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**Presentation to City of Ottawa Planning Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee • Mitchell Beer, Publisher, *The Energy Mix***

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Thank you for the opportunity to share my view that the five elements of the new Official Plan will have greater impact—and in fact can only succeed in a warming, carbon-constrained world—if the response to climate change is treated as a cross-cutting theme.

I am part of the People's Official Plan for Ottawa's Climate Emergency, but I'm here as publisher of *The Energy Mix*, a thrice-weekly e-digest on climate, energy, and carbon-free futures. Much of my work is on climate solutions—including the powerful, pro-active response from hundreds if not thousands of municipalities across North America and around the world.

***So I am proud to see my hometown stepping toward the mainstream of municipal climate leadership, and I congratulate you for the building blocks in 5 Big Moves. I urge you to take this success a step further by bringing rapid carbon reductions, climate resilience, and the community and economic benefits of climate action to the centre of the plan.***

In its blockbuster report last fall, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said the window for climate action has not yet closed. But the challenge is stark. ***We must reduce global greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030. We must fully decarbonize by 2050.*** The difference between a 1.5° and even a 2°C stabilization target is measured in monster storms and flooding, killer heat and drought, multi-breadbasket crop failures, devastating species loss, and in human lives saved or lost.

But this is no time for despair or half-measures. *My biggest takeaway* from the IPCC report was that ***the solutions to the climate crisis are within our grasp.*** That the last box to check is political will. And *political* will is about building *public* demand for practical, bottom-up climate solutions that make people's lives better.

The 2046 time horizon for this Official Plan hands you an incredible opportunity and a fundamental challenge. If you miss this moment to ground everything you do in climate response and climate solutions, the next equivalent moment will come far too late to make a difference. ***If you do make climate a unifying theme of this plan, you will discover so many local benefits, so much fertile ground to show up as local heroes and build the future of our city. Often by building on the bright ideas other cities have already piloted.***

Big Move #4 contains some solid raw material that could do with some framing.

1. It necessarily recognizes the connection between climate change and health. But a 2050 decarbonization deadline is the other essential pillar—if only because everyone must do their part to keep climate change within a range that makes adaptation possible.
2. The references to buildings, infrastructure, and energy are essential to any decarbonization plan. They should also be reflected elsewhere, beginning with the City's economic strategy. Energy efficiency, for example, already employs 436,000 Canadians, more than twice the total in oil and gas. It creates local jobs that can't be exported and delivers dramatic health, environmental, fairness, equity, and resilience benefits. That kind of integrated thinking throughout the Plan will deliver the powerful message that climate action builds and transforms the local economy. ***That it's not about loss and pain, but about opportunity and gain.***

3. The Plan must recognize climate as a fundamental equity issue. Its greatest impacts fall on vulnerable communities with the least capacity to respond unassisted. And the day-to-day cost savings that result from climate solutions accrue first and best to households that are already forced to choose between food and fuel.

These examples point toward a wider view of a post-carbon City that gives structure and context to the menu of energy and resilience measures in Big Move #4. The individual elements are all worthy. But ***they'll only deliver the carbon reductions we need as part of a bigger, more encompassing vision of Ottawa as a carbon-neutral city by 2050.***

It may appear to you that decarbonization measures fall outside the City's mandate. That's largely a matter of framing—and the *reframe* you need to establish the mandate is the kind of thinking that will win wider public support and buy-in for the program.

For example, energy is largely a provincial mandate. But the City is responsible for public health, public housing, emergency services, and local economic development. So what if it turned out that building or retrofitting every Ottawa structure to a Passivhaus or net zero standard made our homes healthier and our workplaces more productive, reduced energy costs for the vulnerable among us, made the City more resilient in a disaster, and created many thousands of jobs? ***That's how carbon reductions become an essential side benefit of actions that cut right across the municipal portfolio, that deliver the results your constituents already expect of you.***

It won't quite happen like this. But if you could totally decarbonize the City without once uttering the words "climate", "change", or "crisis", the atmospheric, economic, social, and environmental benefits would still be exactly the same. *That* would be the biggest city-building project of all, giving every one of us a resilient, safe, eco-efficient community we could be proud of.