

Research Guide 214  
Municipal Land Use Planning

Last Updated: September 2020

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New City Hall, Ottawa, 1959  
RG 65-35-3, 11764-X3520  
Tourism promotion photographs

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## **In this guide**

This guide has information on records of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (and its predecessors) about its role in municipal land use planning and related activities.

Provincial involvement in land planning at the municipal level started in 1912. The Government then required municipalities to submit plans of residential or industrial subdivisions to the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board for review and approval. Government involvement increased and priorities changed over the years. The Department of Planning and Development (the first predecessor to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing) was created in 1944. Government involvement has decreased since the 1980's.

\*Please note: this guide contains links to information found in our online Archives Descriptive Database. On our website, this database is found under “Access Our Collections”. If you are using a print copy of this guide, go to page 6 for more information on how to find the online descriptions.

## Where do I find these records?

You will need to visit the Archives to view the records described in this guide. Please contact us in advance to request them. Library materials may be available at public libraries.

Some of the records are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. This information is included in the online descriptions. Contact us for information on how to request access to those records.

Records after the years mentioned in this guide and in online descriptions are with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. For contact information, visit the Ministry website, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-municipal-affairs-housing>.

## What do I need to get started?

If you are looking for planning records pertaining to a given municipality or project, you will need the name of the municipality, and the name and years of the project.

## The Records

The information about the records we have is arranged by the following planning function or activity:

- Legislation and regulation
- Policy and program development
- Approval of municipal plans and zoning by-laws
- Planning of new communities
- Urban renewal
- Planning-related research
- Support to municipalities and local planning authorities

### 1. Legislation and regulation

Laws affecting local land use planning include the Municipal Act, the Planning Act, and the Ontario Municipal Board Act. The records listed below document the development of these acts and related regulations, and how the Government dealt with legal issues related to those acts.

- Community planning legislation and legal opinion files, 1968 to 1999: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-90](#)

- Correspondence files on the municipal Planning Act, 1972 to 1994: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-105](#)
- Legislation relating to municipal affairs and housing, 1948 to 2008: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-39](#)
- Records pertaining to the review of the Planning Act, 1972 to 1982: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-152](#)

## 2. Policy and program development

The records listed below document policies and programs the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing developed regarding land use planning:

- Community planning provincial project files, 1974 to 1981: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-94](#)
- Municipal land use policy records development records, 1980 to 2006: for information on these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-165](#)
- Municipal planning policy closed committee files, 1987 to 1990 : for information on these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-170](#)

## 3. Approval of municipal plans and zoning by-laws

Since 1912, the Ontario Municipal and Railway Board (later named the Ontario Municipal Board, now the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal) has had the power to either approve or hear appeals from municipal plans and zoning by-laws. This role has varied over time.

At various times, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (and its predecessors) has been directly involved in approving municipal plans. It has also issued zoning orders for municipalities without an official plan.

The records below document this government role:

- Adopted municipal plans working files, 1944 to 1998: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-86](#)
- Minister of Affairs consent to convey land files, 1974 to 1980 : for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-163](#)

- Minister's zoning orders and amendment files, 1969 to 2000: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-82](#)
- Municipal official plans and amendments approved by the Minister, 1945 to 2004, and 2009 : for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-87](#)
- Municipal subdivision files, 1945 to 1966: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-83](#)

For information about hearings of the Ontario Municipal Board, and how to view hearing records, [click here to view Research Guide 208, Ontario Municipal Board hearings](#). To find this and other guides on our website, click on "Access Our Collections" and scroll down to the Research Guides and Tools page.

#### **4. Planning of new communities**

The provincial government has supported the development of new communities. It has either provided advice to municipalities, or lead projects itself. The records below document this government role, and specific projects:

- Haldimand-Norfolk community planning files, 1968 to 1975: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-64](#)
- New townsite planning and development files, 1954 to 1978: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-63](#)
- North Pickering planning and development files, 1972 to 1978 : for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-166](#)
- Townsend (Haldimand County) community planning records, 1976 to 1984: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 43-27](#)

#### **5. Urban renewal**

The records below document government involvement in efforts to renew urban downtown and industrial areas affected by economic changes:

- Main Street Revitalization Loan Program files, 1992 to 1993 : for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-172](#)
- Records of the maintenance of property study, 1969 to 1970: for information and these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-65](#)

- Urban Renewal program files, 1985 to 1989: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-69](#)

## 6. Planning-related research

The records below document research by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on issues related to land use planning:

- Community planning, research and special studies files, 1946 to 1976 : for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-61](#)
- Flood plan criteria and management evaluation study records, 1974 to 1979: for information and these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-167](#)
- Records of studies, committees and task forces relating to local planning, 1965 to 1993: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-104](#)

## 7. Support to municipalities and local planning authorities

The records below document government support to local planners. This took the forms of technical and legal advice, training, and financial support:

- Community planning correspondence files, 1944 to 1990: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-77](#)
- Community Planning Study Grant program files, 1972 to 1993 : for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-91](#)
- Municipal community planning files, 1946 to 2002 : for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-95](#)
- Northeastern Ontario planning project files, 1950 to 1975: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-100](#)
- Northwestern Ontario planning project files, 1950 to 1983: for information about these records and how to view them, [click here to view the description for RG 19-102](#)

## Are there related records?

Other Government of Ontario of Ontario have been or are involved in the planning process. These include the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Ministry of Transportation and their predecessors. For information about these ministries and their records, [click here to search the Archives](#)

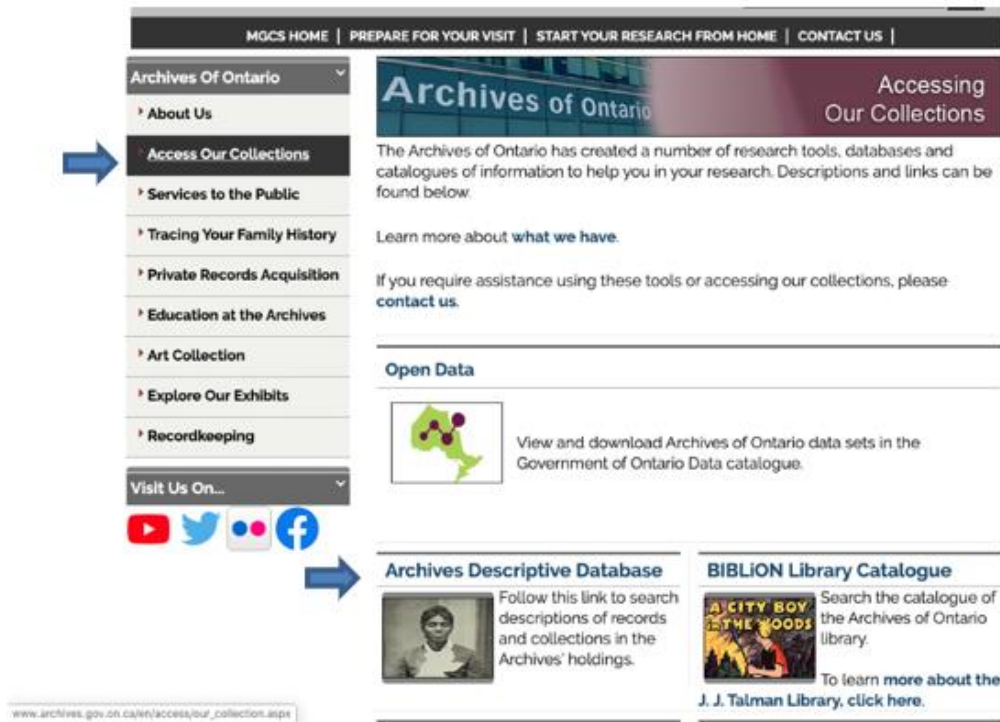
[Descriptive Database](#). In the database, choose the “Search by Records Creators” advances search option.

Records we have from various municipalities may include zoning by-laws and land use planning records. For information about municipal records that we have, [click here to view Research Guide 208, Municipal records](#). To find this and other guides on our website, click on “Access Our Collections” and scroll down to the Research Guides and Tools page.

Our library holds issues of Municipal World, a periodical publication on municipal issues in Ontario, including planning. We have all issues from 1891 to present. To view it at the Archives, request it using the title, the year you want, and call number Period M. You will find a digital copy of all issues at <https://www.municipalworld.com/>.

## How do I get to the online descriptions?

1. On our website’s main page, click on “Access our Collections”, and click on “Archives Descriptive Database”, as shown in the image below:



2. In the Database, click on “Advanced Search”:

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# Archives Descriptive Database

The Archives Descriptive Database is the online guide to the archival holdings of the Archives of Ontario.

**New in the Archives Descriptive Database**  
To begin, choose one of the three search options below.

**Option 1: Keyword Search** HELP

Your search returned no results. Please try another search strategy.

Enter a search term or terms:

**Sources of Family History**

**Ontario Vital Statistics Records**

If you are researching your **family history** or looking for **historic birth, marriage or death** records, click one of the links above.

All these keywords    Any of these keywords    Exact Phrase

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**Option 2: Browse Record Creators**


**Browse Record Creators**

Browse an alphabetical list of the government of Ontario agencies, people, and private sector organizations that have created archival records. Descriptions of record creators link to descriptions of records that the person or agency created.

**Option 3: Advanced Search**


**Advanced Search**

For more advanced search options choose advanced search.



3. On the “Advanced Search” page, click on “Search Groups of Archival Records”:

This image shows the "Advanced Search" page in the Archives Descriptive Database, with an arrow pointing to the "Search Groups of Archival Records" button.

Ontario  Ministry of Government and Consumer Services

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## Advanced Search Options

HELP

For advanced search features, choose one of the search options provided below:

**Search Files and Items**

Form Part of

Consist of

**Search Groups of Archival Records**

Are Created by

Create

**Search Record Creators**

**Search descriptions of files and items** (such as letters, maps, or audio recordings) in the Archives' holdings. Included are links to the larger group of records to which a file or item belongs.

**Search descriptions of the groups of archival records** that make up our holdings. These include records created by both the Government of Ontario and the private sector. Where available, links are provided to lists of related files and items.

**Search descriptions of Ontario government agencies, families, persons, and private sector organizations that have created archival records** in our holdings. Included are links to information about the archival records created by each person, organization or agency.

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4. On the “Search Groups of Archival Records” page, enter the reference code (that’s the number starting with C, F or RG).

## Contact us

Although unable to do your research for you, our reference archivists are waiting to assist you. You may call or write to them by mail or email or — best of all — visit the Archives of Ontario.

**Telephone: 416-327-1600 Toll free (Ontario): 1-800-668-9933**

**Email:** [Click here to email the Archives of Ontario](mailto:reference@ontario.ca). The e-mail address is [reference@ontario.ca](mailto:reference@ontario.ca)

**Address: Archives of Ontario, 134 Ian Macdonald Blvd., Toronto, ON M7A 2C5**

## Website

Visit our website for information about our collections and our services, our online exhibits and education programs, and links to our social media accounts. [Click here to visit our website](#). The website is [www.ontario.ca/archives](http://www.ontario.ca/archives).

## Customer Service and Research Guides

Our guides contain information about our services, freelance researchers available to do research for you, and some of most popular records. [Click here to view our guides](#). To find the “Research Guides and Tools” on our website, click on “Access our Collections”.

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