

Zoning & Official Plans

Amendments to the zoning and official plans developed by municipal councils can evolve into complex land use planning issues that require the coordination, submission and analysis of technical reports and studies, as well as significant legal analysis and procedural know-how.

As official plans guide all of a municipality's planning decisions and set the framework for its zoning by-laws, so to do zoning by-laws flow from official plans, and establish the legally enforceable requirements for how property can be developed, including building aesthetics, height restrictions and location.

Our lawyers assist municipal councils, planning boards and municipal planning authorities with developing upper, lower and single-tier official plans and obtaining stakeholder approval of them. We advise clients on effective community consultation strategies, and facilitate engagement with the applicable approval authority. We help clients ensure their official plans are consistent with provincial plans and policy directions regarding land use planning and development.

We also advise municipalities and councils on the process for passing zoning by-laws, including their consultation, notice and meeting obligations. Where a community stakeholder wants to develop property in a way that is not permitted by a zoning by-law, we will assist clients in bringing zoning change applications. We also represent stakeholders interested in voicing their perspectives in consultation processes.

Lawyers and professionals in this area



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Areas of Expertise

- Applications for approval
- Building permits
- Compliance
- Consultation
- Official plan reviews
- Ontario Municipal Board appeals
- Plan amendments
- Plan exemptions
- Policy advice
- Stakeholder submissions
- Zoning by-law requirements
- Zoning by-law updates
- Zoning change applications

Representative Experience

Our lawyers have managed many significant official plan and zoning by-law amendment projects, including some of the largest in Ontario. Some of these projects include:

- City of Toronto Railway Lands
- Town of Aurora Office Plan Amendment 17, Secondary Plan Area
- Vaughan 400 Industrial Park
- Region of Niagara Official Plan
- St. Mary's Cement, Bathurst Street and Fleet Street, City of Toronto
- Official Plan Amendment 332, City of Vaughan (Secondary Plan, Maple)

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