

Development application guidelines

Planning justification report

What is the purpose of this?

A *planning justification report* provides the planning rationale for a proposed development. This document is intended to help the applicant organize and substantiate the application and to assist staff in the review of the proposal.

Depending on the complexity of the application, the information requirements may be addressed in a letter format or a more comprehensive report.

Who should prepare this?

A *planning justification report* should be a full member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (MCIP). A *planning justification letter* may be prepared by the applicant or a MCIP.

When is this required?

A *planning justification report* is required for the following applications:

- Official Plan Amendment
- Zoning By-law Amendment (including applying for a temporary use)
- Plan of Subdivision
- Plan of Condominium (conversion of existing rental housing to condominium only)

A covering *planning justification letter* with a brief planning rationale may be required for the following applications:

- Plans of Condominium (new condominiums)
- Site Plan Control applications
- Part Lot Control
- Plan Revisions

Why do we need this?

The *planning justification report or letter* is required to:

- provide a clear understanding of the proposal
- highlight information specific or particular to the proposal (i.e. special history or circumstances)
- demonstrate good planning and how the proposal conforms to the Livable Oakville Plan, and where required, the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan and the Halton Region Official Plan

How should this be prepared?

A *planning justification report* should contain:

- description of the proposal, overview, major statistics (i.e. height, density, parking), relevant phasing issues, site and contextual considerations
- process steps/approvals required (i.e. zoning, site plan, consent, condominium)
- site description and surrounding land uses/context/built form
- planning history of the site, such as previous approvals, legislative references, Ontario Municipal Board history, relevant authorities (i.e. site plan agreements, site-specific zoning by-law) and variances currently or recently in process, with copies of relevant documents
- planning justification/rationale to address:
 - Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan and *Planning Act* considerations
 - relevant Official Plan policies (Halton Region and Town of Oakville), including

- discussion as to how and why each is addressed by the proposal
- relevant Zoning By-law information, areas of compliance and non-compliance and why
- discussion of how the proposal will address any other relevant Town planning studies or guidelines
- analysis and opinion as to why the proposal is considered appropriate, including issues of impact and compatibility
- an outline of the supporting studies submitted (i.e. traffic studies, urban design briefs)
- summary and conclusions
- a list detailing the potential amendments to the Zoning By-law or a draft Zoning By-law amendment, if applicable

A *planning justification letter* should contain:

- description of the proposal, overview, major statistics (i.e. height, density, parking), relevant phasing issues, site and contextual considerations
- site description and surrounding land uses/context/built form
- site's planning history such as previous approvals, legislative references, Ontario Municipal Board history, relevant authorities (i.e. site plan agreements, site-specific zoning by-law, heritage designation by-laws), variances currently or recently in process, with copies of relevant documents

In addition, the *planning justification letter* for draft plan of condominium applications may provide a description of the type of application (i.e. leasehold, common elements, phased, vacant land, standard) and on any related planning approval process or on any unusual circumstances (i.e. strata plan). The letter should identify whether the application is the same as the approved site plan and if there have been any changes, what those changes are and why. If there was no previous planning process including site plan approval, the letter should explain the circumstances (i.e. conversion of rental).

What else should we know?

Consult a Planner from the Planning Services Department to determine whether the information requirements should be addressed in a letter or report format.

What other resources are there?

Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) - To hire a professional planning consultant, consult the directory:
<http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/content/HireAPlanner/index.aspx>