

**Submission of Paul Johanis, of the Greenspace Alliance, to the Joint Planning and Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee meeting of August 22, 2019**

I am the current Chair of the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital, and I speak today on its behalf, but also informed and strengthened by the many other environmental organizations with which we have collaborated in the review of the City's strategic directions for the new Official Plan, and the development of our response to it.

We are facing a climate emergency. Following the lead of international organizations and other governments at all levels, the City of Ottawa has officially recognized this fact.

Over the timespan covered by the new Official Plan, we, collectively, must take dramatic, unprecedented measures to lower the concentration of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. We must achieve this by reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases, mostly by reducing the burning of fossil fuels, and by increasing our carbon capture and storage, mostly through more trees, greenspace and wetlands.

The ultimate expected outcome of this Official Plan is a healthy, liveable city for all. Fundamentally, the climate crisis is a public health emergency. The reason why climate change matters is the impact it has on human health and wellbeing, locally and globally. This is taking "liveability" at its most literal sense. Will Ottawa be liveable, will the planet be liveable, if we do not act now?

In light of this, we had proposed, in our response to the discussion papers produced by the City, that climate change be the central organizing theme of the new Official Plan. This is why we are pleased to see that the strategic directions outlined in the Five Big Moves document reflect and respond to this overarching priority.

We see it in Growth Management, which calls for a greater share of projected growth to be accommodated through intensification. It is especially evident in Policy Direction #4, which explicitly links growth management strategy to greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

We see it in Mobility, where Policy directions consistent with effective climate change response are outlined.

We see it Urban and Community Design where policy directions aim to enhance liveability in a context of greater intensification.

And in the Climate, Energy and Public Health set of Policy Directions, the explicit link between public health and response to climate change is made. Walkable, 15 minute neighbourhoods for all ages which are green and sustainable are promoted. The whole purpose of this section is said to: Embed public health, environmental, climate and energy resiliency into the framework of our planning policies.

Elsewhere we find: Embedding emission reduction targets in Master Plans that support the Official Plan (e.g. Infrastructure, Transportation, and Waste Master Plans)

So the bones of an Official Plan that provides an effective response to the climate change emergency are in place. What remains is to determine if the policy directions go far enough and fast enough. This is difficult to assess at this point as there is insufficient information provided in these documents on scale and timeframes.

An exception to this are the intensification targets contained in the staff report to the committee: 50%, 60%, or 70% intensification. I can tell you right now that we support the 70% target, which implies no urban expansion. This is a good example of a specific how far and how fast question. The City should take advantage of the consultation planned over the next few months to gauge how far and how fast the public is willing to go. Clear options and targets should be tested for GHG emission reduction targets, canopy cover targets (why not 40%), modal share targets, etc.

So a positive review from us at this point. But past experience has taught us that things can change significantly between the draft and the final. The first draft OPA 76 report called for 0 ha of urban expansion, the final draft 850 ha, we eventually got an 1100 ha expansion foisted on us. We plan to continue engaging in what we trust will be an open and transparent process throughout, in the hope and expectation that the vision put forward in these draft strategic directions, strengthened by measurable targets, will be fully adopted in the new Official Plan.

August 21, 2019