
City of Peterborough

Terms of Reference for the Preparation and Submission of a *Planning Justification Report*

Purpose

The purpose of a **Planning Justification Report** is to provide an overview of the proposed development, background context to the area subject to the proposal, a summary of key findings from other supporting studies, and a professional planning evaluation of the application that demonstrates a review of all applicable planning policy and the rationale for a proposed development.

A Planning Justification Report helps:

- To provide a clear understanding of the proposal;
- To justify why the land use and built form are appropriate;
- To state why, in the opinion of the author, the proposal should be considered and approved;
- To identify and analyze all the relevant legislation, regulations, and policies (federal, provincial and municipal);
- To highlight information specific or particular to the proposal (i.e., special history, different circumstances); and
- To present the appropriate planning instruments to implement the proposal (i.e. a draft Zoning By-law Amendment).

When a PJR may be required

A Planning Justification Reports may be required as part of a complete application under Section 7.21.2 of the City's Official Plan.

Planning Justification Reports are most commonly required to support the following application types:

- Official Plan Amendment
- Zoning By-law Amendment
- Draft Plan of Subdivision, including major revisions

A PJR, or a scoped version thereto, may also be needed to support the balance of Planning Act applications, including:

- Draft Plans of Condominium, including Condominium Conversions
- Site Plan Control

- Part Lot Control
- Consent to Sever
- Minor Variance

Determining the need and scope

Typically the need for and scope of a Planning Justification Report would be determined prior to receiving a Planning Act application during the pre-consultation stage. In the event an application is received in the absence of pre-consultation with City staff, a complete application should be accompanied by a staff-approved Terms of Reference to avoid potential delays and to avoid the risk of an incomplete application.

Professional Qualification/Certification Requirements

All reports must be stamped and/or signed and dated by a Registered Professional Planner (RPP).

Structure of a Planning Justification Report

In the interest of expediting the development review process, the City suggests the following structure be used, at a minimum. The applicant is reminded that the section and content guidance listed below is not intended to be comprehensive and additional sections or content may be necessary. However, the example table of contents may be used as a general guide for overall report structure and may be scoped accordingly by City staff.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 - Direct reference to the concept plan on which the rationale is based
 - Description of the proposal, overview, major statistics (i.e., height, density, parking), relevant phasing, and site and contextual considerations
 - Required Planning Act approvals, in addition to necessary property acquisition/disposition, and proposed sequencing
 - Relevant planning application history such as previous approvals, legislative references, past tribunal/board decisions (include copies of relevant documents)
2. Site and Surrounding Context
 - Site description, including topography and presence of natural features
 - An overview of existing servicing and access
 - Description of existing buildings, including any historically significant elements
 - Surrounding land uses/context/built form
 - Description of any previous phases of development
3. Summary and Review of Supporting Studies
 - Summarize key findings and studies related to the project
 - Ensure the findings are coordinated and form part of the foundation for the planning analysis

4. Existing Policy Framework
 - relevant Provincial Planning Statement, and Planning Act policies and regulations;
 - relevant Official Plan and Secondary Plan policies
 - existing Zoning By-law
 - identify other City by-laws, development guidelines, and standards that apply and impact the development approval
 - identify other Provincial or Federal legislation, development guidelines, and standards that apply and impact the development approval
5. Planning Analysis
 - How the proposal is consistent and/or conforms to the relevant policies
 - Mitigation of impacts
 - Rationale for all proposed site-specific provisions
 - Coordinating the recommendations of the supporting studies and ensuring their implementation throughout the development processes
 - Address any other relevant City planning studies or guidelines
 - Analysis and opinion as to why the proposal is good planning
6. Summary/Conclusion
7. Draft Planning Instruments (e.g. by-laws, by-law amendments, Official Plan amendments etc.) to implement the development proposal, and may include a zoning matrix

Additional Resources

- To hire a professional planning consultant, consult the directory: <https://ontarioplanners.ca/hire-an-rpp>
- City of Peterborough Official Plan: <https://www.peterborough.ca/en/doing-business/official-plan.aspx>
- City of Peterborough Zoning By-laws: <https://www.peterborough.ca/en/doing-business/zoning.aspx>
- Urban Design Guidelines <https://www.peterborough.ca/en/doing-business/urban-design-guidelines.aspx>
- Engineering Design Standards <https://www.peterborough.ca/en/city-services/resources/Documents/Engineering/standardsdecember-2022-AODA.pdf>
- Community Improvement Plans <https://www.peterborough.ca/en/doing-business/grants-and-incentives.aspx>

Notes from Section 7.21.2 of the City of Peterborough Official Plan

- (a) All required reports and/or studies shall be prepared in accordance with any applicable standards or specifications, and be completed by qualified professional consultants

retained by and at the expense of the applicant. The City may require a peer review by the appropriate public agency or professional consultant retained by the City at the applicant's expense.

- (b) The City may refuse all information, studies and materials, submitted as part of a complete application(s) if it considers the quality of the submission unsatisfactory. In addition, the applicant may be required to submit any other supporting information, studies and materials identified by the City during the formal pre-consultation process for the application to be deemed complete.
- (c) Where a peer review is required of one or more of the studies listed in this Section, the time period to process the application shall not commence until the peer review study has been submitted to the City, and the City has been fully reimbursed by the applicant for the cost of the peer review.