

ABOUT AN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (OCP) AND ZONING BYLAW

Official Community Plans

An official community plan (OCP) is a statutory document for providing a comprehensive policy framework to guide the physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural development of a municipality. Whether you are a large or small municipality or district, your OCP expresses your municipality's vision and provides a blueprint for future development.

An OCP gives residents and investors a clear indication of the community's vision, council's goals and objectives and, together with a zoning bylaw, outlines the legal framework for implementing land use controls. It may be visual, attractive, and thorough in its presentation of goals, objectives and policies and must align with provincial interests to foster responsible growth in Saskatchewan. The OCP should respect and highlight existing land uses while being dynamic as the municipality develops. It must be detailed enough to guide day-to-day decisions yet general enough to allow for some flexibility.

The Planning and Development Act, 2007 (PDA) requires an OCP be prepared in consultation with a Registered Professional Planner (RPP).

Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws

An OCP establishes council's long-term goals, objectives, and policies for the municipality's future development. It must state objectives to be accomplished by the zoning bylaw and should contain policies specific to different types of land uses and guide when, and under what conditions, amendments to a zoning bylaw are appropriate.

The OCP may contain guidelines allowing for the use of special zoning tools within a zoning bylaw such as direct control districts, contract zoning, provisions for the use of exceptions to development standards, demolition control districts, and architectural control districts.

The zoning bylaw functions as a tool to accomplish the long-term goals prescribed within the OCP. For example, an OCP policy statement and future land use map may indicate whether an area zoned for "future urban development" would be most suitable for residential or commercial use in the future.

When a landowner initiates a proposal requiring a zoning amendment and/or subdivision, the OCP provides policies for council to follow when considering the proposal in alignment with the community's future growth plans.

What are they used for?

Municipalities can use an OCP and zoning bylaw to:

- Set out a desired framework for development by defining goals, objectives and policies;
- Inform residents of a community about how council intends to direct and manage community needs and expectations;
- Help clarify the municipal role in the development process;
- Guide current and future councils in making municipal decisions;
- Enforce land use decisions;
- Reduce land use conflicts;
- Provide opportunities for public participation in community planning; and

- Establish a framework for land use, growth and development, inform the public and create certainty for developers.

Plan Adoption Process

Once a council is satisfied with the documents, it may give **only** first reading to a bylaw adopting the official community plan and the zoning bylaw. Council must also determine when to hold a formal public hearing about the plan and bylaw. The hearing must be concluded **after** the first reading and before second and third readings.

Council must give notice of its intention to adopt the bylaws and hold the hearing by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper once a week for two consecutive weeks. The first notice must be published at least four clear weeks before the hearing.