

# Planning Justification Report

Old Victoria Hospital Lands Secondary Plan

Official Plan Amendment

June 15, 2020

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## 1.0 Introduction

In 2013, the last patients in the South Street (Old Victoria Hospital) complex were relocated to a new hospital site. In preparation for the change in land use, the City of London began preparing a secondary plan for the area. The *Old Victoria Hospital Lands Secondary Plan* was subsequently adopted in June 2014.

The policies established in this Secondary Plan rely on bonusing to implement key features of the overall vision. Recent changes made to the *Planning Act* through Bill 108 see bonusing as a tool being phased out by the end of 2020. The intent of the Official Plan amendment is to maintain the intent of the adopted policies, but modify the policy framework to ensure the maximum heights and densities contemplated by the Secondary Plan can be implemented beyond 2020.

## 2.0 Site Location and Surrounding Land Uses

### 2.1 Site Description

The Old Victoria Hospital lands are generally located along the Thames Valley Corridor, just south of the downtown. The Secondary Plan Area (subject lands) are identified below.

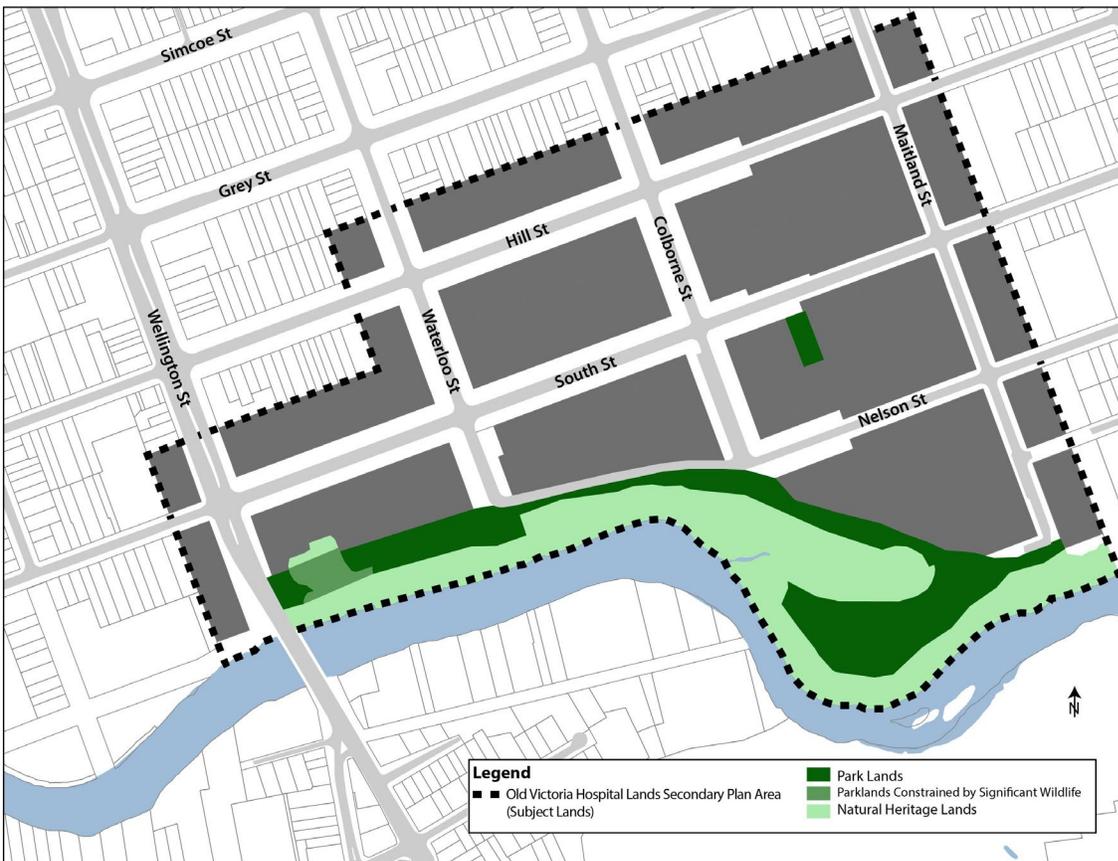


Figure 1: Subject Lands

## 2.2 Surrounding Land Uses

The lands immediately to the north and west of the subject lands primarily consist of low-rise residential uses, as the neighbourhood is a mix of single-detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, converted dwellings and low-rise apartment buildings.

The lands immediately to the east of the subject lands, generally east of Wellington Street, can generally be described as a low-rise residential neighbourhood. There is a notable number of vacant properties throughout the neighbourhood.

Immediately south of the subject lands is the Thames River.

### 3.0 Description of Proposal

The following policy changes are proposed for the *Old Victoria Hospital Secondary Plan*. A strikethrough indicates deleted policy, while an underline indicates added policy.

- Delete Section 20.6.3.3 Bonusing Policies
- Amend Section 20.6.4.1 The Four Corner iv) Built Form and Intensity, as follows:
  - a) Within the Four Corners, new residential development shall have a minimum density of 50 units per hectare ~~and a maximum density of 75 units per hectare without bonus zoning.~~
  - b) Building heights in the Four Corners Policy Area shall not be less than 3 storeys and shall not exceed ~~8~~ 11 storeys. ~~without bonus zoning.~~
  - ~~c) Notwithstanding a) and b) above, residential densities and/or heights exceeding 75 units per hectare and/or 8 storeys in height may be permitted up to 11 storeys in height through site specific bonus zoning and a development agreement that would implement the approved facilities, services, or other matters cited in the bonus policies of this Secondary Plan.~~
  - d) Small-scale office development may be permitted in the adaptive re-use of a heritage building. The adaptive re-use of a heritage building for office uses in excess of 2,000 square metres may be permitted through a site-specific Zoning By-law amendment. ~~site specific bonus zoning that would implement the approved facilities, services, or other matters cited in the bonus policies of this Secondary Plan.~~ All other office development shall be limited to 2,000 square metres or less within each new mixed-use building or a total of 5,000 square metres in the entire designation.
- Amend Section 20.6.4.2 Transit-Oriented Mainstreet Corridor v) Built Form and Intensity, as follows:
  - a) ~~Within the Transit Oriented Mainstreet Corridor, new residential development shall have a maximum density of 50 units per hectare without bonus zoning.~~
  - b) Building heights in the Transit-Oriented Mainstreet Corridor Policy Area shall not exceed 4 four storeys. Building heights exceeding four storeys may be contemplated through a site-specific Zoning By-law amendment where it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient servicing capacity and amenity space to accommodate additional dwelling units and residents, and where site-specific guidelines are developed as a part of the Zoning By-law amendment that address the impact of the additional building height on the surrounding existing and future uses as envisioned by this Secondary Plan. ~~without bonus zoning.~~
  - ~~c) Notwithstanding a) and b) above, residential densities and/or heights exceeding 50 units per hectare and/or 4 storeys in height may be permitted through site~~

~~specific bonus zoning and a development agreement that would implement approved facilities, services, or other matters cited in the bonus policies of this Secondary Plan.~~

- Amend 20.6.4.3.1 Residential Policy Area 1 – Low-Rise Residential iii) Built Form and Intensity, as follows:
  - a) Within the Low-Rise Residential Policy Area, new residential development shall have a minimum density of 15 units per hectare and a maximum density of ~~30~~ 75 units per hectare. ~~without bonus zoning.~~
  - b) Building heights in the Low-Rise Residential Policy Area shall not exceed ~~3~~ five storeys. ~~without bonus zoning.~~
  - ~~c) Notwithstanding a) and b) above, residential densities and/or heights exceeding 30 units per hectare and or 3 storeys in height may be permitted up to 75 units per hectare and/or 5 storeys in height through site specific bonus zoning and a development agreement that would implement the approved facilities, services, or other matters cited in the bonus policies of this Secondary Plan.~~
- Amend Section 20.6.4.3.2 Residential Policy Area 2 – Mid-Rise Residential iii) Built Form and Intensity, as follows:
  - a) Within the Mid-Rise Residential Policy Area designation, new residential development shall have a minimum density of 30 units per hectare. ~~and a maximum density of 75 units per hectare without bonus zoning.~~
  - b) Building heights in the Mid-Rise Policy Area designation shall in no case be less than 3 storey and shall not exceed ~~5~~ eight storeys. ~~without bonus zoning.~~
  - ~~c) Notwithstanding a) and b) above, residential densities and/or heights exceeding 75 units per hectare and/or 5 storeys in height may be permitted up to 8 storeys in height through site specific bonus zoning and a development agreement that would implement the approved facilities, services, or other matters cited in the bonus policies of this Secondary Plan.~~
- Amend Section 20.6.4.3.3 Residential Policy Area 3 – High-Rise Residential iii) Built Form and Intensity, as follows:
  - a) Within the High-Rise Residential Policy Area, new residential development shall have a minimum density of 75 units per hectare. ~~and a maximum density of 250 units per hectare.~~
  - b) Building heights in the High-Rise Residential Policy Area shall in no cases be less than 7 storeys and shall not exceed 12 storeys. Building heights exceeding 12 storeys may be contemplated through a site-specific Zoning By-law amendment where it can be demonstrated that there is sufficient servicing capacity and amenity space to accommodate additional dwelling units and residents, and where site-specific guidelines are developed as a part of the Zoning By-law

amendment that address the impact of the additional building height on the surrounding existing and future uses as envisioned by this Secondary Plan.

- ~~d) Notwithstanding a) and b) above, residential densities and/or heights exceeding 250 units per hectare and/or 12 storeys in height may be permitted through site specific bonus zoning and a development agreement that would implement the approved facilities, services, or other matters cited in the bonus policies of this Secondary Plan.~~

## 4.0 Planning Analysis

### 4.1 Overview

The proposed Official Plan amendment must be assessed in terms of the applicable policies set out by the Province of Ontario and the City of London. The following discussion outlines how the proposal functions in response to the *Planning Act* changes as well as addresses the relevant policies of the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020*, and *The London Plan*.

### 4.2 The Planning Act and Bill 108

The *Old Victoria Hospital Secondary Plan* was adopted in June 2014. To implement the vision established through the Secondary Plan, including the maximum heights and densities contemplated, the bonusing policies (section 20.6.3.3) of the Secondary Plan would have to be utilized. However, recent changes to the *Planning Act* made through Bill 108 have resulted in bonus zoning as a tool being phased out of by the end of 2020. The result of this that a portion of the adopted policies of the Secondary Plan would no longer be implementable beginning in 2021 and therefore the overall vision the Secondary Plan established would not be realized.

To address this policy gap, the proposed Official Plan amendment removes the bonusing policies (section 20.6.3.3) from the *Old Victoria Hospital Secondary Plan* and modifies the Character Area Land Use Designation policies accordingly to remove any reference to bonusing. The amendment also proposes revising the standard maximum heights and densities in the Secondary Plan to those contemplated through bonus zoning, thus ensuring that the maximum heights and densities can still be achieved in the future.

The proposed amendment maintains the intent of the adopted policies, by not exceeding the heights and densities contemplated through the Secondary Plan; however, it addresses the recent changes to the *Planning Act* by allowing the implementation through other means than bonusing.

### 4.3 The Provincial Policy Statement

The *Provincial Planning Statement, 2020* (PPS) identifies official plans as the most important vehicle for the implementation of the PPS and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning.

The PPS directs planning authorities to establish land use patterns within settlement areas based on densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently use land and resources (1.1.3.2 a); are appropriate for, and efficiently use, the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available, and avoid the need for their unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion (1.1.3.2 b); support active transportation (1.1.3.2 e); and are transit-supportive, where transit is planned, exists or may be developed (1.1.3.2 f).

The proposed Official Plan amendment is consistent with this direction as it would facilitate the full implementation of the *Old Victoria Hospital Lands Secondary Plan*, which envisions a mixed-use development within central London, which uses underutilized lands as well as efficiently

uses infrastructure and public service facilities. The Old Victoria Hospital lands are within close proximity to the Thames Valley Parkway; future residents will have easy access to this public network which supports active transportation options. Furthermore, the Old Victoria Hospital lands are also within close proximity to a future Bus Rapid Transit Station, which will be supportive of the future Bus Rapid Transit service.

#### 4.4 The London Plan

The key directions of *The London Plan* that are relevant to this proposed Official Plan amendment include those under Direction #5 Building a mixed-use compact city (Policy 59). In particular, subsection 3, which directs us to “sustain, enhance, and revitalize our downtown, main streets, and urban neighbourhoods.” This Official Plan amendment would facilitate the revitalization of SoHo, an urban neighbourhood just outside of the downtown. Subsection 4 is also relevant, as it states, “plan for infill and intensification of various types and forms to take advantage of existing services and facilities and to reduce our need to grow outward.” Development on the Old Victoria Hospital lands makes use of existing services and if implemented in the proposed form will provide various types and forms of housing through infill and intensification. Subsection 5 states, “Ensure a mix of housing types within our neighbourhoods so that they are complete and support aging in place.” This proposed Official Plan amendment will facilitate the maximum heights and densities to be achieved, will provide for housing forms in this neighbourhood that do not currently exist or are in short supply, such as apartment and townhouse forms. These forms are particularly appropriate to support aging in place.

The key directions under Direction #7 Build strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods for everyone (Policy 61) are also applicable to this proposed Official Plan amendment. Subsection 2 directs us to “design complete neighbourhoods by meeting the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities, allowing for aging in place and accessibility to amenities, facilities and services.” This proposed Official Plan amendment would facilitate the development of a mixed-use community, which would see new residential uses in close proximity to small-scale commercial and community facility uses. Subsection 4 states, “create social gathering places where neighbours can come together, such as urban parks and public spaces, community centres, family centres, community gardens, cafés, restaurants, and other small commercial services integrated within neighbourhoods.”