

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IS HERE



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The climate crisis is now CODE RED. Rapidly changing how Ottawa grows and develops over the next 25 years is the challenge of the Official Plan. The transition to a carbon neutral city by 2050 is both possible and critical to a liveable future. Done right, it can also solve the housing emergency and boost the economy. **The 25- year Official Plan needs to be Ottawa's climate transition plan, with the urgency, boldness and roadmap needed to reach carbon neutrality and climate resilience.**

The Official Plan starts well: it has good general climate policies, treats climate as a cross-cutting issue and has the correct range of mitigation and adaptation policies. But it does a poor job of following through on these policies and won't make Ottawa climate safe.

1. Mitigation of Green House Gases needs to achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2050

The proposed urban form of a compact, car-light, connected City, if done well could reduce GHG emissions by over 30% and improve livability. However, this form will only be achieved in the downtown and inner urban transects. All other areas of the city will remain car-centric. They will be stuck in the 1980s built form with costly GHG emissions and infrastructure demands. **We want Greenfield development (46% of new growth) in the Official Plan to be built right from the beginning, as compact, walkable neighbourhoods.** This will save money and land and make housing more affordable. **Also, we want the Official Plan to transition the suburbs to complete communities.** Changing the suburban form is a huge challenge; but other Cities are doing it and improving livability too.

The proposed High Performance Building Standards do not include standards for materials and don't apply to small low-rise developments or renovated low rise housing. Most of the scope for reducing GHG emissions from existing buildings rests with renovation of 325,000 homes – and offers tremendous economic opportunities. **We want the official plan to include energy efficiency and green performance standards for small low-rise developments and renovation of exiting housing.**

The broad targets from the Climate Change Master Plan (CCMP) and Energy Evolution Strategy (EE) are in the official plan. But many of the specific targets are not. **We want the Official Plan to be guided by a GHG assessment of its impacts, especially for Greenfield developments, intensification and existing buildings. This would make it possible to align the policies with the targets in the CCMP and EE.**

2. Adaptation to Climate must be priority in the Official Plan

Ottawa's climate is already getting hotter, wetter and wilder, although so far the impacts aren't as severe as in other parts of the country and the world. At risk is our infrastructure (roads, bridges, water and sewer, power lines) and many of our buildings. Populations exposed to heat island effects and insufficient indoor cooling are particularly vulnerable. The draft Official Plan fails to show where and how severe the risks are because studies such as flood plain analysis are out of date or incomplete. New developments may expose the City to costly liability. **To reduce risk and the costs of recovery from flooding, heat and storms, we want the Official Plan to be guided by climate vulnerability and risk assessments and a fully developed resilience strategy.**