

People's Official Plan, oral submission, October 14, 2021

800 words, 5 minutes, 10 slides

Slide 1: The draft Official Plan being considered in today's meeting does not do a good enough job to create conditions for an inclusive, affordable and liveable city. That is the conclusion of the People's Official Plan, on whose behalf I am speaking today. My name is Daniel Buckles. I am an Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at Carleton University and a 35 year resident of Ottawa.

The People's Official Plan is a coalition of numerous environmental, social justice and neighbourhood organizations representing thousands of residents across Ottawa, including urban, sub-urban and rural communities. Ever since the Five Big Moves were first presented to the public in April, 2019, we have participated diligently in the City's engagement process. This has included completing surveys, participating in numerous public meetings, and being part of the Ambassador's group formed to mobilize groups and individuals often excluded from consultations.

Almost from the beginning, we realized that the City's consultation process was deeply flawed, and that the general thrust of the Plan was not going far and fast enough on climate and social justice issues. So we decided to do what the city was not doing, which is to create a process for authentic dialogue within and across organizations and communities concerned about distinct but often inter-related issues. We reached very deeply into the environmental community in Ottawa via Ecology Ottawa, CAFES, the Greenspace Alliance, Bike Ottawa and others. We were soon joined by equity seeking groups such as Just Food, City for All Women Initiative, the Healthy Transportation Coalition, and others. Individuals from many community associations, and the umbrella organization Federation of Citizen's Associations, contributed from the beginning.

Slide 2: The People's Official Plan organized 5 major workshops, starting with a launch in November, 2019 at Ottawa's Bayview Yards. After the first draft was released in the spring, we organized a line-by-line review of the document and produced a 115 page submission in March, 2021. Many shorter assessments were circulated among community associations and a significant number of OPED's published in the Ottawa Citizen and other media on behalf of the People's Official Plan.

We also met with staff and many of you with the same message: make the Official Plan Ottawa's response to the inter-related emergencies of the climate crisis and the housing and homelessness crisis. Now, more than two years on, we are left with a draft that cannot succeed on many of the lofty goals expressed in the Five Big Moves.

Slide 3: We want a vision of fairness and equity that includes racial equity, cultural diversity, equity for people with disabilities, and equity for women and gender diverse

individuals, as well as meaningful and authentic reconciliation with indigenous peoples, starting with the Anishinaabeg on whose traditional territory we live.

Slide 4: We want a city of walkable neighbourhoods, not a continuation of the towers, corridors and cars of the now obsolete planning 20th century planning era. Your prior decision to expand the urban boundary and gift of new sub-division rights goes against this fundamental demand.

Slide 5: We want housing equity, by fostering an affordable housing supply with a variety of housing options for different household types.

Slide 6: We want access to greenspace and tree canopy that brings the physical and mental health benefits to all residents, including those currently living in tree deserts.

Slide 7: We want city policies that protect agricultural lands and eliminate barriers that undermine community-based food security.

Slide 8: We want action now on the climate emergency, including the financing that is needed for Ottawa to do its part.

Slide 9: We want better reporting, transparency and accountability framework in the Official Plan. As it stands, with no targets for deeply affordable housing, neighbourhood tree canopy or walkability, the plan reads like a rolling of the dice.

More time and more authentic engagement is needed to turn the current draft plan into something that is workable, coherent and ambitious. We ask that you turn it back to staff for another few months of revision and improvement. We also encourage you to consider the 14 motions we have drafted that would move us in the right direction. Others will speak to these directly, representing the People's Official Plan and organizations directly involved in drafting them.

Slide 10: Finally, one veteran of the 1998 Regional Official Plan and all Official Plans that followed has said that never before have so many civic organizations come together to push City Hall to do the right things for both the environment and for social justice. The climate emergency and the housing and homelessness emergency declared by this Council gave us some reason to think that maybe, just maybe, we had turned a page on the Councils of the past. Show us that this promise has merit. Delay approval of the draft plan, and pass motions that forge a better way ahead.