

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

**MAIN STREET AND  
DUNDAS STREET S  
AREA**

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**Overview of Policy Context**



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# 1.0 OVERVIEW OF POLICY CONTEXT

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

The City of Cambridge Official Plan (approved on November 21, 2012 by the Region of Waterloo) imagines Cambridge as a growing, well designed, compact, vibrant and complete community, and identified a growth framework to the community, with a planning horizon of 2031. The city will be planned to feature an appropriate mix of jobs, range of housing options, access to services and community infrastructure and access to transportation options including public transit. One of the keys to achieving this vision is the development and implementation of a robust policy framework that focuses growth and intensification in strategic locations within the existing built-up areas. These locations include the Urban Growth Centre, Community Core Areas, Nodes, Regeneration Areas, Reurbanization Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas. These locations have been selected because they boast services and community infrastructure that support growth,

they have land parcels with development and redevelopment potential, and they are located along existing or proposed transit routes including the Region of Waterloo's rapid transit service (ION).

To support intensification, the City of Cambridge is in the process of preparing six secondary plans for the City's main intensification areas, including the Main and Dundas Street South Area.

## 1.2. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Main Street and Dundas Street South Secondary Plan is to provide a planning framework that will guide future development and redevelopment in the Main Street and Dundas Street Community Node to achieve growth planning objectives to the 2031 planning horizon. The plan provides long range policy for the following elements:

- Land use;
- Urban design and public realm improvements;
- Transportation and infrastructure improvements; and
- Implementation tools and monitoring program.

## 1.3. SECONDARY PLAN PROCESS

The Secondary Plan process has been undertaken in three phases

- **Phase 1:** The first phase commenced in October 2015 with a stakeholder workshop to identify the key issues and opportunities within the Secondary Plan area. Over 40 stakeholders participated in this workshop and provided feedback, which was used to develop the vision and guiding principles for this Secondary Plan.
- **Phase 2:** The second phase involved establishing the vision, land use and draft policies for the Secondary Plan. Key elements of the draft Secondary Plan were presented to the public in 2016.
- **Phase 3:** The third and final phase involves the development of the implementation program and a draft of the Secondary Plan which was presented at a Statutory Public Meeting under the Planning Act most recently in May 2023. Following the Public Meeting, Staff made several minor revisions to the Plan and will be presenting it to Council for adoption in 2023.

## 1.4. POLICY PLANNING ANALYSIS

### 1.4.1. Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020 articulates the direction of provincial land use planning in a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term manner. The fundamental mandate of the PPS is ensuring that municipal, provincial, and other governmental land use decisions are consistent with this Statement. Additionally, it encourages the wise management of land use change to meet both current and future needs, while conserving significant resources and avoiding areas with potential health and safety risks.

The PPS establishes wide-ranging land use policies for the province, mandating that all decisions, including those made at the municipal level concerning the development and implementation of Secondary Plans, adhere to its guidelines. Moreover, the PPS indicates that municipalities must “maintain at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through residential intensification and redevelopment and, if necessary, lands which are designated and available for residential development” (1.4.1 a). Therefore, municipalities are guided by the PPS to engage in detailed planning processes like secondary planning to make lands available for development.

A key aspect of implementing the policy directions of the PPS is the role of municipalities in the implementation process, including:

- Permitting and facilitating a range of housing choices, including residential intensification, to cater to diverse current and future needs;
- Supporting efficient land use patterns, optimizing resources, infrastructure investments, and housing mix, including affordable options. This approach should promote the long-term financial well-being of municipalities and the Province;
- Working with upper-tier municipalities to allocate population, housing and employment projections; and identify growth areas and set targets for intensification and redevelopment within their jurisdictions;
- Keeping their planning documents, up-to-date with the PPS;
- Updating their zoning and development permit by-laws to align with their planning documents and the PPS; and
- Monitoring the implementation of the PPS policies in their planning documents and report on them as per the Minister's guidelines.

The Main and Dundas Street South Secondary Plan has been developed to implement the provincial direction as set out in the PPS. The policies of the Secondary Plan, and its implementation, will ensure the area develops to meet the current and future needs of residents in a context-sensitive manner, providing a framework for the efficient use of land and infrastructure, the provision of parkland and opportunities to support alternative modes of transportation, including active transportation, and the provision of an appropriate mix of housing forms, including affordable housing,

#### **1.4.2. Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020**

The Growth Plan sets out a broad, strategic framework for managing growth and development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region in a sustainable manner. It aims to optimize the use of existing and new infrastructure, protect environmental and agricultural resources, promote development in designated built-up areas, and foster vibrant and complete communities.

Secondary plans, which are more detailed local plans developed within the framework of a municipality's official plan, play a crucial role in implementing the Growth Plan. The Growth Plan's policies, such as minimum density targets and intensification targets, guide the need for secondary plans. Policy 2.2.4 of the Growth Plan encourages the use of secondary plans to facilitate transit-supportive development around planned and existing higher order transit stations and stops, to promote mixed-use development, and to foster the creation of complete communities that contain a diverse mix of uses and housing options in order to optimize existing infrastructure and public transit. In essence, these policies underline the significance of urban intensification and efficient land use in ensuring sustainable development and economic prosperity in the GGH. By concentrating development within delineated areas and setting specific density targets, secondary plans aim to create a future that is both prosperous and sustainable for Ontario.

In the case of the Main and Dundas Street South Secondary Plan, as a designated growth area within the City's Built-up Area, it is expected that redevelopment and intensification in the area, consistent with the framework set out in the Secondary Plan, will contribute to achieving the City's intensification target. The proposed Secondary Plan will allow for an appropriate level of intensification for this area, in conformity with the policies of the Growth Plan.

## 1.5. REGIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

### 1.5.1. Region of Waterloo Official Plan, 2010

The Regional Official Plan for Waterloo outlines a vision of liveability, dependent on intertwined cultural, environmental, social, and economic aspects. It emphasizes the importance of a well-designed and accessible infrastructure that promotes a high quality of life, providing options and fostering safety.

For vibrant urban and rural communities, Section 3.0 of the plan calls for diverse housing choices, increased pedestrian, cycling and transit accessibility, reduced reliance on automobiles, improved air quality, and support for alternative energy systems. There's also a strong focus on locally sourced food, human services need, and considerations for an aging and diverse population. These objectives will be achieved through collaboration with Area Municipalities and other agencies, aiming for vibrant urban and rural places.

Regarding infrastructure, Section 5.0 of the Plan views effective planning and management as crucial for achieving a sustainable and liveable Waterloo Region. Infrastructure planning should strive to optimize the use of existing resources, reduce additional demands, and support the community's economic opportunities. Shared responsibilities for infrastructure management lie with various levels of government, the region, municipalities, and other agencies.

Several sections of the Regional Official Plan address infrastructure needs, focusing on transportation, drinking-water systems, wastewater systems, waste management, and utilities. The policies seek to improve transportation modes' connectivity, with special emphasis on the Region's transit system due to the strong land use-transportation planning link. Infrastructure master plans, assisting in planning significant initiatives, will support the Plan's community structure and prioritize infrastructure investments for urban development management.

The Regional Official Plan emphasises that Area Municipalities will establish policies in their official plans to adhere to the plan's overarching goal in infrastructure planning, development, and management that optimizes existing resources, accommodates forecasted growth, and promotes sustainability and a healthy population.



The Secondary Plan has been prepared to conform to the ROP<sup>1</sup>; and, City staff have worked with Regional staff to address Regional comments provided throughout the Secondary Planning process to ensure that the final Secondary Plan meets Regional objectives.

## **1.6. INTEGRATION WITH CITY OF CAMBRIDGE OFFICIAL PLAN**

Policy 2.5.5 of the City’s Official Plan states that the City will prepare Secondary Plans to “ensure that development occurs at the densities and form consistent with the (Official Plan)”. The Cambridge Official Plan, 2018 designated the Main St and Dundas St S Community Node and Future Study Area for inclusion in node boundary, which are subject to this Secondary Plan. The expectation is the policies of this Secondary Plan will form a new chapter within the Cambridge Official Plan implemented through OPA 65.

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<sup>1</sup> The Secondary Plan has been prepared to accommodate growth to 2031. The Regional Official Plan Amendment #6 was approved by the Province in April 2023 and includes a number of policies to guide growth and development within the City of Cambridge to 2051. The City of Cambridge Growth Management Strategy currently underway will identify a strategy to implement population and employment growth identified, which may result in additional changes to the City of Cambridge Official Plan and the Main and Dundas Street South Secondary Plan Area, through a subsequent official plan amendment.