

Re: More feedback to help in "squaring the circle" in the OP

Salma A <s.alshehabi@hotmail.com>

Fri 2021-10-15 5:46 PM

To: Blais, Melanie <melanie.blais@ottawa.ca>

Cc: Desjardins, Marc (CCS) <Marc.Desjardins@ottawa.ca>; Mulligan, Mélanie <melanie.mulligan@ottawa.ca>

Thank you, Melanie, and all!

Have a wonderful evening!

Sincerely,

Salma

From: Blais, Melanie <melanie.blais@ottawa.ca>

Sent: October 15, 2021 5:35 PM

To: Salma A <s.alshehabi@hotmail.com>

Cc: Desjardins, Marc (CCS) <Marc.Desjardins@ottawa.ca>; Mulligan, Mélanie <melanie.mulligan@ottawa.ca>

Subject: RE: More feedback to help in "squaring the circle" in the OP

Hi Salma,

Thank you for this. I've saved this submission and will distribute to members of Council.

Best,

Melanie

From: Salma A <s.alshehabi@hotmail.com>

Sent: October 15, 2021 5:32 PM

To: Blais, Melanie <melanie.blais@ottawa.ca>

Cc: Desjardins, Marc (CCS) <Marc.Desjardins@ottawa.ca>; Mulligan, Mélanie <melanie.mulligan@ottawa.ca>; Surprenant, Chantal <chantal.surprenant@ottawa.ca>; Legault, Carole (CCS) <CaroleA.Legault@Ottawa.ca>; Salter-MacDonald, Caitlin <Caitlin.SalterMacDonald@ottawa.ca>; El-Chantiry, Eli <Eli.El-Chantiry@ottawa.ca>; Moffatt, Scott <Scott.Moffatt@ottawa.ca>; Kitts, Catherine <Catherine.Kitts@ottawa.ca>; Fleury, Mathieu <Mathieu.Fleury@ottawa.ca>; Leiper, Jeff <Jeff.Leiper@ottawa.ca>; Capital Ward <CapitalWard@ottawa.ca>; McKenney, Catherine <Catherine.Mckenney@ottawa.ca>; Meehan, Carol Anne <CarolAnne.Meehan@ottawa.ca>; Brockington, Riley <Riley.Brockington@ottawa.ca>; Darouze, George <George.Darouze@ottawa.ca>; Gower, Glen <Glen.Gower@ottawa.ca>; RideauRockcliffe Ward <rideaurockcliffeward@ottawa.ca>; Tierney, Timothy <Tim.Tierney@ottawa.ca>; Dudas, Laura <Laura.Dudas@ottawa.ca>; Bay Ward / Quartier Baie <bayward@ottawa.ca>; Hubley, Allan <Allan.Hubley@ottawa.ca>; Cloutier, Jean <Jean.Cloutier@ottawa.ca>

Subject: More feedback to help in "squaring the circle" in the OP

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Hello Councillors,

I would like to start by saying that expanding into the Greenfields is not a matter of IF, but a matter of when. How we expand into them, will make a huge difference in our city's affordability, and livability and economic prosperity as well as how much we expand in the future. I have been involved with the City's OP since Feb. 2020, and shared many points with staff in the process. In hopes it will help you with your decision making with regards to urban expansion and intensification, and the competing priorities of green spaces, neighbourhoods' characters etc, I would like to share with you a few of the emails.

Sincerely,

Salma Al-Shehabi
613-523-2425

From: Salma A <s.alshehabi@hotmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 18, 2021 1:44 PM

To: Elizabeth Anderson; Reside, Andy

Cc: Forgie, Charmaine; New OP / Nouveau PO

Subject: Thank you and meeting minutes

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Dear Andy and Elizabeth,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns today.

Charmaine I am sorry you could not make it, but hope you had a good meeting this morning.

Below is a summary of our meeting minutes, and a couple more things that I would like to add.

1. We talked about the need to build the capacity to build, how this could be beneficial for Ottawa's economy, and a potential way how we

can create it. Capacity in terms of skilled trade people, and in terms of manufacturing and industrial facilities for the raw material. Since many communities struggle with this issue, it would be advantageous for Ottawa to create and provide these capacities locally and beyond. This is something that I will take to my MP and MPP, but asked you to do as well as a city.

2. We talked about how we could possibly have the missing middle (4-6 stories) in mega projects on green fields in order to minimize the associated costs per unit compared to having them on infills, and gave an example.
3. I asked if we could have the development process expediated, to minimize development costs as well. Time= money.
4. I shared the concerns I heard from residents regarding intensifying in the built-up area and the core. Residents are concerned about how the extra demand for land and the limitation of land supply will drive these lands' values up and negatively affect housing affordability in the built-up areas.
5. Additionally, when comparing costs to expand vs. Costs to intensification in built up area, we need not only consider the initial costs, but also the associated costs such as housing and homelessness services and poverty related costs, over the years. The long-term cost to expansion may be cheaper when looking at the whole picture. For example, if it will cost us \$ 850 M to expand, over 25 years that will be much cheaper than what we will be spending on housing and homelessness measures alone in the next ten years, and it will have better socio-economic outcomes for our city. Currently our city is spending \$111M from municipal budget, and I anticipated that to reach \$200M within this decade if things continue status quo. (The actual cost from all levels of government has been reported at \$ 172 M in the housing and homelessness plan NOW. Can you imagine what that cost could be in 10, 20, 30 years?)
6. I emphasized the need to protect housing affordability by how we build our city, and the potential threat I see, over the long term, to the social safety nets and economic and social wellbeing of our city, if we fail to act and plan in this decade. The more people we have able to afford living in the city and positively contribute to the tax base, the better outcomes we will have for all.
7. Although we need a lot of purpose-built rentals as I communicated earlier, by studying the core housing need I found an increasing number of homeowner households falling in core housing need, and this trend has significantly affected more immigrants than others. We really need to increase our supply of all housing types to meet the market's demands especially if more immigrants are going to be exploring homeownership sooner than previously witnessed. **Again, I understand we cannot increase the supply if we do not have the capacity, which lead to the first point in this discussion.** Charmaine, would you happen to have access to such data in our city? Do we know what our current capacities could be, if all development applications were approved on the spot for example? This is especially important if, as Alain explained in May, we need to bring almost 98,000 units in the next ten years.

8. I also mentioned how the 15 minutes neighbourhoods may not be a reality for the most vulnerable in our society. A person working at Tim Hortons in Kanata will most likely not be able to afford living in the 15 minutes radius. Their transportation options to and from work may not be the greenest whether they want to or not. For example, it would take about 2 hours to take transit from the south end to Kanata, but will take much less time driving. If the person has to pick up kids from school or day care, etc. S/he may not opt to take transit. Similarly, people working at Food Basics or Dollarama in Heron gate plaza are most likely unable to rent in the new Vista Local community built by Timber Creek in that 15 minutes radius. We have to keep these realities in mind. Adding to our discussion on the phone on this point: the last thing we would want is to have "green" being associated with a certain "class" of citizens.

I would like to also add the next points as they are worth bringing to your attention, and I understand that the zoning by-laws and other master plans are better at shaping the final outcome.

9. Some residents shared concerns about the existing infrastructure and its likely inability to accommodate proposed intensification, as is.
10. When we talk about growth management, many groups and advocates are pushing for intensification in the built-up areas and claiming it is the cheapest way to grow our city. I had the chance to talk to a few of them, and unfortunately, I came to realize that some are pushing for certain policy directives without really considering the whole picture. For example, some are pushing for intensification in built up areas, without considering the impact on land values and the people's ability to afford the city. For this reason, I would like to give you my last points on intensification. And I honestly feel for you as staff at the city trying to balance all demands and needs in our city and trying to glue the different pieces of the puzzle. It is not an easy task for sure, and I applaud all your efforts. I would like you to know that you have access to more experts than any other organization, and you have the input from everyone, so you ultimately have more overview of the puzzle than anyone else. I trust your ability to take the best decisions, based on all these pieces, that ensure our people are put first and foremost. When people are able to live with dignity and prosperity, and are not struggling to make ends meet, they will take care of the environment and everything else. With this, I will leave you with my last points regarding intensification.

- A) The OP calls for intensification, which is a good thing, however, **how** we do this will significantly impact our city's long-term housing affordability, as well as financial and social wellbeing.
- B) The OP suggests prioritizing and targeting development in the built-up area rather than green fields.

I pose to ask the following question:

What are we trying to achieve with this recommendation (B)?

The answer would be:

- a) use available infrastructure to save costs;
- b) protect nature/environment.

But are we really achieving these by taking (B)?

if we consider:

- i) inflation and the various economic factors at play through the entire supply chain and development phases over the decades;
- ii) the negative impacts of sticking to (B) on housing affordability and on the city's financial and social wellbeing;
- iii) that the infrastructure will still need to be upgraded in order to accommodate the increased densities' needs, which will cost money as well.

In fact, many residents shared concerns about what if we don't get the required upgrades.

- iv) how much it would cost to implement (B) and all other social and economic costs that could result from (B) (as explained above);
- v) how COVID 19 has changed people's views and experiences in every aspect of life;

vi) the fact that the city will need to expand its infrastructure regardless if it is done now, or in 25 years or more to meet its growing needs.

The proposed approach in (B) may have the cheapest up-front cost but it may not be the most cost effective over the years.

Could we have an alternative approach? How about developing the green fields and have them of equal priority compared to built-up area (or higher priority, depending on which scenario will ensure they don't increase in value more than they should)?

The green field lands we have included in our urban boundaries **will be developed** in the coming decades. It is **not** a matter of "IF"; it is simply a matter of "WHEN" and "HOW".

If we keep this in mind for the long-term, the best and cheapest way to accommodate our growth would be to develop the green fields "now", "with the intensification targets we wish to have in the coming decades". As proposed in my previous email, as our city structures age, we would take more solid moves to rebuild the urban core. By doing so we have many advantages:

- i) the increased economic development opportunity associated with such an approach as explained in point 1);
- ii) the positive effects of taking this approach on the long-term housing affordability in the city, if we do things properly (I would love to help)
- iii) as more people are able to afford housing prices; employed by this sector; we would be able to ensure that more people reach their full potential, and costs incurred by the city to address poverty and related human capital loss could actually be reduced.
- iv) we would be able to ensure that both the new developed areas and the urban core continue to have sufficient green spaces and nature trails, etc. And the required infrastructure is provided from the get-go for both green field and regeneration developments.
- v) we would not have to deal with costs incurred to continually upgrade systems and infrastructures.

Let me ask you:

How much would it cost to implement the alternative proposal herein? Is it more cost effective in the long term? Which one would have better outcomes for the residents' physical, mental, financial and social wellbeing?

I am sorry I remembered one more point, which is in the housing section about how a developer will be required to have an equal number of units with the old rents for the predevelopment tenants on a right of first refusal. I am just wondering if we could extend that beyond existing tenants. The landlord will probably have the rents of all units increased to mitigate potential income loss from this policy, and I doubt that the rents would drop if not many previous tenants go back. Is there a way to ensure either the landlord drops the base rent rates for all tenants if not many people go back; or that the number of units to be at that affordable rate are maintained regardless if the original or a different household goes in it (with priority off course to the older tenants) this is separate from inclusionary zoning. If you would like me to pinpoint the item in the draft op, please let me know.

Again, I greatly appreciate your time, consideration and all the work you have been putting towards this immensely important project, and look forward to seeing the next master piece!

Sincerely,

Salma Al-Shehabi
613-523-2425

From: Salma A <s.alshehabi@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 11, 2021 2:40 PM
To: Miguelez, Alain; Forgie, Charmaine
Cc: Whyte, Elizabeth
Subject: Re: Draft Official Plan Feedback

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Dear Alain and Charmaine,

Thank you for all your hard work, and thanks to all the efforts the planning branch team has been putting into the official plan.

I would like to give you some feedback with regards to:

1. How to increase intensification targets;
2. How many units we need to aim at having by 2046;

I understand that the proposal you have aims to bring in more intensification in the built-up area (downtown core and surrounding), and have more single houses and lower zoning in the outskirts. I am here to suggest something different.

What do you think of having **mostly** high-rise buildings being established in the new developments (the rural and suburban transects)? If we do this, we would be achieving the following:

1. the densities we hope to have for future growth already being established in the new areas;
2. saving developers fees for the in lieu of park land; while ensuring these higher densities still have enough park lands; thereby encouraging more density developments there with green setting. As a result of the decreased cost and increased revenues/construction site, it would be fair that we can expect developers to bring these developments at lower than AMR considering the intensification brings them more revenues; and they don't have to pay the extra fees in lieu of park land. This can positively reflect on our long-term housing affordability.
3. Prevent future NIMBYism in the "to-be-established" neighbourhoods;
4. Allow the city to have its existing neighbourhoods intensifying over the decades at a suitable rate that is not too dramatic to the residents, therefore, reducing NIMBYism or risks of political tensions over these issues, while also meeting the needs of our growing population, and without risking increased shelter costs due to shortage of supply.
5. Considering that we have a big percentage of houses aging in our city, we will probably see more gentrification happening as the years pass by. If we have the new developments ready, and able to accommodate the displaced residents, then we would be well off for such moves. large scale gentrification projects may be better for the city's growth in the long term, than "pop-up" high-rises.
Example: If we consider what happened at Heron Gate, Timber Creek brought in a more dense, not so dramatic, change to the neighbourhood. When I say "not so dramatic", I am not talking about tenants' experience, I am talking about changes to the surrounding neighbourhood. Nearby, residents worried about such intensification effect on their area considering the basic infrastructure has not changed to accommodate the increase in population. But if we plan to do these more often in our city over the

coming years, then we could potentially address the infrastructure issues as they arise. When Timber Creek revitalized the area, it was not one house at a time, and the end result so far does not look completely "out-of-place" for surrounding residents.

6. The biggest issue in Timber Creek's project was the displacement of tenants, considering the low vacancy rates and the high rent rates.
7. I believe we can dramatically increase the vacancy rates if we were to establish high-rise buildings from the get-go in the new development areas.
8. But then, the other concern you may have is that "residents would like to have the floor space provided by the ground-oriented dwellings". To address this, we can have more apartments that have two floors. An example of these actually exists in our city, if you check the buildings on Southvale Crescent. I am not sure if they're the Hawthorne Ridge Properties or the Eaton Carleton Condominiums. But I know at least one of these buildings have these units. I remember a family friend being in love with her place there, as it provided her with the apartment style living with the space of a town-home! We could have more of these in the new developments as well, cannot we?

Lastly, the number of dwellings our city needs to construct cannot just be as much as we are anticipating growth (i.e. we have to have more than 198,000 units constructed). We should bring in **at least 100,000 additional purpose-built rental** units, for a total of about 298,000 new dwellings by 2046. The reasons being: 1. In 2016, we had more than 90,000 families facing affordability issues in the city, and 2. We have a big percentage of our existing housing stock that will not last till the end of the century. If you check the city of Ottawa Rental Market Analysis Report dated March 15, 2019, attached here, in table 5, page 19, it is mentioned how many dwellings were built when. I think we need to keep this in mind as we plan for the next few decades. To protect our city's affordability, we need to bring much more of what we need in anticipation of these stock being lost. and if we can ask developers to have the rents below AMR as explained in point 2 above, we will be able to meet the current population's need for affordable housing.

In this way, we can have more of our residents occupying the outside, and then as decades go by we can move into intensifying the core in more solid moves like Timber Creeks developments in Heron Gate area.

If we do this right, we may be able to do all that without significantly affecting the AMRs as current developing are doing.

What do you think?

Sincerely,

Salma

From: Salma A <s.alshehabi@hotmail.com>
Sent: September 01, 2020 6:24 PM
To: Forgie, Charmaine <Charmaine.Forgie@ottawa.ca>; Miguelez, Alain <Alain.Miguelez@ottawa.ca>
Cc: Whyte, Elizabeth <elizabeth.whyte@ottawa.ca>
Subject: Re: Official Plan Feedback

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Hello Alain, Charmaine, and Elizabeth,

I thank you for the opportunity you have provided me thus far to provide you with feedback and extend a helping hand. After having looked at the survey and the proposed plan, I am sharing this feedback with you.

Unfortunately, the survey does not help residents express their honest feedback to the plan. A huge issue is being unaddressed as you plan the 15-minutes neighborhoods. Specifically speaking, how the proposed plan will affect the cost of living in the city: property taxes, rent rates as well as properties values, in addition to the cost of consumables such as food, clothes, etc. **Will the residents be willing or able to spend the extra money in taxes and rents? Will they be willing or able to afford the "new" cost of living? How is the plan going to affect our already vulnerable populations?**

As we speak, there is 1 in 4 households (total) in Ottawa who is spending more than 30% of income on shelter costs: 42% of renters and 14% of owners according to 2016 census.(1) Considering the current household numbers in Ottawa of 429,080 (2), that is more than 100 thousand households *now!* While 16% of renting households are living in subsidized housing(1), 20% of households are already spending more than 50% of their income on shelter costs.(3) We already have residents in our city who are forced to make the choice between a roof on top of their head or food on their tables. We have others who are making the choice between personal care products such as incontinence products and food on the table. We have a persistent homelessness problem that is not going to be resolved in the next decade, according to the most recent plan proposed to the city council.(4) Additionally, recent rent rates of newly developed condos are already beyond the reach of the frontline workers. For example, the average Joe who is working at Food Basics in Heron gate plaza cannot afford living in Vista Local community *now* to be within 15-minutes walk from work. Similarly, the average Joe working at Tim Hortons in Kanata cannot afford renting there *now* either. Rent in the newly developed Heron gate Vista Local community starts at \$1,660 for the one-bedroom apartment (not including \$120 parking fee, and not including hydro and water). While rent in Kanata can be beyond \$2,000 a month for a one-bedroom. Rent rates for a two-bedroom apartment in downtown were 17% higher than the city's average rates, and those in Kanata were 62% higher than average.(5) These are rents in 2020. Can you foresee what they could be in 2030 and 2040? As for the more highly paid people, and with the new remote-working reality that COVID-19 has forced onto many businesses, travelling to get to work may not be as needed for many people in the next decades. For instance, Shopify already declared that all of its employees will continue to work from home beyond the pandemic.(6) Moreover, as depicted in your report, we will have a lot more seniors in the next 25 years, which will mean that more people in the next 25 years will not have the income they have now. The National Shelter Study of Emergency Shelter Use in Canada between 2005-2016 revealed that more seniors have been using the emergency shelters and staying there longer.(7,8) **Considering all of the aforementioned, how will the implementation of the 15 minutes neighborhoods and the new official plan affect the affordability of the city for everyone in general and for the most vulnerable in particular in the next 25 years and beyond?**

Kind Regards,

Salma Al-Shehabi

References:

- (1) Ottawa Public Health. State of Ottawa Health 2018. December 2018. Ottawa (ON): Ottawa Public Health; 2018.
- (2) City of Ottawa Statistics. Current Population and Household Estimates. <https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/get-know-your-city/statistics-and->

[economic-profile/statistics/current-population-and-household-estimates](#)

(3) Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa. Homelessness in Ottawa: A Roadmap for Change Progress Report Review 2014-2017. June 2018. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a4d46cdb1ffb6b826e6d6aa/t/5dd68079a8c5393bf2a8a057/1574338885516/AllianceProgressReport2017Web_EN.pdf

(4) Ottawa Citizen. Jon Willing. Committee backs new \$1B plan to reduce homelessness over 10 years. June 18, 2020. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/committee-backs-new-1b-plan-to-reduce-homelessness-over-10-years>

(5) Ottawa Citizen. Taylor Blewett. Ottawa's vacancy rate went up, but so did average rents in 2019. January 15, 2020. <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/ottawas-vacancy-rate-went-up-but-so-did-average-rents-in-2019>

(6) Financial Post. Geoff Zochodne. 'Digital by default': Shopify is letting employees work from home permanently. May 21, 2020. <https://financialpost.com/technology/shopify-is-joining-twitter-in-permanent-work-from-home>

(7) Haven Toronto. More Seniors Using, Staying Longer In Emergency Shelters. September 2, 2019. <https://www.haventoronto.ca/single-post/2019/09/02/Seniors-And-Shelters>

(8) Employment and Social Development Canada. Highlights of the National Shelter Study 2005-2016 - Emergency Shelter Use in Canada. 2019. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/homelessness/reports-shelter-2016.html#h0>

From: Salma A <s.alshehabi@hotmail.com>

Sent: June 2, 2020 11:23

To: Miguelez, Alain <Alain.Miguelez@ottawa.ca>

Subject: Re: official plan

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Hello Alain,

How have you been?

I would like to take this time to give you some feedback with regards to the approved balanced approach plan.

Although in the official plan draft report it was mentioned how the census data compared for those 30-50 old, the report did not comment on one significant change in consumers' preference particularly for those 65+. Precisely, how the older folks in 1986 preferred apartments more than those in 2016 (~ 40% vs. 25%) I believe this change in preference may be due in parts to the rising costs to living in apartments. Why would a senior who got his house paid for move into a less affordable option? As you plan the new official plan, I would like to ask you to consider building more apartment buildings. They don't have to be high rise, but must be affordable for those growing seniors with the hope to release their hold on their current housing stock and provide more options for the resale market. For example, all these engineers who are currently hired in the Kanata tech sector and currently own a ground oriented dwelling in Kanata, will not find moving out of their current home appealing if we were to consider that a one bedroom apartment rent in Kanata starts at 1700 right now. What would be the rent of these dwellings in 20-30 years? Also, we should consider building apartment buildings not only by the LRT, but in areas we expect to see more seniors in the next couple of decades. Would you like to move to a totally new neighbourhood when you are a senior? Or would you prefer the choice to stay close to everything you are used to?

I appreciate the opportunity you have provided me to be a part of this planning process! Please let me know if I could be of any help as you move forward in this process.

Hats off for your hard working team!

Sincerely,

Salma

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