

Subject: Councillor Brockington's Thoughts - Residential Growth Management Strategy

From: "Brockington, Riley" <Riley.Brockington@ottawa.ca>

Date: 5/8/2020, 4:36 PM

To: "Brockington, Riley" <Riley.Brockington@ottawa.ca>

CC: "Chiarello, Anthony" <anthony.chiarello@ottawa.ca>

Good afternoon,

Thank-you for contacting me over recent weeks to share your feelings about the potential to expand the urban boundary and/or the proposed Residential Growth Management Strategy.

I believe that elected officials need to share their thoughts about critical decisions/votes they take, sometimes it is not possible to do so beforehand, I tend to gather a fair bit of information and reach out even up to the last minute, but you have taken the time to contact me, so in return I wish to share my thoughts with you.

On May 11, 2020 the Planning and Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committees will jointly meet to consider the following Planning staff recommendations:

- 1. Approve the Balanced Scenario as the Residential Growth Management Strategy for the new Official Plan as described in Document 1 attached, which accommodates 51 per cent overall of residential growth through intensification, with an intensification target that increases to 60 per cent in the 2041 to 2046 period; and**
- 2. Approve the inclusion of new urban residential and employment land expansion of between 1,350-1,650 gross hectares, which is to be selected using the criteria identified in Document 6 for residential land, and for employment land on the basis of strategic additions to the urban employment lands base, with the final amount and location of new urban residential and urban employment land to be brought forward when the draft Official Plan is tabled in Q4 2020.**

The new Official Plan provides a strategy and policy framework to guide development and growth over a 28-year period from July 2018 to July 2046. Over this period Ottawa is projected to grow by about 402,000 persons, reaching a city-wide population of over 1.4 million people. This growth will require in the order of 195,000 new residential units. The strategy and policy framework to accommodate this growth and the development of these units is to be established by the new Official Plan policy directions. The City's new Official Plan and the accommodation of projected growth must be consistent with the new Provincial Policy Statement that took effect on May 1, 2020.

Policy Objectives

The Residential Growth Management Strategy intends to be consistent and align with a variety of policy objectives. From the new Provincial Policy Statement these include directions to provide a minimum residential supply that has an appropriate range and mix of housing, look to opportunities to satisfy market demand through intensification, redevelopment and already designated areas first, locating growth to efficiently use existing infrastructure, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality.

In addition to the new Provincial Policy Statement, other policy objectives were considered in the development of the residential growth management strategy. These include the new Official Plan policy directions adopted by Council on December 11, 2019, which include a direction to achieve the majority of growth through intensification and growing the city around its rapid transit system, and the City's Climate Change Master Plan that seeks to reduce Ottawa's greenhouse gas emissions by 100 per cent by 2050.

Three Growth Options Considered

In response to these policy objectives, three residential growth scenarios with varying degrees of policy intervention were developed and analyzed as part of the Residential Growth Management Strategy

The Status Quo scenario: maintains the current Official Plan intensification target increase but offers no further policy intervention on achieving the majority of growth through intensification. Intensification targets increase two per cent every five-years, reaching 50 per cent during the 2041 to 2046 period, resulting in 45 per cent of overall residential growth within the built-up area through intensification. The remaining 55 per cent of growth is to be accommodated on greenfield lands and requires an urban expansion of approximately 1,930 to 2,230 gross hectares to supplement the existing urban greenfield designated lands and account for potential Urban Employment Area additions.

The No Expansion scenario: accelerates intensification target increases rapidly so that greenfield development only occurs on existing designated greenfield lands. Intensification targets increase at a faster rate than historically observed, such that 100 per cent intensification is achieved during the 2041 to 2046 period, resulting in 64 per cent of overall residential growth within the built-up area through intensification. Approximately 34,000 dwellings, representing 34 per cent, are shifted to the built-up area from greenfield lands in the Status Quo scenario. Under the No Expansion scenario there would also be no opportunity for strategic expansion of urban employment areas.

The Balanced scenario: achieves the majority of growth through intensification through target increases that are more realistic, still results in growing around the rapid transit system and remains in line with greenhouse gas emission reduction objectives. Intensification targets increase at a more moderate pace reaching 60 per cent during the 2041 to 2046 period, resulting in 51 per cent of overall residential growth within the built-up area through intensification for the 28-year period. The additional growth in the built-up area represents policy intervention to shift 10,700 dwellings, representing just under 11 per cent, from the greenfield area in the Status Quo scenario. The remaining 49 per cent of growth is to be accommodated on greenfield lands and requires an urban expansion of approximately 1,350-1,650 gross hectares to supplement the existing urban greenfield designated lands and account for potential Urban Employment Area additions.

Urban Expansion Criteria

The new Official Plan policy directions require that any urban expansion will support adopted City directions with respect to climate change, growth management, transportation, and the efficient use of infrastructure. To achieve these policy directions, urban expansion areas shall:

- Be at locations that will generate high transit ridership
- Round out some suburban communities first and extend others on new expansion lands

- Create complete communities on new expansion lands
- Require a secondary plan process, similar to current CDPs
- Avoid Agricultural Resource Areas
- Achieve an overall density of 36 units per net hectare in each community
- Provide a minimum share of 10% apartments
- Policy that requires a mix of built forms to avoid the cumulative impacts generated by high concentrations of narrow-frontage, front-driveway housing types
- Establish minimum thresholds of service (starting with day-one rapid transit availability) before planning for new expansion lands can begin

Land to be Excluded from Being Added to the Urban Boundary

(Many of you have asked me what lands are excluded-see list below. I also believe a motion will be forthcoming to also exclude any land zoned agricultural).

The land with the following characteristics will not be considered developable area:

- Regulated wetlands including Provincially Significant Wetlands (PPS)
- Valley or escarpment land that is subject to slip or subsidence
- Land designated Natural Environment Areas in the City's Official Plan
- Flood Plain land
- Bedrock and Sand and Gravel Resource land, designated and or zoned for mineral extraction, (except where the City has evidence that the resource is depleted, the license is to be surrendered and the site is to be rehabilitated by 2036)
- Land identified or impacted by existing or historic Landfill operations
- Land within one kilometre of an existing *Village* (except Notre-Dame-des-Champs).

Where a parcel is cut by an obstacle such as a major watercourse, a major ravine or some other barrier that effectively divides the land and limits access to or developability of a portion of the land, that parcel may be divided into two or more parcels for evaluation purposes. For example, a parcel that straddles watershed catchments with significantly different servicing approaches may be divided and evaluated as separate parcels rather than eliminating the entire parcel due to the difficulty servicing only part of the land.

While the above criteria will exclude some lands from consideration as urban land some other criteria will affect the amount of gross developable land that can be used for residential purposes. These criteria include regulatory or operational limits for noise, vibration or impacts close to uses such as Airports, existing or proposed Pits and Quarries, landfill sites and military facilities, as well as minimum distance separation from applicable farm operations.

River Ward Outreach and Consultations

I have conducted community outreach over the past several months of the City's Official Plan and Urban Boundary Expansion including:

- Hosted a public meeting on February 12 to discuss implications of the new Official Plan
- provide regular updates in my monthly e-newsletter
- provide updates to local community associations at monthly meetings
- met individually recently with four local community associations to discuss the staff recommendations and implications
- shared information on my website and social media throughout the process

Five of Six River Ward Community Associations Debated the Recommendations

I have been busy this week, attending four (virtual) community association meetings and speaking at length with a fifth President about his Board's position.

One CA moved to support the NO Expansion model, but it failed when it came time to vote, ultimately, no formal position was taken. Concerns included development on sacred community lands, including the Southern Corridor and McCarthy Woods (there are no plans to build on these lands)

The second CA voted to support the Status Quo option. Concerns included over intensification and lack of adequate infrastructure to accommodate the net increase of residents.

The third CA voted to support the No Expansion model. At the time this email was sent, their written rationale had not yet been shared with me.

The fourth CA voted to support the Balanced model, with an amendment to increase the intensification to at least 70%.

The fifth CA voted to support the Balanced model. Concerns included intensification that would dilute a community and rob it of its unique character and identity.

Many emails have been received from individuals, the vast majority support the No Expansion model.

Where Do I Stand on This Matter

I have read the staff report and accompanying documentation. It is a lot to absorb and consider. Let me be clear, shaping how the City of Ottawa evolves and develops over the next three decades is a serious decision. I want to be as prepared as I can be and make the best decision for River Ward and the City as a whole.

I strongly believe that your Quality of Life and that of all residents in communities across Ottawa is very important and it is very hard to quantify and measure. What is acceptable to me, may not be for you.

Growth needs to be smart and safe. Growth should add to the vitality of a neighborhood, not take away from it.

Taxpayers should not subsidize growth. The over-used 'growth pays for growth' saying is a myth. While Development Charges do contribute to growth related infrastructure costs, it does not provide 100% of the needed revenues.

Local infrastructure needs to handle the increased demands on it and developers, not taxpayers, pay the costs for upgrades.

The City talks a good game about being environmentally minded and the need for 15 minute neighbourhoods, increasing active transportation, public transit use and less commuters from outside the current urban boundary but does Planning staff recommend and City Council approve development applications that contribute towards these goals? Which strategy best aligns with these admirable objectives?

My main focus is to make decisions that don't erode Quality of Life. It is very difficult to assess from the three options which is best in this regard. All three options have positives, all three options have drawbacks.

I will NOT support the Status Quo option.

Intensification targets are too low, the urban boundary is expanded and uses too much greenfield lands, the infrastructure just isn't there and the transportation network is well behind the pace of development.

The **No Expansion Option** should be the option the City tries to incorporate as a first choice. It

caps the urban boundary, preserves greenfield land just outside it, and maximizes already built infrastructure to serve new residential development. It mostly likely aligns with environmental initiatives.

City staff counter this is too aggressive and the amount of land needed is not available. I believe this will create scarcity in the marketplace and will exacerbate housing unaffordability (more so than it is now) for many more. The fear of over-intensifying mature neighbourhoods can not be ignored.

The **Balanced model option** in staff's words tries to do just that, balance the strategy so that intensification can occur, at a pace that that be accommodated that includes an urban boundary expansion.

I don't believe the intensification target is enough. I have asked staff if the rate was increased to a 70-75% rate, what that will do to reduce the need to expand the urban boundary.

I am sitting somewhere in between these two latter options at this time.

Monday's meeting is likely to run 8-10 hours long. Staff plan to offer a 45 minute presentation which I will follow closely. I will listen to every delegate, ask questions where appropriate and then engage in the debate and discussion.

For me, this is about Quality of Life. Many factors go in to this. I am going in to the meeting on Monday with an open mind. You have been kind to share your thoughts with me and I wanted to do the same in the spirit of transparency as your City Councillor.

Please take care and be safe.

Sincerely yours,
Riley

Riley Brockington,
City Councillor - River Ward
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