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## **CHAPTER 1: PLAN FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Township of North Dumfries is located in south-western Ontario and is one of seven lower tier municipalities which comprise the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. While mainly rural in character, the Township's 18,733 hectares encompass a variety of urban environments, including the Ayr Urban Area and a total of thirty-one settlement areas (twenty four residential and seven industrial/commercial). As a result of its location adjacent to Highway 401, the Township has experienced significant industrial and residential development over the past decade. This development, which has been mainly centred in the Ayr Urban Area and in the Hwy. 97/401 Industrial/Commercial Area, has served to diversify and strengthen the local economy.

The Township contains an abundance of significant natural areas, including the Carolinian Forest, Grand River Corridor, six Provincially Significant Life Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), and numerous Provincially Significant Wetlands, Regionally designated Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas and Locally Significant Natural Areas. In addition, the Township contains a variety of natural resources, including prime agricultural lands and aggregate resources.

### **1.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Township of North Dumfries Official Plan (Plan) establishes a policy framework to guide public and private sector decisions relating to development and the provision of infrastructure and community services. This Plan is a legal document which has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning Act and the Regional Official Policies Plan. This Plan sets out the intentions of Township Council relating to future economic, social and land use changes within the Township. No by-law will be adopted by Township Council which is not in conformity with the provisions of this Plan.

The main purposes of the Plan are to:

- a) provide a formal statement of the Township's intentions relating to growth management until the year 2016;
- b) establish a policy framework for maintaining and enhancing the long term physical, agricultural, environmental, social, economic, natural and heritage resources while promoting the sustainable growth of the Township; and
- c) provide a legal framework to guide public and private decisions relating to development and the provision of infrastructure and community services within the Township.

### **1.3 HIERARCHY OF PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

As a lower tier municipality, planning in the Township of North Dumfries is governed through a hierarchy of formal documents. These documents include the Regional Official Policies Plan, the Township Official Plan, Community Plans, Implementation Guidelines and the Township Zoning By-law. The inter-relationships of these documents are described below:

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1. **The Regional Official Policies Plan** - this document is the Official Plan of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. It is adopted by Regional Council and approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Regional Official Policies Plan provides for local interpretation of the Provincial Policy Statement issued by the Province under Section 3 of the Planning Act and establishes boundaries and general policy framework for development within the region. The Regional Official Policies Plan forms the framework within which the Township of North Dumfries Official Plan was prepared. Interpretation of the policies in the Regional Official Policies Plan is the responsibility of Regional Council.
2. **Township of North Dumfries Official Plan** - this Plan functions as a link between the policies of the Regional Official Policies Plan and the municipal objectives of the Township of North Dumfries. This Plan provides policies to guide both development and infrastructure investment within the township. In accordance with Section 26 of the Planning Act, this Plan must conform with the Regional Official Policies Plan, however, the policies in this Plan can be more restrictive. Interpretation of the policies in this Plan is the responsibility of Township Council.
3. **Community Plans** - Community Plans have no legal status under the Planning Act. They serve as statements adopted by resolution of Township Council which serve to guide future decisions relating to the development of a community planning area. Community Plans are prepared to co-ordinate inter-related decisions regarding the distribution of densities, location of schools, the installation of infrastructure, protection of the environment, land use compatibility and the staging of development. Community Plans must conform to both the Regional Official Policies Plan and this Plan and cannot be used as instruments to introduce new policies which could be used as the basis for refusing development applications. Portions of Community Plans not adopted by Official Plan Amendment may be subject to the approval of the Region in accordance with the policies in Section 12.2.3 of the Regional Official Policies Plan.
4. **Implementation Guidelines** - are recognized as statements adopted by Township Council which detail the manner in which policies of this Plan are implemented. Guidelines must conform to both the Regional Official Policies Plan and this Plan and cannot be used as instruments to introduce new policies which could be used as the basis for refusing development applications. Implementation Guidelines may be subject to the approval of the Region in accordance with the Policies in Section 12.2.3 of the Regional Official Policies Plan.
5. **Township Zoning By-laws** - Township Zoning by-laws adopted in accordance with Section 34 of the Planning Act are used to implement the policies of this Plan and provide standards for individual developments within the broad planning context. Any zoning by-laws adopted by the Township of North Dumfries must conform to the policies of this Plan.

## 1.4 GOALS

The Goals as outlined in this section are the basic decision making guidelines of this Plan. They reflect the general long range intent of the Plan and are further interpreted by the policies of the Plan. The Goals of this Plan are described below.

1. To guide future land use decisions in the Township in a manner that provides for the needs of existing and future residents, enhances the natural and human environment, separates incompatible land uses and ensures orderly development within the Township.
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2. To preserve, protect and encourage the continued use of prime agricultural areas for agricultural purposes.
3. To protect, conserve or wherever feasible, enhance the natural environment within the Township.
4. To protect, conserve or wherever feasible, rehabilitate and/or reuse the heritage resources of the Township.
5. To provide for the management of natural resources within the Township in a manner that minimizes undesirable short and long term impacts on the natural environment, the quality and quantity of ground and surface water, and the quality of life for existing and future residents.
6. To minimize the threat to life and destruction of property from flooding and other natural hazards.
7. To concentrate the majority of growth in the Township within the Ayr Urban Area, with limited growth in designated Rural Settlement Areas and Industrial/Commercial Areas where municipal services can be provided in a cost effective and environmentally responsible manner.
8. To encourage a range of housing types, sizes and densities to meet the needs of existing and future residents.
9. To promote the expansion of existing businesses and the attraction of new businesses to the Township to provide for a balance of residential and employment opportunities, and short and long term employment stability.
10. To ensure the cost effective provision and maintenance of transportation, water distribution, sewage collection, stormwater management and fire protection systems as required to service existing and future residents.
11. To provide opportunities for both active and passive recreational pursuits by combining the provision of parkland, sports fields, community facilities, and natural areas to satisfy the recreational needs of existing and future residents.

## 1.5 POPULATION

The Township population and household forecasts contained in Table 1 of this Plan are taken from Regional Forecasts contained in the Regional Official Policies Plan. These population and household forecasts will be used in all planning, infrastructure, and other studies undertaken by or for the Township. Longer term forecasts may be used if based on the Regional Population and Household Forecast.

**Table 1: Township Population and Household Forecast**

	<b>1991</b>	<b>2016</b>
Population Forecast	6,821	10,000
Household Forecast	2,175	3,600