

# **Our Plan Toronto: Official Plan Chapter One - Decision Report – Approval**

Date: March 18, 2024

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

## **SUMMARY**

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Chapter One of the Official Plan sets out aspirational and vision-based statements that inform how the city will grow for the next 30 years. These statements reflect the shared values of Torontonians, expressed in a way to guide development, and are the foundation for the other chapters in the Plan. The Official Plan is Toronto’s roadmap for growth and Chapter One is the compass that helps inform our choices. Chapter One seeks to balance the needs of today’s residents without compromising the needs of future generations of Torontonians. The current Chapter One was adopted by Council in 2002 as part of the City’s first post-amalgamation Official Plan and similar to other Chapters of the Official Plan requires updating to reflect the changing vision for the city.

This report recommends replacing the current Chapter One with a new Chapter One that focuses on advancing reconciliation, a Vision to 2051, and Principles for a successful and inclusive city. The recommended Chapter One will serve as a statement of values that will inform future amendments to the Plan. An emphasis on inclusion, access, and equity will ensure that these values become embedded in future decisions.

This report recommends adoption of Official Plan Amendment 718 informed by the engagement program held as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review and Growth Plan Conformity Exercise, known as “Our Plan Toronto”. The recommended Official Plan Amendment is considered under *Planning Act* Section 17.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Interim Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council adopt Official Plan Amendment 718 substantially-in-accordance with Attachment 1 to this report.

2. City Council authorize the City Solicitor to make such stylistic and technical changes to the recommended Official Plan Amendment 718 as may be required.

3. Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to provide a presentation to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee by the end of the second quarter of 2024 on the new Chapter One of the Official Plan.

4. Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to develop a work plan to continue annual meetings with the Community Leaders Circle as a method to monitor and evaluate progress toward addressing the priorities and achieving the vision and principles contained in Official Plan Amendment 718.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

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Chapter One will help to strengthen and broaden the equity lens applied to all City initiatives and support future projects in delivering positive and meaningful outcomes for all Torontonians. The goals of the City's 2051 Vision are deeply rooted in principles of equity, inclusion, and access, and will ensure that future work implementing the Official Plan address the needs of equity deserving groups. To this end, Chapter One statements, vision and priorities make explicit efforts towards taking action on climate change, addressing the housing demand, and removing barriers for all equity deserving groups.

Chapter One also attempts to advance efforts in reconciliation, guided by the Council-adopted Reconciliation Action Plan (2022-2032). The recommended plan places an emphasis on relationship building with Indigenous Peoples and acknowledging world views that are different from the colonial approach that has guided land use planning in Ontario.

Staff have made broad based efforts to engage with Torontonians and stakeholders representing equity deserving groups across the city. This has involved identifying and removing barriers to engagement activities for the City's marginalized and vulnerable communities throughout the Our Plan Toronto engagement program.

Staff expanded these efforts during the review of Chapter One through deeper engagement with equity deserving groups. These efforts have informed the planning priorities, principles, and Vision to 2051.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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### **Housing and Accessibility**

On February 5, 2024, the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) requested that City Planning, in consultation with the Housing Secretariat, study and report back - as part of the Chapter One review and implementation - work on how to best build more accessible housing units and the limitations of the Neighbourhoods policy as it prevents more density and new accessible housing apartment units.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.DI5.2>

At its June 15-16, 2022, meeting, Council directed the Housing Now Accessible Housing Working Group to expand the scope to include other accessible housing-related matters. On February 5, 2024, an update on this work was presented to the TAAC. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX33.10>

On June 29, 2020, Council requested the Housing Secretariat to form a working group to explore the options and feasibility to increase the percentage of accessible units and units with universal design features to be delivered through Housing Now Initiative.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.PH14.3>

### **Our Plan Toronto: Draft Chapter One Directions for Consultation**

On April 27, 2022, Planning and Housing Committee considered a report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director that described draft Chapter One directions and draft employment policies and directions. The Committee directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director to use the draft Chapter One directions and draft employment policies and directions as the basis for consultation.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.PH33.13>

### **Other Policy Areas**

On December 15, 2021, City Council adopted TransformTO – Critical Steps for Net Zero by 2040 (Item IE26.16). This decision included a request for City Planning to continue to ensure the Official Plan, Zoning By-laws, planning policies and various planning guidelines support the recommendations in the Net Zero Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE26.16>

On November 15, 2021, the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee directed City Planning staff to undertake an environmental scan of jurisdictions that have integrated an equity deserving lens, incorporating the needs of people with disabilities in their land use plans and present draft policies to the Advisory Committee.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.DI18.3>

On June 18, 2021, the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee requested that City Planning staff amplify Indigenous voices into the engagement process of Our Plan Toronto. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.AA11.4>

On February 2, 2021 Council directed the Chief Technology Officer, supported by other Divisions to implement Phase 1 of ConnectTO, which aims to centralize stewardship of municipal resources and assets to deliver the City's goals on equity and connectivity, including creation of a City of Toronto broadband network.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.EX20.8>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

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### **Planning Context**

The context for updating Chapter One of the Official Plan is contained within the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) (“PPS”), A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) as amended in 2020 (the Growth Plan), and the in force and effect Official Plan.

### **Planning Act**

The *Planning Act* is Provincial legislation that sets out the rules for land use decision making in the Province. It provides the basis for a policy-led planning system in Ontario. The *Planning Act* requires an Official Plan to contain goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environment of the municipality or part of it (Section 16.1.a). The recommended Official Plan amendments are considered under Section 17 of the *Planning Act*, where City Council is the approval authority.

### **Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020**

The PPS 2020 provides province-wide policy direction on land use planning and development to promote strong communities that are resilient to climate change, a strong economy, and a clean and healthy environment. The PPS 2020 also requires meaningful engagement between Planning authorities and Indigenous communities to facilitate knowledge-sharing in land use planning processes, and to inform decision making.

The PPS 2020 includes policies on key issues that affect communities, such as:

- providing an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities;
- supporting energy conservation and efficiency, improved air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate through land use and development patterns;
- engaging with Indigenous communities and coordinating on land use planning matters; and
- improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society.

## **A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2020**

The Growth Plan 2020 provides a strategic framework for managing growth and environmental protection in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region, of which the City of Toronto is an integral part. The policies of the Growth Plan build on the policies of the PPS 2020 and take precedence where there is conflict, except where relevant legislation provides otherwise. In accordance with Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, all Council decisions that affect a planning matter shall conform with the Growth Plan 2020. The Growth Plan 2020 recognizes the unique relationship between First Nations and Metis communities within the Great Lakes region, and the role that Indigenous Peoples have had and will continue to have in shaping the growth and development of the region.

With respect to the Our Plan process and Chapter One in particular, the Growth Plan 2020 requires municipalities to:

- Support the achievement of complete communities that are designed to support healthy and active living, and meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime;
- Provide for different approaches to manage growth that recognize the diversity of communities in the GGH;
- Conserve and promote cultural heritage resources to support the social, economic, and cultural well-being of all communities, including First Nations and Métis communities;
- Engage Indigenous communities in local efforts to implement this Plan, and to provide the necessary information to ensure the informed involvement of these communities;
- Integrate climate change considerations into planning and managing growth such as planning for more resilient communities and infrastructure – that are adaptive to the impacts of a changing climate – and moving towards environmentally sustainable communities by incorporating approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Improve social equity and overall quality of life, including human health, for people of all ages, abilities and incomes.

### **Official Plan**

The Official Plan is a comprehensive planning document that acts as Toronto’s road map for land use matters. It sets out the City’s long-term vision, shared values, and policies that help guide decision-making on land development, economic growth, the environment and built form. It directs where different types of uses and development should and should not go. The Section 24 of the *Planning Act* also connects a municipality’s official plan and the role its policies play in determining public infrastructure works that must conform with those policies.

Since Council’s adoption of the Official Plan in 2002 and its approval by the Ontario Land Tribunal in 2006, the policies of the Official Plan have been updated regularly,

including policy updates on affordable housing, transportation, environment, *Employment Areas*, *Inclusionary Zoning*, *Neighbourhoods*, *Implementation* and others.

## **Chapter One – Making Choices**

The current Chapter One of the Official Plan articulates a vision for Toronto’s future and the principles for a successful city. It is the compass for making choices that shape Toronto’s future. The Official Plan is grounded in four principles articulated in Chapter One: (1) diversity and opportunity; (2) beauty; (3) connectivity; and (4) leadership and stewardship. The vision of the Plan is about creating an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging: a city where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy a good quality of life.

As currently written, Chapter One indicates that 75% of the city’s land area is not expected to accommodate much growth but will mature and evolve. These areas are made up of our neighbourhoods, ravines, valleys and our open space system. The remaining 25% of the city is planned to accommodate most of the new growth over the Plan’s 30-year horizon. Chapter One also contains three sections that guide the practical use of the plan. These sections are: *Implementing the Plan*; *Organization of the Plan*; and, *How to Read the Plan*. These are meant to guide the reader in reading and applying the plan.

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Policy Drivers: Planning Toronto’s Future**

The purpose and intent of the in-effect Chapter One was, in part, an exercise to bring six municipalities together in a cohesive and unified land use vision. Since Council’s adoption of the Official Plan in 2002, Toronto has experienced demographic change and unprecedented growth. While many of the current Chapter One principles remain relevant after 20 years, it is also important to examine accomplishments and lessons learned and set new directions for the next quarter century. The Official Plan review process, which the City has named “Our Plan Toronto”, presented an opportunity to address through planning policy, a number of the growth-related challenges facing Toronto today and in the future. These challenges include housing affordability, climate change, mobility, public health and others.

The following report section highlights and summarizes the sources of key inputs and considerations that have informed staff’s recommended updated Chapter One.

### **Reconciliation Action Plan**

On April 6, 2022, City Council adopted the [Reconciliation Action Plan \(2022-2032\)](#) that envisions a city where First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, worldviews, cultures and ways of life hold a respected, celebrated, prominent and distinctive place in Toronto. The City’s first Reconciliation Action Plan will guide its actions to advance truth, justice and reconciliation for the next 10 years, from 2022 to 2032. It builds on the City’s

existing commitments to Indigenous Peoples and takes them even further through 28 meaningful actions across five themes. The Our Plan Toronto engagement program and Chapter One text was guided by the principles, definitions and actions to restore truth contained in the Reconciliation Action Plan.

### **Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism**

On December 5, 2017, City Council adopted the [Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism](#). The five-year action plan contains 22 recommendations and 80 actions that address five areas: children and youth development; health and community services; job and income supports; policing and the justice system; and community engagement and Black leadership. The action plan was the result of reviewing 41 years of anti-black racism research and recommendations, which formed the basis of 41 community conversations in partnership with 18 community agencies, and engagement from over 800 members of Toronto's Black communities. Chapter One text was guided by the vision and principles and anti-black racism analysis contained in the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

### **Engagement Program**

The City retained Dillon Consulting to assist in the design and delivery of the city-wide engagement program that commenced in late-2020. The engagement program was delivered remotely and in-person and took the opportunity to utilize a wide range of virtual tools available to the City to reach as many communities and stakeholders as possible. Engagement was conducted in four phases, aimed at building relationships with each group and to seek iterative feedback. Phase 1 engagement centred around high level questions related to what kind of future Torontonians, stakeholders and businesses wanted for city and identifying today's challenges. Phase 2 engagement focused on the City's strengths and priorities towards "building back better". During Phase 3, staff presented draft visions statements, principles and draft policies on environment, climate change, employment and Major Transit Station Areas. The fourth and final phase focused on the Draft Chapter One components with an emphasis on Indigenous planning perspectives (Attachment 3 provides a detailed summary).

Over 2,800 people were reached in more than 90 meetings and workshops; the project website was visited almost 50,000 times; #OurPlanTO attracted over 10,000 likes, tweets and retweets across social media; and there were 1,200 responses to polls. Attachment 2 to this report summarizes the Our Plan Toronto engagement process. Input received through this engagement has informed staff's drafting of the recommended Chapter One.

### **Indigenous Peoples**

Engagement with Indigenous Peoples for Our Plan Toronto focused on building relationships with Indigenous Treaty Rights Holders, Territorial Partners, businesses, and organizations to learn about and understand Indigenous perspectives on planning. Throughout the engagement process, staff sought guidance from the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC), the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC), the City's Indigenous Affairs Office and Ambe Maamowisdaa Employee

Circle, to ensure respectful engagement. Attachment 3 summarizes the input received in these meeting and focus groups.

Since the Chapter One Directions report on April 22, 2022 ([PH33.13](#)), staff have held a number of focused meetings with Indigenous First Nations, representatives of equity deserving groups, residents' associations and others. Staff also presented updated draft Chapter One language to the public in spring 2023 Open Houses and Public Meetings for the Municipal Comprehensive Review.

### **Equity Deserving Groups**

The Community Leaders Circle (CLC) is a group of 30-40 individuals who work with or represent community organizations across the city. The CLC participated in several workshops and conversations that were fundamental to reach marginalized communities and equity-deserving groups. CLC members mobilized additional outreach and engagement in their respective communities, resulting in additional focused consultations co-designed and/or led by CLC members. Staff presented and sought feedback from the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee on the draft directions and Chapter One. The importance of intersectionality was raised, as well as consideration of land trusts and community hubs. Comments were also raised on ensuring that amenities are prioritized for the most vulnerable residents.

Staff also worked with students from Toronto Metropolitan University to undertake a jurisdictional scan of recently updated equity policies in New York City, Minneapolis, Edmonton, Boston, Seattle, Portland. The results of the study helped inform staff's draft Chapter One.

### **Confronting Anti-Black Racism**

Input on confronting anti-black racism was sought through the Our Plan Toronto process and included meeting with the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee (CABRAC) and receiving feedback on the draft Chapter One directions and text. Input included addressing the removal of systemic barriers for black Torontonians, consideration of policies to address gentrification, African ancestral acknowledgement, addressing climate justice, listing who is included when referring to "all people" in the universal accessibility section, and consideration of anti-displacement text for Black-owned businesses.

### **Housing**

Housing and affordability have been key themes throughout the Our Plan Toronto engagement process, most frequently raised issues by the public, stakeholders, the Community Leaders Circle, Planning and Housing Committee, each of the Advisory Committees and Council. Affordable housing, housing supply, access to a range of housing options that support families and people of all ages and abilities including rental housing, a human rights-based approach to housing, the limitations of the Neighbourhoods policy, how to build more accessible housing, and intensification, have all been highlighted as important elements.



## **Accessibility**

The principles of access and universal accessibility are key issues that were raised through the engagement with stakeholders. Input from accessibility stakeholders and the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC) was sought, and draft directions and text were presented to the Advisory Committee throughout the process. Universal accessibility was raised as an important component of improving access for Torontonians, how to build more accessible housing units, the limitations of the Neighbourhoods policy as it prevents more density and new accessible housing apartment units, and how Chapter One can incorporate accessibility considerations including AODA's Design of Public Spaces and the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines.

## **Internal and Inter-divisional Collaboration**

Staff held inter-divisional meetings to get input from staff members that work with the Official Plan, and across the organization. Members of the Indigenous Affairs Community of Practice (IACOP) were also surveyed on Indigenous planning perspectives. Staff also received feedback from the Gender Equity Unit, which included that Toronto should be an inclusive and accessible city that meets the needs of all women, girls and gender diverse residents, and incorporate an intersectional gender equity lens. City Planning teams were engaged and consulted on the draft Chapter One.

## **Open House (scheduled)**

On March 26, 2024, staff hosted a Public Open House in the rotunda of Metro Hall from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Boards with the draft text and document were displayed and City staff were present to hear from the public and answer questions about Chapter One. Staff will provide an additional report directly to Council, if necessary.

## **Public Outreach for Open House and Public Meeting**

Prior to the March 26, 2024, public Open House, updates were sent through the Our Plan Toronto communication channels. This included a newsletter update with over 1,000 subscribers on progress to-date on Chapter One, social media posts and an invitation to join the Open House.

## **Recommended Official Plan Amendment 718**

A key consideration in developing a new Chapter One was the intended audience, which was discussed throughout the engagement process. Official Plans are often of interest to members of Council and planners, however, it can be difficult to read for a typical reader. Chapter One is intended to reflect the shared values and principles of Torontonians as a whole, and the new text is therefore written to be engaging and non-technical for all readers. Staff retained a “plain English” writer and editor to ensure that directions that resulted from the engagement process were clear and understandable to all readers.

Once adopted, Chapter One will serve as a statement of values that will inform future amendments to the Official Plan. These values will be considered alongside applicable policies and legislation such as the *Planning Act*, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, and the Provincial Policy Statement. An emphasis on inclusion, access and equity will ensure that these values become embedded in Toronto's growth moving forward.

Attachment 1 to this report contains the recommended amendment to the Official Plan (OPA 718) for a new Chapter One of the Official Plan. It is City Planning staff's opinion that the recommended OPA 718 is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and conforms to and does not conflict with the Growth Plan. The proposed text and intent of each section is summarized below.

## **Section 1 - Toward Reconciliation Through Planning**

Council's adoption of the [Reconciliation Action Plan \(2022-2032\)](#) and the [Reconciliation Action Plan 2022 \(Year 1\) Work Plan](#), identify several actions to undertake in City Planning. These actions include a Reconciliation audit to revise new policies, improve relationships with treaty and territorial partners, and identifying opportunities for Indigenous placemaking and placekeeping initiatives in new development. The first page of Chapter One is recommended to be an acknowledgement that the Official Plan is an opportunity to help reset the City's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. Chapter One includes a new sidebar on the Reconciliation Action Plan.

### **Section 1.1 - Planning for Toronto's Future**

Setting the context for the Official Plan is an important component of understanding its role in planning and how it can influence Toronto's growth. It is expected that Toronto will grow to more than 4 million residents by 2051. This section includes an explanation of the policy-led planning system in Ontario, and how the Official Plan fits into that context. The section also includes a new sidebar that graphically shows the framework for planning and growth, and the role that the Official Plan plays in that framework.

### **Section 1.2 - Planning Priorities**

Key themes that were heard throughout all four phases of engagement have formed the four priorities of the Official Plan. Across these themes was a common thread: balancing the needs of today's residents without compromising the needs of future generations of Torontonians. The four priorities are a statement of what challenges will be addressed over the next 30 years by the Plan and its new Vision to 2051 and Principles. The four priorities are:

- advancing reconciliation;
- taking action on climate change and its impacts;
- addressing housing demand; and
- removing barriers.

The section contains new sidebars on Toronto's Reconciliation Action Plan; Toronto's TransformTO Climate Action Strategy; Toronto's HousingTO Action Plan and policies

that increase options across the housing spectrum for Torontonians; and a description of what makes a complete community.

### **Section 1.3 - Vision to 2051**

The *Planning Act* requires the Official Plan of a municipality to contain goals and objectives to manage the physical environment, and the Vision to 2051 is the goal that the Official Plan sets out to achieve. This vision for the next 30 years of growth reflects the diversity of the city. The key components of this vision are to become a city of complete communities with equitable access to services and amenities, a climate resilient city, the most inclusive city in the world by 2051, and a city that contributes to a just future for Indigenous Peoples. The section contains new sidebars that explain the meaning of universal access and what is inclusive planning.

### **Section 1.4 - Principles**

The principles are the pillars that underpin the Vision to 2051 for a successful and inclusive city. The principles are reconciliation; access; equity; and inclusion. This section also includes new sidebars on Toronto's Seniors Strategy and Toronto's Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism.

### **Section 1.5 - Implementing This Plan**

This section connects the priorities, vision and principles described above with the planning tools that are available to achieve them. The Official Plan is a guiding document for growth and investment that is built on city-wide consensus of how we manage change. While it is a statutory document adopted by City Council, it is one of many plans of Council. Some complement the Official Plan and others provide more precise direction. For example, Council's Corporate Strategic Plan establishes corporate and strategic priorities for the public service, while secondary plans provide more specific guidance for growth in local areas. The Official Plan provides a clear direction for the city's growth.

### **Section 1.6 - How the Plan is Organized**

To help the reader understand how the policies of the Official Plan are organized, a short section describing each chapter is provided. This includes a graphical representation of the relationship between the chapters that reflects the nature of how policies in early chapters are broad and become more specific with each following chapter.

### **Section 1.7 - Have Your Say in Planning Our City**

An integral part of ensuring the Official Plan, including a new Chapter One, and the policies of the Plan are up to date, is to clearly articulate how Torontonians can stay involved. While thousands of Torontonians have contributed to Our Plan Toronto, there are thousands more future residents that will deserve to have their say on what values the Official Plan should reflect. This section is also a statement of intent and commitment that the City will be proactive in updating the plan.

## Next Steps

Following Council's consideration of Official Plan Amendment 718, staff will:

- present to the Advisory Committees on progress made, including the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and the Housing Rights Advisory Committee; and
- develop a work plan to continue the Community Leaders Circle as a way to monitor and evaluate progress toward addressing the priorities and achieving the vision and principles contained in OPA 718.

## CONCLUSION

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Chapter One of the Official Plan plays an important role in the growth of Toronto. It is the shared values that reflect Toronto's diversity and has been shaped by the thousands of Torontonians that have contributed their voices in this review of the Official Plan. The result of this process has identified the need to advance reconciliation, address climate change and the demand for housing, and reduce and remove systemic barriers faced by equity-seeking groups across the city. Once adopted, the recommended Chapter One will inform policy-making, new developments and growth to 2051.

## CONTACT

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## SIGNATURE

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City Planning Division

## ATTACHMENTS

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Attachment 1: Recommended Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 718  
Attachment 2: Final Engagement Summary Report (prepared by Dillon Consulting Limited)  
Attachment 3: Indigenous Engagement Summary Report (prepared by Dillon Consulting Limited)