

Strategic Directions for Ottawa's New Official Plan

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 (2021-2036), we, collectively, must take dramatic, unprecedented measures to lower the concentration of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The reason this matters is the impact of climate change on human health, security and economic wellbeing for all, locally and globally. Our survival as a species depends on it.

In the development of this official plan, the City must make many choices about land use and supporting infrastructure. We want those choices to reflect the following strategic directions:

1. **Apply a Climate Emergency Test.** Reducing Green House Gas emissions and increasing carbon capture and storage should be the unifying, central goal of the new Official Plan and guiding measure of success. The policies and programs allowed under the Official Plan should therefore demonstrate and be assessed against how they measure up on CO2 emissions, carbon capture and carbon storage (that is, pass a climate emergency planning test that is monitored and used for reporting back to residents of Ottawa).
2. **Adopt a regional orientation to economic development.** Ottawa is located at the confluence of three great rivers and connects to the many human and natural resources that make up the region (Ottawa Valley, eastern Ontario, western Quebec). A regional orientation to planning for economic development would create opportunities in rural and urban Ottawa for investment in renewable energy, environmental services, food security and the provision of renewable materials. A greater degree of energy self-reliance at the regional level and economic solidarity between urban, semi-urban and rural communities are our best options for adaptation to the effects of climate change (flooding, heat islands, etc.). These are also significant economic opportunities.
3. **Intensify building by holding the line on urban expansion and fostering the housing 'Missing Middle'.** Greater population density can be accommodated within the current urban footprint through a focus on mid-rise rental and owner-occupant buildings near transit with access to amenities, places of employment and the benefits of urban trees and greenspace. High towers and single family dwellings are no longer the smart investment in housing design, compared to compact, socially and economically integrated and liveable neighbourhoods. Funding this shift may involve revisions to development regulations to capture the public share of increased land value due to public investment in transit and other amenities.
4. **Establish free, active and effective transportation for all** (public transit,

biking, walking, etc.) (to be developed by the Transportation group)