



Urban Councillors Official Plan Summer Event

Consultation overview

Five City Councillors organized an engagement event for the residents of their respective Wards on June 24th, 2019.

The Councillors represent the urban Wards of: Rideau-Vanier, Rideau-Rockliffe, Somerset, Kitchissippi, and Capital. The event was very well attended (getting final numbers from assistants), with each discussion table overflowing with residents.

The discussion tables were focussed on one of five different topics:

- **Affordable Housing**
- **Certainty in the Development Process**
- **Urban Boundary**
- **Active Transportation**
- **Environment**

Notes were taken at each of these tables and shared with the Official Plan Community Consultation Specialist. They were coded and inform the summary of what we heard below.

What we heard

Affordable Housing

A discussion around how the Official Plan can facilitate more affordable housing in Ottawa led to several key themes being identified. The most prominent theme in the discussion was finding ways to provide more lower cost housing. The main idea shared to achieve this was to implement an Inclusionary Zoning policy. The Inclusionary Zoning policy would require the allocation of affordable housing in new developments of a certain number of units. Along with Inclusionary Zoning, the group identified the need for 'affordability' to address people in core housing need, as well providing a Housing First model to those who need it.

A second theme was the need for the Official Plan to promote the development of a diverse range of housing types. Different types of housing are needed to meet the needs of seniors, larger multigenerational families, rental vs. own, accessibility needs, etc.

Creating a diverse range of housing types was noted as an important element in creating complete communities. There was a lot of discussion around how along with the ability to house people of different incomes and housing needs, it was important to also address access to green spaces, schools, social services, parks, nearby shops and cultural and recreational programs.



Finally, the need to ensure development around transit hubs such as LRT and BRT includes a mix of housing types was identified as an important element to include in the Official Plan. Particularly when the City or other levels of government own the land. It was noted that new communities and intensification need to align with access to transit.



What we heard

Certainty in the Development Process

The main theme discussed in this group was the need to ensure greater clarity in the Official Plan and to ensure future zoning requests follow the established policies. By having transparent policies in the Official Plan, it is suggested it would ensure more reliable outcomes for development. Engaging communities in the different aspects of planning policies and subsequent applications was seen as a way to balance interests between property developers and the residents in the surrounding community. The group highlighted how it can be frustrating to participate in informing policies if they do not see them consistently implemented in their own neighbourhoods.

Clarity and consistency in application was expressed as a means of helping communities integrate greater intensification. In addition to helping intensification fit within neighbourhoods, the group suggests the Official Plan should include ways to ensure there is sufficient infrastructure and social resources in the communities for the increased population.



They expressed a desire for the Official Plan to include tools to help communities benefit from intensification and that a diversity of housing types are created.



What we heard

Urban Boundary

The most significant theme in the discussion around the urban boundary was how to address the Greenbelt. Participants spoke mainly of the importance of saving the Greenbelt as it is, but there were a couple of comments exploring the potential of allowing some development on that land to have new housing be closer to the core.

The second most notable theme was around the possibility of increasing development charges. Some pointed out the need to increase the development charges in outer areas to deter sprawl. Another suggestion was to reduce the charges for creating secondary units within established neighbourhoods to encourage intensification. Others added ideas of ensuring enough development charges are collected to properly invest in new and maintaining infrastructure.

Though intensification was seen as important, some pointed out the need to shift it to neighbourhoods that have yet to experience redevelopment to better spread out the impact. One of the goals of intensification would be to increase the supply of affordable housing stock.



Finally, support was expressed for holding the current limits of the city's urban boundary.



What we heard

Active Transportation

The most prominent theme in the active transportation discussion was around improving connectivity for the different sustainable modes within the City. Within this issue, residents identified creating more complete communities, interprovincial connections, ensuring winter access is maintained, expanding the cycling network, and prioritizing the physical space for these modes on roads as ideas to help achieve greater connectivity.

The discussion outlined that connectivity is one of many different ways we should be working on shifting towards more of a multimodal network. Other tools for shifting towards more active transportation in Ottawa shared were: closing off areas to cars, freeze road expansion or designing new roads with active transportation as the priority, and finally making the sustainable modes more affordable than driving.

Another significant theme shared by the residents was safety. They shared ideas for improving all road users safety. For cars, they suggested reducing speed limits within all neighbourhoods. For cycling safety, the need for more dedicated bike lanes and more substantial barriers between these and cars. Finally, better winter maintenance of sidewalks was identified as an important step for better pedestrian safety.



Improved winter maintenance was highlighted as a tool for better road, bike lane and sidewalk access. Finally, they shared the advice of making public transit more affordable as a means of shifting residents from their cars into more sustainable transportation.



What we heard

Environment

Three main areas were explored in the environment discussion group – greening the city, building code changes and reducing GHGs from transit. There were several thoughts shared around how to green the city, from protecting and expanding the tree canopy and green space within the city, to green roofs and less hard surfacing in new development.

By changing building code standards, it was agreed that we could significantly reduce the GHGs produced within the City. New building codes could include more substantial efficiency requirements, but also the construction of electric vehicle charging stations and better access to recycling and composting.

Reducing GHGs emitted from transportation was seen as crucial and they suggested could be accomplished through improving the transit service, restricting access for cars, creating more compact neighbourhoods, and encouraging active transportation.



Finally, the need to encourage more sustainable energy production was identified as an important goal in reducing our adverse impact on the environment.



Next Steps

1. City staff will review the feedback and consider it in the development of the new Official Plan.
2. Preliminary Policy Directions will be shared on August 9, 2019.
3. Check out the New Official Plan website for opportunities to provide direct feedback on the Preliminary Policy Directions as well as any future engagement activities.
4. The Preliminary Policy Directions will go to Council for a vote later in Q4 2019.
5. A draft Official Plan will be available for public engagement in Q2 2020

If you have any questions about how to engage further in the Official Plan you can contact City Staff at newop@ottawa.ca.

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