City of Kingston Guideline for Preparing a Planning Rationale for Official Plan Amendment Applications

A Planning Rationale is required to be submitted with all applications for Official Plan Amendment in the City of Kingston. An application for Official Plan Amendment will not be considered complete unless the following information is submitted to the Planning, Building and Licensing Services, 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 of the application and justification in support of the proposed Official Plan Amendment.

A Planning Rationale is not intended to be a personal analysis or business case for a proposed development.

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) Assist staff in reviewing the proposal and assist in the City’s assessment and recommendations on the application;

(c) Provide an opportunity at the outset for the proponent to establish why the proposal should be considered and approved;

(d) Highlight information specific or particular to the proposal (e.g. special history, different circumstances); and,

(e) Establish how the proposal conforms to the policies of the City of Kingston Official Plan and is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.
3. Who can prepare a Planning Rationale?

The City of Kingston requires that a Planning Rationale be completed by a Registered Professional Planner or equivalent qualified person approved by the Director of Planning, Building and Licensing Services.

The benefits to the applicant of hiring a Registered Professional Planner can be significant in presenting the proposal in its best form, which may result in cost and time savings.

The planning rationale will stand as a record should the application end up at an Ontario Municipal Board Hearing.

For a list of Registered Professional Planners that provide consulting services, please refer to the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) website at www.ontarioplanners.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) and (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 or insufficient to support the application.

(a) Include a description and overview of the proposal, including any major features or attributes (e.g. height, density, parking, architectural design, retained and/or protected natural heritage features).

(b) Indicate whether there are other planning approvals required, and if those necessary applications have been filed (e.g. Zoning By-Law Amendment, Site Plan Control Agreement, Minor Variance, Draft Plan of Subdivision or Condominium).

(c) Provide a physical description of the site, including descriptions of current land use(s) and surrounding land uses, context, built form and existing natural heritage features.
(d) Include a description of the site’s planning history, including previous planning approvals and/or agreements (e.g. Site Plan Control Agreement, site-specific by-law), 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 is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 and provide any other Planning Act considerations that are relevant.

(h) Describe how the proposal conforms to the general purpose, vision, planning principles and goals of the Official Plan.

(i) Describe, in detail, the way in which relevant Official Plan policies will be addressed, including both general policies and site-specific land use designations and policies.

(j) Describe how the proposal takes into consideration or complies with any applicable City Planning studies (e.g. Heritage Conservation District Plans).

(k) Describe the suitability of the site, and indicate reasons why the development is appropriate for this site and will function to meet the needs of the intended future users.

(l) Provide a detailed analysis of the compatibility of the proposed development or land use designation with the existing adjacent developments and land use designations. Examine and describe the potential impact of the proposal on the surrounding community, and vice versa.

(m) Provide a summary of the recommendation and conclusions of the required studies completed in support of the development application(s).

(n) Examine and describe the potential impact of the proposal on the natural environment, specifically any identified natural heritage features and resources.

(o) Examine and describe the potential impact of the proposal on the municipal services (e.g. sewage collection and treatment systems, water distribution and treatment systems, utilities, roads, transit, parking, community facilities, cultural heritage resources, parks and open space).

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(p) Provide justification that the proposal is appropriate and constitutes good land use planning, including details of any methods that are used to mitigate potential negative impacts.

If you are not familiar with the City’s Official Plan, Zoning By-Laws or any studies identified during the pre-application process, then please contact the City of Kingston Planning, Building and Licensing Services at:

1211 John Counter Boulevard, Kingston,
Phone: 613-546-4291 extension 3180,
Email: planning@cityofkingston.ca,
or visit the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website at http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/index/htm.