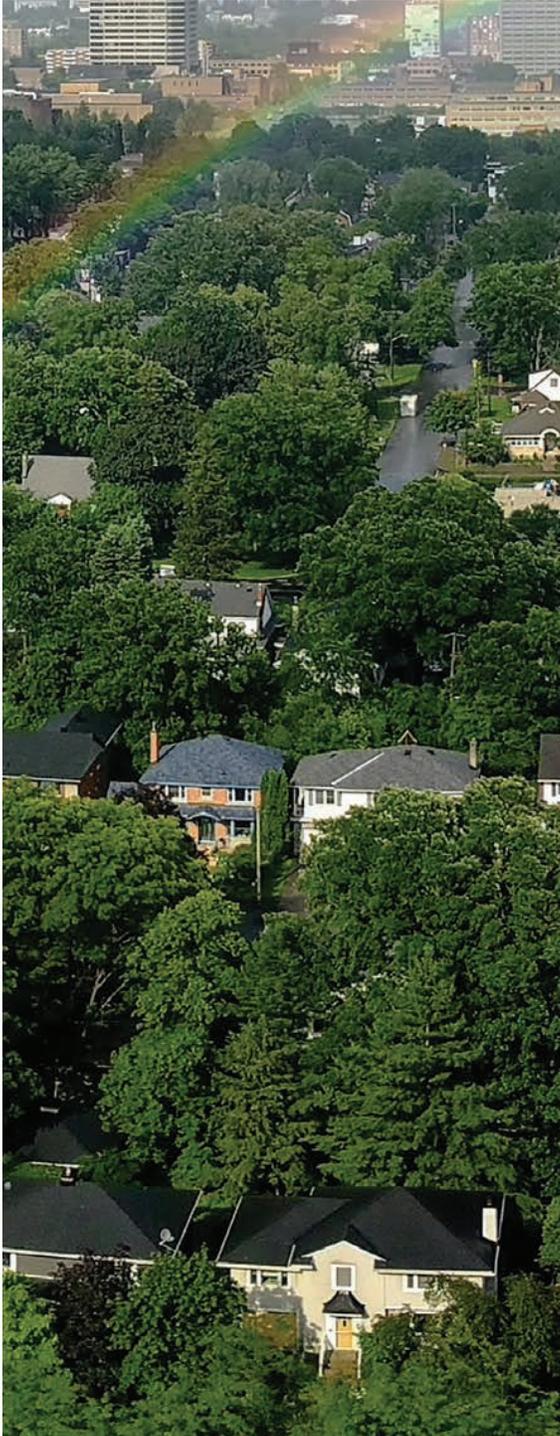


GREENSPACE FOR ALL



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Tree Canopy and Greenspaces for All

Ottawa is nestled between three mighty rivers and tributaries encompassing extensive wetlands, woodlands and pockets of rich biodiversity. These ecosystems help protect the city as a whole from extreme weather events. Abundant parks and pathways also provide valuable avenues for people to access the mental and physical health benefits of being active in nature. The Official Plan intends to protect these assets, and has put in place specific policies that do so.

It does a much poorer job, however, with respect to neighbourhood **tree canopy and protections for parks and open spaces** in urban areas.

1. The draft Official Plan sets a tree canopy target of 40% averaged over the entire urban area, including significant tree canopy provided by the Greenbelt. This target lacks ambition and specifics with respect to tree-desert neighbourhoods that often also house the city's most marginalized and vulnerable communities. A city-wide average is just not good enough. **We want the Official Plan to commit to eliminating tree-deserts.**

2. Neighbourhoods with mature tree canopy, particularly inside the Greenbelt, are at high risk of steady decline in tree canopy. Similar threats will soon come to Ottawa's suburban neighbourhoods as well. Defending trees one at a time has proven to be a losing battle. **We need to defend the neighbourhood forest, not just individual trees.**

3. **We want the Official Plan to commit to using existing, detailed 2017 baseline data (already paid for by taxpayers) to set and defend neighbourhood tree canopy targets.** Without neighbourhood level targets and aggressive tree protections and replacement programs, the draft Official Plan offers no policy path to address significant inequities in tree canopy across the city, or keep cover in treed neighbourhoods experiencing intense development.

4. The draft Official Plan provides residents with higher targets for access to greenspace than in the past. This is great progress. However, protections for parks, open spaces and small public woodlots are not as strong as they need to be in the face of development pressure. Recent incidents in places such as the Ottawa Hospital, the Hunt Club Pine Plantation, Mechanicsville Embassy site, Besserer Park in Sandy Hill, the Kanata Golf Course development and Nantes Woods in Orleans underline this vulnerability. **We want the Official Plan to enhance protections for parks, open spaces and woodlots.** It must take a firmer stance against dealing away sections of parks or allowing passive open greenspaces in the urban area to transition into new developments.

5. **We want the Official Plan to commit to regularly monitoring access to greenspace at the neighbourhood level** and to using this information to aggressively address persistent inequities in urban and suburban areas.