



AN INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING

Land use planning is used to manage the development of land by regulating land uses in an efficient and ethical way. It helps decide where homes and factories should be built; where parks and schools should be located; and where roads, sewers and other essential services should be provided.

Land use planning means managing our land and resources. It helps each community set goals about how it will grow and develop and to work out ways of reaching those goals while keeping important social, economic and environmental concerns in mind. It balances the interests of individual property owners with the wider interests and objectives of the whole community. Good planning leads to orderly growth and the efficient provision of services. It touches all of us and helps us to have the kind of community we want.

The following has been prepared to help you understand how the land use planning process works in Ontario. This information is intended to give general information only and is not an interpretation of the Planning Act or any other act. You should refer to the legislation for specific requirements and procedures or contact municipal staff for more information.

Planning Act

The *Planning Act* sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario and describes how land uses may be controlled, and who may control them. The Act provides the basis for:

- Considering provincial interests;
- Establish local planning administration;
- Preparing official plans;
- Streamlining planning processes;
- Regulating and controlling land use through zoning by-laws and minor variances;
- Dividing land into separate lots through a plan of subdivision or severance;

- Ensuring the rights of local citizens to be notified about planning proposals; and
- Ensuring the approval authorities have regard to decisions made by municipal councils.

Provincial Policy Statement 2014

The PPS 2014 provides direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development and promotes the provincial “policy led” planning system. The *Planning Act* requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters “shall be consistent with” the PPS.

Town Official Plan

An Official Plan is a comprehensive, long-range planning document approved by the province and designed to guide and direct future growth in a logical and orderly manner to the benefits of all residents. It can be considered a blueprint of how a municipality wants to guide and direct future land use development and growth.

The Official Plan sets out areas of the Town intended for residential, industrial, commercial and institutional, as well as identifying major open space areas and parkland. The plan contains general policies to guide development within the various land use designations. Policies within the OP are then implemented through the more detailed land use regulations contained within the Town’s Zoning By-law.

Official Plan Amendment

An Official Plan Amendment (OPA) is required when a property owner wishes to develop land differently than what is permitted in the Official Plan. OPAs can be Town-wide, area-wide or site-specific.

Please see the Official Plan Amendment handout for more detailed information regarding this process.

Zoning By-law 12-019

A Zoning By-law contains provisions that regulate the use, size, height, density and location of buildings on properties within the Town. The basic purpose of a Zoning By-law is to regulate what you can build.

Zoning By-law Amendment

A Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA) is required when a property owner cannot meet the requirements of the

existing zone or if the property owner intends to alter the property in a manner that significantly differs from the requirements of the existing zoning, including:

- a complete change of use;
- a major reduction in zoning provisions; and
- an inclusion of a certain use that is similar, but not permitted, by the existing zoning.

Please see the Zoning By-law Amendment handout for more detailed information regarding this process.

Minor Variance

The owner of any land, building or structure who has been unable to comply with the provisions of the Zoning By-law (i.e. height, setbacks or lot coverage) may apply to the Committee of Adjustment for a minor variance.

Please see the Minor Variance handout for more detailed information regarding this process.

Creation of New Lots

Plan of Subdivision

A Plan of Subdivision is a method of dividing land into two or more parcels or lots so that those parcels or lots can be held in separate ownership. The approval process is governed by Section 51 of the *Planning Act* and includes consideration of where streets, parks and dwellings will be located. The plan must also address servicing issues related to storm and sanitary sewers and protection of natural features such as woodlots or watercourses.

Please see the Plan of Subdivision handout for more detailed information regarding this process.

Consent

The severance application has several purposes, such as the creation of a new lot; the addition of land from one lot to an adjacent lot; and the granting of an easement.

Consent applications are normally utilized when a developer or owner of a property would like to create a small number of lots.

Please see the Consent handout for more detailed information regarding this process.



For more information, please contact:

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