

Notes of the July 18 meeting of the POP group

3. Timeline for future actions

a. Development of “Strategic Directions” document for presentation at Planning Committee August 22

- OP adoption is spring 2021
- We're in the period where we can provide input
- That said, official consultation period runs from Sep to Dec 2019
- That period will consult on the strategic directions adopted by Planning Committee on August 22
- Staff will provide a report to council on August 12
- We first provided input into the discussion papers
- Last week, the city held a meeting with the FCA to talk about the input we have provided to date
- Our submission asked that climate change be the central organizing theme of the OP
- Paul has sent out a summary on what occurred
- We learned that there will be a Climate Change Master Plan as part of the OP
- Energy Evolution and the AQCCMP will be rolled up into this
- We know that there will also be a Parks a Greenspace component
- There will be an option re: no expansion of the urban boundary, with most growth occurring through intensification more focused on building of neighbourhoods and less focused on numerical targets
- Last time, even with no expansion technically supported, 1,100 hectares were lost anyway
- Real audience right now is Planning Committee members and full council

- Re: deadlines - it's more important that it is well-composed than delivered very quickly
- Our conversations with staff have more or less reached their end point - we have provided them with all of the input we could up to date
- In Dec. 2019, council will officially launch the period where staff must write the OP
- The rest of the process involves getting approval from the province, etc.
- We need to have something good in place for August 22 - a well-established position on the record
- We need to officially react to the staff report at that time (published on August 12)
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b. Other actions

- Greenspace Alliance is committed to mentoring a cohort of students to organize a public event in the fall
- 10-12 motivated Youth Ambassadors to help with this
- The city is also organizing a workshop in the fall - date to be determined
- Timing could be tricky due to the federal election
- Andrea Flowers and the Energy Evolution team would like to meet with us to present the work that they've been putting together
- They are suggesting some time in August - ASAP

- Question: is this group connected to the city's emergency planning process, stemming from a provincially mandated process? Perhaps our group could feed into the process being driven by this group - Ron Matyas (city staff) - this may be connected with (or the same as) city's resiliency and adaptation plan

4. Strategic directions content – high-level discussion on core concepts with policy examples where possible

a. Apply a climate emergency test to the Official Plan (Paul Johanis)

- In our joint response to the discussion papers, we developed a one-page diagram about making climate change the central facet of the OP
- The diagram shows how the various OP aspects feed into climate change considerations
- We determined that everything should be going through a climate test
 - 1) Does this contribute to eliminating GHG emissions?
 - 2) Does this preserve or increase carbon storage?
 - 3) Does this respond to crises / assist with resiliency and adaptation?
- Now that we know there will be a Climate Change Master Plan, this should be the central organizing principle
- Discussion:
 - We should reinforce the 1.5 degree target outlined by the IPCC
 - Health is possibly the biggest pathway to getting public buy-in for climate action
 - Our language could take health and safety aspects into account
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 - Consideration: does measure retain some of the critical assets that the city needs to develop resiliency? Answer: This is embedded in point 2 above. We need to flesh this out better.
 - What about toxicity and plastic usage? Is this contained in the above test? I.e., the idea of keeping the good stuff we have
 - Answer: we're trying to focus on reducing the amount of GHG in the atmosphere. The connection is around the production of plastics and CO₂, but it's not a direct kind of connection
 - Shouldn't we factor this in given that there is a trend towards accounting for production emissions as well as consumption emissions in cities around the world?
 - Is there appetite for a fourth pillar: positioning the city to take advantage of the massive benefits that would stem from action on climate change?
 - We know that the Economy discussion paper didn't focus on this at all
 - Infrastructure is an important consideration when it comes to climate impacts
 - Re: format: we could imagine something longer, narrative form in addition to something that is more graphical or table-based, that is brief and focused on highlights
 - Is this going on a website?
 - Is there a place under this area to make explicit reference to water storage?
 - It sounds like there is an issue when it comes to water issues like permeability as well

- Answer: I think there is room under the climate adaptation / resiliency piece, where we can bring in water
- Suggestion: bring in “urban and rural Ottawa” to say, wherever possible, that shared issues bring us together
- Importance of regional view
- Everything that happens in one area of the city affects others; hot air is transferred, water pollution spreads, etc.
- Question: there are other species involved here. Are we talking about biodiversity? Migratory corridors, etc.?
- Thinking about the interconnections, should we frame things under the idea of interdependence and mutual reliance?
- Also, how do we influence some of the other groups working on similar submissions (e.g., housing table working on affordable housing, but not tying it to the need for intensification to preserve urban boundary)
- So, there's a role for those of us who are participating in multiple tables to make the links apparent
- Roland Dorsay to share contact for this group
- There's also a rural economic development strategy, which is happening before the planning process formally kicks off

b. Adopt a regional orientation to economic development (Moe Garahan, Aaron Thornell, Janet, Daniel Buckles)

- Daniel, Moe, Aaron and Janet from the Stewardship Council are on this group
- Moe has submitted a list that is very food and agriculture-related
- We want to focus this discussion on suggestions for inclusion in a piece, to be submitted later
- Ideas:
- Transition to a low-carbon economy
- Ecological services provided by rural Ottawa - urban part benefits from the services provided by the rural area
- Note: the Greenbelt is not in the rural area; it is within the urban boundary
- Rural Ottawa is 80% of the city's landmass, and therefore must be part of the city's economic infrastructure thinking
- Moe: we believe that Ottawa has missed the boat on food as an economic engine for this city
- We haven't been focusing on small to medium size agriculture either
- We have focused on the strong regional supports to help with local food and farming
- Bringing food to the inner city and to the people who need it is important
- We have literally thousands of acres in Ottawa devoted to corn and soy
- We need smaller, more diversified farming with alternative energy
- Right now, there is more demand than supply for locally produced food because we're out of farmers
- What about inner city community gardens? Yes, there are groups working in this area
- We also need compost that doesn't have plastic in it

- Other themes that might be of use: thinking of regional economic development across the Ottawa-Gatineau area
- Economic solidarity between rural, semi-urban and urban communities
- We can take out “global” and highlight local economic development
- Also, “circular economy” is important - repair economy, using inputs from other groups’ outputs
- Point that Rebecca Aird mentioned earlier: 95% of our energy is imported; there’s an opportunity to produce more through the use of renewable energy; also an opportunity with energy efficiency
- In terms of areas where we have expertise: solar, hydro
- It’s important to be delivering more energy using a democratic model that keeps energy dollars within the community; this doesn’t require the massive foreign investment that is needed for large solar farms
- Use of the co-op model is important here
- Is there room for testing these models based on learnings from OREC -
- Other important ideas: micro-grids, district energy
- Like food, decentralization is important for energy
- Has there been any conversation about carbon farming as a revenue source for farms?
- Answer: there has been a lot of work on a model here (current example in the Kawarthas through Alice project (?))
- We need food and farming to be community-driven
- Re: the solar piece - should we have language around incentivizing new developments to have solar built in and other production methods
- Is there a way that we can recommend that the city build this, and batteries, in?
- There are jurisdictions that are mandating these things as part of new builds
- Could Hydro Ottawa be more of a catalyst in energy projects in Ottawa?
- They had Energy Ottawa and it was botched pretty terribly - maybe we can have a different approach to distribution?
- Broadly speaking, the green energy sector has outproduced all others
- There is a huge economic opportunity in the retrofit area
- The current federal government is very much a proponent of retrofits
- Idea: City to endow Community Revolving Fund on the TAF model
- We should also consider the incentives to landowners to sell land - especially sell rural land to developers

c. Intensification (Roland Dorsay and Heather Pearl)

- Intensification is at the heart of the Planning department’s vision regarding what needs to be done
- There is a core problem: advocacy groups tend to not talk to each other across the table as much as we should; the same is true at city hall - different departments don’t talk to each other
- In intensification, there are many city / developer / planning conversations that miss the climate dimension and the kinds of issues we’re concerned about here
- This is essentially a governance problem

- Do you need to restructure the way in which city staff does business to ensure that climate change considerations are infused into decisions?
- This hasn't happened, but city staff clearly recognize the need for a variety of components - will these be siloed?
- Unless we engage much more with city hall on the need to become less siloed, we will see less effectiveness in terms of realizing our objectives
- We need to raise at city hall: climate change must be a centralizing principle here and in other plans (TMP, IMP, etc.)
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- Discussion:
- There is a disconnect between the idea that we don't want development on farmland and the implications of this decision - it means more intensification inside the city
- It seems city staff are well aware of this
- People aren't seeing the benefits of density
- We end up with 'rogue entrepreneurs' - builders who damage properties, etc.
- So, it's not a question of being against intensification, but it's about how it's done
- 'NIMBY' has been used as a way to shut down discussion
- Our objectives on climate are going to be met through intensification, so we need to be part of the change in conversation
- If intensification gets understood as a cornerstone of a climate plan and problems start to pile up, all of a sudden the climate plan will be perceived as the problem
- We need to ensure that the city has an interest in getting this right
- We must make sure that greenspace and trees are preserved or enhanced and that communities are affordable for the families who want to use them
- There's a sense of growing understanding in Ottawa communities about the need for smarter development that preserves greenspace
- There is a broken social contract between the city and its residents
- The challenge is to fix that
- According to city planning staff, GOHBA seems to be amenable to the idea of not expanding the urban boundary
- That said, some of GOHBA's members have been pushing for the expansion even while GOHBA has not been
- Behind this is provincial law - at least 10 years of growth needs to be accommodated
- The city is of the view that there is sufficient land; FCA says therefore there's no need to review this until the next census (2022)
- This has implications by most of the residents who don't follow this closely
- The focus seems to be on more low-rise development
- We think this might signal a change
- Right now, the way you determine whether there's a need for expansion is a survey of vacant residential land, coupled with housing projections
- The vacant residential land is greenfields within the urban boundary
- What happens in cases where cities don't have the room to expand (e.g., Toronto)? Often, the towns and cities around the city expand
- Note that LPAT will ultimately make many of the decisions here
- Also, planning dept is working on a "nodes and corridors" discussion on Aug. 14 - this gives us a clue as to where they're heading, possibly for the first stage of intensification
- Is there room to disincentivize large land holdings? There are some tools but they're limited
- Other important points: retrofitting for intensification - oftentimes, you can increase density through an internal retrofit
- Another one: incentivize agrarian way of life through additional markets

- There's a larger question about how much North Americans spend on food vs. Europeans - is the city doing its part for buying

d. Transportation (Trevor Haché and Catherine Christoffersen)

- **Healthy Transportation Coalition notes:**
- There are 5 big policy/funding issues I'd like to see this Official Plan address, and I'm keen to hear what Bike Ottawa suggests:
 - the ultimate cycling network should be built prior to 2030
 - the ultimate pedestrian network should be built prior to 2030, and we need much better maintenance standards for snow and ice clearing off of sidewalks
 - the ultimate public transit network should be built prior to 2030
 - specific and immediate attention should be given to lower-income neighbourhoods that aren't well-connected to existing cycling networks, nor will they be well-connected to rapid transit stations
 - the building of many thousands of units of deeply affordable housing near rapid transit stations needs to be prioritized (on the 20 parcels of land that the government owns, which the interdepartmental task force identified earlier this year)
- link to draft transportation strategic direction: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bUV8ctk781gtRrJqrDfACcrBzKSmdlBiSSLNLiZMCI8/edit?usp=sharing>

5. Next steps

- Develop Google docs for each of the strategic areas, following best practices of the transportation group
- Aim for end of the month
- We want a narrative piece and a bullet list for each of the four areas
- We should consider making this stuff into an infographic
- Larger plan: graphic display for effective communication; communications and outreach plan to get some traction for our ideas
- Greenspace Alliance will be holding a meeting between Aug. 12 and Aug. 22 to identify the strategy - everyone here is invited
- Possible date: Thursday, Aug. 15 @ Hintonburg Community Centre (to be confirmed by Paul)