

## **Mayoral Direction**

Decision Number: 2025-22

Date: September 26, 2025

Subject: Direction to Staff – Official Plan Review

I, Mat Siscoe, Mayor of the City of St. Catharines, pursuant to Section 284.3 of the Municipal Act, hereby direct the Chief Administrative Officer to ensure that the Official Plan (OP) review currently ongoing accomplishes the following:

### **Streamline and Modernize**

- Avoid duplication and reiteration of existing City policies (urban design, heritage, sustainability, transportation, utilities). Reference these documents rather than restating them unless required by legislation to do so.
- Simplify language and structure to ensure the OP interpretation is clear, accessible, and usable for staff, developers, Council, and the public.
- Remove unnecessary or outdated regulatory barriers that slow down or complicate development.

### **Maximize Flexibility with Appropriate Protections**

- Transition density policies from units per hectare to a form-based planning approach focused on built form, height, and massing, where possible.
- Consolidate land use designations (e.g., streamline multiple commercial categories into fewer, broader designations).
- Provide maximum development potential while identifying clear “non-negotiables” (environmental protection, heritage, public safety, core urban design principles).

### **Align with Provincial and Regional Frameworks**

- Do not repeat Provincial policies. Use the OP to interpret and apply this policy in a St. Catharines context.
- Focus City OP content on local distinctiveness and areas not covered at the upper levels.

### **Reflect St. Catharines’ Unique Planning Context**

- Recognize the City’s fixed urban boundary and built-out condition—St. Catharines cannot follow a suburban or greenfield planning model.
- Emphasize intensification, infill, and adaptive reuse in policies, ensuring compatibility with existing neighbourhood fabric.

- Support tailored approaches for distinct neighbourhoods (Downtown, Port Dalhousie, Facer St., Hartzel Rd., etc.), avoiding one-size-fits-all standards, and incorporating findings from the Neighbourhood Investment Plan.

### **Implementation and Practical Outcomes**

- Ensure the OP is a working document, easily applied by staff, Council, and development stakeholders.
- Prioritize outcomes—housing supply, economic vitality, and community wellbeing—over process-heavy requirements.
- Design the OP to be adaptable for future updates, allowing the City to respond to changing conditions without major overhauls.


### **Holistic Treatment of Agricultural Properties**

- Provide flexibility for agricultural owners whose operations span across multiple parcels of land to be treated holistically, rather than as isolated lots.
- Provide greater flexibility for agritourism and value-added uses.
- Allow planning policies that recognize farm and agri-business operations as a whole, enabling greater efficiency, diversification, and sustainability in agricultural uses.
- Ensure this flexibility respects environmental protections and compatibility with surrounding land uses.

### **On-Street Parking as a Tool for Managing Parking Needs**

- Recognize on-street parking as part of the broader parking supply, particularly in established neighbourhoods and intensification areas where private parking is limited.
- Explore policy approaches that allow on-street parking capacity to offset or reduce minimum on-site parking requirements in appropriate contexts.
- Support flexible parking standards that consider on-street availability, active transportation, and transit access as part of the parking equation.
- Encourage design solutions that balance the need for parking with pedestrian safety, cycling infrastructure, and neighbourhood character.

And further that this OP review be completed by Q4 of 2026.



Signature of Mayor  
Mat Siscoe