in general to lessen their impact on the skyline.

### 7.7.4 Lifelong Learning

- (1) Lifelong learning supports a healthy population and an engaged community. In accordance with the Public Libraries Act, the City will support the Library Board in delivering a library service that supports lifelong learning and literacy for everyone in the community, regardless of economic or social status.
  - (a) A library service will be supported that recognizes its role as a community information and education centre for people of all ages and from all backgrounds.
  - (b) The approved district branch model for library service delivery will be supported, which maintains an expanded Main Library in Uptown Waterloo, a neighbourhood branch on Parkside Drive, and the development of two district-sized branch libraries in east and west Waterloo. This model recommends that new libraries be developed as part of joint-facilities/multi-use centres.
  - (c) In addition to facility-related services, City-wide services will be expanded through the use of appropriate technologies and through collaboration with other organizations/agencies.