

Section 1 — Introduction

Section 1, Introduction, describes the role of the Official Plan. The Official Plan is one of five growth management plans that was completed under the umbrella of Ottawa 20/20.

1.1 – The Role of the Official Plan

The Official Plan provides a vision of the future growth of the city and a policy framework to guide its physical development to the year 2036. Always Canada’s symbolic focal point, Ottawa is among the country’s most geographically extensive and populous urban areas, responsible for providing services to a population of 940,000 in 2013. [Amendment #180 November 8, 2017] [Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

By 2036, the population of Ottawa will push past the one million mark and possibly reach 1.1 million. This level of growth will open new opportunities for the city and its residents, but will also bring enormous change and new challenges. This Plan sets a policy framework for managing growth in ways that will reinforce the qualities of the city that are most valued by its residents: its distinctly liveable communities, its green and open character, and the landmarks and landforms that distinguish Ottawa from all other places. The Plan also recognizes Ottawa as a capital city, as a meeting place for Canadians and international visitors, and as host to Canada’s most significant political, cultural, social and economic institutions. [Amendment #180 November 8, 2017] [Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

The Official Plan is one of the most important tools a City has to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. This plan has sustainability as its primary goal – where sustainable development is defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ The Official Plan is not a tool to limit growth but rather to anticipate change, manage it and maintain options. It recognises the need to consider the social economic, environmental and cultural outcomes of land use decisions and how these will affect future generations. [Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

The Official Plan is also a legal document that addresses matters of provincial interest defined by the Provincial Policy Statement and that guides the review of development applications made under the Planning Act. [Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

1.2 – The Role of Ottawa: A Capital City and a Place to Call Home

[Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

Ottawa is the largest municipality in Canada’s Capital Region, a region of 4715 km² comparable in size to Prince Edward Island. The region takes in most of Ottawa, the City of Gatineau and all or part of eight other municipalities in Quebec and Ontario. The National Capital Commission, a federal crown corporation, is responsible for guiding development of federally-owned lands and preserving extensive natural areas owned by the federal government. It works closely with Ottawa, Gatineau and other municipalities in the region on interprovincial travel and sustainable transportation issues.

At the centre of Canada’s Capital, Ottawa represents Canada to other Canadians and to the rest of the world. The city hosted more than 8 million visitors in 2010, many attracted by national museums, institutions and monuments that express the country’s history, culture and values. Ottawa is also the meeting place for federal political leaders, international delegations and national organizations.

Parliament Hill and the federal institutions in the central area create the image of Ottawa held by visitors and residents alike. The official residences of Canada’s leaders, the embassies, and buildings of national

importance further define the capital image. In addition, the image of Ottawa is one of water, greenways and open spaces. It is a city built for motorcades as well as Sunday strollers and cyclists.

Ottawa overlooks the Ottawa River, a great river forming the border between Ontario and Quebec. But the city is really centred on the Rideau River and Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which joins the Ottawa River just below Parliament Hill.

Access to the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers and Rideau Canal are a legacy of Jacques Gréber's Plan for the National Capital in 1950. The legacy of this plan includes federal office complexes as well as parkways along the Ottawa River and the Rideau Canal on rights-of-way cleared by the relocation of rail lines through the central area.

The federal plan also created the National Capital Greenbelt, a 20,000 ha greenspace planned to surround and contain urban growth. However, suburban development started outside the Greenbelt in the 1960s and this area is now home to Ottawa's newest communities. The Greenbelt today provides green vistas for cross-town travellers and adjacent neighbourhoods. In some areas it blends seamlessly into the rest of the rural area, which occupies about 90 per cent of the municipality.

Like the Greenbelt, the rural area contains extensive agricultural areas as well as a rich mosaic of woodlands, wetlands, creeks and valleylands. Its villages and cross-roads hamlets suggest the agricultural history of the region but many rural communities have grown to house families seeking a rural lifestyle. [Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

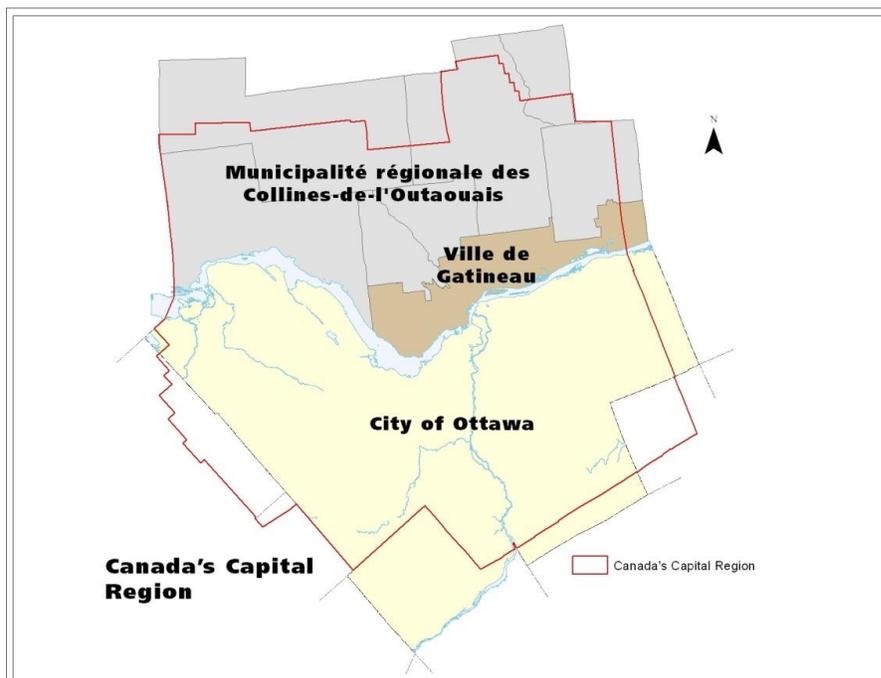


Figure 1.1 – Canada's Capital Region

[Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

1.3 – The Challenge Ahead

[Amendment #150, May 2, 2018]

Ottawa is facing new challenges in the 21st century that require new responses.

A shifting global economy - As part of a global economy, Canada's economic health is tied to events around the world and within the United States, its major trading partner. Federal government employment accounts for about one in every five workers¹ in the city and helps buffer widespread downturns. Yet the city is also vulnerable to government down-sizing and diversification is needed to strengthen economic stability. The City needs to continue to provide the infrastructure, employment land and housing that makes Ottawa a good place to live and do business.

Energy Costs and Consumption - Heating and cooling systems in buildings account for the largest share of energy consumption in Ottawa, although automobiles and other forms of transportation are consuming increasing amounts of energy. Concerns about rising energy costs and the long-term environmental effects of energy consumption have increased the desire for more environmentally sustainable forms of housing and transportation.

Climate Change - Predictions of the effects of climate change on Ottawa indicate a warmer and drier climate in the future, with more extreme weather events in the form of heavy rain, ice storms, and prolonged heat spells. The City's experience to date has underscored the need to be ready for emergencies and to safeguard the elderly and other vulnerable people. Woodlands and wetlands will continue to be valued as a means to manage the flow of surface water.

Population Change - Perhaps the most significant change is the aging of the baby boomers over the next 20 years and a doubling of the population over age 65. Ottawa will also continue to become more diversified through overseas immigration, provided the city continues to maintain a globally competitive position in terms of quality of life and economic opportunities.

Affordability - In the past, municipalities focused their infrastructure investments on providing the infrastructure needed to support urban expansion and rural development. The considerable growth that has occurred since the 1950s has left Ottawa and other municipalities with a legacy of roads, bridges, buildings and other infrastructure that now require significant investment to maintain them in good repair. Faced with a need to substantially increase annual spending on infrastructure renewal in the built-up area over the next 10 years, Ottawa has adopted a Comprehensive Asset Management Program to prioritize investments and ensure best value to taxpayers.

The City also needs to pursue a more affordable pattern of growth based on higher densities and increased use of transit. This pattern allows for more efficient use of municipal infrastructure and reduces the need to build and maintain roads over their life-cycle. This pattern is compact and allows for more efficient delivery of municipal services such as solid waste collection and emergency services that are costly to provide over large areas.

Health - In 2011, half of adults in an Ottawa survey reported that they were either overweight or obese². A lack of physical activity is a key contributor to the incidence of obesity. Physical inactivity and obesity contribute to the risk of developing chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, strokes, some cancers, and reduced psychological well-being. Healthy lifestyles and daily physical activity is supported in communities where residents can easily and safely walk or cycle to transit stops, schools, or

¹ Statistics Canada. Federal Government Employment. Wages and Salaries. September 2010.

² Ottawa Public Health. Healthy Eating, Active Living and Healthy Weights 2012.

http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/obh/2012/05-07/HEAL_Report2012_EN_Final_Updated_May_07_2012.pdf

to local stores and services. These trips also create opportunities to meet neighbours and help build a sense of community.

Sustainable, liveable and resilient communities can help Ottawa meet the challenges of the 21st century. They are characterised by opportunities for active transportation including safe walking and cycling facilities, good transit service, well-connected streets and open space, and a mix of housing with convenient access to shops, services and places to work. Attention to urban design creates spaces and buildings that look good and function well. Quality of life is supported by building:

- A more affordable, compact urban area where walking, cycling and transit are attractive options and there is less reliance on private automobiles;
- A healthier city where there are everyday opportunities to socialize and safely walk or cycle;
- Community-based food production into urban areas, through edible landscapes, community gardens and small and mid-scale urban farms;
- Convenient access to services and facilities that allow seniors to retain their independence in the community and families to raise children in a safe and stimulating environment;
- More prosperous cities, where efficiency, design excellence, and cultural vitality make Ottawa a good place to work and do business;
- A greener and cleaner city, with less air pollution from traffic and less consumption of energy for travel and housing;
- Compact communities that use land efficiently and decrease the pressure to build on farmland and natural areas. [Amendment #150, May 2, 2018]

1.4 – Building a Sustainable Capital City

[Amendment #150, May 2, 2018]

Council has adopted this Plan to help achieve its vision of a sustainable, resilient and liveable city. This vision is expressed through goals for the sustainability of Ottawa that are framed in the City's Strategic Plan. These goals ensure that decisions take into account their long-term impacts on Ottawa's economic prosperity, environment, social well-being, and culture and identity.

The City's Strategic Plan identifies the goals for the long-term sustainability for Ottawa as:

Health and Quality of Life

All residents enjoy a high quality of life and contribute to community well-being

Economic Prosperity

Economic prosperity supports local people, community well-being, and ecological health

Culture and Identity

Cultural vitality and diversity contribute to the region's strong identity

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health

Ecosystems are healthy, protected and support biodiversity

Governance and Decision-Making

Decision-making is open, informed and inclusive

Climate Change

The region adapts to a changing climate

Energy

Energy is used efficiently and supplied from green, renewable sources

Connectivity and Mobility

Walking, cycling, and transit are residents' first choices for transportation

Materials and Solid Waste

Waste is reduced towards zero

Water and Wastewater

Water resources are cherished, conserved and protected

Housing

Housing options are green, healthy and meet the needs of the whole community

Food and Agriculture

The local food system is sustainable and provides residents with healthy and affordable food

The Official Plan contributes to the achievement of these goals by setting directions for managing growth, providing infrastructure and protecting the environment. The Plan shows how the City will manage growth so that development is compact and land within the urban boundary is used efficiently. This pattern reduces impacts on agriculture land and local food production and helps preserve the biodiversity and eco-system health of natural areas. The Plan maps Ottawa's natural heritage system and requires careful analysis and mitigation of potential development impacts on woodlands, wetlands and other natural features. Water runs throughout the natural heritage system and is protected through policies on how the City manages stormwater in urban areas and permits servicing in rural areas.

Combined with walking, cycling and transit, compact development reduces energy consumption and impacts on the environment. Together, compact development and sustainable transportation result in affordable options for providing municipal services and infrastructure as well as affordable options for housing and travel for many households.

The Plan supports sustainable, liveable and resilient communities and the quality of life of all residents. It supports the long-term sustainability of Ottawa in concert with other plans approved by Council. These plans include:

- **Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture** – The action plan builds on Ottawa's strengths, and sets out a path aimed at reaping the major economic impacts and the positive social and environmental benefits of cultural activities in Ottawa.
- **Partnerships for Prosperity** – Ottawa's economic strategy focuses on international competitiveness, brand and market development, and City leadership in shaping economic directions. It seeks to balance business prosperity with social equity, environmental responsibility, and cultural expression.
- **Environmental Strategy** – The strategy sets the direction and establishes a comprehensive approach to create sound environmental management in City practices and policies.
- **Parks and Recreation Master Plan** – The plan proposes a set of operating principles and strategic recommendations to guide the development and implementation of parks and recreation services.
- **Older Adult Plan** – This plan addresses the specific needs of Ottawa's older residents now and in the future, in such strategic areas as transportation, housing, communication and information.

- **Youth Summit Action Plan** – The City is committed to 31 actions to enhance municipal services for youth in such areas as career advice, volunteering, and youth participation in decision-making.
- **Equity and Inclusion Lens** – The lens is a tool to enable the City to be systematic, consistent and coherent in its efforts to promote equity and inclusion in all areas of municipal activity.
- **Accessibility Design Standards** – The standards optimize accessibility for new construction or redevelopment of existing facilities owned, leased or operated by the City in order to address the needs of diverse users and ensure an inclusive environment.

The Official Plan works in parallel with several supporting plans that take their direction from policies in the Official Plan, particularly its directions on growth and how it will be managed to 2036: [Amendment #180 November 8, 2017].

The main supporting plans are:

- **Transportation Master Plan** – This plan is a comprehensive plan that sets out the City's approach to managing and meeting the demand for transportation, including priorities for future infrastructure. This plan is supported by the Ottawa Cycling Plan and the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan, which propose infrastructure, policies, and programs to increase sustainable travel.
- **Infrastructure Master Plan** – An integrated planning and system management document, the Infrastructure Master Plan coordinates the City's efforts in meeting the demand for public water, wastewater, and stormwater services;
- **Greenspace Master Plan** – All greenspaces in the urban area are characterized and evaluated in this plan as a basis for policies on greenspace protection, acquisition and management.

Council implements its Official Plan and supporting plans through its decisions on how land is used and where public funds are invested. These decisions include:

- Review and approval of development applications from developers and landowners who want to change how their land is used;
- Amendments to the Zoning By-law for specific sites or types of activities such as parking, that are consistent with the Official Plan;
- Creation and updating of community design plans to guide development in new communities and change in established ones;
- Approval of detailed guidelines on a range of policy matters such as Environmental Impact Statements and community design;
- Planning and approval of public works to be carried out by the City to support future growth, including water and wastewater infrastructure, roads and transit facilities, and public parks;
- Preparation of annual municipal budgets and long-term plans for capital spending.

Implementing this Plan will require the cooperation of a wide variety of actors outside the municipal administration, not only because they must respect the Plan, but also because they have the mandate, experience and expertise to implement much of it.

The City must partner with the provincial and federal governments, including the National Capital Commission, as well as the City of Gatineau and the Province of Québec, on issues related to transportation infrastructure, management of natural resources, economic development, and more.

The private sector, including builders and developers, has an increasing role to play through partnerships with the City. Examples include building and managing facilities and services, economic development, provision of mixed-use projects, and more.

A host of agencies such as the Conservation Authorities, school boards, and non-profit and cooperative housing associations have responsibilities that contribute to the quality of life in Ottawa.

Finally, individuals and community groups do much to define public issues and solutions and their on-going participation is essential to implementing this Plan. [Amendment #150, May 2, 2018]

1.5 – Structure of the Official Plan

This Plan is organized into five main sections, moving from general planning principles to practical implementation measures. The Plan should be considered as a whole, from the broadest strategic principles through to specific directions for implementation.

- Section 1: Introduction.
- Section 2: The strategic policy directions the City will follow over the coming years.
- Section 3: Policies for the land use designations in the city, and guidance regarding the types of land uses that are permitted in the land use designations.
- Section 4: Matters related to the review of development applications.
- Section 5: Specific issues related to implementation and interpretation of the Plan.
- Schedules: Land use designations.
- Annexes: Some of the Annexes form part of this Plan, while most do not. Section 5.4, policy 2 lists those that do.
- Volume 2: Secondary plans, site-specific policies and the Village plans.
[Amendment #150 December 21, 2017]

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