

AN ACTION PLAN FOR 15-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS

the policy asks

Sprawl is defined as some combination of low-density, single-use development and car-dependency. We can make progress on 15-minute neighbourhoods by enhancing density, increasing the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods and increasing mobility choice. Below, we explore what can be done in each of these areas to make Ottawa a climate leader.



MORE DENSITY

Policy ask

Indicator(s)

Move forward with ambitious neighbourhood-level intensification targets, and tie greenfield development with attaining these targets

Neighbourhood-level intensification targets

Neighbourhood-level targets ensure the city will reach ambitious intensity levels and protect greenspace.

Eliminate the 30% minimum threshold for the percentage of new single detached housing in suburban areas

New intensification policy

The development market would continue to make build single-detached housing to suit demand, but would not be forced to build more than required.

Accelerate the start/completion of the Zoning By-Law review

New Zoning By-law review starts mid-late 2021

The Zoning By-law Review is a powerful opportunity to enhance municipal density. Speeding up this process will hasten action that protects the environment and combats climate change.

Update zoning policies to allow more households to access existing neighbourhoods through appropriately scaled multi-tenanted housing, co-housing, laneway housing, and other forms of "gentle density."

New residential zoning policies

City zoning could be modified to allow for higher-level building across a range of planning typologies.

Expand intensification focus zones beyond transit areas

New intensification policy

The city has ambitious climate and density targets that cannot be met by transit corridors alone.

Eliminate R1 zoning

New Zoning policy

R1 zoning exacerbates inequality, undermines efficiency and takes us further away from a connected 15-minute city.

MORE VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Policy ask

Indicator(s)

Update zoning policies to integrate grocery stores, schools, local retail, live-work housing, parks, civic spaces and universally designed amenities into all areas of our city

Number of 15-minute neighbourhoods; increased integration of different zoning types city-wide; changes to residential zoning to allow for greater mix of uses

Mixed-use development reduces emissions by cutting down on the need to travel. It enhances walkability and bikability and makes for a more dynamic and vibrant city.

Expand use of mixed use / commercial zones in areas in and around residential areas

Increased use of "Traditional Mainstreet Zone" and "Local Commercial Zone"; increased mix of zones city-wide

To embed mixed-use development into more corners of our city, we will have to expand the range of certain existing zoning typologies.

Enact moratorium on new big box and strip mall development and work to retrofit existing malls where possible

Changes to or reduced use of "General Mixed Use Zone" and "Mixed Use Centre Zone"

Strip malls are the by-product of harmful municipal bylaws like single-use zoning, minimum parking requirements, and car-focused setback regulations. They are not a "natural" feature of urban development, and can be eliminated with well-crafted policy.

Attain tree canopy target of 40% per neighbourhood city-wide and ensure green infrastructure is systematically incorporated into road developments

New urban forest policy

40% canopy cover has been cited as the minimum threshold for multiple benefits from trees (e.g., reducing heat island effect). Neighbourhood-level targets ensure that no corner of the city lacks access to a healthy tree canopy.

MORE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Policy ask

Indicator(s)

Enact congestion pricing strategy, with revenues directed to transit and active transportation

Policy direction in Transportation Master Plan

Congestion pricing encourages alternatives to car usage and generates profits for the city. These profits can be directed to transit and active transportation.

Reallocate a growing proportion of the city's annual budget from road widening and extension to transit and active transportation. Increase annual reallocations with the aim of eliminating the road expansion budget

Proportion of budget allocated to road expansion vs. transit and active transportation

Each year, the city spends tens of millions of dollars on expanding its road network. This money is wasted - road growth does nothing to alleviate congestion over the long term. We can put this money to better use by funding viable alternatives to cars.

Enact a Road Diet Policy of systematically converting existing parking and car lanes to other uses, including transit-only lanes, wider sidewalks or protected bike lanes

Creation of a road lane conversion policy

Road diets work by reducing car lanes while calming traffic and adding new space for pedestrians, transit and active transportation.

Adopt a target of zero fatalities and severe injuries on Ottawa's roads, and follow up with a Vision Zero action plan

Creation of a Vision Zero policy

Each year, dozens of Ottawans are killed or severely injured on our roads. Vision Zero is an approach to transportation design that seeks to eliminate death and severe injury. By making our roads safe to walk and bike on, we can greatly enhance the appeal of alternatives to the car.

Remove all mandatory minimum parking requirements for any new building

Ban of the minimum parking policy

Minimum parking requirements mean more parking is supplied than is demanded by the market. Excess parking lots degrade walkability, sap community character and embed car-dependency.

MORE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES (CONTINUED)

Policy ask

Indicator(s)

Significantly increase municipal tax rate for surface parking lots to encourage other uses

N/A

Higher tax rates on parking lots can be used to dissuade developers from building them.

Institute a vehicle registration tax of at least \$50 per passenger car per year, with 100% of proceeds invested into public transit

N/A

Vehicle registration taxation will help the city collect revenues while disincentivizing car-use.

Set and enact policy to attain a target of 60% of total trips by sustainable mode share – walking, cycling and transit – by 2031, with escalating targets and annual reporting leading to 75% in 2046

Change in mode share targets

The shift away from car-dependency starts with ambitious targets and a plan to meet them.

Remove “automobile passenger” from inclusion as a sustainable mode share in all targets and city transportation analysis

New categorization scheme for mode shares

By counting "automobile passenger" as a "sustainable mode share," the City of Ottawa intentionally conflates car use with alternative transportation modes that reduce emissions and enhance community vibrancy.

Quadruple Transportation Demand Management staff, from 1 FTE to 4 FTE

Staffing levels in annual budget

Transportation Demand Management is the set of policies and strategies designed to reduce travel demand. To reduce car-dependency, we will need to invest in city staff working on this important task.

Move forward on creation of car-free zones in strategic areas of the city, targeting existing NCC car-free pilot areas, the ByWard Market and the Central Business District

Car-Free Zone policy

Car-free zones are sweeping cities around the world with tremendous success. The City of Ottawa has already identified opportunities for car-free zones in dense, urban areas. A new policy will allow the city to move forward here.