

Greenspace Alliance oral submission to Joint Meeting of Planning and ARAC, October 14, 2021

My name is Paul Johanis and I am the current Chair of the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital. The GA is one of the co-convenors of the Peoples Official Plan.

1. We would much prefer to have in front of us today an Official Plan that did not include any urban expansion. We opposed it then, and we still oppose it now, even more so. Why?

- Since, May 2020, when this was last considered, the urgency of addressing the climate emergency has become ever more apparent.
- A lesson we can take from our fight against COVID is that a balanced approach is not necessarily the best approach in a crisis
- Additional evidence, including the City's own modelling, has shown that growth management goals can be achieved through intensification alone

We would gladly support any reversal of Council's May 2020 decision

In the absence of such a reversal, at a minimum we ask that Policy 3.1.5f be changed back to the text of the revised draft so that areas containing elements of the Natural Heritage System are excluded from consideration as urban expansion lands.

We also ask that in future, decisions regarding the share of future growth as between intensification and expansion be tied to achievement of GHG emission reduction targets.

2. At this point, we would much prefer to continue consultation and development of the OP, which is not ready for adoption, despite the best efforts of staff, as evidenced by the large number of motions for amendment presented and the number of delegations today Why?.

The major change made to the growth management strategy between the draft OP and the revised draft is in our view the result of a misreading of community response to the draft. What was viewed by the City as a rejection of neighbourhood intensification was in fact a normal reaction to a neighbourhood overlay that covered almost everything from Bayshore to Beacon Hill, and poorly explained density targets that led residents to believe that their neighbourhoods might become as dense as Tokyo.

They felt they were being asked to buy a pig in a poke. The accelerated timeline placed on the development of the Official Plan prevented undertaking the local planning that would have found the right solutions for neighbourhoods, while meeting or exceeding intensification targets. It also led to the quick and easy solution of intensifying predominantly in hubs and corridors.

We would gladly support any significant extension to give proper time to complete the local planning required.

In the absence of such an extension, at a minimum, we ask that the implementation of the intensification policies for corridors and neighbourhoods be deferred until such time as local planning is completed to ensure targets can be met while preserving neighbourhood integrity and maintaining or enhancing liveability.

3. Concerning specific greenspace and tree canopy concerns, we fully support improvements in the coverage and protection of greenspace, and especially in the improved standards for access

to greenspace for residents. Only urban open space, and to a certain extent, parks suffer from a thin layer of protection, which must be improved. Otherwise, the only improvement we are seeking is language around the baseline assessment, action and reporting against the new access to greenspace targets. Regarding canopy cover, we support the many new policies that address gaps for tree protection through the development process and welcome the 40% canopy cover target city-wide. However, to assure the equitable distribution of canopy cover across neighbourhoods, we are seeking the establishment of sub-city wide targets for canopy cover, and baseline assessment, action and reporting against these targets.

I am speaking today for the GA, but through POP, these positions enjoy widespread support, reaching very deeply throughout the enviro community via Ecology Ottawa, CAFES, Just Food and others; connecting with the views of community associations through our close ties with the FCA, and also resonating with equity seeking groups such as CAWI and its network. It was this work that provided the basis for the draft motions we developed and distributed ahead of this meeting in the hope they may be adopted by, or inspire and inform, members of this Joint Committee, so as to address through motions what we consider as major deficiencies in the revised draft before you.