

Joint meeting of the Planning and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees
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I am a Board member of the Champlain Park Community Association in Westboro and am speaking today as a representative of Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability. CAFES is made up of more than 40 community association environment committees in all wards across the city. I am also a participant in an ongoing discussion among community organizations on the Official Plan and Ottawa's Climate Emergency.

As a researcher and Professor at Carleton University I have worked for many decades on agricultural issues and rural economic development in various settings. Consequently, I will focus my remarks on the City's draft policy directions for Economic Development.

Municipal governments in Canada are empowered to promote cleaner, safer, and healthier economies and enhance employment and new careers through a wide range of policy measures. The climate emergency provides an opportunity to innovate in this role by adopting a regional orientation to economic development. Producing more energy, food, fibre and recreational amenities locally and regionally multiplies the economic and employment gains of economic activity. Local and regional linkages also provide a kind of insurance in the face of disruptions to economic networks, whether they be due to the climate crisis or global economic forces.

We are well-placed to take this path of greater economic self-reliance. 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). Working together across inner urban, outer urban and rural parts of the city and with the wider Ottawa-Gatineau metropolitan area is our best option to create the economies of scale needed to build on the opportunities of the growing green and low-carbon economy.

In short, my first point is that the OP should pay more attention to building local and regional linkages and self-reliance in the economy, rather than framing the future of Ottawa primarily as a globally oriented city dependent on the economies of Toronto and New York.

I'd like to make three other points briefly. First, getting the work element in the live, work, play goal of many of the policy directions is difficult. It is important, however,

because the separation of employment from where people live and play undermines other steps the City may take to support a cleaner, safer and healthier economy. One option would be to permit a broad, flexible and scalable policy for Urban and Rural Employment Lands that encourages the development of small, decentralized work hubs. Imagine dozens of small work hubs located in Ottawa's villages and outer urban neighbourhoods, supported by park and ride facilities, high speed internet infrastructure and flexible workspaces where people can go to work without being funnelled downtown and where they can also live and play. Imagine dozens of mini-Bayview Yards work environments in different parts of the City where Ottawa's start-ups and innovators come to work as part of mixed-use districts. Ottawa already has a potential investor in the Federal Government, which is starting to create alternative work hubs for public servants. The commercial viability of the concept is also proven by the global success of companies such as WeWork.

Striking the right balance between global and regional orientations to economic development and locating jobs and careers outside of the urban core are important policies. I'm not so sure, however, about the emphasis given to the growth of the International airport. While the airport is relevant, it is in my view a stretch to suggest that it is a serious economic engine or node for intensification. It is fair to say that Ottawa is not in line to become an airline hub, and there are serious limitations on development lands around the airport due to noise and flight path restrictions. In the medium term, air travel will likely level off and decline as a global mode of transportation due to its oversized impacts on GHG emissions. A goal of modest tweaking of land use and transportation infrastructure around the airport would seem to be more appropriate.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the potential of high-impact city-building projects to leverage economic development. I would, however, caution against seeing these as showcases for global positioning and visibility as the document currently suggests. Eye catching is not the same as investing in city-building that helps integrate and leverage other investments in affordable housing and active transportation that reduce health costs and boost productivity.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning. I plan to participate in the public consultations that follow on today's discussion, and look for ways to contribute to making Ottawa a creative and caring city at the confluence of three great rivers.