

Just Healthy (and Sustainable) Neighbourhoods: Workshop Purpose, Logistics and Agenda

Peoples Official Plan for Ottawa's Climate Emergency

Acknowledgement: Ottawa is located on the traditional and unsundered territory of the Algonquin Nation.

Workshop Purpose

The City of Ottawa is developing a New Official Plan that will guide the physical development of Ottawa to 2045. It will define key policies for land use, including where housing and transportation infrastructure will be built. Other strategic plans of the City of Ottawa take their guidance from the Official Plan, including the Transportation Master Plan, the Greenspace Master Plan, the Waste Management Master Plan, and the Climate Change Master Plan. For this reason, the political and policy choices about land use and supporting infrastructure that go into the new Official Plan are the most important decisions that residents and Council can make.

Since April, 2019, neighbourhood groups, environmental organizations and social justice advocates have engaged with City Officials and with residents of Ottawa as independent groups and through The People's Official Plan for Ottawa's Climate Emergency (<http://www.ottawaclimatesolutions.net>). We are all deeply concerned that the new Official Plan is not moving far enough and fast enough on the climate crisis, housing and homelessness emergency and transportation imperatives we face as a city.

Soon City Officials will be making two critical decisions. On March 30 a Special Joint Meeting of Planning Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee will consider and vote on a staff report outlining recommendations for Ottawa's "land budget". All indications are that City staff are going to recommend expansion of the urban boundary by at least an additional 1200 hectares, adding significantly to Ottawa's urban sprawl and the public cost of urban expansion. We urgently need to change that policy recommendation and influence the Council vote.

A second critical moment is the tabling of the Draft Official Plan by City Staff in October of this year. By then, all of the key policies of the Official Plan will be outlined. Our job for the next few weeks and months will be to hold City Officials' feet to the fire on the twin emergencies declared by Council (climate and housing/homelessness) and work with them to get the right policies in place, before big mistakes are baked in.

On February 22 we will strategize and organize the actions and campaigns needed to influence the shape of the Official Plan and Council decisions in the short and medium term. That is the workshop purpose.