

Planning Rationale

Terms of Reference

1. Description

A Planning Rationale is a document to organize and validate the planning justification in support of the *Planning Act* application and to assist staff and the public in the review of the proposal. This document should also demonstrate why the applicant believes their proposal represents good planning and how the *Planning Act* application is consistent with the Official Plan, relevant secondary plans, other Council adopted plans and policies and the Provincial Policy Statement.

2. When Required

A Planning Rationale is required for the following planning applications:

- Official Plan amendment
- Zoning By-law amendment
- Plan of Subdivision

Note: The level of detail provided in the sections below should be proportionate to the scale and complexity of the planning application. For example, small-scale development requiring a Zoning By-law amendment may have less significant implications on the Strategic Directions and Growth Management objectives of the Official Plan, compared to Official Plan amendments for high-density mixed-use developments, or large-scale institutions.

3. Contents

A Planning Rationale will contain and/or address the critical issues identified in a pre-consultation meeting, in addition to the relevant objectives listed below. Failure to address identified issues, or to include the content described below, may result in the application being considered incomplete. In the case of a property where a secondary plan applies, please include specific reference to applicable secondary plan policies within the sections outlined below. Through pre-consultation with staff, key objectives and policies addressed in Section B - Policy Justification, may be identified for more thorough analysis as part of the Planning Rationale.

A - Executive Summary

Provide a high level overview of the proposed *Planning Act* application and the findings of the planning rationale analysis.



B – Introduction

Summarize the planning application:

- Provide a brief overview of the local context, including a description of the areas surrounding the site, existing site conditions and uses, topographical characteristics, and connectivity.
- Explain the details of the proposal including, but not limited to, buildings, landscaping, mobility and connectivity, and phasing. Provide key development statistics as they relate to height, density, gross floor area, setbacks, trees, soft landscaping, parking, etc.
- Explain previous approvals or other pertinent applications from the City or relevant authorities as they relate to application. If possible, include previous file numbers and/or copies of documents.
- Include relevant visuals to situate the proposal in context to relevant Official Plan Schedules and Annexes, as well as renderings (e.g., aerial photos, concept plans, drawings and schematics, etc.). This should include maps of any natural heritage features or existing tree cover, where applicable.

Provincial Policy Statement

- Describe how the project is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.

Official Plan Designation

- Indicate the Transect, as per Section 5 of the Official Plan (e.g. Downtown Core, Inner Urban, etc.), where the subject site is located, and indicate if an Overlay applies as per Section 5.6.
- Describe and summarize the applicable designation policies, as per Official Plan Sections 6-9 (e.g. Hubs, Corridors, Neighbourhoods, Industrial and Logistics, Mixed Industrial, Special Districts, Greenspace, Greenbelt, Village, Agricultural Resource Area, Rural Countryside, Rural Industrial and Logistics).

Zoning By-law

- For Official Plan amendment applications, indicate the current zoning and provide additional provisions and permissions applicable to the site.

Parks

- Demonstrate how the proposal meets the requirements under the Parkland Dedication By-law. Provide details regarding the provision of new parks, or



the extension of existing parks. Describe how the proposal meets the policies in Sub-section 4.4 - Parks and Recreation Facilities, of the Official Plan and responds to the needs assessments outlined in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan. If cash-in-lieu of parkland is proposed, provide a rationale.

Other Applicable Policies or Studies

- Discuss any other applicable City policies relevant to the proposal, including any in-progress City lead policy initiatives that may impact the development, that have been indicated as relevant at pre-consultation.

C - Policy Justification

Strategic Directions and Growth Management

- Provide a detailed description of how the *Planning Act* application supports all applicable Strategic Directions outlined in Section 2 of the Official Plan, referring to City-wide policies of Section 4, and policies linked to cross cutting issues found throughout the Official Plan. The rationale should consider the high-level “Big Policy Moves” (Section 2.1) and specifically address the “Cross Cutting Issues” (Section 2.2), listed below. Note that the cross-cutting issues have corresponding symbols as examples connecting them to implementation policies throughout the OP
 - Intensification
 - Economic Development
 - Energy and Climate Change
 - Healthy and Inclusive Communities
 - **Note: further healthy communities’ analysis and considerations can be incorporated into other required appraisals such as an Environmental Assessment or background studies.*
 - Gender and Racial Equity
 - Culture
 - **Note: Refer to the City’s ‘Cultural Spaces Inventory’ to identify cultural assets located on site, or adjacent to the site.*
- Provide an overview of how the proposal achieves growth objectives contained in Section 3 of the Official Plan.
- Describe how the proposal fits with the Transect policies of Section 5 and furthers the policies pertaining to the relevant land use designations per Sections 6-9. Comment on how the project reflects the intended built form



and site design for the site, based on Official Plan direction contained in the Transect, Designation and Urban Design (Section 4.6) sections.

Official Plan

- Indicate requested Official Plan amendment(s) to permit development proposal, if applicable. Outline if the amendments are to result in an Area-specific policy as per Section 12, or a redesignation of the property.

D - Integrated Environmental Review

- For projects that require an environmental impact study, the Planning Rationale should incorporate an Integrated Environmental Review. This can be done as part of the policy justification section of the Planning Rationale or as a separate section. The Integrated Environmental Review should summarize how the proposal has incorporated key recommendations from the environmental impact study and other supporting technical studies to demonstrate its compliance with relevant Official Plan policies. The appropriate policies and required supporting studies will be identified through pre-application consultation at the beginning of the design and review process.
- For complex proposals, a stand-alone Integrated Environmental Review may be required. A final updated version of the Integrated Environmental Review (whether stand-alone or excerpted from the Planning Rationale) may be required as a condition of approval for some plans of subdivision.

E – Conclusion

- The author should conclude with a summary statement and analysis that explains, in the author's professional opinion, how the proposed project constitutes good planning. References to the conclusions of supporting technical reports and policy interpretations may be included to support the opinion.

4. Evaluation Criteria

- Provincial Policy Statement
- Provincial guidelines, regulations and policies
- Official Plan
- Transportation Master Plan
- Climate Change master Plan
- Relevant City By-laws



- City policies and standards

The Planning Rationale should demonstrate compliance and consistency with the above plans, policies, guidelines and standards.

5. Roles and Responsibilities / Qualifications

The Planning Rationale should be signed by a full Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (MCIP).

