

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 2051, the City of Waterloo is a green resilient and low carbon city with healthy green spaces, land, water and clean air; well-designed in accordance with local urban design objectives; an economic leader with a strong diverse economy; an inclusive 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.

2.2 PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN

Achievement of the vision is guided by a set of principles that draw from the pillars of sustainability. These principles form the foundation of the objectives and policies found in subsequent chapters of this Plan.

(1) Environmental Sustainability

An environmentally sustainable city is one that supports a healthy urban and natural environment, both within and beyond its borders, is resilient to the impacts of climate change, makes efficient use of resources and green *infrastructure*, and supports low-carbon practices such as local clean energy production, reduced energy consumption, *active transportation* and public transit. This Plan recognizes the important role that built form, building design, transportation *infrastructure* and natural and public spaces play in safeguarding human and ecosystem health, and supporting choices that will help Waterloo transition to a low carbon community.

(2) Equity and Inclusion

An equitable and inclusive city offers people of all ages, abilities, incomes and backgrounds and equity-deserving groups, a high quality of life, health and wellness, feeling of safety and a sense of belonging. An equitable city offers public and private spaces and amenities that acknowledge the cultural heritage of the past and support the cultural practices of the present. This Plan acknowledges Indigenous heritage and takes steps to support truth and reconciliation in planning and planning processes. It also strives to meet the needs of our growing and diversifying population by supporting equitable access to and a diversity of options for housing, transportation, employment, and amenities. The Plan provides policies to guide planning and design of inclusive, vibrant, and accessible public realms and developments that foster social interaction.

(3) Economic Sustainability

An economically sustainable city supports opportunities for employment, investment, talent attraction and retention, *affordable* and accessible housing, and plans for the long term and life-cycle costs of growth and supporting *infrastructure* and services. This Plan provides direction for the efficient and cost-effective use of land and *infrastructure*, opportunities for employment, commercial and academic growth, and an increased supply and diversity of housing, including *affordable* housing, to support the community's prosperity, competitiveness and resilience, provided other City objectives related to complete communities, built form and urban design are achieved.

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. Most of the City's population and employment growth will be accommodated through *intensification* within the existing Urban Area. Focal points for *intensification* include the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, Major Transit Station Areas and other designated Nodes and Corridors. Areas outside of priority growth areas will be planned to accommodate some growth through context-sensitive *intensification*.
- (2) Uptown Waterloo is a focal point within the City, and forms Waterloo's Primary Node. The Uptown Waterloo Primary Node 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 area. 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 area, and support a *pedestrian*-oriented streetscape.
- (3) The policies in this Plan support public transit investments by focusing *intensification* within designated Major Transit Station Areas, the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, and designated Nodes and Corridors. These areas will be planned to support existing and planned transit service levels and will accommodate *Transit Oriented*

Development.

- (4) Waterloo will be planned to support *complete communities* that provides opportunities for people at all stages of life, incomes and abilities 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 a diversity of housing options, social interaction and a greater sense of community, supports *active transportation* and transit, 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 Primary Node, Major Transit Station Areas, 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 residents within the community.
- (8) 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, cycling, or rolling.
- (9) 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 developed areas. 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.

- (10) 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.

City Liveability

- (11) 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.
- (12) 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.
- (13) 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

- (14) This Plan contains policies that recognize Waterloo's diverse economy and protect Waterloo's *employment* areas from conversion to non-employment uses in accordance with the Provincial Planning Statement and the City's planning objectives for *employment* in this Plan.
- (15) 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.
- (16) 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.
- (17) 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

- (18) 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*.
- (19) 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.