

# Introduction

## What is the purpose of ION?

The ION Project will demonstrate how we can improve intensification in neighbourhoods such that existing neighbourhoods in Ottawa become healthier, happier, more equitable places to live, with dramatically reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and with the housing we want and need.

ION will model infill housing patterns, together with possible neighbourhood improvements including new small shops, trees, walking/biking paths, recreational facilities, parking, transit, etc. Most importantly, ION will model the interdependence of various elements of change in neighbourhoods, and provide a comprehensive picture of neighbourhood evolution.

ION will support informed decision making about municipal regulations and investments, and allow for informed and more meaningful stakeholder involvement.

ION will model the cumulative impact of neighbourhood change in terms of population increases, car-centric vs active lifestyles, emission reductions, dwelling unit diversity, increases/decreases in soft landscaping, and improved physical health outcomes. For the purposes of this modeling exercise, baseline assumptions for municipal regulations and investments will be set to reflect known Official Plan objectives and to meet Official Plan targets.

## Who is behind ION?

The ION Project has been initiated and is being undertaken by Rosaline J. Hill Architect Inc. with the help of Walkable Ottawa collaborators. Rosaline is an architect and development consultant. She works for infill developer clients to determine their best development options, and has designed award winning infill housing projects. Rosaline founded Walkable Ottawa in May of 2020 so that stakeholders could work together to find solutions and actionable steps toward improving our neighbourhoods.

The scope of the ION work will necessarily involve the collaborative input, insights and contributions of a broad range of stakeholders, including members of the People's Official Plan group, the Urban Infill Council of the Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association, Ecology Ottawa and CAFES. Walkable Ottawa will play a key role in organizing and coordinating this collaboration, ensuring that all voices are heard and that transparency is maintained throughout. Collaborative work will include data gathering, review and critique of approach /process /method /assumptions, as well as suggestions for variations to baseline assumptions and targets to test alternate ideas.

## Why is this work important?

In the context of the visionary aspirations of our new Official Plan, this kind of modeling of neighbourhood infill is unique and critically important. It will provide a structured tool that will allow stakeholders to problem solve together, and to chart a new and significantly better direction for our neighbourhoods. ION output can be used to build consensus around proposed



criteria for new regulations and to target municipal spending. ION output can also be used as a basis for financial modeling, so that there is quantitative information about the cost benefits for our City.

### **What insights have we gained so far?**

So far the early results of this modeling work are surprising. It seems clear that, with appropriate municipal regulations and investments for neighbourhoods, density targets can likely be met with ease. Neighbourhoods can be intensified and tipped from car-dependance to a mix of active lifestyles without significant increases to building heights. Percentages of soft landscaped surfaces can be maintained or slightly increased, together with tree rooting volumes. Emissions can be dramatically reduced. Housing options on neighbourhood streets can become more diverse with a mix of unit sizes and tenures more closely aligned with our city's demographics and needs. Business models for infill development can improve. Conflict between developers and residents can be diminished. Small businesses can thrive along walking shopping destinations in all our neighbourhoods. Our neighbourhoods can intensify by 1.6 to 2.4x their existing populations, matching or exceeding populations in the 1950's, without losing the visual characteristics of neighbourhood streets that we all hold dear.

ION will remove speculation, allowing discussions and decision making that is based on information. ION will allow the creation of a full, realistic and complete vision for our neighbourhoods, together with a clear understanding of the regulatory framework and municipal investments required to get there.

### **How can you get involved?**

The results of this study will excite, empower and unite us, but moving ION forward will require your collaboration. We will also need to secure resources to fund key aspects of model building and analytical work. Our approach will be to ask different groups to contribute funds to support aspects of the scope of work that are of particular value to that group. For example GOHBA might consider a financial contribution to ensure that Highest and Best Use studies are completed for a variety of scenarios that are of interest to infill builders; EO might consider a financial contribution to cover the cost to calculate the impact of infill patterns on percentages of soft landscaping; both EO and GOHBA might finance the modeling of the impact of specific tree preservation measures on the total anticipated rates of infill housing. To date, city staff have expressed interest in seeing this work as it unfolds, but have not made any commitment to collaborate or support this effort.

Work has proceeded to date on a purely volunteer basis. However, to move this project forward to completion along a timeline so that the outputs can support municipal decision-making, we are seeking funding partners as well as securing collaborators to provide key input.

So this is where you come in. We appreciate you taking the time to review this project document and to consider working with us, and/or providing financial support to see that this work can be completed. Please take this proposal to your group for consideration and get back to us.

