



## GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A PLANNING RATIONALE FOR OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS

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A **Planning Rationale** is required to be submitted with all applications for Official Plan Amendments to any Official Plan in the City of Kingston. **An application will not be considered complete unless this information is submitted** to the Planning & Development Department, together with the completed application form, application fees, and any background studies required in support of the application.

### 1. **What is a Planning Rationale?**

A Planning Rationale is a document that will provide an overall planning description and rationale for understanding the proposed Official Plan Amendment, and is intended to help the applicant organize and provide written support for the application. The document will assist staff in reviewing the proposal and will assist in the City's assessment and recommendations on the application.

### 2. **What is the purpose of a Planning Rationale?**

A Planning Rationale is required as part of an application for an Official Plan Amendment in order to:

- (a) Provide a clear description and understanding of the proposal;
- (b) Provide an opportunity at the outset for the proponent to establish why the proposal should be considered and approved;
- (c) Highlight information specific or particular to the proposal (i.e. special history, different circumstances, etc.); and,
- (d) Enable staff to analyze and prepare recommendations on the application.

A **Planning Rationale** is **not** intended to be a personal analysis or business case for a proposed development. Instead, the **Planning Rationale** should examine the impact of the proposal on the surrounding community, and vice versa.

### 3. **Who can prepare a Planning Rationale?**

Depending on the complexity of the application, the information requirements can be addressed in a letter of several pages or a longer report. The material can be prepared by the owner, the agent, the applicant or a member of the consultant team, depending on the nature of the application.

**In a complex application, it is recommended that a planning professional be retained to prepare the Planning Rationale. The benefits to the applicant of hiring a planning professional can be significant in presenting the proposal in its best form, which may result in cost and time savings.**

For a list of Registered Professional Planners that provide consulting services, please refer to the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) website at [www.ontarioplanners.on.ca](http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca).

### 4. **Under what authority can a Planning Rationale be requested?**

The *Planning Act* gives a municipality the authority to require that a Planning Rationale be prepared. Under Sections 22(4) & (5) of the *Planning Act*, a Council or a Planning Board has the authority to request such other information or material that the authority needs in order to evaluate and make a decision on an application.

## 5. What specifically does a Planning Rationale contain?

**A Planning Rationale shall contain and/or address, at a minimum, the points listed below. The failure to address the following points may result in the application for the Official Plan Amendment being considered incomplete.**

- (a) Include a description and overview of the proposal, including any major features or attributes (i.e., height, density, parking, architectural design, natural heritage features, etc.).
- (b) Indicate whether there are other planning approvals required, and if those necessary applications have been filed (i.e. Zoning By-Law Amendment, Site Plan Control Agreement, Minor Variance, Draft Plan of Subdivision or Condominium, etc.).
- (c) Provide a physical description of the site, including descriptions of current land use(s) and surrounding land uses, context, and/or built form.
- (d) Include a description of the site’s planning history, including previous planning approvals and/or agreements (i.e. Site Plan Control Agreement, site-specific by-law, etc.), and provide copies of the pertinent documents.
- (e) Indicate the availability of other property already designated for the proposed use, if any.
- (f) Provide a draft of the proposed Official Plan text and mapping, if applicable.
- (g) Describe how the proposal conforms to the general purpose, intent, philosophy, and goals of the Official Plan.
- (h) Describe the way in which relevant Official Plan policies will be addressed, including both general policies and site-specific land use designations and policies.
- (i) Indicate whether the proposal complies with any applicable City Planning studies (e.g. Urban Growth Strategy; Regional Commercial Study Update; etc.).
- (j) Describe the suitability of the site, and indicate reasons why the development is appropriate for this site and will function well to meet the needs of the intended future users.
- (k) Provide a detailed analysis of the compatibility of the proposed development or land use designation with the existing adjacent developments and land use designations.
- (l) Provide justification that the proposal is appropriate land use planning, including details of any methods that are used to mitigate potential negative impacts.
- (m) Describe the impact of the proposed amendment on the natural environment.
- (n) Describe the impact of the proposed amendment on municipal services (e.g. sewage collection and treatment systems, water distribution and treatment systems, utilities, roads, transit, parking, community facilities, parks and open space, etc.).
- (o) Indicate how the proposed amendment complies with the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2005), and provide any other *Planning Act* considerations that are relevant. If you are not familiar with either of these documents, please contact the City of Kingston Planning & Development Department, or visit the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca>.