

Site Plan Application Process Guide

April 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

The Town Council, under Section 41 of the *Planning Act*, passed Site Plan Control By-law 2025-033. This by-law designates most lands within the Town as a Site Plan Control Area, with a few exceptions.

Site Plan approval focuses on several key elements, including the location of buildings and structures, the size, scale, and design of proposed buildings, and their relationship to nearby buildings, streets, and public spaces. It also addresses grading, drainage, and erosion control, site services, and tree preservation.

Additionally, it considers the location of garbage facilities, the layout of parking, loading areas, and vehicle and pedestrian traffic flow. Sustainable design features such as landscaping and bicycle parking, along with facilities that ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, are also reviewed.

The Site Plan Approval process helps carry out the policies of the Town’s Official Plan, Livable Oakville, and other related guidelines and standards.

This guide provides an overview of the Site Plan Application process.

2. BILL 23, MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022

The Province introduced Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*, which made changes to the *Planning Act* to help speed up housing development and lower costs for applicants. These changes limited the scope of site plan control by exempting residential developments with ten units or fewer and removing the ability for municipalities to review and secure exterior design elements.

3. BILL 97, HELPING HOMEBUYERS, PROTECTING TENANTS ACT, 2023

Following the passage of Bill 97, *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023*, a new regulation was filed on August 9, 2023, under Section 41 of the *Planning Act*. Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 254/23. This regulation reintroduced site plan control for smaller residential developments of ten units or fewer within proximity of a 'prescribed area'.

Site Plan control now applies to developments within 300 m of a railway line¹ or within 120 m of a wetland, Lake Ontario, inland lake, or a river or stream valley that has depressional features associated with a river or stream, whether or not it contains a watercourse.

¹ The following railway lines are excluded:

1. a railway line to which the Canada Transportation Act (Canada) applies and whose operations have been discontinued under section 146 of that Act;
2. an abandoned railway line to which the Canada Transportation Act (Canada) does not apply; and
3. a railway line on which the only railway that operates is an urban rail transit system.

4. CLASSES OF DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING SITE PLAN APPROVAL

The entire Town of Oakville is designated as a Site Plan Control Area pursuant to Section 41 of the *Planning Act*.

The *Planning Act* defines “development” as the construction, erection or placing of one or more buildings or structures on land or the making of an addition or alteration to a building or structure that has the effect of substantially increasing the size or usability thereof, or the laying out and establishment of a commercial parking lot or of sites for the location of three or more trailers.

The Town of Oakville has two Site Plan review processes designed to provide different levels of review based on the scale, scope and complexity of the proposed development.

1. Scoped Site Plan Approval Review Process

The Scoped Site Plan approval process involves the approval of servicing, grading, drainage plans, tree protection plans, as well as a stormwater management report and an arborist report. This process applies to the following types of development:

- a) Residential development containing 1 to 3 units within 300 m of a railway line²
- b) Residential development containing 1 to 3 units within 120 m of:
 - i. a wetland;
 - ii. the shoreline of the Lake Ontario;
 - iii. an inland lake; or
 - iv. a river or stream valley that has depressed features associated with a river or stream, whether or not it contains a watercourse

NOTE: A pre-consultation is not required for a Scoped Site Plan Review application.

2. Full Site Plan Approval Review Process

The Full Site Plan approval process includes the approval of the plans outlined in subsection 41(4) of the *Planning Act*.

This process applies to the following types of development:

- a) medium and high-density residential developments containing 11 units or more.
- b) residential development containing 4 units or more within 300 m of a railway line³;

² See Note 1

³ See Note 1

- c) residential development containing 4 units or more within 120 m of:
 - i. a wetland;
 - ii. the shoreline of the Lake Ontario;
 - iii. an inland lake; or
 - iv. a river or stream valley that has depressed features associated with a river or stream, whether or not it contains a watercourse
- d) all non-residential development;
- e) all other types of development unless exempted in the Site Plan By-law;
- f) a temporary sales office for the sale of new homes within a draft approved plan of subdivision or condominium; and,
- g) a commercial parking lot

NOTE: A pre-consultation meeting is strongly encouraged to provide a high-level review of the application before a formal submission, which can potentially reduce the number of resubmissions. In addition, the pre-consultation meeting will scope the list of plans, reports and studies required by the Official Plan.⁴

5. EXEMPTION FROM SITE PLAN APPROVAL

Site plan approval is not required for:


- 1. Development which is located outside of a wetland, river or stream valley that has depressed features associated with a river or stream, whether or not it contains a watercourse or woodland, and consists of:
 - a. a building or structure that is 50 square metres or less in size that is either accessory to or in addition to, an existing building or structure;
 - b. a new non-residential building or structure on town-owned land, provided that the building or structure is less than 100 square metres;
 - c. a temporary building or structure erected and used for a maximum of six consecutive months, provided the structure is located on a property with existing development;

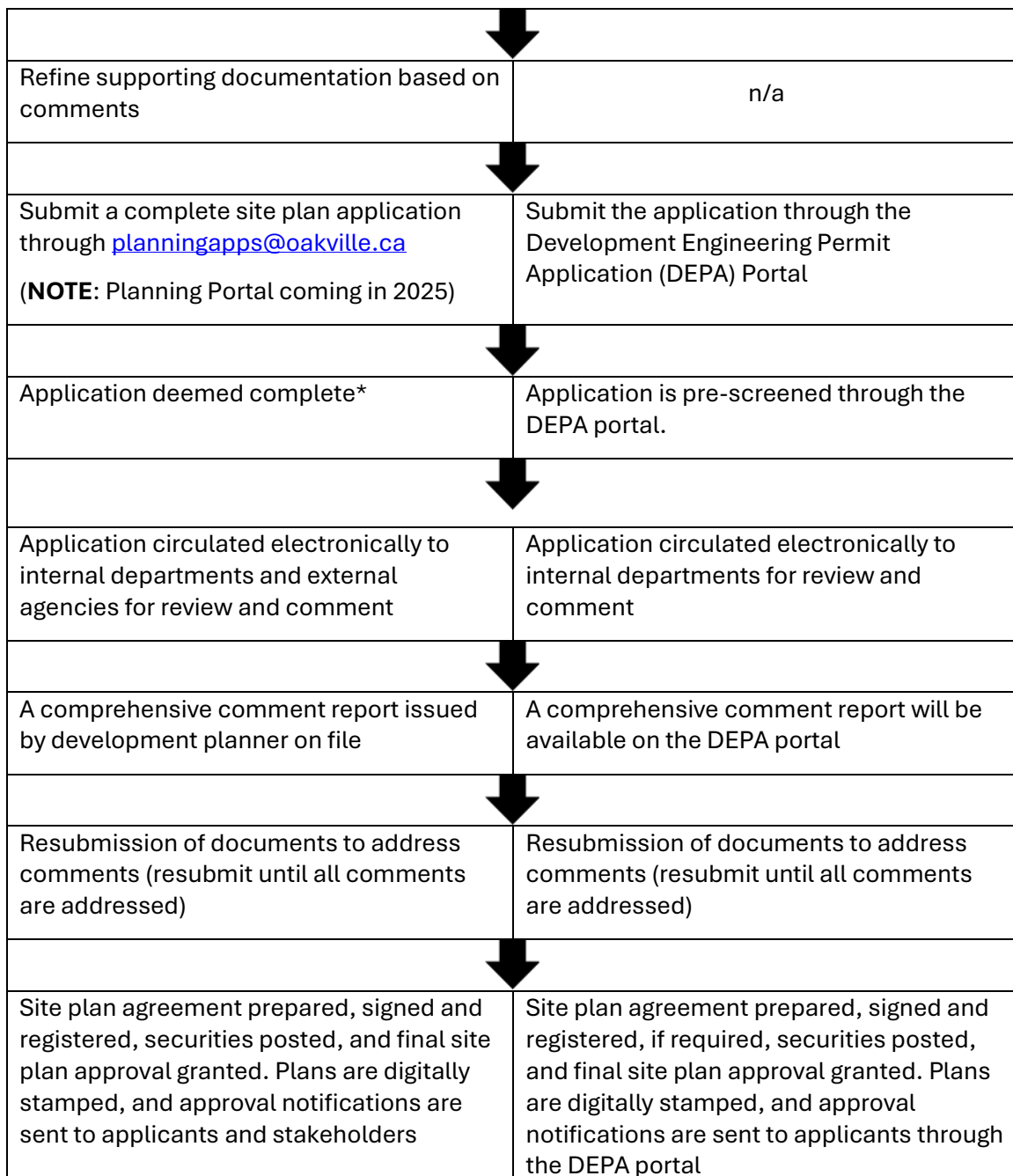
⁴ **Other information**

(3.4) A municipality may require that an applicant provide any other information or material that the municipality considers it may need, but only if the official plan contains provisions relating to requirements under this subsection. 2022, c. 12, Sched. 5, s. 7 (1).

- d. a temporary building or structure on public lands allowed through a municipal permit; or
 - e. a building or structure accessory to an existing agricultural use north of Highway 407.
2. Residential freehold street townhouse units approved as part of a registered plan of subdivision unless a specific condition in the subdivision agreement requires site plan approval.
 3. Up to two additional dwelling units within an existing detached dwelling, semi-detached dwelling or townhouse dwelling.
 4. Development in the form of a single-detached or semi-detached dwelling within five years of subdivision registration north of Dundas Street, unless a specific condition requires site plan approval.
 5. The placement of a portable classroom on a school site of a district school board if the school site was in existence on January 1, 2007.
 6. In accordance with section 62.0.2 of the *Planning Act*, an undertaking of the following post-secondary institutions for the objects of the institution:
 - a. publicly-assisted universities, as defined in section 1 of the *Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act*; or
 - b. colleges and universities federated or affiliated with a publicly-assisted university referred to in paragraph a.

6. SITE PLAN FLOW CHART

Full Site Plan Approval	Scoped Site Plan Approval (determine eligibility in Section 4.1)
Request a pre-consultation meeting by filling in the planning-pre-consultation-form.pdf (oakville.ca) and emailing it along with supporting documentation to planningapps@oakville.ca	A pre-consultation meeting is not required for a “Scoped Site Plan” application. Reference to submission requirements are provided on the town’s website.
	
Pre-consultation meeting held, submission checklist and comment report provided to the applicant	n/a



7. PRE-CONSULTATION OVERVIEW

NOTE: A Pre-consultation meeting is not necessary for an application for a "Scoped Site Plan Approval." Skip to Section 8.

If you are applying for a Full Site Plan application, you are strongly encouraged to participate in the Town's [Pre-consultation Process](#).

Pre-consultation meetings are organized by Town Planning staff. While staff aim to schedule these meetings within 2-3 weeks of receiving a request, timelines may vary depending on the volume of requests. Meetings are held virtually every Wednesday afternoon, and agendas are sent out two weeks before the meeting date.

Submitting a Pre-consultation Request

To schedule a pre-consultation meeting, submit all required materials and fees as outlined in the Pre-consultation Request (Form 1). Incomplete submissions will not be scheduled for a meeting.

Purpose of a Pre-consultation Meeting

The meeting serves to:

- Provide applicants an opportunity to discuss their development proposal with Town staff and approval/commenting agencies before filing an application.
- Clarify what constitutes a complete application, including required studies and supporting documentation.
- Offer applicants a clearer understanding of the approval process.
- Allow Town staff and agencies to review the proposal, ask questions, offer feedback, flag potential issues, and address the applicant’s questions.
- Deliver a Pre-consultation Checklist and meeting notes to the applicant detailing the required materials to file an application.
- Establish that the signed Pre-consultation Checklist is valid for six months⁵.

8. RELATED POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

Below is a list of related policies, guidelines, and standards, though it is not comprehensive. During the pre-consultation stage for a full Site Plan application, applicants will be provided with a tailored list of relevant materials.

Town of Oakville Official Plans

[Halton Regional Official Plan](#)

[Livable Oakville Plan](#)

[North Oakville East Secondary Plan \(NOESP\)](#)

[North Oakville West Secondary Plan \(NOWSP\)](#)

Zoning By-laws

[Zoning By-law 2014-014](#) - comprehensive zoning by-law applying to all properties in Oakville south of Dundas Street and north of Highway 407.

⁵ An extension for up to three months may be considered by the Director provided any required fee is paid before the expiry.

[Zoning By-law 2009-189](#) - comprehensive zoning by-law applying to all properties north of Dundas Street and south of Highway 407.

Town of Oakville Planning/Urban Design

[Livable by Design Manual - Part A](#)

[Livable by Design Manual - Part B](#)

[Livable by Design Manual - Part C](#)

[Urban Design Guidelines for Stable Residential Communities](#)

[Sustainable Design Guidelines](#)

[Section 6 Urban Design](#)

[Part C \(oakville.ca\)](#)

Town of Development Application Guidelines/Terms of Reference

[Development Application Guidelines](#)

Town of Oakville Design Criteria

[Development Engineering Procedures and Guidelines](#)

[Stormwater Master Plan](#)

[Grading and Servicing Plan Guide for Residential Infill Developments](#)

[Standard Drawings](#)

9. APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND CIRCULATION

A Site Plan Application will only be accepted once all required documents and materials have been submitted. After acceptance, the applicant will be requested to pay the application fee. The application will then be circulated for review upon receipt of payment.

How to Submit Your Application

To submit your Full Site Plan Application, please email planningaspps@oakville.ca to request an upload link.

To submit your Scoped Site Plan Application, visit this link [Development Engineering Permits](#) for helpful information and access to the DEPA portal.

What to Submit for a Full Site Plan Application

The following must be provided before your application can be deemed complete:

- All submission requirements listed within Section 28.19.3 of the Livable Oakville Plan, or
 - All submission requirements listed on the completed Pre-consultation Checklist (Policy 28.19.5 – scoped list of materials)
- A completed Site Plan Application form, including signatures from the property owner(s).
 - The Site Plan Application form is available here. [planning-site-plan-application-form.pdf \(oakville.ca\)](#)
- Payment of the application fee.

What to Submit for a Scoped Site Plan Application

The following must be provided before your application will pass the pre-screening process:

- Site Servicing, drainage and Grading Plan
- Stormwater Management Report
- Arborist Report/Tree Declaration

Once all of the required information has been provided, you will be notified by email what fees are to be paid online.

How to Pay

For payment processing of a Full Site Plan application, contact planningapps@oakville.ca to obtain your reference number for a Full Site Plan application for payment processing. Ensure the reference number is noted on your payment.

1. Online (for Scoped Site Plan only)

All application fees (up to \$5,000) will now be paid online by:

- Sign into your town account, access the “My Development Engineering Permits and Applications” page and select the “Pay Fees” button beside the applicable permit application.
- Select the “Pay Selected Fees” button and pay your fees using your credit card.
- To access a copy of your receipt, select the “Application Documents” tab.

2. Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)

- Request a void cheque from the Town for EFTs to deposit into the Town’s bank account.
- For Full Site Plan Applications, ensure the reference number is noted on the payment.
- Email the bank confirmation to devengrequests@oakville.ca (Scoped Site Plan)/planningapps@oakville.ca (Full Site Plan) and accountsreceivable@oakville.ca

3. E-Transfer (EMT)

- Available for application fees up to \$25,000.00.
- For Full Site Plan Applications, ensure the reference number is noted on the payment.
- Send the EMT directly to devengrequests@oakville.ca (Scoped Site Plan)/planningapps@oakville.ca (Full Site Plan)
- Email the bank confirmation to devengrequests@oakville.ca (Scoped Site Plan)/planningapps@oakville.ca (Full Site Plan) and accountsreceivable@oakville.ca

3. Wire Transfer (not preferred)

- **Note:** A \$25.00 additional fee applies and may cause processing delays.

- Include an extra \$25.00 in your payment.
- For Full Site Plan Applications, ensure the reference number is noted on the payment.
- Email the bank confirmation to devengrequests@oakville.ca (Scoped Site Plan)/planningapps@oakville.ca (Full Site Plan) and accountsreceivable@oakville.ca

File Naming

Please use the naming conventions for you plans as described at the link. [Digital-File-Naming-Conventions \(oakville.ca\)](#)

Materials

Prepare materials (drawings/reports/documents)

- The type of documents required will be identified during the mandatory pre-consultation meeting with staff. All reports, documents and drawings submitted must be:
 - in digital (PDF) format unless otherwise required (e.g. Word, Excel, SketchUp, etc.).
 - presented in metric measure that can be accurately scaled.
 - prepared, stamped and signed by a qualified professional architect (for site plan and architectural drawings), engineer (for site plan and engineering drawings/reports), or landscape architect (for landscape and tree protection drawings/reports)

Circulation

Once the application is deemed complete or passes the pre-screening process, it will be circulated to relevant Town departments and/or external agencies for comments. The assigned Planner or Development Engineering Technologist will coordinate feedback from the circulation process, including any input from the local community. All responses will be forwarded to you for consideration as you revise your proposal by email or through the DEPA portal.

10. SITE PLAN AGREEMENT

Note: A Site Plan Agreement may not be required for a Scoped Site Plan. The applicant will be informed during the application process.

A site plan agreement is required for a Full Site Plan application to ensure that the site works and town works, including tree protection, are completed and maintained in accordance with the approved plans.

At the appropriate time the assigned development planner will request the [site plan information sheet](#) together with a draft [Solicitor's Certificate](#) along with the site plan agreement preparation and registration fee to initiate the site plan agreement.

Site plan agreements are signed electronically using DocuSign and registered on the title of the property.

As part of the site plan agreement, securities are required to be posted in the form of a letter of credit, certified cheque, surety bond or cash.

Templates:

[General Information regarding Development Related Securities and Deposits](#)

[Letter of Credit](#)

[Surety Bond](#)

The security amount will be calculated by the assigned planner/development engineering technologist once the application is nearing completion.

11. FINAL APPROVAL PROCESS

After all issues are resolved, a Site Plan Agreement (Full Site Plan) is executed, the final approval fee is paid, and securities are submitted. The plans are then digitally stamped by the Director of Planning & Development. The applicant will be notified of the approval, and the approved plans will be made available either through a provided link or the DEPA portal.

12. RELEASE OF SECURITIES

Scoped Site Plan and Site Plan Inspections are conducted upon request at the completion of all site works to ensure compliance with the final approved Site Plan materials (drawings and reports) and for the reduction of posted securities. Once site plan works have been completed, a certification package can be submitted to request a reduction of the posted securities.

To initiate an inspection for an approved Full or Scoped Site Plan, submit a complete certification submission package with the required documentation, materials and fee.

Contact: Development Inspector
 Building Services
 (905) 845-6601 ext 3983

Additional information can be found [here](#).

To initiate an inspection for Scoped Site Plan, submit a complete certification submission package through the DEPA portal and request the inspection through the portal. Inspections will be scheduled once the certification submission has been reviewed.

13. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

a) What is a Site Plan?

They are detailed plans and drawings showing the proposed location and design of buildings, parking, landscaping and other facilities. Site plans are required for new developments as well as amendments to existing properties before a building permit is issued.

b) What can a site plan regulate?

Site plan authority does not include the power to impose conditions restricting on-site operational matters such as hours of operation. Section 41 - Subsection (7) of the *Planning Act* specifies what types of conditions a municipality can impose conditions of site plan approval relating to:

- Road widenings – as required by the Official Plan of Town/Region
- Access to/from Roads – curbs, access ramps, traffic direction signs
- Loading and Parking Facilities – covered or uncovered, driveways, surfaces
- Walkways / Pedestrian Access
- Accessibility for People with Disabilities
- Lighting
- Walls, fences, hedges, trees, shrubs or other ground cover
- Garbage/Waste – vaults, central storage, collection areas, enclosures
- Municipal Easements – related to watercourses, ditches, land drainage works, sanitary sewage facilities and other public utilities of the municipality or local board
- Servicing, Grading and Drainage – including disposal of storm, surface, and wastewater

Since site plan approvals deal with the provision of facilities rather than the use of those facilities, conditions related to operational matters, such as restrictions on the hours of operation, construction phasing and tenancy, are not within the scope of the site plan authority.

The applicant may agree to things beyond the scope of Section 41, but it is voluntary on behalf of the applicant and cannot be enforced.

c) How do site plans relate to zoning?

Site plans are used to make sure the proposed development meets the requirements of the zoning by-law. Site plans start with the requirement that the proposed use is permitted. Zoning by-law speaks to how the land can be used, e.g. retail, commercial etc. and provides the context when applying for a building permit. Site plan applications are not about land use, but the specifics of implementation for a new development to an existing property. Site plan applications provide the details necessary to help municipalities review and issue building permits.

d) **What is a Zoning By-law and can the Zoning By-law regulate the types of tenants?**

Zoning By-laws regulate the use of land, where buildings/structures can be located on the site, lot sizes/dimensions, parking requirements, building heights and setbacks. The Town's Zoning by-law sets out the permitted land uses but cannot regulate tenancy or tenure.

e) **Does the *Planning Act* mandate the municipality to hold public info sessions before a site plan application is approved?**

The *Planning Act* does not require a municipality to host a public meeting. Under the Town's Site Plan Control By-law, the Director of Planning & Development or designate is given the authority to approve site plans.

f) **Can a site plan application be appealed?**

Section 41 – Subsection (12) of the *Planning Act*, sets out the rights of appeal for site plan applications. Subsection 12 states that only the applicant/landowner can appeal the municipality's lack of a decision within 60 days of submission of the application. The applicant/landowner can also appeal the conditions imposed by the municipality.

Third parties (such as neighbours in the surrounding area) do not have a right of appeal for a site plan application under the *Planning Act* since the application is not proposing a change in land use, only the technical implementation of what is already permitted in the town's Zoning By-law.