

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the assumptions and context that provide the basis for the objectives and policies of this Official Plan. Statements contained in this chapter must be read in conjunction with the remaining chapters of this Official Plan (the Plan).

1.1 PURPOSE AND REVIEW

The Official Plan is the primary long-range, comprehensive municipal planning document that outlines a framework for land use decision-making for the City of Waterloo (the City). This Plan is adopted by City of Waterloo Council with input from the community and represents Council's vision for growth and change within the community, guided by the public interest. The Plan sets a broad, coordinated vision for all lands within the City, and supports the overall goal of achieving a healthy community built on the principles of diversity and adaptability, accessibility and equity, sustainability, connectivity, health and vitality. The area affected by this Plan constitutes all lands under the jurisdiction of the Corporation of the City of Waterloo.

This Official Plan contains principles, objectives, and policies designed to direct the form, extent, nature and rate of growth and change within the municipality to the year 2051.

The Plan will be reviewed every five years or whenever there is a fundamental change in the basic assumptions upon which the Plan is based, whichever comes first. This will ensure that changes in social, economic, environmental, technological, and demographic conditions are reflected in the policy framework of the Plan.

1.2 LEGAL STATUS OF THE PLAN

This Official Plan provides a long-term vision for all lands within the City of Waterloo. While more than a land use plan, the legal status for this Official Plan centres on land use planning.

The Official Plan has status in law pursuant to the provisions of the Planning Act and has the effect of requiring that the municipality conform to the Official Plan when undertaking public works or passing by-laws. The Plan also outlines principles, objectives and policies, and criteria to guide the decisions of the private sector and co-ordinate public and private efforts during the process of urban change.

1.3 CONTEXT OF THE PLAN

In preparing the Plan, Council has recognized its role within the *Province* and the Regional Municipality of Waterloo (the Region). Requirements stemming from legislation, plans and policies of the *Province* and the Region have been incorporated into this Plan.

The Plan recognizes the multi-level planning framework provided for in the Planning Act.

When approved in accordance with the Planning Act, this Plan shall become the Official Plan of the City of Waterloo and shall be deemed to conform to the Regional Official Plan, and be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement.

The Plan recognizes that the City operates in a regional context and that the City will continue to liaise and collaborate with local area municipalities regarding inter-municipal issues, and the Region of Waterloo regarding matters of regional interest.

1.4 USING AND INTERPRETING THE PLAN

The Plan is a comprehensive and cohesive document and is meant to be read in its entirety. The Plan consists of text, tables, and schedules. All text is to be considered part of the Plan, including chapter and section introductions that are not numbered as individual policies. Words that are italicized in the text of this document are defined in the Glossary to this Plan.

Boundaries for land use designations, designated Nodes and Corridors, and Major Transit Station Areas, as well as references to quantities, proportions and dates are deemed to be definitive, except where they coincide with natural features. The boundaries along natural features will be delineated in accordance with the policies of Chapter 8 of this Plan.

City Council is responsible for interpreting all portions of this Official Plan. Where an interpretation of the Plan involves a matter of Regional Official Plan policy, such interpretation of the City of Waterloo Official Plan shall be made by the Council of the City of Waterloo in co-operation with the Council of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. In instances where the policies of this Plan refer to an action or decision of Council, Council shall be deemed to include Council of The Corporation of The City of Waterloo and its delegated persons or bodies.

It is recognized that some properties within the City may have a split designation and/or zoning, meaning that a land use designation or zone boundary (or boundaries) divides the property into two or more sub-areas, with each having a different land use designation or zone. Where this occurs on designations that permit residential uses, the overall residential density of the property shall not exceed the sum of the calculated densities permitted under each of the individual zones, unless otherwise contemplated in this Plan. Permitted residential density may be transferred across a land use designation or zone boundary, provided the property is developed and used as a single parcel of land under the same ownership or the same condominium and that all other provisions of the individual designation and implementing zoning are met, including those related to height, built form and permitted uses.

Where lands are dually designated, meaning that two separate designations are applied to the lands, it is the intent of this Plan that the land uses contemplated in either or both of the designations shall be permitted, provided all other relevant provisions of this Plan and the implementing zoning are met.

Permitted land uses identified in the policies of this Plan are intended to illustrate the range of activities contemplated in each respective land use designation and do not denote a complete list of permitted uses.

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A full list of permitted uses will be defined in the City's Zoning By-law. It is the intent of this Plan that multiple zones may be established to implement each land use designation in Section 10 of this Plan, and that each zone may contain a restricted range of permitted uses based on planning considerations such as the nature of the development, the planned function of the site/area, built form objectives of the City and any other criteria that the City deems appropriate based on the context of the site.

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This Plan provides a framework for strategic investment. Any indication of *roads*, parks and other facilities provides information on the general location of such *infrastructure* and facilities to property owners, developers and future residents, and the exact locations and timing of public investment are subject to further detailed analysis, design, as well as capital budget approvals.

Policies in this Plan that use the words “will” or “shall” express a mandatory course of action. Where the word “should” is used, the City may consider suitable alternative approaches to meet the intent of the policy. Where the words “encourage” or “may” are used, it indicates that the City requires that consideration be given to the policy, but not necessarily compliance in all instances. The words “promote” or “support” mean that actions will be taken to advocate for and/or achieve a desired result.

None of the objectives or policies of this Plan are intended to formally commit City Council to provide funding for their implementation. Funding decisions will be made by City Council on a case-by-case basis.

The provisions of this Plan shall not apply to the use of any land or to the erection or use of any building or structure for the purpose of a public service or services by the City, the Region or any department or Ministry of the *Province* or the Government of Canada. Agencies, boards or other bodies funded wholly or in part by the *Province* shall be bound by the provisions of this Plan, unless specifically exempt through legislation.

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1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

Chapter 1 **INTRODUCTION** – Introduces the main purpose of this Official Plan, a document intended to guide growth and change in the City of Waterloo within the Provincial and Regional context. This chapter also outlines how to use and interpret the Plan.

Chapter 2 **VISION, PRINCIPLES AND BASIS OF THE PLAN** – Describes the vision,

principles, trends and other factors which form the foundation for the Plan and have a significant influence on the land use policies and designations of the Plan.

Chapter 3 **CITY FORM** – Provides the framework for shaping the City into a *complete community* with a strong emphasis on urban design. Policies describe the City structure, including a series of designated Nodes and Corridors, the Uptown Waterloo Urban Growth Centre, *Major Transit Station Areas*, and *Designated Growth Areas* which will be planned to accommodate a significant share of future growth.

Chapter 4 **ARTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE, RECREATION AND LEISURE** – Provides the policy framework for preserving Waterloo’s cultural heritage and providing new opportunities for arts, cultural, heritage, recreation and leisure experiences that support an overall high quality of life.

Chapter 5 **NETWORKS** – Defines a series of interconnected networks that support the Waterloo community, including: servicing and utilities; parks, trails and open space; *road*; and rail.

Chapter 6 **TRANSPORTATION** – Describes the transportation system that facilitates the movement and interaction of people and goods between land uses within the City and to external destinations.

Chapter 8 **ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY** – Policies provide direction with respect to the protection, management, and stewardship of the environment. This takes the form of maintaining, enhancing and restoring the Natural System and our water resources, ensuring environmental health and safety, supporting the sustainable production and use of energy, improving air quality and reducing contributions to climate change, and encouraging sustainable development practices.

Chapter 9 **MINERAL AGGREGATES** – Policies recognize the need to protect Mineral Aggregate Resources Areas for long-term uses, while acknowledging that a large portion of identified Mineral Aggregate Resources Areas are owned by the City of Waterloo and therefore extraction is unlikely over the planning horizon of this Plan.

Chapter 10 **LAND USE DESIGNATIONS** – Policies and accompanying Schedules indicate the City’s intent with regard to existing and future land uses.

Chapter 11 **AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES** – Policies pertain to specific areas of the City where the application of the land use policy framework of this Plan does not provide sufficient clarity regarding the City’s intent for the future use of land. Policies contain additional direction regarding the development of specific areas.

Chapter 12 **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN** – Policies outline the tools and procedures that the City will use to implement the provisions of this Plan and to ensure open and transparent communication and decision-making. Policies address public involvement in general.