

5.

OFFICE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Office land use designations provide for the development of purpose-designed office buildings, office conversions, and mixed office/residential buildings at appropriate locations. The intent of these designations is to allow for choice in the location and cost of office space while maintaining the Downtown as the primary office employment area in the City and as the preferred location for major office developments. Limited forms of office development are also allowed in other Commercial designations and under the Industrial and Residential land use policies; however, these provisions are not intended to accommodate the type and scale of general office development that may be appropriate at selected locations outside of the Downtown.

There are two types of Office land use designations. Lands designated "Office Area", which are located along major roads in various parts of the City, may be developed for stand-alone office uses and office conversions. "Office/Residential" areas, which are located near the Downtown, may be developed for mixed office/residential uses and office conversions.

In creating separate Office designations and allowing some suburban office development, it is recognized that such development may have an impact on the demand for office space in the Downtown. For this reason, the policies limit the scale and form of office development in the Office designations. Where an Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law amendment is required, consideration will be given to the impact of the office development on the projected office space demand for both the Downtown and the City.

5.1.

OBJECTIVES FOR OFFICE DESIGNATIONS

5.1.1.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES FOR ALL OFFICE DESIGNATIONS

- i) Provide for choice in the location and cost of office space while maintaining the Downtown as the primary office employment area in the City.
- ii) Encourage the maintenance and preservation of buildings and/or areas considered by Council to be of cultural heritage value or interest to the community.
(Clause ii) modified by Ministry Mod. #20 Dec. 17/09
(Clause iii) deleted by OP 438 Dec. 17/09)

5.1.2.

OFFICE AREA OBJECTIVES

- i) Accommodate small and medium-scale office uses within purpose-designed office buildings at appropriate locations.
- ii) Encourage the development of high quality office buildings which are compatible with surrounding land uses.

- iii) Accommodate general office development along major roads which serve as entryways to the City.

5.1.3.

OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL OBJECTIVES

- i) Promote office/residential projects, in areas adjacent to the Downtown, which will serve as a buffer between more intense commercial development and nearby residential neighbourhoods.
- ii) Accommodate office development at a limited scale in areas adjacent to the Downtown.
- iii) Maintain a continuity of pedestrian-oriented uses at street level through the development of office uses on the lower levels of office/residential buildings.

5.2.

OFFICE AREAS

Locations designated as Office Areas provide for the development of general office uses in small- to medium-scale office buildings. It is intended that Office Areas will provide alternative locations for office uses outside of the Downtown, and increase employment opportunities in different parts of the City. Limitations are placed on the scale of development in keeping with the intent that the Downtown should be the primary office employment area in the City. As part of the consideration of proposals to designate new areas for office development, it is expected that Council will have regard for any impacts that such development would have on demand for office space in the Downtown.

Requests for temporary zoning for surface commercial parking lots, and extensions to temporary zoning for surface commercial parking lots, will be evaluated based on the following criteria;

1. *Site plan approval will be required for all temporary surface commercial parking lots in the Downtown.*
2. *The importance of any pedestrian streetscapes that are impacted by the surface commercial parking lot and the degree to which these streetscapes are impacted.*
3. *The location, configuration and size of the parking area will be designed to support the provision of, and enhance the experience of pedestrians, transit-users, cyclists and drivers.*
4. *The impact of parking facilities on the public realm will be minimized by strategically locating and screening these parking areas. Surface parking should be located in the rear yard or interior side yard.*
5. *Surface parking lots should be designed to include a sustainable*

tree canopy with a target of 30% canopy coverage at 20 years of anticipated tree growth.

6. *Surface parking located in highly-visible areas should be screened by low walls and landscape treatments.*
7. *Lighting of parking areas will be designed to avoid negative light impacts on adjacent properties.*
8. *Large surface parking lots shall be designed with areas dedicated for pedestrian priority including landscaping to ensure safe pedestrian connectivity throughout the site.*
9. *Surface parking areas will be designed to incorporate landscape/tree islands for visual amenity and to help convey stormwater and reduce the heat island effect.*
10. *Large surface parking areas will be designed to incorporate low impact development measures to address stormwater management. (OPA # 676)*

**5.2.1.
Function**

The Office Area designation is intended to accommodate general office uses which would not normally locate in the Downtown, or which have specific location requirements that make a location outside of the Downtown desirable. The amount and scale of development in Office Areas will be controlled to protect the Downtown's role as the primary office employment area in the City.

**5.2.2.
Permitted Uses-
Office Areas**

The main permitted use within the Office Area designation shall be offices within purpose-designed office buildings, and buildings converted for office use. Secondary uses which may be permitted as accessory to offices include eat-in restaurants; financial institutions; personal services; day care centres; pharmacies; laboratories; and clinics. The Zoning By-law will regulate the size of secondary uses individually and relative to the total floor area of the building, and may restrict the range of uses permitted on individual sites.

**Zoning of
Heritage
Buildings**

- i) Within the Office Area designation it is recognized that Council, under the policies of Chapter 13, Heritage Resources Policies, may designate buildings of architectural and/or historical significance. Notwithstanding the Office Area designation, these buildings may be zoned to permit only the existing structures under the provisions of Chapter 13 and the provisions for heritage zoning in the Zoning By-law.

**Drive-through
Facilities**

- ii) Proposals to add new drive-through facilities shall require an amendment to the Zoning By-law, and consideration of the matters identified in Section 4.10 (Drive Through Facilities). (OPA 444 passed 2008/07/22)

**5.2.2.1
Methadone
Clinics and
Methadone
Pharmacies**

Within the Office Area designation, methadone clinics and methadone pharmacies may be permitted, subject to a zoning by-law amendment and in accordance with the policies under section 6.2.11 of this Plan. (Added by OPA 521)

**5.2.3.
Location Criteria**

All of the following criteria will be considered when evaluating a site for an Office Area designation:

- i) The site must have frontage or flankage on an arterial road, primarily those which serve as major entryways to the City;
- ii) The site should be adjacent to activity nodes such as Community Shopping Area, Regional Shopping Area and Regional Facility designations;
- iii) The site must be located such that it could be efficiently serviced by transit.

**5.2.4.
Scale of
Development**

Office buildings in Office Area designations shall be low to medium rise in height, and of a scale that will minimize the impact on, and can be integrated with, surrounding uses. Office buildings shall be permitted up to a medium scale in the Office Area designation. The Zoning By-law will control the scale of development through building height, lot coverage, floor area, and setback regulations.

For the purpose of this Plan, office development of less than 2,000 square metres (21,529 sq.ft.) gross floor area will normally be considered "small scale", and office development between 2,000 square metres (21,529 sq.ft.) and 5,000 square metres (53,921 sq.ft.) gross floor area will normally be considered "medium scale".
(OPA #506)

**5.2.5.
Form and
Design**

It is intended that development in Office Area designations shall maintain a nodal form through the clustering of small and medium scale office buildings. Notwithstanding this intent, individual office buildings may also be recognized. It is also intended that the design of development within Office Areas shall provide a high level of aesthetics and visual prominence, particularly where located on major entryways to the City.

**5.2.6.
Applications
to Expand
or Add Office
Areas**

Office Area designations shown on Schedule "A" - the Land Use Map, generally apply to areas of existing office development with some opportunity for the infilling or redevelopment of new uses. It is intended that new Office Area designations should be considered through the Official Plan amendment process in response to development proposals. Proposals for new Office Area designations will be evaluated on the basis of:

Demand

- i) The total projected demand for office space in the City and the likely impact of the proposed development on the demand for office

space in the Downtown.

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| Supply | ii) | The supply of vacant land or vacant buildings in the City which are zoned for office use. |
| Economic Opportunities | iii) | The potential economic opportunities to be gained from providing a broader range of office types and locations in the City. |
| Compatibility | iv) | The compatibility of the proposed office development with surrounding land uses. |
| Criteria | v) | Compliance with the appropriate policies or permitted uses, location, scale, and form of development. |
| Municipal Services | vi) | The availability of municipal services to accommodate the proposed use. |
| Planning Impact Analysis | vii) | Planning Impact Analysis, according to the provisions of Section 5.4. |

5.3. OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Office/Residential designations will be located near the Downtown. These mixed-use developments are intended to serve as transition areas between more intensive commercial developments in the Downtown, and nearby residential neighbourhoods or other sensitive land uses. Office uses in apartment buildings are to be located on the lower floor levels to provide a continuity of pedestrian-oriented land uses at street level.

5.3.1. Permitted Uses

The main permitted uses in the Office/Residential designation shall be offices and residential uses within mixed-use buildings or complexes; apartments; small scale stand alone offices and office conversions. Secondary uses which may be permitted as an accessory use include personal services; financial institutions; convenience stores; day care centres; pharmacies; laboratories; clinics; studios; and emergency care establishments. In addition, eat-in restaurants may be permitted through an amendment to the Zoning By-Law, subject to the Planning Impact Analysis as described in Section 5.4., to determine, among other things, whether the use can be integrated with minimal impact on surrounding areas. The Zoning By-law may restrict the range of uses permitted on individual sites, and will regulate the size of eat-in restaurants and other secondary uses.

(Section 5.3.1. Amended by OPA 226, approved 01/09/04)

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| Zoning of Heritage Buildings | i) | Within the Office/Residential designation it is recognized that Council, under the policies of Chapter 13, Heritage Resources Policies, may designate buildings of architectural and/or historical significance. |
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Notwithstanding the Office/Residential designation, these buildings may be zoned to permit only the existing uses under provisions of

Chapter 13 and the provisions for heritage zoning in the Zoning By-law.

Drive-through Facilities ii) Proposals to add new drive-through facilities shall require an amendment to the Zoning By-law, and consideration of the matters identified in Section 4.10 (Drive Through Facilities) (OPA 444 passed 2008/07/22)

5.3.2. Location The preferred locations for the Office/Residential designation are those areas adjacent to the Downtown which abut arterial or primary collector roads and which can accommodate mixed-use development with minimal impact on surrounding low density residential uses.

5.3.3. Scale and Form of Development The Zoning By-law shall contain height and site coverage requirements that will provide for a transition between the densities and heights permitted in the Downtown, and the lower densities and heights in established residential neighbourhoods surrounding the Downtown.

Mix or Uses i) Office uses are generally not expected to comprise more than the two lower floors of an office/apartment building. The floor area specifications for office uses will be detailed in the Zoning By-law.

Height and Density ii) Residential densities and height shall be similar to densities and height allowed within the Multi-Family, High Density Residential designation. The Zoning By-law shall specify maximum densities and height, based on the nature and scale of adjacent land uses, and the minimum proportion of a building floor area which must be devoted to residential use.

Small Scale and Stand Alone Offices iii) Small scale stand alone offices are generally limited to a height of two storeys. Floor area specifications and height limitations will be detailed in the Zoning By-law.
(Subsection 5.3.3. iii) Added by OPA 226, approved 01/10/05)

5.3.4. Applications to Expand or Add Office/Residential Areas It is intended that new Office/Residential areas should be designated at locations that are adjacent to, or in close proximity to the Downtown. Proposals for new Office/Residential designations will be evaluated on the basis of:

Compatibility i) The compatibility of the proposed office/residential development with surrounding land uses.

Criteria ii) Compliance with the appropriate policies on permitted uses, location, scale and form of development.

Municipal Services iii) The availability of municipal services to accommodate the proposed use.

Planning Impact Analysis iv) Planning Impact Analysis, according to the provisions of Section 5.4.

5.4. PLANNING IMPACT ANALYSIS

5.4.1. Purpose

Planning Impact Analysis will be used to evaluate applications for an Official Plan amendment and/or zone change, to determine the appropriateness of a proposed change in land use, and to identify ways of reducing any adverse impacts on surrounding land uses. Planning Impact Analysis is intended to document the majority of criteria reviewed by municipal staff through the application review process to assess an application for change. Depending upon the situation, other criteria may also be considered.

(Sec. 5.4.1. deleted and replaced by OPA 438 Dec. 17/09)

5.4.2. Scope of Planning Impact Analysis

Planning Impact Analysis will be undertaken by municipal staff and will provide for participation by the public, in accordance with the provisions for Official Plan amendments and/or zone change applications as specified in Section 19.12. of this Plan.

Proposals for change in the use of land which require the application of Planning Impact Analysis will be evaluated on the basis of criteria relevant to the proposed change. Other criteria may be considered through the Planning Impact Analysis to assist in the evaluation of the proposed change.

(Sec. 5.4.2. amended by OPA 438 Dec. 17/09)

General Proposals

- i) Where an Official Plan amendment and/or zone change application is for a general change in land use and does not relate to a specific development proposal or where site specific information on the future development of the site is not required, all or some of the following criteria may be considered:
 - (a) compatibility of proposed uses with surrounding land uses, and the likely impact of the proposed development on present and future land uses in the area;
 - (b) the size and shape of the parcel of land on which a proposal is to be located, and the ability of the site to accommodate the intensity of the proposed use; and
 - (c) the supply of vacant land or vacant buildings in the area which are designated and/or zoned for the proposed use;
 - (d) the potential traffic generated by the proposed change, considering the most intense land uses that could be permitted by such a change, and the likely impact of this additional traffic on City streets, pedestrian and vehicular safety, and on surrounding properties; and
 - (e) impact of the proposed change on the transportation system, including transit.

(Clauses (d) and (e) added by OPA 438 Dec. 17/09)

Site Specific
Proposals

- ii) Where an Official Plan amendment and/or zone change is for a specific development proposal or where more site specific and detailed information on the type and nature of future development is required, all or some of the following criteria may be considered:
- (a) all of the criteria listed in policy 5.4.1. i) of the Plan;
(Clause (a) amended by OPA 438 Dec. 17/09)
 - (b) the height, location and spacing of any buildings in the proposed development, and any potential impacts on surrounding land uses;
 - (c) the location of vehicular access points and their compliance with the City's road access policies and Site Plan Control By-law, and the likely impact of traffic generated by the proposal

on City streets, on pedestrian and vehicular safety, and on surrounding properties;
 - (d) the exterior design in terms of bulk, scale, and layout of buildings, and the integration of these uses with present and future land uses in the area;
 - (e) the potential impact of the development on surrounding natural features and heritage resources;
 - (f) constraints posed by the environment, including but not limited to locations where adverse effects from landfill sites, sewage treatment plants, methane gas, contaminated soils, noise, ground borne vibration, and rail safety may limit development;
 - (g) compliance of the proposed development with the provisions of the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law, Site Plan Control By-law, and Sign Control By-law; and
 - (h) measures planned by the applicant to mitigate any adverse impacts on surrounding land uses and streets which have been identified as part of the Planning Impact Analysis.

**5.4.3.
Information
Required**

An applicant for a proposed change in land use may be required to provide information and details on the development its likely impacts, for the purposed of assisting the City in undertaking Planning Impact Analysis.