

Guide to County Official Plan Amendment Applications

Introduction

This guide is intended to assist land owners in Perth County in completing an application to amend the County of Perth Official Plan. Another helpful resource is the “Citizens’ Guide to Official Plans” produced by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and found [here](#).

An official plan describes your County’s policies on how land in your community should be used. It is prepared with input from your community and helps to ensure that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of your community and be aligned with the community’s values and goals.

An official plan amendment (OPA) is a formal application that proposes to change a municipality's official plan text and/or mapping. The County may also amend its official plan due to changes in the community, or new policies and legislation that are introduced. In most cases, an OPA is made by private land owners when a proposed use of a specific property is not permitted by the policies in the Official Plan. OPA applications are often accompanied by other Planning Act applications, such as zoning by-law amendments, plan of subdivision, and consent applications.

Council of the County of Perth is the approval authority for OPA applications. An application for an OPA is a process that results in a decision to either approve or deny the request. The OPA process generally takes between 3 to 4 months, or may take longer for more complex applications or where additional studies are required, for example.

The Application Process

1. Pre-Consultation Meeting

A pre-consultation is a meeting between the applicant and/or their agent (such as a consulting planner, solicitor, surveyor, etc.), and usually involves County Staff, and any local Municipal or Agency staff that have an interest in the application. The purpose of the meeting is to assess the merits of the proposal, and identify information specific to your property that you will need to prepare and include with your application. Pre-consultation meetings are required by the Planning Act. Staff will help you understand the process and assist in finding solutions to any issues that arise.

A pre-consultation meeting may be set up by contacting the County Planning and Development Department by phone or email:

Phone: (519) 271-0531 Ext. 449

Email: planning@perthcounty.ca

Website: <https://www.perthcounty.ca>

To prepare for the pre-consultation meeting, the planning department will need the address and/or legal description of the property and an explanation of the purpose of the OPA. It is also highly recommended that any conceptual sketches, drawings, or background material be submitted prior to the pre-consultation meeting for review by County staff. More information at this early stage will help staff provide a thorough response on the merits of the application. Completing the **Pre-Consultation Submission Requirements and Request Form is required.**

The Planner will review the proposal and conceptual sketches against provincial, county, and local policies, and conduct a site visit if necessary, as part of the pre-consultation process and prior to the formal pre-consultation meeting.

At pre-consultation it will be determined if the subject property is located within an area regulated by the local Conservation Authority. If so, the consent application will be circulated to the appropriate conservation authority for review and a fee will be invoiced directly by the applicable conservation authority (UTRCA, ABCA, MVCA, or GRCA). This fee is in addition to the County OPA application fee.

The Planning Act provides for the County to request additional information or studies that may be required to fully evaluate the proposed OPA. The Perth County Official Plan includes a list of various types of information and studies in Section 18.19.3. The intention is that any requirements specific to your application will be identified at the pre-consultation meeting, however sometimes further review of the completed application results in additional required information.

2. Complete an Application

After the pre-consultation meeting, you may complete an application on your own or you may wish to hire someone to apply on your behalf, which is referred to as an “Agent”. The owner of the land must sign the application form and give permission to the Agent to conduct the application.

A complete application must include:

- One copy of the completed Application Form
- A Site Sketch and any other development drawings that are consistent with the requirements of Section 11 in the Application Form.
- The Application Fee payable to the County of Perth. A full listing of planning application fees is available [here](#).
- One copy of the Parcel Registry (PIN Printout) for all properties involved in the application proposal. A PIN printout lists the full legal description of the property, along with the legal ownership. A PIN may be obtained from a lawyer’s office, or by visiting the local Land Registry Office or by accessing the [Ontario Land Property Records Portal](#).
- Any information, reports or studies identified during the pre-consultation meeting

3. Submit the Application

An application can be received at the County of Perth in person at central reception or by regular mail. Applications can also be *e-mailed to planning@perthcounty.ca but will not be processed until payment is received.

*Please note: applications submitted through e-mail must submit payment separately in person, through regular mail, or by credit card by contacting Perth County central reception at 519-271-0531.

All applications submitted must include the signature of the applicant on the Application Form, and must be commissioned by a Commissioner of Oaths. This is a process to ensure that the applicant is the one who has signed the document. There are Commissioners on staff at the County of Perth – it is best to call ahead to ensure a Commissioner will be available when you bring in your application. The application may also be commissioned by a Notary Public or by a Solicitor of the applicant’s choosing.

Once all of the components listed above have been received, County Planning Staff will review the application package and determine whether or not the materials represent a complete application. The Planning Act provides a 30-day period for staff to review the application and deem it “complete” or “incomplete”.

4. Notice

Within 30 days of an application being deemed complete or incomplete, the County will issue a “Notice of Complete (or incomplete) Application”. For a complete application, staff may also issue a combined “Notice of Public Meeting”, which is required a minimum 20 days in advance of the meeting.

These notices will be sent by mail to neighbouring property owners within 120 metres of the subject property, any relevant agencies, and will also be posted in the local newspaper. A sign displaying details of the application will also be posted on the property.

Copies of the application may also be circulated to the local Council, municipal staff, and external agencies such as Bell Canada, Hydro One or any other applicable agencies to obtain comments.

5. Local Municipal Consideration

Staff at the local municipality will be involved in reviewing the application. The Planner will coordinate their input and its communication to you.

It is the Planners role to present the application and the policy review for Council. Local Council may ask the Planner questions for clarification. Since this is not a Public Meeting, the applicant and/or members of the public are not permitted an opportunity to speak. The applicant can however, request a delegation to local Council through that specific municipality’s clerk.

Since a Notice of Application was circulated, any issues or ideas arising from the public and/or agencies can be learned and addressed by you before the presentation to the Local Council.

The local council may choose to endorse the application, defer the application for more information, or not endorse the application. The recommendation of local council will be given via resolution for consideration by the Planning Approval Authority.

6. Public Meeting

The Statutory Public Meeting will be hosted by County Council. A Notice of Public meeting will be circulated at least 20 days prior to the meeting and the posted sign will be updated with meeting information.

At the Public Meeting, the Planner will make a presentation explaining the application and provide a professional recommendation for a decision similar to the Local Council Meeting. The presentation will include a review of:

- a. The purpose of the application,
- b. The policies that affect the application; and
- c. Any comments from agencies or the public resulting from the circulation of the Notice of Complete Application and Notice of Public Meeting.

The Applicant and any other person or public body wishing to speak will be given an opportunity to do so. The applicant or agent is strongly encouraged to attend the public meeting. Whether or not the applicant or agent attends, County Council can proceed to consider the application.

7. Decision by the Planning Approval Authority

County of Perth Council serves as the Planning Approval Authority for County OPA applications.

At the County Council meeting, the Planner will make a presentation explaining the application and provide a summary of any comments received at the Public Meeting, along with the recommendation of the Local Council. The Planner will provide a professional recommendation for a decision on the proposed OPA application. As this meeting is not a Statutory Public Meeting, the Agent, Applicant, and public cannot speak further to the application.

County Council will consider the OPA application and decide to approve, defer, or refuse the OPA application.

8. Notice of Decision

Within 15 days of a decision by County Council, a Notice of Decision which identifies appeal rights is mailed to the applicant, applicable agencies and to any members of the public who provided written comments or attended a public hearing and who requested to be notified of the decision. Listed on this notice is the last day for appeals, which is 20 days from the date listed on the Notice of Decision.

Appeal of an Application

The Applicant, Agencies, any person who spoke at a public hearing or sent a written submission to the County Clerk can appeal the decision of the Planning Approval Authority within the 20-day appeal period. Appeals are heard and decided by the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). Those wishing to appeal and OPA application must submit a completed Appellant Form to the

Municipal Clerk along with the required filing fee payable to the Minister of Finance. For more information about the appeals process, please consult the [OLT Appeal Guide](#).

9. Notice of Adoption and Decision in Effect

If the OPA application is approved and there are no appeals at the end of the 20-day appeal period, the applicant will receive a “Notice of Adoption” and the OPA application will be considered to be in effect. The approval of an OPA may also include approval(s) of other Planning Act applications prior to development occurring, or any other conditions that may form part of approval.

Your local [Planner](#) is available if you have any questions about the decision or conditions.

Other Planning Tools & Resources

Mapping and aerial photography of your property is available at the County of Perth’s online GIS at the following link: <https://www.perthcounty.ca/en/living-here/maps.aspx>

The Application Form for Official Plan Amendment can be found online at:
https://www.perthcounty.ca/en/county-government/resources/files/COP-FORM-PL-Consent_Form.pdf

The County Official Plan can be found at: www.perthcounty.ca/en/county-of-perth-official-plan.aspx

Other Resources and Links can be found at: <https://www.perthcounty.ca/planning>

Local Official Plans (Listowel, Milverton, Mitchell) are posted on local municipal websites.