

Section 1. Introduction



Photo: City of Ottawa



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1.1 Context

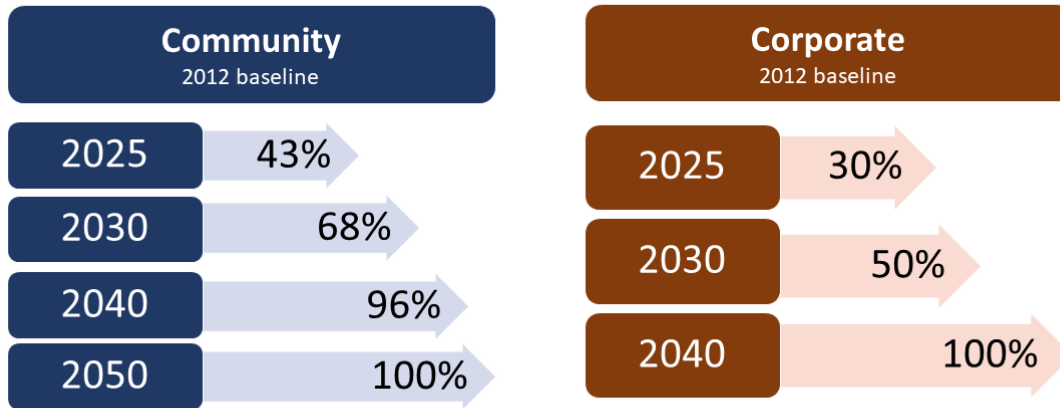
Ottawa’s population surpassed a million people in 2019, doubling its population over the past fifty years. With this growth we have seen fundamental changes to who we are as a city - from the growth of Kanata, Barrhaven and Orléans, to amalgamation, then to the repopulation of the downtown core and the rise of urban living, to becoming a more multicultural society, the birth of the high-tech sector and the new light rail system. We have grown from simply being Canada’s capital, to become a vibrant major Canadian city.

By 2046 it is expected that Ottawa’s population will surpass 1.4 million people, within an Ottawa-Gatineau region that is expected to grow to over 2 million people. Our vision for the future is that Ottawa will become the most liveable mid-sized city in North America, and Ottawa is well positioned to achieve this vision. We enjoy a high quality of life supported by strong neighbourhoods and cultural communities. We have incredible parks and greenspaces. We have a stable and increasingly diverse economy, as well as extensive educational and health systems.

However, as we grow, we will face significant new challenges. Our growth will need to accommodate a more diverse population and an aging demographic. Ottawa’s growth will need to align with Council approved community and corporate greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets (see Figure 1) and take steps to adapt to a changing climate. We will need to find new ways to ensure we can weather crises - be they health, environmental or economic. We will also need to find ways to harness rapid technological change to support local economic development and quality of life. We will need to create an affordable supply of options across the city for different household types and income groups. And we will need to find ways of supporting urban and rural neighbourhoods as healthy, inclusive and vibrant places.

Figure

Ottawa's Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets



The Official Plan is a key foundational document that will help us achieve these objectives. The Official Plan directs how the city will grow over time and sets out policies to guide the development and growth of our city. Our new Official Plan positions Ottawa to be flexible, resilient, and above all, a city where people want to live, work and play. This Official Plan will take us to the year 2046, but it also seeks to set the stage for the city to reach a population of 2 million.

1.2 Role of the Official Plan

Ottawa's Official Plan is a legal document, adopted under the authority of the Ontario *Planning Act*. Municipal Official Plans are required to contain goals, objectives and policies in order to manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic, built and natural environments. Ottawa's Official Plan contains the City's goals, objectives and policies to guide growth and manage physical change to 2046. It also implements the priorities identified in the City's Strategic Plan as they relate to land use. Land use direction is both driven by, and has an impact on, Ottawa's health, economy, environment and sense of community. As such, this Plan provides direction to other City plans that do not implicitly affect land use matters, such as the Transportation Master Plan, the Infrastructure Master Plan, the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and the Urban Forest and Greenspace Master Plan. The non-land use matters of the Official Plan are often implemented through these related complimentary plans (see Figure 2).

1.3 Recognition of Algonquin Territory

Ottawa is located on unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Host Nation. The peoples of the Algonquin Anishinabe Host Nation have lived on this territory for millennia. Today, Ottawa is home to approximately 40,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Ottawa's Indigenous community is diverse, representing many nations, languages and customs.

The City honours the land of the First Peoples, as well as all First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Ottawa and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

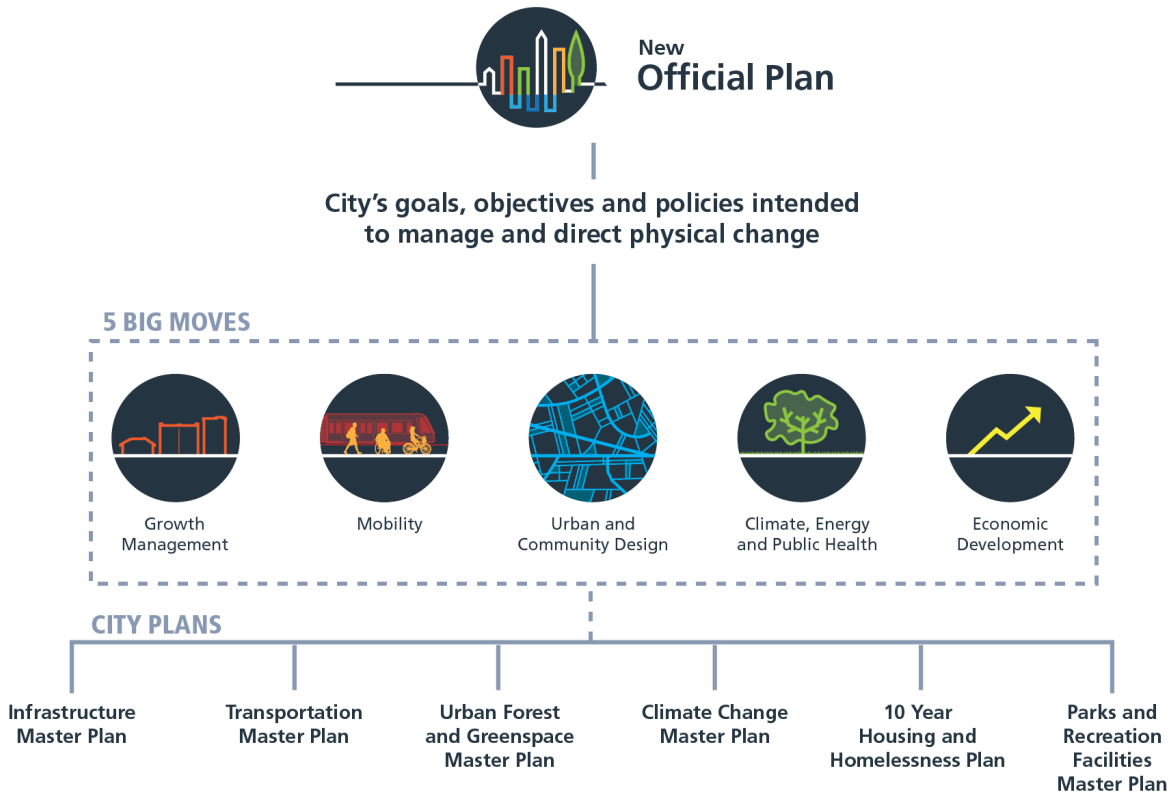
1.4 How to use the Official Plan

This Plan contains the City's goals, objectives and policies intended to manage and direct physical change, and the effects of this change on Ottawa's social, economic, built and natural environment. The following should be considered by the reader:

- The Plan is an integrated document. For any individual part to be properly understood, the Official Plan shall be read as a whole, from goals set forth under the "What We Want To Achieve" headings and the broadest strategic policies, to designations, to specific directions for implementation. Unnumbered text, goals, definitions and tables are all operative parts of the Official Plan. However, figures are included for information purposes only; and
- Every time a policy uses a term that is defined in the Definitions section, its meaning shall be interpreted in accordance with that definition, unless specified otherwise; and
- Every time a policy uses a term that is defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement*, as identified in Table 9, its meaning shall be interpreted in accordance with the *Provincial Policy Statement* definition, unless specified otherwise; and
- Annexes do not form part of this Plan and are to provide information only for the reader. Annexes can be amended without need for an Official Plan Amendment process; and
- Boundaries for transects and designations are deemed to be definitive. The boundaries along the natural heritage system and natural features shall be considered approximate except where they coincide with roads, railways, hydro transmission lines, former township lots and concession lines, major water courses or other well defined natural or physical features; and

- Where a transect or designation boundary coincides with a street or road, the boundary will follow its centreline unless otherwise stated. Where a road boundary changes post-adoption, the transect or designation boundary is interpreted to align to the centreline of the new road location; and
- Unless otherwise stated in the policies, when the general intent of this Plan is maintained, minor adjustments to boundaries will not require amendment to this Plan; and
- Where there are inconsistencies in policies between this Plan and secondary plans or area-specific policies, those policies contained in secondary plans and area-specific policies take precedence; and
- Where reference is made in this Plan to documents that rest outside the Official Plan, such as provincial or federal Acts or other legislation, or to other documents that are not part of the Official Plan, it is understood that it is the latest approved version of the documents that is being referenced, unless otherwise specified; and
- The indication of any proposed roads, bridges, parks, municipal services or infrastructure in policy text or on Plan schedules, including local plan maps or schedules, will not be interpreted as a commitment by the City to provide such services within a specific timeframe, nor to be specifically or solely the responsibility of the City to provide, finance or otherwise implement. Minor adjustments to the location of these facilities do not require an amendment to the Official Plan, provided they are consistent with the objectives and policy directions of the Plan; and
- Where the Plan refers to studies, guidelines and other policy documents, such as watershed plans, the master plans, community design plans or arterial road design guidelines, such policy documents are not part of the Plan unless the Plan has been specifically amended to include the document in whole or in part. In many instances, these documents implement the policies of the Plan and may be used to guide Council decisions on development, capital works projects and other matters. However, they do not have the status of policies in this Plan adopted under the *Planning Act*; and
- The term local plan refers to secondary plans and area-specific policies as outlined in Section 12 of this Plan.
- '*Generally*' is used in this Plan to indicate the most common or typical instances, or to suggest a trend. It does not apply to every single instance. The term conveys the idea that a particular parameter will typically be met, while acknowledging that deviations may occur, and these deviations might substantively differ from the norm due to historic development or extraordinary conditions.
- '*Approximately*' is used in this plan to indicate that a number or figure is not exact, but is close to the actual value or standard, excluding extreme outliers. The intent of this term is to allow for some flexibility around numerical targets, while still adhering to the overall objectives and policies of the Plan. (By-law 2023-403)

Figure 2

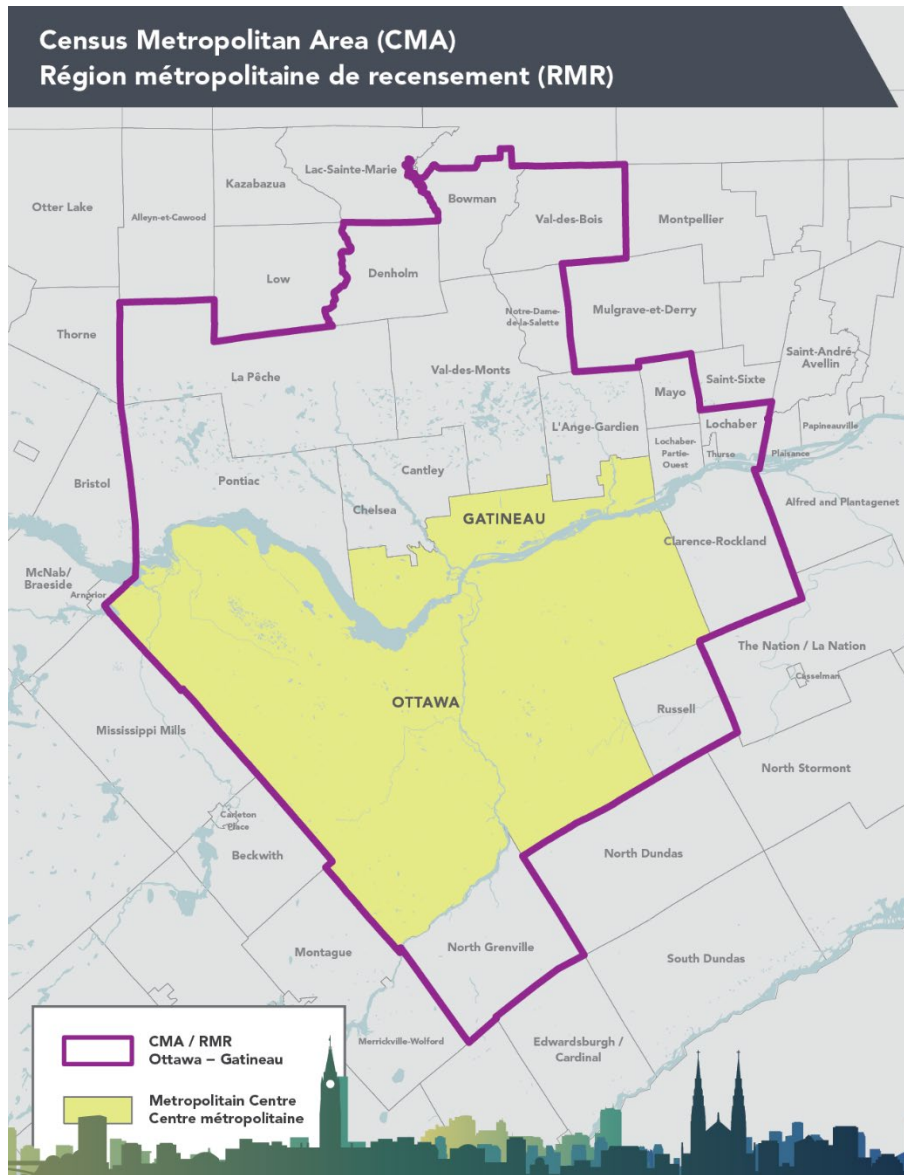


1.5 Coordination with Federal Planning and Planning by the Ville de Gatineau

Ottawa’s growth has largely been shaped by its role as Canada’s capital. Through the work of the National Capital Commission and its predecessors, Ottawa is known as the home to Canada’s national symbols, including Parliament Hill, the National Gallery, the Supreme Court, as well as national cultural institutions including the National Arts Centre and national museums.

At the same time, Ottawa has grown to become a major Canadian city and part of a larger metropolitan area (see Figure 3) of a million and half people that includes the Ville de Gatineau and surrounding municipalities in Ontario and Québec. With this growth, the region’s identity has evolved, based on its shared history (including Indigenous history), quality of life, multiculturalism, bilingualism, vibrant and diverse arts community, lively neighbourhoods, culture, music and food scene and proximity to natural areas. It is an identity that continues to evolve as the region grows, changes and becomes increasingly urban. The direction for Ottawa’s future, therefore, includes not only this Official Plan but the long-range plans for the Ville de Gatineau and the National Capital Commission.

Figure 3



Strengthening our role as a major metropolitan centre and national capital will require ongoing cooperation with the Ville de Gatineau and surrounding municipalities on key files such as transit and economic development, as well as with the National Capital Commission, as owner and manager of over 500 square kilometres of land and about 1,600 properties in the Census Metropolitan Area, and Public Services and Procurement Canada as a federal department responsible for long-range planning. This cooperation must take into account different legal and planning context between partners.