

# Burlington Official Plan

## WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL PLAN?

The City of Burlington Official Plan is a document that sets out a long term vision for the future of Burlington. It contains goals and policies to guide the City's decisions on growth, land use and good design.

Maps are included that show where residential, commercial, recreational and industrial developments can locate and what green areas must be protected. It also contains information on the future expansion of the city's network of roads, transit systems and utility services.

The Official Plan is founded on principles that aim to create an attractive, livable community focused on sustainable development, community identity, environment, local economy and equal access to housing and services.

## A GUIDE TO BURLINGTON'S OFFICIAL PLAN

### Employment Areas

These are areas characterized by offices and industrial activities. The Official Plan policies on employment lands are designed to:

- maintain a sufficient supply of land for existing and future employment needs;
- limit retail uses in employment lands;
- increase job opportunities through economic development.

Within this general designation are more specific designations that outline the types of employment scale and intensity permitted in each area, including:

- General Employment, for example, Mainway between Guelph and Walkers Line; and
- Business Corridor, for example, along the QEW and Highway 407;

### Retail Areas

Retail designations provide land primarily for the buying and selling of goods and services. Official Plan policies are intended to maintain a supply of land to accommodate present and future retail needs and direct shopping areas to designated locations rather than industrial or residential lands.

Within this general designation, there are several specific designations, including:

- Regional Commercial Area, for example, Mapleview Centre;
- Community Commercial Area, for example, Appleby Village;
- Employment Commercial, for example Guelph Line at the CNR
- Neighbourhood Commercial Area, for example, Wedgewood Plaza.

Some retail areas also permit residential uses, for example Community Commercial areas permit apartments up to twelve storeys in height provided that 50% of the Community Commercial area is retained for shopping centre uses.

## Residential Areas

Official Plan policies promote a variety of housing types, including housing for people with special needs and nursing homes. Residential areas are differentiated by the density of development. Density is the number of dwelling units - and therefore the number of people living in a given area.

Additional, or infill, development is encouraged within appropriate residential neighbourhoods so that existing serviced lands can be more efficiently used. The Official Plan encourages the creation and maintenance of affordable housing. It also requires that the city maintain a supply of approved building lots to allow for the next three years of growth, and designate enough residential lands to accommodate the next ten years of growth.

## Mixed Use Activity Areas

Residential, employment, retail and entertainment uses are all permitted in Mixed Use Areas to create vibrant live-work relationships. Policies for these areas require design to encourage walking and good connections to transit. Mixed Use areas take two forms:

- **Mixed Use Corridors** These are areas along main roads with transit service where development can rise to six storeys. Mixed Use Corridors bring together and integrate different land uses and activities, making them readily available in one location and creating interesting and lively streets. Planning policies encourage locating parking lots behind or beside the buildings, away from the street. Examples of Mixed Use Corridor include, parts of Plains Road, Waterdown Road, Brant Street, Fairview Street, and Appleby Line.
- **Mixed Use Centres**, for example, Brant Street (Downtown), and Appleby Line and Upper Middle Road (Uptown). In these areas, Official Plan policies allow higher-density development and encourage retail and service uses on the ground floor of multi-storey buildings. The Official Plan also supports the maintenance of Burlington's historic downtown area as the centre of cultural, business, and government activities in the city.

## Natural Features and Open Space

Green spaces include areas where the natural environment is preserved and open spaces are intended for passive and active recreational use. There are three main categories of green space:

- **Greenlands** are important creeks, valleys, wetlands, woodlots, wildlife habitat, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Development of these lands is restricted and landowners are encouraged to keep these areas in their natural state.
- **Watercourses** are important creeks in the city that provide wildlife habitat and drain away water after heavy storms. These lands must be given to the City as a condition of development or redevelopment of lands containing a creek.
- **Major Parks and Open Spaces** are city, community, and neighbourhood parks, parkettes, and special resource areas (parklands left in a natural state).

## **Rural Lands**

Burlington's rural area is north of Dundas Street and Highway 407. Policies for these lands emphasize the protection of the natural environment and farmland.

Development is not permitted on the slopes of the Niagara Escarpment, or in wetlands, stream valleys, or sites designated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas. New lots may be created in the rural settlement areas of Lowville, Kilbride, and Mount Nemo in order to control rural non-farm development.

## **North Aldershot Lands**

Burlington's North Aldershot area is located north of Highway 403 and south of the Niagara Escarpment. Policies for this area protect the significant environmental areas and open space setting. Any development in this area must be integrated with the existing topography and be compatible with the existing settlement character.

## **Citywide Policies**

The Official Plan also contains "functional policies" which apply to all areas of the city. For example:

- **Sustainability and the Environment**

Development must reduce or eliminate harmful effects on the natural environment. Where possible, walking, cycling and transit use is encouraged, rather than car use. Public access to lands that are sensitive to human disturbance should be restricted.

- **Cultural Heritage Resources**

Policies that identify and conserve the City's cultural heritage resources such as buildings, structures and landscapes.

- **Waterfront**

The Official Plan protects the shoreline of Burlington Bay and Lake Ontario, including fish and wildlife habitat, and promotes the waterfront as a valuable resource, by encouraging more public access to the lake. Development on the waterfront preserve or complement views of the Lake and Burlington Bay from public lands.

- **Design**

New development should enhance existing natural features and heritage structures. Entrances to the City should be marked by special design features. New or renovated buildings should be held to a high standard of architecture and should be energy-efficient.

- **Transportation**

Burlington streets should offer safe, convenient, efficient and affordable transportation to link all areas of the city. Emphasis is placed on providing facilities that increase use of alternative transportation modes such as walking, cycling, and using transit.

**For more information about the Official Plan or the land use planning process, please contact the Burlington Planning & Building Department at (905) 335-7642 or view the City's Web Site at [www.burlington.ca](http://www.burlington.ca)**