



Kanata Greenspace Protection Coalition

A Not-for-Profit Corporation Established in 2019

May 8, 2020

City of Ottawa
Councillors, Planning Committee
Councillors, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

Dear Councillor,

Just eight weeks into the Covid-19 pandemic, the lesson from quarantines and closures is clear. Access to our natural environment is critical to ensuring we have liveable neighbourhoods that support our physical and mental health.

Ottawa deserves an Ambitious Plan to address its Climate Emergency

You, and our City Council, appropriately declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. It remains necessary that you now drive the change in policy to address this untenable situation. The Growth Management Strategy as it supports the next Official Plan is a key piece of the change required. It must be more than what went before. It must be forward acting and ensure consequential strategies are employed to address the issues around environmental sustainability.

Ambition should likewise grace Ottawa's Greenspace Master Plan. This 2006 document, now up for review, must deliver a plan of action, much beyond a wish list for parkettes and tree protection. While it should be a guide, it must now encompass the priorities and goals and monitoring metrics necessary to protect and develop our natural urban infrastructure to ensure we can meet this climate emergency head on.

Ottawa deserves a Defined Development Plan that ensures Environmental Sustainability

At the core of our fight against climate change is a need to understand where we are and why. For decades we have assumed environmental security that we now know does not exist. We need to imbue all of our planning exercises with the priorities that support environmental sustainability and identify the specific asset inventories and metrics that we require to stem climate change.

What and how much protection do we want and need? Have we planned or agreed to the amount of green and open space necessary for environmental protection and liveability? Should we plan for 4 square metres per person or 40? How do our existing neighbourhoods fare on a scale of accessibility to our natural environment and what investment might be required to make previous development decisions right for today's environmental challenges? To succeed, a true calculation of the effective contribution and cost of loss of our open and green spaces, tree canopy and rural land needs to occur with every development application inside our urban boundary.

Our common obligation is to ensure that all taxpayer investment is sustainable environmentally, financially and socially. To do that, let us put the dog in charge of its tail. Consider policy that starts by identifying land and space available consistent with enhanced sustainability and liveability criteria and then identify how appropriate development should occur while ensuring all Ottawa neighbourhoods have access to open natural spaces and the safety of a monitored 40% tree canopy.

We are all Developers within our Neighbourhoods

We suggest that the complex decisions about urban boundary, density, greenspace and environmental protection would be better served utilizing criteria developed across all of Ottawa's neighbourhoods with city supported consultation through the Federation of Citizens Associations of Ottawa (FCA). This broader dialogue would help nurture and develop neighbourhood identities as well as ensuring all neighbourhoods have input into the basic services and infrastructure that everyone values and needs. Again, we have the dog in charge of its tail.

The KGPC encourages you to consider the critical and irreplaceable nature of our natural environment as you deliberate this important policy decision. All of Ottawa's residents should be entitled to enjoy the health benefits of a sustainable environment including a protective tree canopy for temperature modulation and cleaner air, open space for walking and exercise, space for community gardens and fertile rural land to protect our food supply as well as the environmental benefits of protected forests, wetlands and wildlife.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Ramsay'.

Barbara Ramsay
Chair, Kanata Greenspace Protection Coalition

cc Mayor Jim Watson
Councillor Jenna Sudds