

## INFO SHEET:

### The Official Plan – A Tool for Managing Change

#### What is an Official Plan?

An Official Plan is a policy document that sets out the city's objectives for growth and development for the next 20 years. It's a tool for managing change within the city as it grows by developing and redeveloping.

#### Why Does the Official Plan Change?

**The Official Plan is not a static or inflexible document** - sometimes the plan itself changes, to reflect environmental, social and economic trends, to respond to special circumstances, and to remove strategies that are no longer applicable.

**The Official Plan anticipates change and has mechanisms to manage change.** For example, it contains criteria for evaluating intensification and infill proposals, and for evaluating land use conversion proposals. While the Official Plan is intended to provide clear direction, it is intentionally flexible because it is a long-term plan. Rather, it is the Zoning By-law that is a prescriptive tool providing site specific regulations such as permitted uses, setbacks, and heights.

#### How Does the Official Plan Change?

The Official Plan can change by amending the maps and/or policies. These amendments follow a process prescribed by the *Planning Act* and can be initiated by an applicant, or by the municipality. The process is set up to provide public notice, to allow people to provide input to Council on the proposed amendment, and to provide an opportunity to challenge a Council decision at the Ontario Municipal Board. The process includes a comprehensive review of studies including the rationale for the proposed change and supporting technical studies. Subject to the review, staff may recommend to Council to approve, refuse or modify the proposal. Council makes the decision on the application and the proposed Official Plan amendment, in some cases the decision is referred to the Ontario Municipal Board.

For more information on Official Plan amendment process and requirements, please visit our website at: <http://cms.burlington.ca/Page5970.aspx>