



TORONTO

OFFICIAL PLAN

CHAPTER ONE – **MAKING CHOICES**

1. MAKING CHOICES

1.1 TORONTO OFFICIAL PLAN – INTRODUCTION

Toronto is a great city! It has evolved into a special place that people care about deeply. It is a wonderful city in which to live, offering a diversity and richness of urban life that nurtures creativity, entrepreneurial spirit and a concern for each other and for future generations. Together, these characteristics have shaped a city that attracts people from every corner of the world.

What kind of city will Toronto be in the 21st century?

This is an important question affecting us all. Toronto faces a complex and challenging future and the decisions we make today will shape the kind of city we will live in tomorrow.

This Official Plan is about making the right choices and shaping Toronto's collective future. The Plan is about getting the fundamentals right. It is about having a clear vision for the City - grounded in durable principles that assure a successful future.

Successful cities are key to a healthy future. They are the cities that will attract investment with their high quality of life. As Canada's largest city and Ontario's capital, Toronto's future prospects are of national and provincial significance.

Building a successful Toronto means that we have to make sustainable choices about how we grow. We have to see connections and understand the consequences of our choices. We have to integrate environmental, social and economic perspectives in our decision making. We have to meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

There is no such thing as an isolated or purely local decision. Each of us make choices every day about where to live, work, play, shop and how to travel. They seem like small choices, but together and over time the consequences of these choices can affect everyone's quality of life. That's why planning matters.

Toronto will grow. Our choice is not whether we grow, but how well we grow. Making Toronto better should always come before making Toronto bigger, but we will get bigger.

This Plan sets its sights on building a consensus around change by painting a picture of the City's future. Building a future for Toronto does not mean changing everything. The Plan's land use designations covering about 75 per cent of the City's geographic area will strengthen the existing character of our neighbourhoods, ravines, valleys and our open space system. These areas are not expected to accommodate much growth, but they will mature and evolve. Most of the new growth



Council's Strategic Plan and the Official Plan

The vision and goal statements in *Council's Strategic Plan* are the broadest expression of the type of city we envision for the future. The *Strategic Plan* embraces sustainability as a central concept. Sustainability is based on social equity and inclusion, environmental protection, good governance and city-building. The concept of sustainability helps us to broaden our vision by considering economic, environmental and social implications together, rather than using a single perspective. It encourages decision making that is long range, democratic, participatory and respectful of all stakeholders.

Sustainability means focusing on long term horizons (such as 30 years ahead) instead of the next fiscal year, or the next term of Council.

Sustainability is not a new concept and in the context of city-building is recognized in the *Planning Act*, which requires that Official Plans contain “*goals, objectives and policies established primarily to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic and natural environment*”. This Plan looks ahead 30 years through a sustainability lens and provides a framework for managing physical change that is needed for a successful City.

Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing our planet. Toronto is committed to addressing this challenge through leadership and providing a sustainable future for all Torontonians. The City's Climate Change Action Plan (2007) outlines the City's response to climate change and poor air quality. Actions on climate change include reducing harmful emissions and building a clean, resilient City.

Our weather is changing. The City expects hotter, drier summers, more heat waves; warmer and milder winters; and fewer, but much more intense, summer rainfall events. These changes will impact how we design City buildings, infrastructure and the public realm to be resilient to changing weather and how we manage our forests and natural resources.

over the next 30 years will occur in the land use designations covering the remaining 25 per cent of the City's geographic area. These are the areas of real opportunity where change can contribute to a better future and where we can realize the greatest social, environmental and economic benefits.

This Official Plan rests on strong foundations that can weather the test of time. It builds on the vision of those who have helped us travel from our early roots as a settlement on the shores of Lake Ontario to a vibrant and modern city. It is grounded in principles of:

- diversity and opportunity;
- beauty;
- connectivity; and
- 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. A city with:

- vibrant neighbourhoods that are part of complete communities;
- affordable housing choices that meet the needs of everyone throughout their life;
- attractive, tree-lined streets with shops and housing that are made for walking;
- a comprehensive and high quality affordable transit system that lets people move around the City quickly and conveniently;
- a strong and competitive economy with a vital downtown that creates and sustains well-paid, stable, safe and fulfilling employment opportunities for all Torontonians;
- a healthy natural environment including clean air, soil, energy and water;
- infrastructure and socio-economic systems that are resilient to disruptions and climate change;
- a connected system of natural features and ecological functions that support biodiversity and contribute to civic life;
- green spaces of all sizes and public squares that bring people together;
- a wealth of recreational opportunities that promote health and wellness;
- a ravine system that offers wilderness, respite, recreation, beauty and a link to our past;
- a spectacular waterfront that is healthy, diverse, public and beautiful;
- cultural facilities that celebrate the best of city living; and
- beautiful architecture and excellent urban design that astonish and inspire.

1.2 PRINCIPLES FOR A SUCCESSFUL TORONTO

This Plan is about the basics of successful city-building. Holistic and integrated thinking is a fundamental requirement for planning a modern city like Toronto. Integrated thinking means seeing, understanding and accounting for all the connections as we go about our decision making. Sometimes it means thinking differently about solutions. Always it means searching for outcomes that demonstrate integration, balance and interdependence and that earn social, environmental and economic rewards.

A successful city is one with a competitive advantage over others locally, nationally and internationally. It has a quality of life that will attract and retain people who have capital, skills, knowledge, ingenuity and creativity. A successful city with an enviable quality of life is diverse, equitable and inclusive; it astonishes with its human-made and natural beauty; it thrives on making connections and it inspires great leadership and stewardship. Toronto has these attributes now. We will have to consolidate and build on these strengths as we grow. Success will come by seizing new opportunities based on these principles.

A City of Diversity and Opportunity

Toronto is an interesting and cohesive city that offers a dynamic mixture of opportunities for everyone to live, work, learn and play. As in nature, diversity is key to our social, cultural and economic life. Diversity is our strength because it means vibrancy, opportunity, inclusiveness and adaptability - it is a fundamental building block for success. To be successful, our future must also be diverse, inclusive and equitable. Our future is one where:

- housing choices are available for all people in their communities at all stages of their lives;
- ecological diversity is conserved and nurtured for future generations;
- multiculturalism is celebrated and cultural diversity supported;
- a variety of jobs is available to people with a range of education and abilities that creates and sustains well-paid, stable, safe and fulfilling employment opportunities for all Torontonians;
- people have equitable access to a range of leisure and recreational opportunities;
- people with special needs are supported to live in their communities;
- public transit is universally accessible and buses and streetcars are an attractive choice for travel;
- diverse employment areas can adapt to changing economic trends and are poised to capture new business opportunities;





- well-being is measured by how well we provide for our children and the most disadvantaged among us;
- no person pays more than they can afford for shelter;
- educational opportunities are available for people of all means and abilities;
- children and youth find their surroundings safe, stimulating and inviting;
- the elderly can live comfortably and securely;
- people enjoy freedom of conscience and religion and opportunities for such enjoyment are supported;
- adequate amounts of safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable food are available to all; and
- communities are supported by equitable access to opportunities, resources and services.



A City of Beauty

All successful cities astonish with their human-made and natural beauty. People choose to live and businesses choose to invest in beautiful cities. People also want to live in cities that understand their past and push their creative limits. Toronto's future must be one where:

- nature is within easy reach throughout the City;
- the City's waterfront is a vital, healthy and beautiful asset;
- the arts and culture are actively promoted;
- public art graces streets and open spaces;
- heritage buildings and features are conserved, archaeological resources are protected and lost heritage is commemorated;
- the City's natural features are protected, enhanced and restored;
- quality and excellence are hallmarks in the design of public spaces and buildings;
- sidewalks are animated and attractive people places;
- significant public views and focal points are preserved; and
- the City is well maintained, with clean and beautiful green spaces, including community and rooftop gardens.



A City of Connections

A connected city recognizes that all aspects of our daily lives are linked and that we have to understand relationships and interdependencies to ensure future success. The choices we make about where we live, how we travel, where we work, shop and play all impact on and are affected

by the choices of others. Everything is connected to everything in some way. Toronto's future is one where connections are understood and where:

- we meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs;
- people understand the environmental, social and economic consequences of their individual choices;
- the City's natural features and watercourses are protected and regenerated, forming a vital and integral part of the urban landscape;
- a connected green space system links our parks and open spaces;
- there is a fast, convenient and high-quality transit system linking areas of housing and employment and also providing access to goods and services, health care, education and recreation;
- mixed use is seen as the best way to "move less";
- City services are delivered efficiently through a growth-supportive infrastructure system; and
- we each think globally and act locally.

A City of Leaders and Stewards

A city of leaders and stewards is fundamental to success. Leadership and stewardship in the successful city are not confined to elected officials, but include everyone, from the volunteer in a grassroots community organization to the CEOs of our largest corporation.

Implementation of this Plan needs the participation of all segments and sectors of the City. The City of Toronto cannot do it alone. We need leaders in the public and private sectors with the courage to take risks, develop proactive solutions and then follow through. Great leadership makes it safe to do the right thing – make the hard choices and reap the quality of life rewards. Toronto's future as a city of leaders and stewards is one where:

- individuals and communities actively participate in decisions affecting them;
- communities share responsibility, for their children and youth;
- innovative implementation solutions are embraced;
- everyone takes responsibility for the natural environment;
- the volunteer sector is thriving;
- people are inspired to become involved in affecting positive change;
- all levels of government recognize their mutual dependence and work together;
- people are engaged and invested in city living and civic life;
- the private sector marshals its resources to help implement public objectives;

- we are all advocates for a sustainable city-region; and
- the City's capital spending priorities support the growth strategies of this Plan.

1.3 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

This Plan is about the big picture. It spells out a clear direction for Toronto. It is the road map to our future, providing the basis for building a city-wide consensus around change. It is about vision and while the details of the Plan's implementation may vary from time to time, the vision and the core principles upon which it is based will remain constant.

Toronto's Food Charter

In May 2000 Council adopted a Food Charter with the objective of making Toronto a food secure City where a variety of healthy foods would be available to Torontonians at a reasonable cost and our food production capacity would be safeguarded. Access to food is carried into the Official Plan through references to reducing loss of foodlands to urban sprawl and the creation of community gardens.

Social Development Strategy

Approved by Council in 2001, the *Social Development Strategy* outlines the City's social priorities and gives direction to its role in providing service and supporting communities. To improve and enhance the quality of life of people living and working in Toronto, the *Social Development Strategy* contains important directions for strengthening communities.

Toronto is a big, complex and fully urbanized city. Its future is about re-urbanization and its continuing evolution will involve a myriad of situations and decisions. This Plan provides a general guide but it cannot encompass or even imagine every circumstance. Further implementation plans and strategies dealing with important components of the City are needed to bring the Plan to life. These include: a municipal housing strategy, a transportation strategy, community service and facilities strategies, parkland and watercourse acquisition strategies, to name a few. Some areas of the City identified for growth will also need more detailed guidance than this Plan provides, in which case Secondary Plans, area studies and urban design parameters will be needed.

There are also important implementation linkages to be made outside of the Official Plan. Other City plans and strategies complement the Plan and will help to implement its city-building goals. Council's Strategic Plan is the broadest expression of the type of city envisioned by Council in the future, serving as a framework document to guide other major initiatives throughout the City. Other plans and strategies, such as the *Social Development Strategy*, the *Economic Development Strategy*, the *Environmental Plan*, the *Culture Plan*, the *Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan*, the *Water Efficiency Plan*, a *Public Art Master Plan*, the *Archaeological Master Plan*, the *Food and Hunger Action Plan*, the *Cycling Master Plan*, a *Pedestrian Master Plan* and a *Tourism Strategy*, are a means to implement the vision in *Council's Strategic Plan*, but they are also vital to implementing this Official Plan. What is key is that all these plans and strategies inform and support one another and the vision for city-building set out in this Official Plan.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Plan is organized into seven chapters.

Chapter One articulates a vision for our future and outlines the principles for a successful city upon which the Plan is based.

Chapter Two sets out the urban structure of the City, develops the strategy for directing growth within the structure and sets out policies for the management of change, through the integration of land use and transportation.

Chapter Three contains policies to guide decision making based on the Plan's goals for the human, built, economic and natural environments.

Chapter Four contains the land use designations which apply across the City, which together with the land use maps implement the strategy for managing change set out in Chapters Two and Three.

Chapter Five sets out a general approach to implementing the Plan, including the policies to guide local planning in the City.

Chapter Six contains the Secondary Plans.

Chapter Seven contains site and area specific policies.

1.5 HOW TO READ THE PLAN

This is not a conventional Official Plan with individual, stand-alone chapters devoted to specific topics. In successful city-building, “everything is connected to everything” and so it is with the Plan. While the Plan is organized into various chapters, it is a comprehensive and cohesive whole.

The Plan consists of the policies, maps and schedules as indicated in Chapter Five under Interpretation of the Plan. The Plan also consists of non-policy textual commentary (unshaded text and sidebars) to make the Plan more accessible and to make the context and intent of the policies more readily understandable. The non-policy textual commentary is not to be afforded any independent status in interpreting the Plan and is to take on meaning only as an explanation of the policies, maps and schedules. The Plan is an integrated document. For any individual part to be properly understood, the Plan must be read as a whole.