



# Building a Liveable Ottawa 2031 Preliminary Policy Proposals

## Executive Summary

Official Plan  
Transportation Master Plan  
Infrastructure Master Plan  
Cycling Plan  
Pedestrian Plan



Building a Liveable Ottawa 2031

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**ottawa.ca**  
City services **3-1-1**  
TTY 613-580-2401

# Building a Liveable

**Ottawa 2031** is a city-wide review of land use, transportation and infrastructure policies that make up the Official Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Infrastructure Master Plan, Cycling Plan and the Pedestrian Plan, with an eye towards making Ottawa a more vibrant, healthy and sustainable city. The focus of the review is to propose solutions to 12 current planning issues. The outcome of the review will be an updated Official

Plan and supporting plans with policies and priorities that influence the future growth of the city for years to come.

The last step is the review and approval of the Development Charges (DC) by-law before it expires in July, 2014. Development charges fund a portion of the growth-related costs associated with many services provided by the city.

We have prepared this summary of the proposed policy directions to help residents understand what is being proposed and participated in Building a Liveable Ottawa 2031.

Go to [ottawa.ca/liveableottawa](http://ottawa.ca/liveableottawa) to read the complete preliminary policy proposal papers. Tell the City what you think of the proposals by completing our survey before March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013.

## Affordability and Infrastructure

The City of Ottawa is aware of the need to spend responsibly and get the most out of its investments in order to lower the tax burden on residents. To this end, the Official Plan, the Transportation Master Plan and the Infrastructure Master Plan reviews will assess infrastructure needs, costs, and priorities with the aim of keeping infrastructure investment as affordable as possible now and in the long term.

There is a growing backlog of transportation infrastructure that requires upgrading and it is likely that both infrastructure needs and the costs to fulfill these needs have increased since the current plans were approved.

The Official Plan sets out how and where the City will focus residential, commercial, and employment growth. How the City grows impacts affordability for residents and the municipality. Therefore, the Official Plan review will:

- Consider the costs of servicing intensification growth and greenfield development growth;

- Reflect the market driven trends in housing choice;
- Incorporate principles aimed at maximizing use of existing and planned infrastructure to accommodate growth;
- Consider the impact of the total costs of growth on future spending needs;
- Assess the impact of future growth on taxation requirements; and
- Develop growth options that increase the affordability of the City for residents and the municipality.

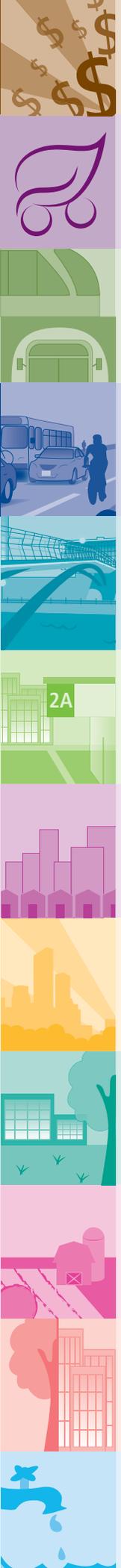
The review of the Transportation Master Plan will:

- Consider the total costs of travel, including environmental, social, and user costs;
- Include life-cycle and maintenance costs in the affordability analysis;
- Consider reducing levels of service where necessary to reduce infrastructure costs and timing; and

- Present three scenarios of funding levels, showing what the City can afford with its current revenue as well as options for either reducing the number of projects or finding new ways of generating revenue.

The Infrastructure Master Plan deals with water, wastewater, and stormwater systems. This review will:

- Analyse the performance of the water and wastewater infrastructure under extreme conditions;
- Reflect how changing demographics and stronger conservation measures affect infrastructure needs;
- Assess the servicing required for intensification and growth in the suburbs;
- Find opportunities to coordinate projects to save money;
- Examine options for servicing rural villages;
- Initiate planning to retrofit stormwater management in selected areas, to improve water quality;
- Pursue new approaches to managing stormwater in new communities; and
- Examine how infrastructure can be adequately funded.



# Safe and Efficient Transportation Infrastructure

Although the percentage of people choosing to cycle or take transit in Ottawa continues to increase, close to half of trips will likely be made by car in the year 2031. The roads and parking facilities needed to accommodate that travel should be as safe and efficient as possible.

Over-building of roads and parking encourages excessive travel by car, which is environmentally harmful and economically inefficient. Recognizing this, the Transportation Master Plan review will provide stronger guidance on managing roads and parking facilities by incorporating the City's Strategic Road Safety Action

Plan (2012), Transportation System Management Action Plan (2012) and Municipal Parking Management Strategy (2009). The review will give direction on zoning for long-term and short-term bicycle parking and encourage car-sharing services in new development in exchange for reduced parking requirements.

The review will consider modifying how the City determines future requirements for new roads and road widening.

Historically, requirements have been based on forecasts of travel demand for the single, busiest hour —the “peak hour” — and roads are planned to handle that traffic with acceptable levels of congestion. The review will look at a peak period of up to three hours to determine requirements. This means that travel demand would be estimated over a longer time period and the peak demand would be flattened and redistributed. This means roads would be used more intensively for a longer period, and therefore the need to expand infrastructure would be avoided or delayed.

## Sustainable Transportation

The Transportation Master Plan review will propose ways to make sustainable and more affordable transportation options, such as walking, cycling and transit, more competitive and attractive alternatives to car use.

The review will set higher overall goals for the proportion of people using sustainable transportation. It will create new targets for the share of travel by walking, cycling and transit within individual corridors (e.g. across the Greenbelt to Orléans), travel between common commuting destinations (e.g. Barrhaven to Kanata), demographic

groups (e.g. young adults aged 16 to 24), and multiple modes (e.g. cycling and transit in combination). A combined target for walking, cycling and transit will take seasonal differences into account and provide a more flexible framework for sustainable options.

The plan will set goals for the total distance traveled by car per person each year and will explore incentives to encourage people to change their travel

behaviour—whether, when, where, and how they travel. These include ways to encourage people to use sustainable transportation more often, to travel outside peak periods, to reduce the length of their trips, and to reduce the number of trips they make. Additionally, the review will explore user pay options which would help pay for new transportation infrastructure and make sustainable forms of transportation more competitive and attractive.



# Complete Streets

Complete streets are streets designed to accommodate the needs of all who use them, whether they are walking, cycling, taking public transit, or driving a car. Complete streets are safe, comfortable, and convenient for all users, regardless of age or ability.

Complete streets often include traffic calming measures to slow vehicles, bike lanes, wide sidewalks, and landscaped areas. There is no single street design that defines a complete street. The design of the road does not start at the centreline, as is

customary, but starts instead at the building frontage and works toward the centre. The needs of the most vulnerable users (pedestrians and cyclists) are considered first, followed by the needs of motorists and transit users. Trade-offs are made among competing users, guided by the intended function of the street and surrounding land uses.

There is a need for consistency and transparency when making difficult trade-offs between the needs of different users in the design of constrained roadways and intersections. The current Transportation Master Plan measures the level of service for motor vehicles. The plan review will develop new level of service measures for walking, cycling, and transit ridership to help evaluate how well these users are being accommodated on Ottawa's streets.

## Active Transportation

Active transportation includes walking and cycling and any other form of travel that is people-powered, including travel by motorized wheelchairs. Active transportation is the most affordable form of transportation for residents and in terms of infrastructure requirements for municipalities.

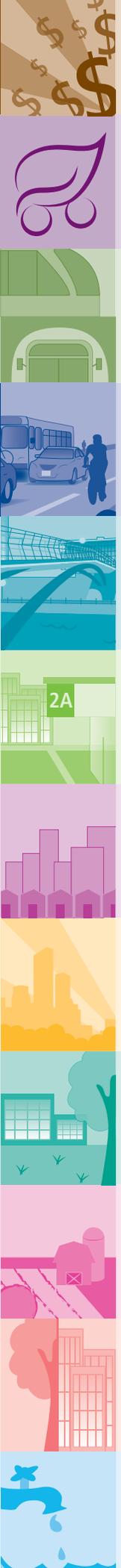
The City's detailed plans for active transportation are provided in the Ottawa Cycling Plan and Ottawa Pedestrian Plan. These plans will be updated to include revised vision statements, goals and objectives for active transportation.

In addition to overall targets for walking and cycling, new targets will be proposed

for different kinds of trips (e.g. short trips) and in specific areas of the city. New tools will be developed to assess the quality of walking and cycling environments to ensure that the most vulnerable road users are best accommodated.

There will be greater emphasis on improving walking and cycling safety; a review of maintenance practices, particularly for winter conditions; and a refinement of both the pedestrian and cycling networks

and facilities. Policies for the requirement and priority of sidewalks will be strengthened and clarified with an emphasis on improving access to transit and schools as well as to parks, public buildings, retail, and employment centres. The use of multi-use pathways in lieu of sidewalks will be recommended under certain conditions. All of these active transportation initiatives will help to create vibrant, liveable neighbourhoods that support healthy and active lifestyles for people of all ages.



# Public Transit

Ottawa has an extensive and successful transit system and completion of the new light rail system will further improve service and efficiency. The transit system is a key component when it comes to creating a liveable and affordable City as the Official Plan calls for a focus on accommodating growth through intensified development along transit corridors.

Substantial changes to the plan for public transit are not envisioned. Rather, the plan review will refine and consolidate the City's transit strategy. Policies will be drafted that:

- Improve the physical and operating performance characteristics for each type of rapid transit corridor, which include primary corridors such as the Transitway

transit intensive corridors like Baseline Road that have dedicated transit lanes and transit priority corridors like Bank Street that have priority measures for transit in the roadway;

- Phase the next improvements to the primary rapid transit system;
- Propose how supplementary rapid transit can be expanded by introducing new corridors with frequent transit service; and
- Complement Official Plan policies on planning communities that support walking, cycling and transit.

Other approaches to support public transit will be considered. These include: building elements of the rapid transit network as soon as opportunities arise, which in turn will postpone the need for road widenings; and implementing measures to make park-and-ride facilities more accessible for cyclists and pedestrians.

These improvements are intended to improve the entire transit system and attract more passengers. This approach will achieve long-term ridership goals and reduce and delay the need for additional roadway capacity in the form of new or widened roads.

## Transit-Oriented Development — Planning for Land Use and Transit

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is development where all physical elements — buildings, open space, roads and sidewalks — are designed to support transit ridership. Increased densities and developing areas that are attractive, convenient and safe will encourage transit use. In order to fully maximize transit ridership and the return on public investment, new and re-developed areas need to be carefully designed to support walking, cycling and transit use. TOD areas are designed to make walking and cycling connections to transit safe and direct. These are areas where public spaces are attractive, buildings frame the sidewalk, and roads and sidewalks are

designed for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Increased cycling and walking supports a healthier lifestyle and creates opportunities to build socially stronger community connections. As a TOD area develops, it supports a greater mix of jobs, housing and services and becomes a liveable community that is accessible and affordable for all residents.

The Official Plan already includes key elements of TOD. Proposed policies include:

- Stronger direction in the Official Plan on designing for transit and using transit to as a focal point when designing Ottawa's mainstreets and mixed-use areas such as Blair Road and Tunney's Pasture;
- Sharing space in complete streets, where the public right-of-way balances the needs of all users, including cars, transit, pedestrians, and cyclists;
- Stronger requirements for new communities to support transit service in their early stages and key subsequent phases to transit extensions; and
- Required content for Community Design Plans to include locations for intensification near transit and good walking and cycling connections.

# Intensification and Tall Buildings

Intensification is development that results in an increase in housing or jobs on a piece of land. It can occur as small projects that fill in one or two lots or as tall buildings of 10 storeys or more. The Official Plan focuses intensification in specific areas. The highest densities are planned around rapid transit stations and include a mix of uses. More modest intensification is supported along mainstreets served by high-quality transit. These areas are currently busy shopping, commercial and residential streets or may become like that in the future.

Recently, buildings of more than 20 and 30 storeys have been proposed in areas where there are few tall buildings. Communities and developers want more clarity about where tall buildings and higher densities can be located.

New requirements for Community Design Plans are proposed to make sure they establish intensification areas and maximum building heights. Buildings 20 storeys and more will only be permitted in locations where a Community Design Plan or a Transit-Oriented Development Plan has allowed it. Buildings over 30 storeys are proposed only in areas planned for a mix of uses around rapid transit stations, where they are permitted in a plan and where conditions for design and location are met.

The Official Plan will set height limits in areas where there is no Community Design Plan to

provide certainty to the community and the development industry. It is proposed that in mixed-use centres and employment areas building height limits will be increased to 10-19 storeys where immediately adjacent to a rapid transit station, transitioning down to nine storeys elsewhere. No changes are proposed to current policies for traditional mainstreets and arterial mainstreets, however four new mainstreets are being proposed. In addition, intensification of up to six storeys will be allowed on other corridors that are not designated as mainstreets, but that are served by the supplementary rapid transit network. Outside these areas, buildings in the General Urban area would be permitted up to four storeys, which is the current policy.

# Urban Design and Compatibility

Urban design is about how buildings, roads and public spaces combine to create beauty. A focus on urban design and compatibility can make Ottawa stand out as Canada's capital and create places that are more attractive and functional. The Official Plan has policies on the design of public and private development, and how these can be made to be compatible with their surroundings. The City has developed several other planning tools including the following:

- Community Design Plans prepared for individual communities such as mid-Centretown or Barrhaven South, and portions of roads such as Bank Street and Jeanne d'Arc Boulevard. These plans guide urban design and how to make new development compatible with its surroundings. The plans may lead to changes to the Zoning By-law and are

used to review development proposals.

- Urban Design Guidelines prepared for specific types of development, such as development around light rail transit, and for specific types of buildings, such as high-rise housing and infill housing. These guidelines help to deliver Official Plan policies.
- Design Priority Areas which warrant a high level of design review because of their potential for intensification or because, like the downtown, they have a big impact on how people see and experience Canada's Capital. Projects in these areas are reviewed by the City's urban design staff or by the Urban

Design Review Panel — an independent panel made up of experts in urban design and architecture.

The Official Plan policies on design and compatibility can be stream-lined now that these tools are in place. As well, communities, applicants and staff have asked for clarification of current policies, new policies, and new procedures for reviewing development applications. Proposed changes to the policies include:

- Added clarification about what should be included in Community Design Plans;
- New Design Priority Areas which are subject to a higher level of design review; and
- New requirements for development applications to address design issues for tall buildings.

# Employment Lands

Employment land is land reserved in the Official Plan for industrial and business development such as offices, manufacturing, warehouses, and other industrial uses. Different types of businesses require different types of employment land, and these are located throughout the City. The Official Plan includes employment land located in the rural area and in different parts of the urban area so that residents have a better chance of working near their homes, which in turn positively effects affordability of the City for residents.

The Employment Lands Study will analyse the current land supply and projected

demand for office, industrial and other employment uses. The analysis will:

- Look at trends in employment with the federal government, advanced technology and other sectors. If more employment land is required, the Official Plan will be updated accordingly;
- Develop evaluation criteria to guide decisions on converting areas reserved for employment to other uses;
- Look at whether the employment targets for mixed-use centres and other nodes in the Official

Plan are achievable and propose ways for meeting targets; and

- Assess the merits of providing water and sewer services to rural employment land. The study will also look at adding a new Rural Employment Land designation in the Official Plan.

Location, amount, and type of employment land is a key economic development factor. This aspect of the Official Plan review will help the City meet the needs of all sectors of Ottawa's economy and support continued job growth.

# Rural Lots and Villages

Residential growth occurs in Villages and outside the Villages on individual lots created by severance, and until 2009, by country lot subdivision. In 2009, Council asked for a review of the subdivision policy and put in place a moratorium to no longer allow new country lot subdivisions in rural areas.

The preliminary proposal is that country lot subdivisions would no longer be permitted, continuing the moratorium. Consideration could be given to relaxing policies on

severances to allow severance of two new lots from one property, an increase of one lot from the current policies.

The Official Plan envisions that at least 50% of rural growth will occur in Villages where stores, commercial services, schools and community facilities are concentrated. Like complete communities in urban settings, complete communities in villages

will make the best use of existing resources and require the least infrastructure and service delivery growth. This type of rural growth also positively impacts affordability for residents and the municipality. Preliminary proposals for the three groups of villages in Ottawa — large, mid-size, and small — have been established to guide village build-out, any village boundary expansion, and the rural servicing study to be completed as part of the Infrastructure Master Plan review.

# Mineral Resources

Ottawa's mineral resources consist of sand, gravel and bedrock. These are non-renewable resources used to construct and maintain buildings, roads and other infrastructure. An ongoing, inexpensive supply of aggregates helps to minimize costs and supports local economic development.

A Mineral Resource Study is looking at how to regulate mineral resources as well as what deposits will be preserved for future use. Municipalities periodically update their mineral resource policies and this review

is the third study for Ottawa since 1979. Preliminary proposals include:

- Stronger protection for deposits, such as not allowing adjacent development, will be considered so that incompatible development does not prevent extraction of the resource in the long term;
- Plans will be developed to rehabilitate areas where mineral operations are concentrated such as the Greely area and the Carp Road corridor;

- Various changes to the Official Plan are proposed, such as the addition of policies promoting recycling of aggregates;
- New criteria are proposed to screen out deposits and define areas identified for mineral development on maps in the Official Plan. These include natural areas identified by the Province and wellhead protection areas (the area surrounding municipal wells that supplies their water); and
- Criteria from previous studies will be continued (including proximity to developed areas, the presence of wetlands, the size of the deposit, and depth below grade).

# Agricultural Land Evaluation

Preservation of agricultural land is the first step towards protecting the ability of future generations to produce the food they need. Agriculture is the mainstay of the rural economy and locally-grown products are a growing presence in many homes and restaurants throughout the city.

A Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) is an evaluation system used to identify and ultimately preserve the best agricultural land. Each parcel of land is evaluated and assigned a score. Properties receiving scores above a certain threshold are considered prime agricultural land. Areas of prime agricultural land that are 250 hectares or

larger are considered prime agricultural areas. Prime agricultural areas are protected in order to ensure they are not used for another purpose, such as residential development.

In 1997 the former Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton used a LEAR system to evaluate and protect agricultural areas. In 2009, City Council gave direction that the LEAR be brought up-to-date, using new land use and soils information. A Working

Group composed of local farmers, rural Councillors and developers have revised the LEAR system. Preliminary results indicate most of the lands currently identified as prime agricultural area will remain as agricultural. However, there may be some additions or deletions from the lands currently protected as agricultural areas.

The results of the LEAR review will be available on [Ottawa.ca](http://Ottawa.ca) early in 2013. If you would like notification of this posting and opportunities for consultation, please send a request to [planning@ottawa.ca](mailto:planning@ottawa.ca).