

# Nurturing Neighbourhoods

## Issues and Options Report

### How can the Official Plan support and foster vibrant neighbourhoods in Orillia?

Cities are best served when neighbourhoods are home to local populations that support a wide range of housing, jobs, services, and shops. Thoughtful planning for Orillia's neighbourhoods through Our Orillia Official Plan Review can also:

- Connect people, businesses, and recreational opportunities, reducing the number of short distance car trips.
- Lead to greater housing choices and mobility connections with access to economic and social opportunities.
- Create neighbourhoods that are more adaptable to generational change, serving people and families through their life cycle stages, including aging-in-place.
- Result in more adaptive neighbourhoods that are resilient to a changing climate.

#### What are the elements of Nurturing Neighbourhoods?

- Residential Areas
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Economic Development
- Age-Friendly Planning
- Arts and Culture

Today, Orillia's neighbourhoods contain a diverse mix of housing types, ranging from single detached homes to multi-unit residential homes, a network of parks, trails, and open spaces, community amenities, and shops – all connected by the City's mobility network. It is also important to recognize that different areas of Orillia are undergoing different types of change. Within the City's new neighbourhoods west of Highway 11, development and investments in new community and civic infrastructure such as roads and community amenities are needed to meet the demands of new residents. Within the City's existing neighbourhoods, investments in maintenance and retrofits are needed to keep pace with growth and redevelopment and modernize existing infrastructure. Policies will also be needed to guide new and infill development in those existing neighbourhoods that respects the existing character of the community.

Through Our Orillia Official Plan Review, **Nurturing Neighbourhoods** means considering all of the elements that make great places to live – from housing and jobs to parks, community spaces, grocery stores, and child care facilities.

#### What We Heard

"South end Orillia is lacking a grocery store and day cares are needed in all wards"

- Visioning Workshop Attendee

## Policy Issues and Options

The policy issues and options outlined below are organized by the elements of the **Nurturing Neighbourhoods** City Move. These elements build on the input received from the community during Phase 1 of Our Orillia Official Plan Review engagement activities and the City Moves Report. These issues and options provide the basis for community and stakeholder consultation in Phase 2 of Our Orillia Official Plan Review and will inform a subsequent Policy Directions Report which will recommend specific actions to implement the Official Plan.

### Do you want to know how the Guiding Principles are being considered in the Official Plan?

Each of the issues outlined in the Report are ‘tagged’ with one or more icons that show how each issue aligns with the Guiding Principles for Our Orillia Official Plan Review.



**Complete Community**



**Strong & Diverse Economy**



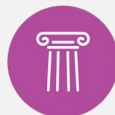
**Integrated Mobility**



**Sustainability & Stewardship**



**Safe & Affordable Housing**



**Wellness & Creativity**

## Residential Areas

### What does the current Orillia Official Plan say?

The current Official Plan includes two land use designations for residential areas in Orillia – the “Stable Neighbourhood” and “Neighbourhood Greenfield” designations. The Stable Neighbourhood designation primarily applies to lands east of Highway 11, which are largely built-out and may undergo modest change over time. The Neighbourhood Greenfield designation applies to lands outside of the City’s built boundary. These two designations are largely similar in terms of land use permissions and development policies; however, **Table 1** highlights the key differences.

Table 1 – Summary of differences between the Stable Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Greenfield designations

Policy Topic	Stable Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood Greenfield
<b>Maximum Height</b>	3 storeys	8 storeys
<b>Apartment Permissions</b>	Not Permitted.	Permitted.

Policy Topic	Stable Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood Greenfield
		(within 400-metres of transit routes on appropriate streets such as Arterials and Collector Roads)
<b>Townhouse and Multiple-Unit Building</b> <sup>(1)</sup> <b>Permissions</b>	Permitted, subject to a site-specific Zoning By-law Amendment.	Permitted subject to completing a Neighbourhood Plan on lands greater than 20 hectares.
<b>Development Policies</b>	Policies to promote compatibility and neighbourhood character.	Requires preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan to guide future development.

<sup>(1)</sup> Multiple-unit buildings refers to triplexes, fourplexes, and other similar buildings that include multiple dwelling units

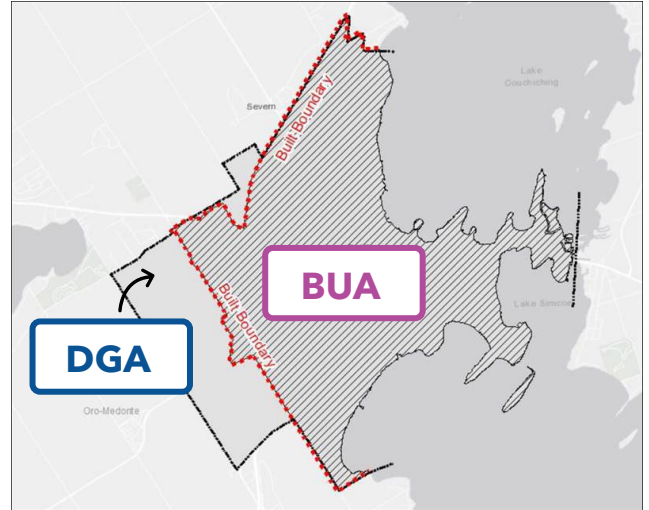
Section 3.3.3 (General Living Area Policies) of the Official Plan establishes policies that apply across both designations, including specific uses (e.g., different housing forms, home occupations, schools, local convenience/service retail) as well as general topics (e.g., affordable housing, infill development, waterfront development).

### What does Provincial policy or legislation require us to do?

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS, 2020) requires that sufficient land be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of up to 25 years, where growth is to be directed to settlement areas through intensification and redevelopment, designated growth areas, and greenfield areas.

A Place to Grow: A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan, 2020) outlines where and how growth and development within the Greater Golden Horseshoe should occur between now and 2051. The Growth Plan, 2020 addresses the need to plan for a range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units, affordable housing and higher-density housing options. Orillia’s ongoing Land Needs Assessment will determine the City’s housing supply potential by unit type. Specifically, the Growth Plan, 2020 defines two policy areas:

- **Delineated Built-Up Area (BUA)** – lands which are generally already developed and fall within the delineated Built Boundary.
  - The BUA is required to accommodate a minimum of 50% of all residential development on an annual basis.
- **Designated Greenfield Area (DGA)** – lands which are generally undeveloped but designated for development in the Official Plan.
  - Lands within the DGA (excluding employment areas) are to be planned to achieve an overall minimum density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare by 2051.



Map of Orillia's Built Boundary (shown in red)

Orillia's Official Plan implements the BUA and DGA policy areas through the Stable Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Greenfield designations, respectively.

Section 2 of the *Planning Act* sets out a list of planning matters that are of 'provincial interest', and planning authorities and municipal Councils must have regard to these interests when carrying out their responsibilities under the Act. Section 16(1) of the *Planning Act* also sets out contents that must be included in an Official Plan.

Through the *Planning Act*, the Province now requires municipalities to permit two additional residential units (known as "additional dwelling units" in Orillia) on lots with a detached, semi-detached, or townhouse building (for a total of three units on a lot). Additional dwelling units come in many shapes and styles, such as basement units, garden suites, or garage conversions, and can be considered in a wide range of neighbourhood contexts.

It should be noted that the Province recently released the Proposed Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (April 2024) that proposes to consolidate both the Growth Plan and the PPS into one document as it pertains to matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development in Ontario. The Proposed PPS carries forward minimum targets for intensification and development of built-up areas and designated growth areas, however, loosens the framework by **encouraging** their establishment and implementation instead of **requiring**. Municipalities are also directed that they **should** establish and implement phasing policies within designated growth areas to ensure that development is orderly and aligns with infrastructure and servicing provision.

## Policy Issues and Options

The following policy issues and options have been informed by input from the community, the requirements and directions of Provincial policy and legislation, and emerging practices in land use planning.



**Issue 1. The current Official Plan establishes two land use designations for residential areas, differentiating between areas within and outside of the Built Boundary. In the new Official Plan, there are two options to consider for land use designations in residential areas:**

- Recommendation 1.A. – Consolidated Designation.** Consolidate the Stable Neighbourhood and Neighbourhood Greenfield designations into a new “Neighbourhoods” designation and defer to the growth management policies of the Official Plan to address policy requirements specific to lands within the Designated Greenfield Area (e.g., Neighbourhood Plans) and Built-Up Area. This change would simplify the land use framework for Orillia’s neighbourhoods by applying one designation across all residential areas. Policies related to infill within existing neighbourhoods and development within new neighbourhoods will continue to be guided by other policies in the Official Plan.



City of Orillia Official Plan – Schedule A Land Use



**Issue 2. There is a need to expand the range of permitted dwelling types in residential areas. A series of different options could be considered to address this in the new Official Plan.**

While single-detached dwellings have historically been the predominant housing type in Orillia, housing preferences have undergone a shift. More people are now looking for semi-detached, townhouse, and apartment dwellings that meet a greater diversity of needs, stages of life, and financial circumstances.

A core principle to providing a range and mix of housing types within a neighbourhood is the ability to accommodate more households within an existing neighbourhood and providing housing choice within one's existing community.

### **General Policy Updates**

- **Recommendation 2.A.** – Review the policies of the current Official Plan as they relate to site plan control to eliminate the requirement for site plan control for developments less than 10 units (excluding those along the waterfront), in line with Provincial legislation.
- **Recommendation 2.B.** – Review the policies of Section 3.3.4.4 of the current Official Plan as they relate to requirements for certain dwelling types containing more than ten dwelling units to provide more policies that contemplate general building and site design, angular plane, massing, scale and landscaping.

## Expanding Housing Options

- **Recommendation 2.C. – Expanding permissions to permit a broader range of housing options with greater flexibility in the Official Plan.**
  - i. Permit street townhouses as-of-right in residential areas, subject to locational criteria, access to transit and compatibility with existing neighbourhoods.
  - ii. Expand permissions for walk-up apartment and stacked townhouse-style dwellings along Collector and Arterial Roads, subject to criteria that can include adequate servicing, proximity to a transit route or Strategic Growth Area.

## Heights

- **Recommendation 2.D. – Increased Height Permissions.** Increase the maximum permitted height within neighbourhood designations up to four storeys on Arterial and Collector Roads. Three storeys would remain permitted as of right on Local Roads. Under this option, enhanced policies for infill development would be required to support land use compatibility, such as a height transition and design policies for developments with more than ten dwelling units.
- **Option 2.A. – Status Quo.** Maintain the maximum permitted height of three storeys within the neighbourhood designations as currently established by the Official Plan.



## **Issue 3. There is a need to build complete, walkable neighbourhoods that include local, community-serving retail and commercial uses.**

- 
- **Recommendation 3.A. – Modernize Policies.** The policies of Section 3.3.3.16 (Local Convenience/Service Retail) should be revised to permit small-scale neighbourhood commercial uses as-of-right and:
    - Encourage their establishment along Collector, Arterial, and Local Roads;
    - Review on-site parking requirements to incentivize active transportation and leverage on-street parking; and
    - Introduce a new definition for small-scale neighbourhood commercial uses that reflect the current exclusion of auto-oriented uses and expands to include other uses such as community spaces and artist spaces.

## Parks and Open Spaces

### What does the current Orillia Official Plan say?

Orillia's Official Plan outlines three primary intentions regarding the Parkland and Major Open Space designation. It prioritizes existing public open spaces and trail networks, permits parkland in any land use designation, and aims to preserve current and new Community/Neighbourhood parks for recreational purposes. Section 3.5.4.4 establishes Orillia's parkland hierarchy which comprises Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, and Urban Squares.

The City's Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan, 2014 provides a road map for the development of Orillia's parks, recreation, culture, and trail resources. Specifically, the Master Plan recommends that the Official Plan adopt a new park classification system and utilize the park design guidelines associated with each classification. The park classification system set out in the Master Plan supports the development of traditional park needs and uses, while using a character-based approach to expand the types of parks developed for a more varied system of activities and environments. There are seven types of park classifications identified:

- Activity Parks
- Celebration Parks
- Connector Parks
- Cultural Parks
- Leisure Parks
- Nature Parks
- Portal Parks

Further, the Master Plan provides a series of policy recommendations to support the implementation of the Plan and provide a foundation for development enhancing the park system. The policy recommendations relate to identity, design, linkages, inclusivity & accessibility, safety & maintenance, natural environment, and programs & events.

### What does Provincial policy or legislation require us to do?

The Growth Plan, 2020 encourages municipalities, conservation authorities and non-governmental organizations to develop a system of publicly accessible parkland, open space, and trails. This system should clearly indicate where public access is and is not permitted, ensuring that residents have interconnected access based on a coordinated approach to trail planning and development.

The PPS, 2020 requires that healthy, active communities should focus on safety, accessibility, and equitable distribution of recreational areas. It encourages designing streets and facilities for pedestrians, providing diverse recreational settings, ensuring public access to shorelines, and minimizing negative impacts on protected areas.

Section 42 of the *Planning Act* pertains to the conveyance of land for park purposes. Under this section, a municipality has the authority to require land to be conveyed for park or recreation purposes as part

### Did You Know?

The City is currently updating its **Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan**. The update is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2025 and will be reflected in the new Official Plan.



of development or redevelopment. The goal is to ensure that adequate public open spaces are integrated into urban development, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

## Policy Issues and Options

The following policy issues and options have been informed by input from the community, the requirements and directions of Provincial policy and legislation, and emerging practices.



### Issue 4. The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan establishes a revised parkland hierarchy for Orillia which can be considered in the Official Plan.

- Recommendation 4.A – Update Parkland Hierarchy.** To support the implementation of the Master Plan, there is an opportunity to reflect the new parkland hierarchy within the Official Plan. This would include specific policies for each classification, related to matters such as design, location, accessibility, and programming. Should this option be pursued, it is recommended that policies related to urban squares be retained as they relate to privately owned publicly accessible spaces (POPs) within intensification/mixed-use areas.



### Issue 5. The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan provides policy recommendations which should be considered in the Official Plan. Further, there is an opportunity to introduce additional policies.

- Recommendation 5.A.** – The policy recommendations of the Master Plan should be used to inform policy revisions to the Official Plan as they relate to parks, recreation, and cultural facilities. Further, additional policies should be considered that relate to:
  - Connecting the trails, cycling, and parks system;
  - Supporting Indigenous placekeeping such as ceremony, stewardship, and cultural activities;

- Increasing the visibility and access of the parks network;
- Supporting the realization of “Green Streets” and Atherley Road Parkway identified in the Master Plan; and
- Addressing climate-resilient design (e.g., mitigating extreme heat conditions) including increasing the tree canopy, providing shade structures, and provision of green infrastructure.

## Economic Development

### What does the current Orillia Official Plan say?

Principle 4 of the Official Plan focuses on promoting a strong and diverse employment base in Orillia and encourages a competitive business environment. Section 3.4 sets out policies for the City’s Employment lands which are planned to accommodate a full range of employment opportunities. Downtown Orillia is also recognized as playing a key role in providing employment opportunities in a mixed-use context. Together, the policies of the Official Plan work to protect the City’s Employment lands for current and future uses and jobs.

### Did You Know?

The City is currently preparing a new **Economic Development Strategy** that will identify Orillia’s economic vision, mission, and goals with an actionable framework to guide economic development and vitality over the next 5 years.

### What does Provincial policy or legislation require us to do?

The Growth Plan, 2020 provides employment forecasts for Orillia and provides a basis for the long-term protection of employment areas. It also stresses the importance of planning for traditional industries, service sectors, and knowledge-based businesses.

The PPS, 2020 requires that planning authorities promote economic development and competitiveness providing for an appropriate mix and range of employment, institutional, and broader mixed uses to meet long-term needs. Additionally, at the time of an official plan review or update, planning authorities should assess employment areas identified in local official plans to ensure that this designation is appropriate to the planned function of the employment area.

**The “Growing Up” Issues and Options Report explores key policy changes as they relate to employment area planning and accommodating future jobs.**

### Policy Issues and Options

The following policy issues and options have been informed by input from the community, the requirements and directions of Provincial policy and legislation, and emerging practices in land use planning.



**Issue 6. There will be a need to align Official Plan policies with the Economic Development Strategy.**

- **Recommendation 6.A.** – Once the new Economic Development Strategy has been prepared, it is recommended that an Economic Development policy sub-section be added to the Official Plan. The policies may contemplate emerging trends such as:
  - Providing sufficient space to attract, retain, and expand industrial uses, knowledge-based businesses and the cultural and tourism sectors;
  - Planning for employment uses in a mixed-use context;
  - Supporting opportunities for shared location, flexible workspaces and alternative ownership models;
  - Exploring strategies to address the displacement of small businesses, industrial uses, and community-serving spaces; and

## Age-Friendly Planning

### What does the current Orillia Official Plan say?

The Official Plan does not currently contain specific policies related to building an age-friendly Orillia, beyond general permissions for long-term care and seniors’ residences. The Age-Friendly Orillia Action Plan (2022-2026) provides direction for policies established through the Official Plan that contemplates age-friendly community principles including housing, transportation, and outdoor spaces. The Official Plan permits child care facilities within the Living Area designations, subject to site plan control and criteria to ensure compatibility with the surrounding community. Policies also require parking and drop-off/pick-up spaces for child care facilities.

### What does Provincial policy or legislation require us to do?

The PPS, 2020 recognizes that healthy, liveable, and safe communities are in part sustained by improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society.

### Policy Issues and Options

The following policy issues and options have been informed by input from the community, the requirements and directions of Provincial policy and legislation, and emerging practices.



**Issue 8. There is a need to expand, support, and retain child care spaces alongside planning for housing and jobs, as part of complete neighbourhoods.**

- **Recommendation 8.A. – Provide Flexibility.** To provide flexibility for the provision of child care in Orillia, consider integrating new policies that encourage the integration of child care facilities with the development of schools, mixed-use developments, and other community facilities.

Beyond these recommendations, age-friendly planning can also be addressed indirectly through mobility, parks and open space, and housing policies.

## Arts and Culture

### What does the current Orillia Official Plan say?

Arts and culture evolves and adapts with history and time and is influenced both by visual arts trends in general and by our own relationship with the built form and the urban context to which it contributes by visually enriching the environment. To foster a sense of local pride and achievement, arts and culture needs to be accessible to the community at large and needs to encourage community interaction.

The Official Plan recognizes Downtown as the administrative and cultural hub of Orillia and promotes it as a focus area for investment in commercial, institutional, cultural, and entertainment uses.

### What does Provincial policy or legislation require us to do?

The PPS, 2020 encourages municipalities to support long-term prosperity by “encouraging a sense of place, by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning.”



### Policy Issues and Options

The following policy issues and options have been informed by input from the community, the requirements and directions of Provincial policy and legislation, and emerging.



**Issue 9. There is a need to foster and support arts and culture in Orillia. In the new Official Plan, there is an opportunity consider the following options and recommendations.**

#### Placekeeping and Public Art

- **Recommendation 9.A. – Support placekeeping features that consider Indigenous representation, the needs of all ages including children and seniors, and cultural groups.**

- **Recommendation 9.B.** – Provide direction to seek input from Indigenous communities when naming public assets, spaces, and buildings.
- **Recommendation 9.C.** – Establishing policies for the encouragement of public art through different mechanisms such as the City’s capital construction program and other public realm initiatives in Orillia.

### **Creative Industries**

- **Recommendation 9.D. – Broaden Land Use Permissions.** Review policies for live/work spaces, home industries, and home occupations to be more permissive for cultural industries such as maker spaces, studios, and galleries.