



# Building a Liveable Ottawa 2031 Backgrounder 1: Inner Urban Area

Wards 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17

Official Plan  
Transportation Master Plan  
Cycling Plan  
Pedestrian Plan



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**Building a Liveable Ottawa 2031** is a city-wide review of land use, transportation and infrastructure policies intended to make Ottawa a more vibrant, healthy and sustainable city. Multiple policies of the Official Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Infrastructure Master Plan, Cycling Plan and the Pedestrian Plan are being looked at.

The review underway builds on investments made since the last Master Plan reviews. It also incorporates technical research and the results of several outreach activities, including consultation with the general public and technical experts.

Below is a look at the policies and projects that will shape the urban area in the next 20 years.

## At a Glance - Downtown Ottawa Now\*:

- During the morning peak period, half of residents use sustainable transportation compared with one-third of residents city-wide. In downtown Ottawa 50% of residents use their cars to get to work (passenger or driver) (66%), followed by 23% for transit (22%); 20% walk (10%), and; 6% cycle (3%).
- Almost 204,000 people live in the area, which accounts for almost a quarter (22%) of the city's entire population.
  - » Many seniors live in the area, with 15.2% over 65 years of age (13.2%). In communities outside the Greenbelt, seniors are 10% or less of the total population.
- The area has 43% of jobs in Ottawa and received 25% of new jobs over the last six years.
- About half of all the new housing built through intensification in the last five years was built in the five Central Wards. New residential units since 2008: (over 6,762 total new units 32,850), including 126 singles (9,752), 370 semis (1,486), 238 row (9,409), and 6,280 (12,383) apartments. This area received half of the new apartments built since 2008 in Ottawa.

\*City-wide comparisons in parentheses.

# Official Plan (Land Use)

The Central Area and surrounding neighbourhoods have accommodated much of the city's intensification and infill in recent years. Completion of the Confederation Line and 12 light rail stations by 2018 are expected to continue to increase development interest in the inner area.

Proposed policies continue to target intensification in the Central Area, in mixed-use areas centred around rapid transit, and along active mainstreets.

- **Transit-Oriented Development** – Proposed policies will make it easier for people to access transit in mixed-use centres such as Billings Bridge and along all the Confederation Line transit stations. The proposals require well designed public areas, a mix of housing and other uses, carefully-managed parking, and safe connections to transit for pedestrians and cyclists. As individual sites redevelop, new policies preserve walkable pedestrian connections and opportunities for future infill. A minimum building height of four storeys is proposed.

Proposed changes to policies on mainstreets will also affect much of the Inner Area, which includes a network of traditional mainstreets such as Wellington, Bank, McArthur, and Beechwood, and; a few arterial mainstreets such as portions of Carling Avenue, St. Laurent Boulevard and Montreal Road.

Outside the target areas for intensification, new policies on parking and land use support transit use within walking distance of rapid transit stations and transit priority streets, where transit moves ahead of other vehicles. Parking is also proposed to be reduced or eliminated within walking distance of mainstreets, if on-site parking cannot be provided because of lot sizes.

- **Urban Design and Compatibility** – The Official Plan supports more jobs and housing in the central area and mixed-use centres and along mainstreets. These areas are design priority areas, where special policies and review apply. New design policies are proposed to require amenities and attention to building facades next to public areas. A new design priority area is also proposed for the entire area bounded by the Rideau River, Queensway and O-Train.

Within stable, low-rise residential neighbourhoods, the compatibility of new development with its surroundings is proposed to consider community character and how it is expressed in terms of building height and massing, setbacks, the location of off-street parking and access to it.

Developers may be asked for new studies on wind and shadows as well as a design brief and planning rationale that show how proposals meet the City's plans and design policies. New city-wide proposals also require that buildings be oriented to the street and frame major intersections.

- **Intensification and Tall Buildings** – New policies propose maximum building heights that will apply to all areas of the city unless a community plan sets different heights for the planning area. Plans in process for the areas around Lees and Hurdman stations can be viewed here:

## LRT Station Area Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Studies | City of Ottawa.

A maximum height of 4 storeys will apply within most residential areas. Heights potentially increase along arterial roads within walking distance of a rapid transit station or on a transit priority street.

While current height limits remain the same on traditional (up to 6 storeys) and arterial (up to 9 storeys) mainstreets, more direction is proposed for the location of buildings up to 9 storeys on arterial mainstreets: within walking distance of a rapid transit station, at key intersections, or next to major urban facilities such as hospitals and universities. Any tall building (10 storeys and more) will only be allowed through approval of a community plan.

Buildings over 30 storeys will only be permitted in the central area or in mixed-use centres inside the Greenbelt, following approval of a community plan. Approved plans on the Confederation Line permit buildings up to 30 storeys and can be viewed here: [Transit-Oriented Development \(TOD\) Plans | City of Ottawa.](#)

The proposals also clarify that the mainstreet designation has priority over other, adjacent designations. This policy preserves the potential for mainstreets to intensify and develop as walkable streets well-served by transit and supporting a mix of residential, commercial and employment activity.

# Transportation Master Plan (Roads, Transit, Cycling and Walking)

Since 2008, the urban area has benefitted from a number of transportation investments that have and will lead to significant change to the look and feel of the core and inner area of the city.

Most importantly, construction is underway on the **Confederation Line** – 12.5 km of light rail from Tunney's Pasture to Blair Station with a tunnel under Queen, Rideau and Waller Streets that will result in less congestion, and less buses through the downtown. Building on this investment, Council has approved a route for the western extension of this line as part of the Western Corridor Light Rail Transit Environmental Assessment Study. A new design of Queen Street, as well as a complete street design for Main Street has also been approved with the latter giving more priority to active transportation modes. Capacity on the provincial highway system is also expanding to better accommodate demand, including two additional lanes on **Highway 417** between the split at Ottawa Road 174 and west of the Nicholas Street interchange.

The Ottawa on the Move initiative has already undertaken several major road projects in the downtown area to deal with the infrastructure backlog in advance of the light rail.

The cycling and pedestrian networks have been an identified priority for our urban dwellers, and, recognizing this, a number of projects are underway to better connect downtown neighbourhoods and key destinations. A new segregated bicycle lane, the City's first, was successfully initiated along Laurier Avenue West. It will form part of a larger network of east-west and north-south bikeways linking the city. Since 2008, the City has completed Environmental Assessment Studies and has now undertaken design for the construction of multi-use (pedestrian and cycling) bridges over the **Rideau River** (Donald-Somerset), **Rideau**

**Canal** (Fifth Avenue-Clegg), and at **Hickory Street** over the O-Train Line.

In 2013, a new multi-use pathway opened along the O-Train corridor, linking the Ottawa River pathway to Gladstone Avenue. Construction has also begun on the Hickory Bridge which is to be completed in 2014.

There have also been a number of sidewalk improvements to enhance the safety of our pedestrians throughout the core.

As every resident in Ottawa, regardless of where they live, uses the transportation system, we are proposing a balanced approach to our investments that is affordable and address the needs of all users across the City.

For the urban area, future investments will focus on enhancing mobility for all users through our downtown neighbourhoods, with a continued focus on enhancing transit, cycling and walking to key destinations.

Major projects and policies included in the draft TMP that will shape our downtown neighbourhoods to 2031, include:

- **Significant LRT investments**, including construction of the Council-approved western alignment between Tunney's Pasture Station and Baseline Station. This will extend the Confederation Line and link downtown dwellers with communities further west.
- **A new O-Train station at Gladstone**, which will offer downtown dwellers with enhanced connectivity to an

expanded O-Train line from Bayview station to Bowesville in the south. Increased service frequency will also be provided along the O-Train line.

- **Transit priority measures** on streets throughout the core, including a number of intersection modifications on Bank Street to enhance transit reliability for our residents.
- **Road investments** will provide residents with better connections to key destinations in their community such as
  - » extending **Preston Street** from **Albert Street to Vimy Place (at John A. Macdonald Parkway)**.
- The construction of multi-use bridges over the Rideau River from Donald Street in Overbrook to Somerset Street in Sandy Hill, as well as making use of the existing Prince of Wales Bridge to better connect Ottawa and Gatineau on foot and by bicycle. Both of these investments will significantly enhance connections between communities and key destinations downtown, including our transit system, the University of Ottawa, federal employment in the core, and the existing network of multi-use pathways. Improvements to the Prince of Wales Bridge will also make use of an existing asset to better connect pedestrians and cyclists from the Ottawa River pathway system on the Ottawa side to Gatineau, as well as to an existing informal dog park on Lemieux Island. A third multi-use bridge, over the Rideau Canal from Clegg Street to Fifth Street in the Glebe, is also planned to enhance connectivity to the new Lansdowne.
- A number of **projects will be undertaken to complete the East-West bikeway** linking Vanier to Westboro, including improvements on Beechwood, Hemlock and Richmond Road. Once complete, these projects will interconnect to provide a continuous, safe, convenient and accessible network of cycling facilities through our downtown.
- A number of **additional** cycling projects will address current missing links and create an interconnected downtown from the new Lansdowne, Confederation Line and the future Canal bridge, including:
  - » Paving and enhancements to the Ottawa River West Pathway



# Transportation Master Plan (Roads, Transit, Cycling and Walking)

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- » Installation of a bikeway on O'Connor and adjoining streets
- » Glebe bikeway
- Application of the **Complete Streets** policy through road reconstruction projects will better accommodate the safety, comfort and convenience of all road users.
- In addition to level of service considerations, **sidewalk improvements** will ensure that pedestrians have safe and seamless access to the City's transit system, as well as community amenities, shops and recreational facilities in downtown neighbourhoods including along:
  - » **Dovercourt** from Churchill to Broadview
  - » **Clyde** from Carling to Woodward
  - » **Hemlock/Beechwood** from Oakville to Lansdowne
  - » **Broadview** from Byron to Princeton
  - » **Tormey** from Coburg to Brigadier
  - » **Range Road** from Mann to Templeton