

## DOCUMENT 1

*Note that this summary reflects a multitude of opinions and ideas expressed by participants at the Planning Summit on April 26 during discussions groups on six different topics. The questions from the discussion groups and feedback received for each topic are presented separately below.*

### **Growth in Rural Areas**

*What do you think is working well, in terms of our plans and approaches to planning in the rural area?*

Participant comments included:

- Our Rural Affairs Office and Council committees are doing a good job keeping us informed. The improved planning website has also helped.
- Villages have a strong sense of community and there is a lot of energy and interest in participating in plans. The village plan updates and review of agriculture land are going well.

*What would you like to see changed or improved, in terms of rural planning?*

Participant comments included:

- We need a bigger picture of rural growth and change, one that includes transportation, jobs, and the relationship between rural areas and the nearby urban area. What is the future for large homes on country lots, when we have an aging population and rising gasoline prices? What does the ecosystem look like at a regional scale?
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the province, the city and the conservation authority in such areas as well and septic systems, protection for endangered species, and tree-cutting. Better consultation with all affected parties would help avoid contentious issues when they arise in cross-jurisdictional areas.
- A greater variety of housing is needed in villages, especially condominiums for seniors plus housing for young people. Some way is needed to keep monster homes from locating next to small bungalows and to provide more guidance to housing in country lots subdivisions, so they fit better in a rural area.
- A challenge is to make villages more self-sufficient in terms of jobs, shopping and services. Growth could help support these, but may lead to a new way of life.

### **Very Tall Buildings**

*Do very tall buildings contribute to Ottawa's image now? What contribution could they make?*

Participant comments included:

- Most of the older tall buildings in Ottawa are blocky and squat, and contribute little to the City's image.
- We can meet our intensification objectives without tall buildings. Buildings of four – six

storeys can achieve high densities and may be a more appropriate form given the scale of many neighbourhoods.

- Very tall buildings potentially can add character and focal points if they are well-designed—creative, dynamic buildings that also contribute to the streetscape and activity at grade by incorporating non-residential uses on the first floors. They can also potentially contribute to communities by:
  - creating a new housing option for young people or retirees wishing to stay in their home community;
  - providing affordable housing as a community benefit under the *Planning Act*;
  - creating the density needed to support local business and services, rapid transit investment, and public amenities for walking and cycling.
- Well-designed, iconic tall buildings can also contribute to the city's image as a world-class, capital city and as a leader in Canadian urban design.

*Where would you permit very tall buildings? What are the characteristics of areas where tall buildings are appropriate?*

Participant comments included:

- Most tall buildings will be built outside the downtown because of the need to protect views to the Peace Tower and Parliament Hill.
- The quality of the design and compatibility with the surroundings are the paramount considerations in locating tall buildings. Height per se is not the issue, except in relation to shadowing and solar access, view protection, and wind. Increased traffic and demand for on-street parking area also concerns, along with impaired access for emergency vehicles.
- The important characteristics of areas suitable for very tall buildings include:
  - Location within five to seven minutes walk to rapid transit or very good regular transit
  - At major intersections, to serve as gateway or landmark
  - Next to major open space such as the Central Experimental Farm, while still preserving views from the community
  - Selectively along or near the city's waterways, to enliven and complete areas around national institutions
  - At the edges of residential communities and employment areas, not in the interior
  - On wide roads where height is less obtrusive
- Potentially, tall buildings could punctuate each of the city's important and distinct areas, reflecting the particular character of each. These could include downtown; shopping centres such as Billings Bridge or South Keys; and town centres in Kanata, Orleans and Barrhaven.

- Tall buildings should be located in places where people want to live, in liveable communities with good views, good transit, and stores and services for everyday needs. They should only be accommodated at the edges of established communities where appropriate transitions to lower-scale development can be made.
- Tall buildings can also be clustered within a design plan that preserves views and openings to the sky.
- More planning and design guidance is needed but not to the extent that it stifles creativity. In established neighbourhoods, we need more detailed planning to articulate the nature of future development.
- We need to provide amenities and services for people in the high-rise buildings. Cash-in-lieu of parkland must be reinvested in the community. If there is no daycare in the neighbourhood, only singles and couples will live there.
- Do not locate tall buildings:
  - In areas of national or historic importance
  - Within rural areas or low-rise residential areas
  - Alongside major roads or in other locations where automobiles are the primary source of transportation

## **Suburban Development**

*What do you think have been the challenges so far, with intensification and redevelopment of suburban areas inside the Greenbelt? What does the City need to change, to make intensification work better?*

*Although this question was intended to focus on suburbs inside the Greenbelt, the participants discussed suburbs both inside and outside the Greenbelt.*

- Resistance to change is perhaps the greatest barrier to intensification. No one likes the impact of change in their neighbourhood but it has to happen if we're going to increase density.
- More communication is needed between developers and communities, along with a more effective process. Many community representatives feel like observers rather than participants because they lacked information, knowledge, and skills to engage. They said there is an apparent lack of transparency in the process and they are not being engaged early enough.
- Participants generally agreed that mixed-use, complete and liveable communities are pivotal and that different levels of intensification are possible, appropriate and acceptable depending on the location. We need to do more work at the community level to develop a

vision and select areas for intensification and types of intensification that are compatible with that community. All communities need to accept a share of intensification but they can help plan what is most acceptable. Other ideas include:

- Validate the Official Plan intensification targets with communities;
  - Use neighbourhood planning charettes to create intensification plans;
  - Look at successful approaches or projects and ask if they could work in other neighbourhoods; and,
  - Look for untapped opportunities for redevelopment, especially older or obsolete shopping centres that can be redeveloped with little disruption to the community.
- Developers and residents need more clear policies, information and certainty about what is permitted. The Official Plan allows more development than the zoning bylaw in some areas because the zoning bylaw was not amended after the Official Plan was approved. Developers look at the Official Plan, but communities look at the zoning and are then surprised at the development being discussed. They feel there is too much random, spot rezoning.
  - Once a good plan is in place, everyone should stick to it and the planning department should make sure they do.
  - Intensification can be more attractive and functional but there are barriers within the planning department. Lengthy timelines for processing applications discourage creative proposals that may take more time to review. The planners may approve a proposal but then the engineers will disagree and the applicant does not know how it will turn out.
  - Green infrastructure plans can help preserve a system of public greenspaces, natural areas and walkable streets with tree canopy.

*How well are our newest suburbs outside the Greenbelt working, in terms of their planning, design and overall liveability? What changes would you recommend in how we plan them?*

- Many participants said that new communities are working quite well. Developers said that it's not well known that new communities outside the Greenbelt are more dense than communities inside the Greenbelt. Common success factors included:
  - Having a plan to which everyone adhered;
  - Placing liveability as the highest value;
  - Campuses for employment;
  - Building schools before instead of after development;
  - Early installation of public landmarks installed;
  - Having parks that are well-designed and can accommodate different ages;
  - Having nature and a mix of green spaces, ravines, and human-made lakes; and,

- Having a catalyst for development (e.g., in Kanata, growth in high-tech employment was the catalyst for development of the town centre).
- Other participants disagreed and said that the suburbs outside the Greenbelt are bedroom communities instead of complete communities. Common concerns included:
  - Attracting employers and jobs other than retail to business parks and employment lands has been challenging.
  - Residents have to drive to every location, including the town centre and to all forms of retail. This puts more cars on the road and makes walking even less attractive.
  - Congestion and slow public transit make it difficult to get downtown.
  - Walkability is limited because land uses are separated and isolated and walking is unpleasant because of the narrow roads and lack of trees.
  - A lag in delivering services and a pressure on infrastructure.
- A few consultants and architects noted that we are, unfortunately, losing community character

### **Transit-Oriented Development**

*What is the single most important take-away idea for Ottawa that you heard today from guest speaker Jeffrey Tumlin?*

Participant comments included:

- Ottawa should be planning cities for increasingly smaller households and young urban professionals who want an active lifestyle, where cycling and walking replace car ownership.
  - More areas should be planned so that people can park once and then complete several errands and activities on foot.
  - We need to re-evaluate congestion and see it as a sign of economic vitality. Where the speaker proposed pricing parking so that a few spaces are always available, several participants said the market should decide.
  - Reconsider road standards so that streets become narrower and neighbourhoods become more liveable.

*How can the City encourage businesses and retail to locate near the light rail stations opening in 2018, as part of a transit-oriented development?*

- A few participants said no extra measures were required since the stations would be a market draw.
- Many participants said the city needs to create station areas that are green, walkable and cycling-oriented, with good connections into the surrounding area. They had a clear picture of station areas with a mix of jobs and housing, shops providing everyday needs, and other facilities. The housing including a mix of housing suitable for all income groups.

- More specifically, some participants said that the City should:
  - Provide development incentives such as waiving fees, assisting with brownfield cleanup, and accelerating approval processes perhaps combined with building permitting;
  - Zone the sites now for a higher density and mix of uses and allow for more flexibility;
  - Create air rights, so that development can occur over the station and rail line;
  - Build on the opportunities now available at each station, rather than pursue future uses, as each station area has different issues and positive attributes; and,
  - Help businesses by increasing the time allowed on transfers from the current 90 minutes, so people have more time to shop.

*What should the City be planning now, for stations in the next phases of rapid transit?*

Participant comments included:

- Plan now for these areas, consulting the surrounding communities on policy and zoning for a mix of uses and making sure there is sufficient transportation and servicing capacity for future redevelopment.
- Confirm the route and schedule as far in the future as possible, to increase certainty for developers.
- Take lessons from Barrhaven's marketplace, where a grid-pattern of roads underlies the area in anticipation of future development; or from South Keys, where retail preceded a larger mixed-use development planned for the future.
- Participate in land assemblies around the station and partner with others in their development, including affordable housing providers.

### **Community Design Plans (CDP)**

*In your experience, what has worked well with the CDP process? The CDP product?*

- Several in the development industry said CDPs have worked well in undeveloped, greenfields areas. They provide an overall vision for area landowners and coordinate servicing, transportation, greenspace and other elements. Different approaches may be needed in established areas to consider the impact of new development.
- Some said CDPs provide a comprehensive picture of a community and help manage community expectations of future development.

*What have been the shortfalls in the process or product? What improvements would you make to provide greater certainty in planning?*

- Communities were clear that they wanted more real engagement and effective participation in the process. Some said the process worked best when communities were in control. Others felt disadvantaged compared with the City and developers in what they felt was a “top down” process and wanted more tools and information. They said community associations get caught in issues and need to know their options.
- Several believed the City did not respect CDPs in its planning decisions, once the plans were approved. Others said planning is difficult to understand and communities can be surprised by results. A project proposed before a CDP is approved, for example, would be considered under the plans in place at the time of the proposal. Similarly, the Official Plan now allows greater heights in some areas than are permitted in the zoning bylaw and communities are unprepared for proposals that exceed the zoning.
- Several said the scope of the CDP should be expanded to include social infrastructure and amenities to help meet the needs of a growing population. CDPs should consider the community’s full suite of assets, including the natural environment, infrastructure, cultural facilities and the built environment.
- Many said the process takes too long, in part because of the number of parties involved in established areas and their different expectations and interests. Nevertheless, there was a strong call that all stakeholders be included and that more time be spent at the outset to engage participants.
- Prioritizing areas for CDPs is a problem. Some said all neighbourhoods should have them regardless of cost. Others said CDPs should be reserved only for areas experiencing change. CDPs in evolving areas should be reviewed every five to 10 years.

Other participant comments were:

- The CDP process should be continuously improving. There could be a more dynamic exchange with communities and other participants, greater use of social media, and alternatives to public meetings. The process should tap a broader range of information sources, such as faith-based groups and community police.
- The City should do a comprehensive review of the zoning bylaw and bring it into conformity with the Official Plan to provide for intensification, rather than continue with CDPs. Others said they preferred the CDP process because it recognizes individual communities.
- The City needs to meet the same standards for studies and analysis in CDPs that it applies in the private sector. CDPs have been completed without servicing analysis and some question whether there is sufficient capacity to support the plans. Public infrastructure and investment should receive equal attention as private development.
- Zoning should be amended when a CDP is approved rather than leaving it for later. The

developer knows what is allowed and may be happy with it. If the developer has to rezone the land, he may ask for more height or density since a rezoning process is required regardless.

## **Economic Development**

*What effect do you think the 2012 federal and provincial budgets will have on Ottawa's economy?*

Participant comments included:

- The budgets will have little or no impact because Ottawa is resilient with a highly-educated and well-paid workforce. The Ottawa economy will continue to move away from reliance on public employment. This is an opportunity to encourage new start ups and growth in small businesses, which are important to diversity.
- Caution was raised in several areas.
- Young people are having difficulty finding good-paying jobs and are deferring home purchases. Well-educated immigrants new to Canada are continuing to have difficulty finding work in their field because of lack of recognition of foreign credentials.
- We need to focus on innovation and ongoing education.

*Does land located near the Ottawa Macdonald-Cartier International Airport (OMCIA) offer any advantages or disadvantages generally to business, industrial or commercial and retail uses? What are they?*

Advantages mentioned included:

- The airport area offers large parcels, which are difficult to find in the city. Also, it is close to the airport, Riverside South, Limebank Road and the light-rail system, and access to Highway 416 will improve with construction of the Strandherd-Armstrong Bridge.

Disadvantages mentioned included:

- We need to position the airport and the land around it as part of a larger vision of the economy for the whole city.
- There is little demand for industrial land within the city.
- There is no direct access to a 400-series highway and connections to other parts of the

city are poor. Growth industries trying to locate in Ottawa will choose better-connected areas.

- The surrounding environmental lands, Greenbelt and residential areas may constrain future uses. Also, there is no servicing and the property is available for lease, not purchase.

*On the whole, what do you think would be the best possible type of development that could be attracted to land around the airport?*

Participant comments included:

- Aviation-related uses are the most obvious land uses. These include private distribution centres, remote sensing, uses that require aircraft and aircraft storage.
- International and travel-oriented businesses could also be interested in proximity to the airport, along with convention facilities and services.
- Plans and policies for the area should allow broad land uses so that there are no impediments to growth.
- The baby boomers will continue to retire and fuel the demand for condominiums.
- Planning should revisit the concept of employment land in favour of mixed use and the flexibility that provides.