

**City of London**  
**Official Plan Review**

**Working Group**  
**Terms of Reference**

**March 2006**

A five year review of the Official Plan is mandated by the Province under the provisions of Section 16.(1) of the Planning Act. While current provincial legislation does not mandate annual updates, it does require that the municipality investigate the need for modification in light of emergent local issues and evolving matters of provincial interest. The last Official Plan Review was conducted in 2001. By legislation, the City is now required to undertake a five year review of the Official Plan

## **1.0 Background:**

The Official Plan for the City of London was adopted by Council in 1989 and was approved by the province, subject to a number of referrals to the Ontario Municipal Board, in 1991. As adopted, the Official Plan anticipated a planning horizon for a period extending through the year 2016. The 1989 Official Plan replaced the previous Official Plan adopted by Council in 1971.

In 1993, the City of London annexed a significant land base from surrounding townships within the County of Middlesex. With annexation, the province issued the London-Middlesex Act (Bill 75) which required that the City "...prepare, adopt and forward to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval, an Official Plan that covers all of the land annexed to the City..." The Minister further required that the Plan include objectives relating to specific matters of provincial interest including, but not limited to: housing and intensification; servicing; the protection of the natural environment; and, the protection of agricultural uses. Most importantly, Bill 75 underscored the importance of growth management noting the significant expansion of the municipal boundary.

In response to the issues identified in Bill 75, and the Ontario Regulation that accompanied it, the Vision'96 process was struck in 1993. Products of the process initially included the London Strategic Plan. Economic, Infrastructure, Transportation, Social and Environmental Plans soon followed - all of which provided direction in respect to the formulation of a comprehensive Amendment to the City's Official Plan (O.P.A No. 88). Official Plan Amendment No. 88 was adopted by Council in 1996. The comprehensive amendment included:

- new policies pertaining to the establishment of a comprehensive growth management strategy;
- extensively revised environmental policies;
- a new Environmental Review designation and associated policies;
- new agricultural and rural settlement policies;
- extensively revised Transportation and Heritage Resource policies; and,
- the establishment of land use designations for all lands within the annexed area;

Following an exhaustive series of hearings before the Ontario Municipal Board, Official Plan Amendment No. 88 received ministerial approval in 1999.

Consistent with the requirements of Section 26.(1) the Planning Act, the City undertook a review of the Official Plan in April of 2001. Noting that the Official Plan was the product

of a comprehensive and fairly recent analysis of the issues, trends, and current provincial policies and guidelines, the review was limited to a number of scoped considerations including, but not limited to: the revision of population, housing and employment forecasts; the expansion of the range of permitted uses within the Rural Settlement land use designation; the inclusion of new noise wall policies; and, storm water management policies.

The 2001 Official Plan Review process “closed” in December 2001.

## **2.0 Key Issues to be addressed:**

The proposed work plan for the 2006 Official Plan Review has been developed with three major phases, or study processes. Each phase results in a product or document that would serve as a “lead in” to subsequent phases. This “stepped” approach would provide for “sign-off” on major tasks in order to both frame the process and to identify points of consensus and concurrence.

The three phases of the work plan, as proposed, are as follows:

### **Phase 1 Issue Identification and Work Plan Confirmation**

The first step in the process of undertaking the Official Plan Review is issue identification. A series of preliminary issues will be identified by the Planning Department having consideration for existing municipal planning studies; development applications; and, Provincial legislation and policy documents.

Having identified a preliminary list of issues, the next step in the process of undertaking the Official Plan Review is to devise a work plan. The work plan will outline the scope of the process, define the general tasks to be undertaken, identify the sequence and anticipated timing of these tasks, and illustrate the importance of public participation in the review process.

### **Phase 2 The undertaking and completion of Background Studies and Discussion Papers addressing the following issues:**

- Growth/Land Needs
- Commercial Policy
- Residential Infill and Intensification
- Affordable Housing Strategies
- Urban Design
- Transportation Planning

The purpose of the Background Study and Discussion Paper is to establish a common foundation of facts, trends, assumptions, constraints and opportunities upon which new or alternative goals, objectives and/or policy may be formulated. Background Studies are intended to provide an inventory and understanding of those issues identified in Phase 1. The policy formulation component will be subsequently undertaken in Phase 3 of the Official Plan Review.

The Background Studies will be technical in nature and will include both qualitative and quantitative components. These Studies will describe the existing

policy framework and inventory existing land use. As a fact-based analytical document, the Background Study will provide a basis for policy formulation, but it will not be a policy document. As such, it is not intended to be approved and adopted through the Official Plan Review process. It is intended that Background Studies be circulated to Council, the public and the appropriate Ministries and agencies for review and comment.

Discussion Papers will serve as an addendum to the Background Study. Discussion papers will be prepared for each Background Study to provide an overview of the issue and a description of the relevant history, emerging trends, constraints, and opportunities within which the issue can be considered. In addition to defining the issue, the Discussion Paper will identify conflicts that may arise in addressing a variety of issues, and examine the potential for conflict resolution. Discussion Papers will include a summary recommendation relating to the issue (Policy Formulation will be addressed under Phase 3 of the Proposed Work Plan). Like the Background Study, the Discussion Paper is to be made available to the public for review and comment. Based on the input received, the issues (and discussion paper) may be modified, as necessary, such that they accurately reflect the concerns and priorities of the community and Council.

### **Phase 3 Policy Development and Formulation**

The final product to be generated from the Official Plan Review Process is an Official Plan Amendment. The Official Plan Amendment would reflect the summary recommendations advanced by way of the various Phase 2 Background Studies. The Amendment may propose the replacement or modification of existing Official Plan policy or may propose new policy that more accurately reflects the priorities that have been identified through the review process.

After the public input and site specific issues have been addressed, a statutory public meeting of the Planning Committee will be held at which the final draft Official Plan Amendment will be tabled for consideration and Council Approval

### **3.0 Roles and Responsibilities:**

#### **3.1 City of London Planning Division:**

The review will be coordinated by the Policy Section of the Planning Division under the direction of the Manager of Land Use Planning Policy. Technical assistance and support will be provided by the GIS Data Technician and the Land Use Planning Policy Clerk. Planning Staff shall be responsible for the preparation of draft Policy Development and Formation being brought forward for consideration.

#### **3.2 Planning Committee:**

Planning Committee, as a statutory charged committee of Council, shall act as the oversight committee for the Official Plan review process. All reports relating to the Official Plan review will be vetted through the Planning Committee, who will then forward their recommendations to Council. Presentations to the Committee of the whole will be conducted at major milestones to facilitate direct dialogue with staff, Planning Committee and Council.

### 3.3 Consultants:

Given the myriad issues to be addressed through the Official Plan Review process, consulting services will be required to supplement staff resources. The proposed Work Plan anticipates that consultants will be retained to assist in the preparation of the:

- (a) Growth Forecast / Land Needs Background Study
- (b) Commercial Policy Review Background Study
- (c) Urban Design Guidelines Background Study.

### 3.4 Working Groups:

Working Groups shall confirm the work plan and provide input in the preparation of Background Studies and Discussion Papers. The Working Groups will be composed of City staff, technical experts from various organizations, agencies and ministries, consultants and members of the public. The Working Groups will be established along the following “interest” streams:

- Community Working Group
- A Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality Working Group.
- Development Industry Working Group

Refer to Section 5.0 for further clarification regarding the composition, role, responsibilities and expectations of the Working Groups

### 3.5 Steering Committee:

The Steering Committee shall consist of members from each of the Working Groups (Community, Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality and Development Industry Working Group). The Steering Committee shall be chaired by the Manager of Land Use Planning – Policy. The Steering Committee will provide an opportunity for a coordinated review of any issues, findings, and recommendations advanced by the Working Groups in relation to the Background Studies, Discussion Papers and community consultation process, and have input into the preparation of draft Official Plan Policies. The Steering Committee will not be responsible for policy development.

## **4.0 Public Input:**

A Community Consultation Program will be designed to:

- Inform group, agencies and the general public about the Official Plan Review Process;
- Involve as many Londoners as is reasonably possible in the process through a variety of traditional and innovative consultation techniques that will maximize accessibility and input;
- Fulfill all requirements of the Planning Act for public information, notice and meetings;
- Seek public involvement in all stages of the planning process. Input on issues, ideas and priorities will be important in the early stages of the program and the feedback from the review of the Background Studies

- and Position Papers will assist in the refinement or redirection of objectives and/or policies;
- Provide for the careful documentation and reporting of all community input such that it is clearly understood and traceable;

## **5.0 Working Groups**

Working Groups shall confirm the work plan and provide input in the preparation of Background Studies and Discussion Papers. The Working Groups will be composed of City staff, technical experts from various organizations, agencies and ministries, consultants and members of the public. The Working Groups will be established along the following “interest” streams:

- Community Working Group;
- A Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality Working Group;
- Development Industry Working Group;

The work of each group will be coordinated by planning staff. The Working Groups will:

- Review information from the related Background Studies;
- Review input from the community consultation process and identify key issues and priorities arising from them;
- Evaluate alternative strategies from the resolution of identified issues;
- Provide input and review of Discussion Papers;

Where appropriate, Working Groups may participate in focus group sessions to obtain input from key external agencies and interest groups that will have a stake in the outcome of the review process.

The Working Groups key role is to review and provide input related to the Background Studies, Discussion Papers and the issues identified through the community consultation process. The Working Groups will also review the draft policies, however Working Groups will not be responsible for preparing draft policies or reporting directly to Planning Committee.

A City staff person shall chair each working group. City staff will schedule meetings, coordinate meeting agendas, minutes and circulation.

Working Group members should make every attempt to attend scheduled meetings, while providing an alternate member from his/her organization familiar with the areas of interest to attend if necessary.

For each of the identified component studies, smaller technical working groups may be created to provide technical input and review for the specific study. These technical working groups should be composed primarily of staff and may include outside technical experts related to the studies.

The Working Groups will remain in place until the completion of the Official Plan Review process.

## 5.1 Community Working Group

### Composition

The Community Working Group will consist of individuals from the following organizations:

- Urban League of London;
- London Housing Advisory Committee;
- Housing Division, Planning & Development Department;
- Advisory Committee on the Environment;
- Transportation Advisory Committee;
- London Advisory Committee on Heritage;
- Creative Cities Task Force;
- Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee;
- Agricultural Advisory Committee;
- Mainstreet;
- Old East BIA;
- Downtown BIA;
- City of London Planning Division;

Planning staff will work with interest groups to identify members of the various Community Working Groups.

### Responsibilities:

The Community Working Group will be responsible for the following:

- Review information from the related Background Studies:
  - Growth/Land Needs
  - Commercial Policy
  - Residential Infill and Intensification
  - Affordable Housing
  - Urban Design
  - Transportation

The Community Working Group shall assign representation amongst the various issues/background Studies and establish the scope of their involvement in each of the Studies.

- Review input from the community consultation process and identify key issues and priorities arising from them.
- Evaluate alternative strategies from the resolution of identified issues.
- Provide input and review of Discussion Papers.
- Review draft policy development and formation
- Report to Steering Committee

## 5.2 A Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality Working Group

### Composition:

The Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality Working Group will consist of individuals from the following organizations:

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing;
- Ministry of the Environment;
- Ministry of Natural Resources;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs;
- Middlesex County;
- Township of Middlesex Centre;
- Municipality of Thames Centre;
- Elgin County;
- Southwold Township;
- Central Elgin Township;
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority;
- Lower Thames River Conservation Authority;
- Kettle Creek Conservation Authority;
- London District Catholic School Board;
- Thames Valley District Public Board;
- French Catholic School Board;
- French Public School Board;
- City of London Planning Division;

Planning staff will work with interest groups to identify members of the various Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality Working Group.

### Responsibilities:

The Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality Working Group will be responsible for the following:

- Review information from the related Background Studies
  - Growth/Land Needs
  - Commercial Policy
  - Residential Infill and Intensification
  - Affordable Housing
  - Urban Design
  - Transportation

The Provincial/Agency/Area Municipality Working Group shall assign representation amongst the various issues/background Studies and establish the scope of their involvement in each of the Studies.

- Review input from the community consultation process and identify key issues and priorities arising from them.
- Evaluate alternative strategies from the resolution of identified issues.
- Provide input and review of Discussion Papers.
- Review draft policy development and formation
- Report to Steering Committee

### **5.3 Development Industry Working Group**

#### Composition:

The Development Industry Working Group will consist of individuals from the following organizations:

- London Development Industry;
- London Home Builders Association;
- London St. Thomas Real Estate Board;
- London Economic Development Corporation;
- London Chamber of Commerce;
- London Area Planning Consultants;
- London Society of Architects;
- Utilities Coordinating Committee;
- City of London Planning Division;

Planning staff will work with interest groups to identify members of the various Development Industry Working Group.

#### Responsibilities:

The Development Industry Working Group will be responsible for the following:

- Review information from the related Background Studies
  - Growth/Land Needs
  - Commercial Policy
  - Residential Infill and Intensification
  - Affordable Housing
  - Urban Design
  - Transportation

The Development Industry Working Group shall assign representation amongst the various issues/background Studies and establish the scope of their involvement in each of the Studies.

- Review input from the community consultation process and identify key issues and priorities arising from them.
- Evaluate alternative strategies from the resolution of identified issues.
- Provide input and review of Discussion Papers.
- Review draft policy development and formation
- Report to Steering Committee

### **6.0 Project Budget:**

In addition to the use of internal City of London Planning staff and resources, an amount of \$250,000 has been included in the 2006 City of London Planning and Development Operating Budget for the retention of community consultants to provide professional services, in accordance with the Terms-of-Reference. This budget is administered by the City of London.

## 6.0 Process and Review Timeline:

Figure 1 illustrates the proposed Official Plan Review process. The process anticipates that a preliminary range of issues be circulated to identified stakeholders for consideration and comment. Following this consultation period, a refined Terms of Reference would be prepared and brought forward to a statutory public meeting of the Planning Committee for confirmation and adoption.

Background Studies will be undertaken concurrently. Discussion Papers, which will include summary recommendations outlining a proposed policy framework, will be prepared as an addendum to Background Study. Individual Background Studies will be brought forward to the Planning Committee as they are completed. The Studies will subsequently be released for public review and comment.

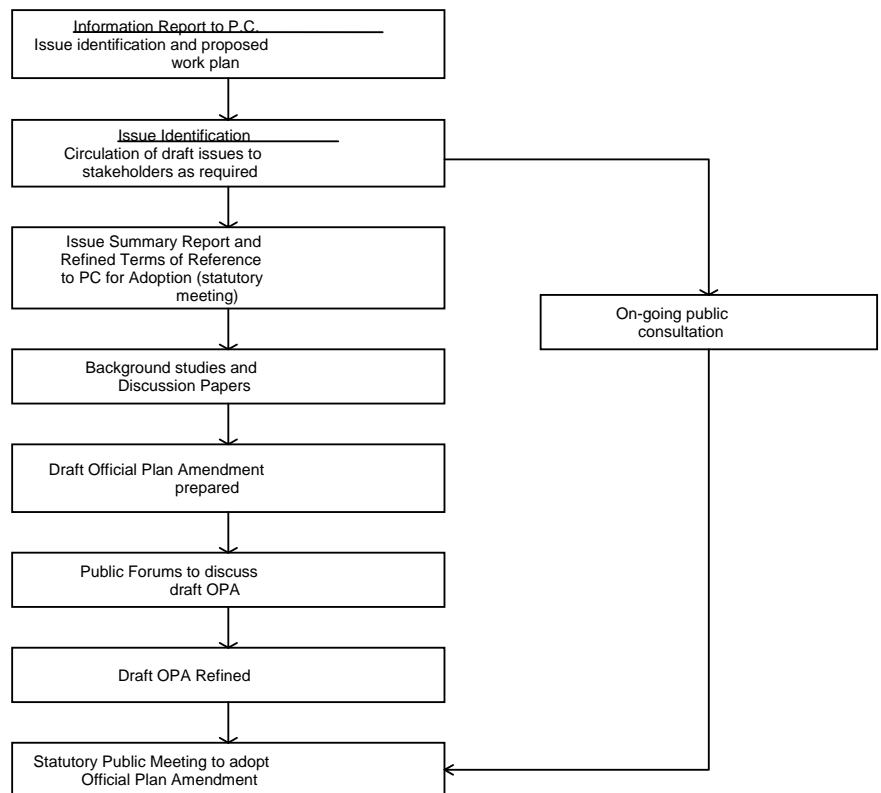
Having completed all of the Background Studies, Planning staff will set about to prepare a draft comprehensive Official Plan Amendment. Upon completion, the comprehensive amendment would be “rolled out” through a series of issue specific Public Forums wherein input would be solicited. The draft Official Plan Amendment would be subsequently refined and thereafter brought forward to the Statutory Public Meeting of the Planning Committee.

**FIGURE 1**

Given the range of issues to be addressed, the need to retain consulting services for three of the Background Studies, and an exhaustive public consultation process, it is anticipated that the Official Plan Review process will take approximately 16 months to complete.

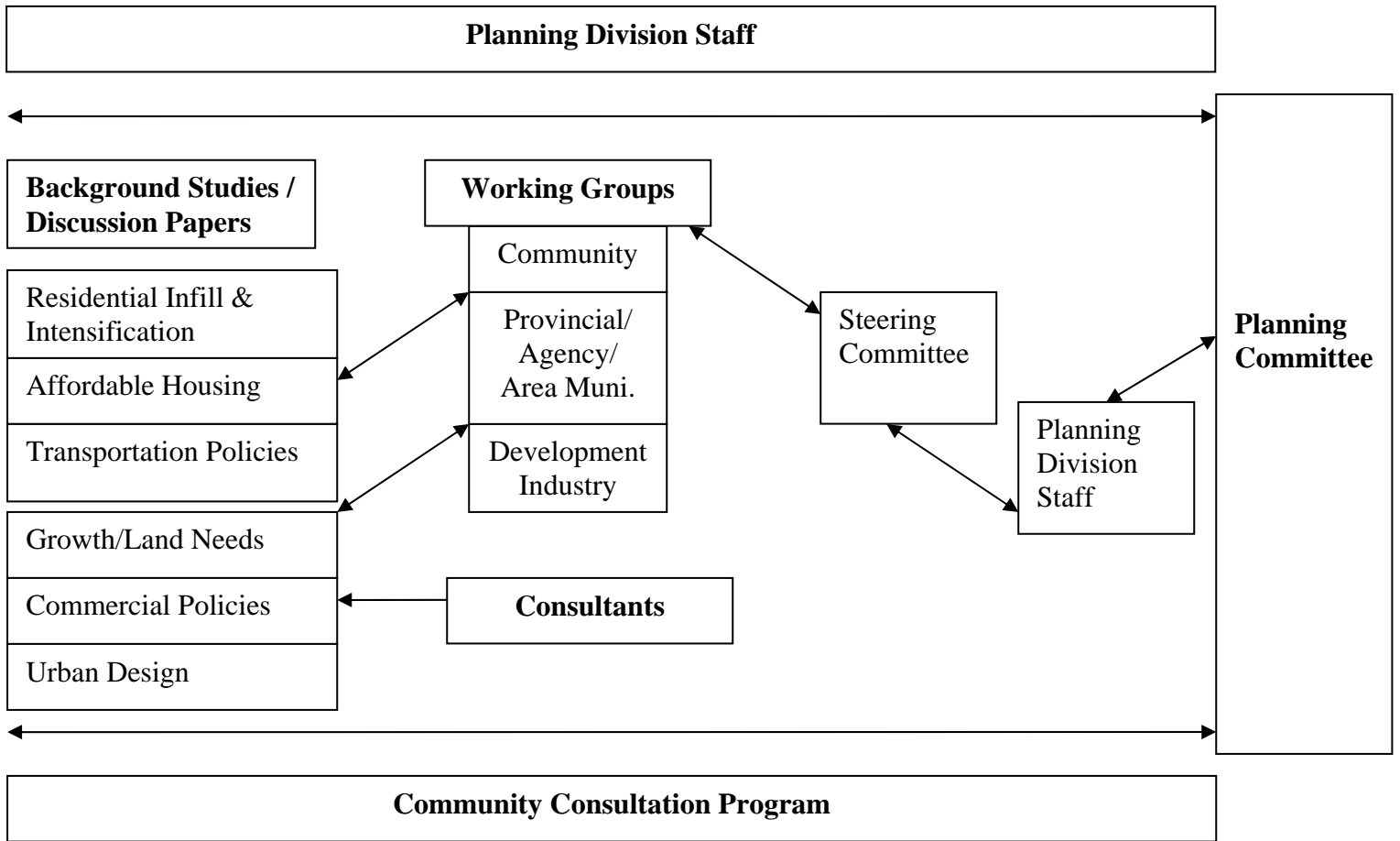
A draft time line for the anticipated work program is shown in Figure 2. The timeline may be refined subject to the identification of additional issues, or needs, through the initial public consultation component. In the development of the project timeline, care has been given to the scheduling of the public consultation component and the summer holiday schedule. Time allocations for each component of the project are outlined in the attached Summary of Tasks and Responsibilities.

Proposed Process for the 2006  
Official Plan Review



**Figure 2**  
**City of London Official Plan Review - Summary of Tasks and Responsibilities**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Information Report to Planning Committee	February 2006	City of London Policy Section
Issue Identification / Public Review	March 2006	City of London Policy Section, Working Groups & Public Input
Issue Summary Report and Refined Terms of Reference	April 2006	City of London Policy Section, Working Groups & Public Input
Statutory Public Meeting / Need for an Official Plan Review	April 2006	City of London Policy Section
Background Studies and <u>Discussion Papers</u> Land Needs Commercial Policy Urban Design Residential Infill and Intensification Affordable Housing Transportation	April 2006 to December 2006	City of London Policy Section, Community Consultants, Working Groups and Public Input
Draft Official Plan Amendment Prepared	January 2007	City of London Policy Section, Working Groups & Public Input
Public Forum to discuss Draft Official Plan Amendment	February 2007	City of London Policy Section
Draft Official Plan Refined	March 2007	City of London Policy Section, Community Consultants, Working Groups and Public Input
Statutory Public Meeting to adopt Official Plan Amendment	March/April 2007	City of London Policy Section



# **Background Studies: Tasks and Preliminary Issues**

## **Land Needs Background Study:**

- *Review the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement as it directly and indirectly relates to land needs, in particular Section 1.1.3 (Settlement Areas), and formulate revised policies that may be required in the Official Plan to ensure consistency with the provisions of the PPS including consideration of the need to establish criteria relating to minimum densities;*
- *Review, with area municipal planners and the Provincial officials, the need for regional growth strategies;*
- *Review the City's forecasts for population, housing and land requirements, and confirm that they are accurate and current for the 2006 Official Plan Review;*
- *Review and update the Vacant Residential Land Inventory and the Vacant Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Land Inventory so that they are accurate and current as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006;*
- *Review the report entitled "Tracking and Understanding Growth in London" to determine the need for modifications to the policies in Section 2.6 of the Official Plan which will more clearly address the costs and servicing requirements associated with growth, and the need for policies to address development phasing within the Urban Growth Area;*
- *If needed, develop criteria to be considered in evaluating and prioritizing lands for inclusion in the Urban Growth Boundary;*
- *Formulate criteria and graphics to identify and prioritize areas for future development, based on corporate priorities and cost-effective servicing considerations; and*
- *Itemize, define and evaluate proposals that have been referred by City Council, or received directly from landowners, for adjustments to the Urban Growth Boundary.*

## **Commercial Policy Background Study:**

- *Inventory the location, type and amount of commercial development that currently exists in each of the commercial designations within the City of London;*
- *Review population projections and demographic characteristics to determine how they will affect the future market for commercial development in the City;*
- *Review the existing commercial land use designations with a mind to developing strategic objectives that would articulate a revised commercial hierarchy;*
- *Identify market conditions and lifestyle trends that are likely to influence the amount, location, function and form of commercial development in London over the planning period;*
- *Review the existing policy framework in Chapter 4 of the Official Plan with a mind to identifying opportunities that will more clearly articulate the differences in the form, function and location of the various designations in the commercial hierarchy;*
- *Identify design elements that would provide for development that promotes convenient access by pedestrians and public transit service, high quality design elements, integration with existing neighbourhoods, mixed used buildings including live-work units, and other attractive or innovative forms of commercial development;*
- *Identify design elements that support forms of commercial development that will be sensitive to existing streetscapes, heritage properties and pedestrian-oriented activities.*
- *Identify the changes required to Zoning By-law Z-1 that will implement the recommended policy framework;*
- *Prepare an overview report on the “State of the Downtown” and identify Official Plan policies that may be required to promote the Downtown as the primary multi-functional activity centre serving the City of London; and*
- *Formulate objectives and policies that will more clearly articulate the strategic direction relating to building form, scale, design, and the integration of commercial development with the surrounding urban fabric.*

## **Residential Infill and Intensification Background Study:**

- *Undertake an inventory to determine the amount and type of residential intensification that has occurred, and identify development trends that are expected to affect future forms of residential intensification;*
- *Review existing Official Plan objectives and policies as they relate to the direction advanced by way of the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement;*
- *Review Official Plan policies 3.2.3, 3.2.4 and 3.2.5 with a mind to determining how they can be modified and expanded to clearly define the criteria relating to the location, form and function of infill housing, conversion of non-residential buildings, and dwelling conversions in the City of London; and,*
- *Identify possible design elements to supplement the above noting that intensification should be undertaken in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the surrounding residential neighbourhood.*

## **Affordable Housing Background Study:**

- *Prepare an affordable housing monitoring report that would include a review of supply, demand, available residential land capacity, recent development trends, and municipal and provincial affordable housing targets;*
- *Evaluate the current affordable housing policy framework (Chapter 12 of the Official Plan);*
- *Review the issue of permitting accessory units as-of-right and Consult with the homebuilding industry and community groups for input on policy modifications that may be required to more effectively implement the affordable housing targets established in the Official Plan.*

## **Urban Design Background Study:**

- *Prepare a new “Creative City Policies” component to be included in Chapter 11 of the Official Plan (Urban Design Principles) which promotes the intent of Council to place a high priority on developing London as a Creative City;*
- *Formulate policies that will facilitate live/work/play/display opportunities in appropriate residential and commercial locations;*
- *Review the Urban Design Principles in Chapter 11 of the Official Plan to more clearly define the intent of Council to place a high priority on high quality design including an emphasis on creating a sense of place, pedestrian friendly design, heritage protection, and public art opportunities. This review will be undertaken within the context of the enabling legislation that is being enacted through the passage of Bill 51;*
- *Formulate new guidelines in Chapter 16 (Parks and Recreation Policies) which support high quality design elements in parks and other public spaces;*
- *Review Chapter 13 (Heritage Resources Policies) to ensure that the policies relating to built and cultural heritage landscapes clearly implement the objectives of City Council within the context of Provincial legislation;*
- *Review the provisions in Chapter 19 (Implementation) to determine the feasibility of adopting policies that would facilitate the implementation of a development permit system that would allow for an integrated review process of zoning amendments, site plan approvals and/or design guidelines; and,*
- *Review the demonstration project being undertaken by the City, in partnership with the Z Group, and formulate policy modifications that will support the principles of “smart growth” and “placemaking”.*

## **Transportation Background Study:**

- *Investigate the introduction of transportation objectives and planning principles as part of the policy framework in Chapter 18 of the Official Plan;*
- *Update the Transportation Corridors Schedule of the Official Plan to reflect the network plan identified in Exhibit 4.1 of the Transportation Master Plan;*
- *Consider amendments to the Official Plan that will address long-range transportation needs for the City of London;*
- *Review the modal split targets as they relate to public transit;*
- *Review the policy implications of an Enhanced Transit Zone”;*
- *Review the policy implications of the new London Transit Master Plan;*
- *Identify strategies in the Official Plan that support innovative and creative transportation demand management initiatives (the SHIFT Program) to increase the incidence of walking, cycling, ride-sharing programs and preferential parking, by providing more choices that promote environmental health and financial benefits;*
- *Consider new policies to ensure that the capacity of the arterial and collector roadway network is optimized and preserved to the fullest extent possible before major capacity enhancements are required; and,*
- *Consider the policy implications of requiring that a Traffic Impact Study be required at specific stages of the planning and development approval process, to determine how the proposal will affect the assumptions and projections in the Transportation Master Plan.*