

# What is an Official Plan amendment?

## What is the Official Plan?

The City of Ottawa's Official Plan provides a vision for the future growth of the city and guides the physical development and use of land over the long-term. It is a legal document that addresses matters of provincial interest defined by the Provincial Policy Statement under the *Ontario Planning Act*.

The Official Plan determines:

- Where new housing, industry, offices, and shops will be located
- What services like roads, watermains, sewers, parks, and schools will be needed
- When, and in what order, parts of your community will grow
- Community improvement initiatives

The Official Plan is a high-level document. Its objectives are implemented through zoning, minor variances, site plan control, plans of subdivision, severance, local improvement strategies, and more detailed secondary planning processes.

Understanding what an Official Plan amendment is and how it affects you is the first step to getting involved.

## What an Official Plan amendment can change

An Official Plan amendment can be citywide, area-wide or site-specific. Each Official Plan amendment proposal is unique; however, here are few things to keep in mind.

### ✓ The City considers the effect of a proposed amendment in terms of its:

- » Consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement
- » Achievement of the strategic directions of the Official Plan
- » Impact on the neighbouring communities
- » Fiscal and functional impact on infrastructure, services and transportation

## What is the Official Plan amendment process?

### Pre-application consultation meeting

Those who apply for an Official Plan amendment must meet with Development Review staff from the City of Ottawa for a pre-application consultation meeting. Development Review staff outline what studies and plans are required and provide an overview of the land use principles that must be addressed by the proposed Official Plan amendment before it will be reviewed.

### Public notification

The City notifies registered community groups once the application is submitted to the City. For a site-specific Official Plan amendment, the City installs a notification sign on the lands affected by the proposal and notifies nearby property owners. For a Citywide Official Plan amendment, notices are published in local newspapers.

### Technical review

Reviewing an Official Plan amendment application involves many individuals including City Planners, Engineers, Architects, City Councillors, registered community groups, residents, provincial ministries and agencies, and other professionals.

The *Planning Act* lays out the base standards for when consultation takes place, with whom, and to what degree.

### Staff recommendation at Committee meeting

Planning staff provide a recommendation, in most cases, to either the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee (for rural area amendments) or the Planning Committee (for all other proposed amendments).

### Council decision and appeal period

Committee considers the report and the opinion of public delegations and makes a recommendation to City Council. City Council then approves or refuses the Official Plan amendment. Notice of the decision is given within 15 days of the approval or refusal date. The process takes approximately six months. The Council decision may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal, which is the provincial tribunal that is the final arbiter of any planning disputes.

## How to Get Involved

- Submit written comments to the assigned Planner
- Attend the public open house and/or committee meeting(s) at City Hall
- Make a presentation when the proposed amendment is presented for review at a City committee meeting. Be prepared to come with information about how you believe the proposal impacts you.
- Only by making a written or oral presentation at a committee meeting at City Hall or a written submission before Council makes its decision, are you able to appeal a Council's decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal



## For More Information:

For information regarding a specific application, please contact the Planner assigned to the application or visit:

[ottawa.ca/devapps](http://ottawa.ca/devapps)

For general information on Official Plan amendments, please call 3-1-1 and ask to speak to a Development Information Officer or visit:

[ottawa.ca/opamendment](http://ottawa.ca/opamendment)