

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

On September 14, 2005, the City of Ottawa City Council voted in favour of an Official Plan Amendment to redesignate approximately 160 hectares of vacant land east of Mer Bleue Road from 'Employment Area' to 'General Urban Area' and 'Mixed Use Centre' as illustrated in Figure 1. Official Plan Amendment Number 35 was approved following a review of the employment potential of the subject lands, which concluded that the lands would be more appropriately developed as a mixed-use residential community instead of solely as an employment area.

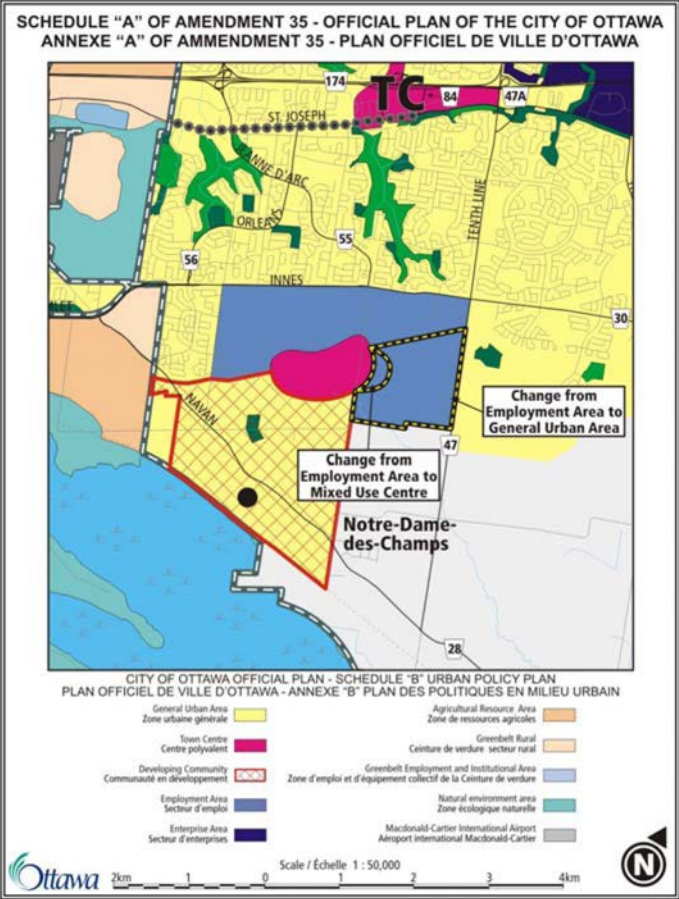


Figure 1 – OPA Nr. 35

The basis for the Official Plan Amendment, as defined by the City, states that ‘the proposed planned community would be more sustainable by enabling higher density forms of development and making more efficient use of the adjacent rapid transit corridor, while still achieving the established employment targets for the lands. The future community would provide for a greater supply of residential units while not negatively impacting the job potential for the area.’

As a condition of this approval, City Council required City Staff to work with the owners of the redesignated lands to prepare a Community Design Plan (CDP), which would guide future development in the area.

Terms of Reference for the preparation of the CDP were completed and approved by the Project Team and are available from the City under separate cover.

The Mer Bleue CDP is a developer initiated and funded project. However, the City of Ottawa remained the project leader in this process and provided the regulatory framework within which the Community Design Plan was completed.

## 1.2 Purpose of the CDP

The Mer Bleue CDP provides guidance for the future development of the Mer Bleue Area in accordance with the requirements of the Official Plan for a CDP. However, although the CDP requires approval from the City's Planning and Environment Committee, except for Mixed Use Centres, it does not require an amendment to the Official Plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide a detailed development concept, transportation and servicing studies based on a set of principles and guidelines established during the plan process. The Plan includes:

- A Land Use Plan and associated policies
- A Transportation Plan
- A Servicing Plan
- A Demonstration Plan
- Community Design Guidelines

## 1.3 CDP Area

The area subject to this CDP is located within the Orleans Expansion Area of the East Urban Community and bounded to the north by the southern boundary of the hydro corridor, to the west by Mer Bleue Road, to the east by Tenth Line Road and south by the urban boundary.

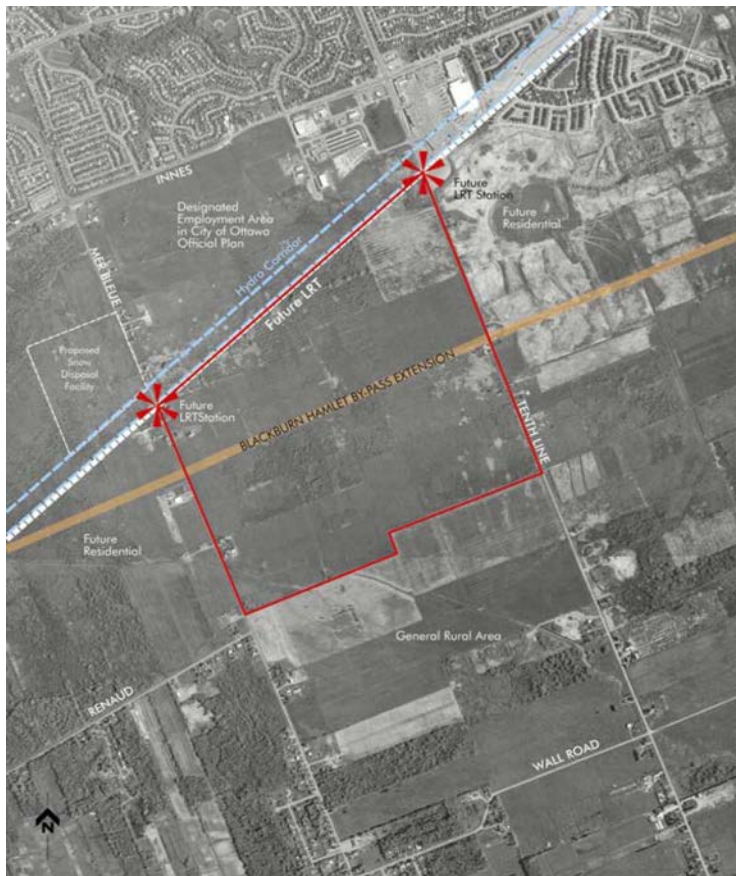


Figure 2 – CDP Study Area

The right-of-way for the future East-West transit expansion runs along the CDP Area's northern boundary while the right-of-way for the Blackburn Hamlet By-pass Extension bisects the CDP Area.

Stations for the east-west transit line are currently planned at Mer Bleue and Tenth Line Road. To the north of the CDP Area is the Bilberry Creek Industrial Park for which a Land Use and Design Study was recently completed.

The western boundary of the CDP Area, Mer Bleue Road, is also the boundary between two former municipalities, the City of Gloucester to the west and the City of Cumberland to the east. The entire CDP Area is located within the former municipality of Cumberland.

South of the CDP area, near the Village of Notre-Dame-des-Champs, is the Mer Bleue Bog, the name of which inspired the title for this CDP. The Mer Bleue Bog is a unique wildlife sanctuary and conservation area managed by the National Capital Commission (NCC). The area was named 'Mer Bleue' when "during the early days of homesteading east of Ottawa, when weather conditions were right, swirling mist obscured the vast wetlands. Local residents called the area 'Mer Bleue' (Blue Sea in English) and the name stuck."



*The Mer Bleue Bog*

## **1.4 Land Use Planning Regulatory Framework**

The following section outlines key municipal policy and regulatory documents that influence this Community Design Plan.

### **1.4.1 City of Ottawa Official Plan (2003)**

The new City of Ottawa Official Plan was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (with modifications) in November 2003. A total of 85 Appeals were filed to the Ministerial approved City of Ottawa Official Plan (2003).

Although some appeals have been resolved through Official Plan Amendments and a number of appeals have been withdrawn; certain appeals remain outstanding.

#### **General Urban Area**

The majority of the CDP Area is designated General Urban Area in the City's Official Plan. This designation permits the development of a full range and choice of housing types to meet the needs of all ages, incomes and life circumstances, in combination with conveniently located employment, service, cultural, leisure, entertainment and institutional uses.



Figure 3 – Official Plan Land Use designations

### **Mixed Use Centre**

The northwest portion of the CDP Area is part of a larger Mixed Use Centre (MUC) to the west. This designation applies to lands that have been identified as strategic locations on the rapid-transit network and lie adjacent to major roads. They should contain development that is both locally and regionally oriented. The designation on both sides of Mer Bleue targets at least 5,000 jobs.

Lands located within 600 metres of Rapid Transit Stations are intended to develop as compact, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly cores. There are two rapid transit stations abutting the CDP area, one at the intersection of the future LRT line and Mer Bleue Road and another at the intersection of the LRT and Tenth Line Road. A Community Design Plan is required for the Mixed-Use Centre at Mer Bleue Road and will be adopted by amendment to the Official Plan.

### **Snow Disposal Facilities**

A Municipal Snow Disposal Facility is planned at the northwest corner of the Hydro Corridor and Mer Bleue Road. Although not located in the CDP Area, its impact must be considered for the future development of the CDP Area. The Official Plan indicates that the impacts of snow disposal facilities for existing and committed sites shall be mitigated through urban design and site plan control measures which include locating landscaping, road allowances, open space uses, utility installations, commercial uses, etc. in any intervening separation distance between the snow disposal facility and a sensitive land use.

This future Snow Disposal Facility is subject to the former City of Gloucester Zoning By-law, which provides additional guidance regarding the impact of this facility. The site is zoned Mx-Heavy Industrial (E4), which only permits snow disposal facility and also requires that the facility be a minimum of 300 metres away from any lot used for residential purposes. This requirement affects the northwest corner of the CDP area.

### Floodplains

As indicated in Figure 3, a portion of the CDP Area is constrained by part of the 'Floodplain' overlay on Schedule K of the Official Plan. The City will permit development when the floodplain is not incorporated in Fill, Construction, and Alteration to Waterways regulations administered by the Conservations Authorities. Prior to development, it must be demonstrated that safety or environmental issues are not created.

### 1.4.2 City of Cumberland Zoning By-law

The CDP Area is currently zoned D-I in the former City of Cumberland Zoning By-law. Discussions with City of Ottawa staff indicate that the D-I zoning represents the former Council's approval in principle of future Industrial development of the CDP Area (Figure 4). This zone is a type of holding provision, which prevents no new uses beyond those existing on the land. Any change from this status will require a Zoning By-law amendment.

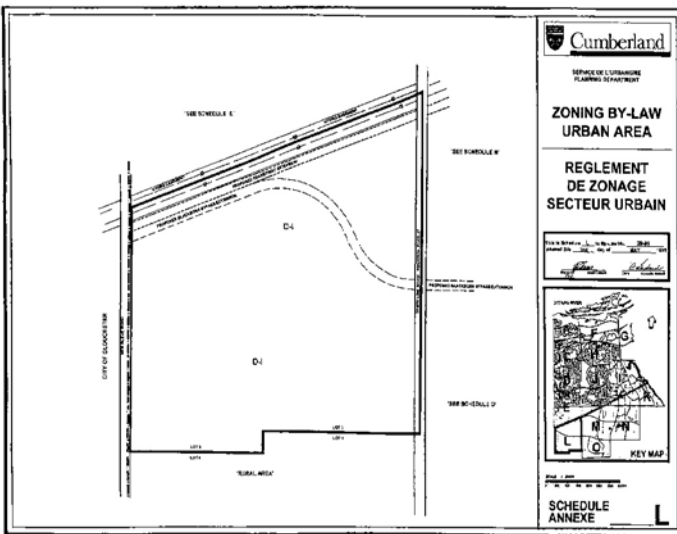


Figure 4 – Cumberland Zoning By-Law