

Section 1 — Introduction

Section 1, Introduction, describes the role of the Official Plan. The Official Plan is one of five growth management plans that was completed under the umbrella of Ottawa 20/20.

1.1 – The Role of the Official Plan

The Ottawa Official Plan is the first plan for the new City of Ottawa and its guide to the 21st century. Creation of the City in 2001 brought 11 urban and rural municipalities and a regional government into one government structure, responsible for providing services to a population of about 800,000. Always the country's symbolic focal point, the amalgamated City is now among the country's most geographically extensive and populous urban areas.

Over the next 20 years, the City's population will push past the one million mark and possibly reach 1.2 million. This level of growth will open new opportunities for the city and its residents, but will also bring enormous change and new challenges. This Plan sets a policy framework for managing growth in ways that will reinforce the qualities of the city that are most valued by its residents: its distinctly liveable communities, its green and open character, and the landmarks and landforms that distinguish Ottawa from all other places. The Official Plan is not a tool to limit growth but rather to anticipate change, manage it and maintain options.

In addition to the challenges of managing growth and change, the City also faces many challenges common to large cities such as road congestion, water quality in some rivers and streams, and greenhouse gas emissions. [OMB decision #1582, June 17, 2005]

The Official Plan provides a vision of the future growth of the city and a policy framework to guide its physical development to the year 2021. It is a legal document that addresses matters of provincial interest defined by the Provincial Policy Statement under the *Ontario Planning Act*.

The City of Ottawa and the Committee of Adjustment, in carrying out their responsibilities under the *Ontario Planning Act*, shall have regard to, among other matters, matters of provincial interest such as,

- a. the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;
- b. the protection of the agricultural resources of the Province;
- c. the conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base;
- d. the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;
- e. the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water;
- f. the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems;
- g. the minimization of waste;
- h. the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- i. the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies;
- j. the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;
- k. the adequate provision of a full range of housing;
- l. the adequate provision of employment opportunities;
- m. the protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities;
- n. the co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies;
- o. the resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private interests;
- p. the protection of public health and safety;
- q. the appropriate location of growth and development;

- r. the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians.

But beyond this legal purpose, the Plan serves as a basis, or provides guidance on, for a wide range of municipal activities. These include:

- The planning and approval of public works to be carried out by the City in support of future growth, including sewage and water treatment infrastructure, roads and transit facilities, and public parks;
- The drafting of a new comprehensive zoning by-law, which will help translate planning policies into a finer level of detail;
- The creation of community design plans, which will articulate key elements of community design as well as help establish local implementation priorities;
- The review and approval of development applications to provide guidance to prospective developers and landowners who want to alter existing land uses;
- The preparation of more detailed guidelines on a range of policy matters such as Environmental Impact Statements and community design;
- The preparation of annual municipal budgets and long-term plans for capital spending;
- Provision of a land-use context for other studies such as Environmental Assessments. [OMB decision #1582, June 17, 2005]

Through these and other implementing mechanisms, this Plan will ensure that growth “works” for Ottawa that it will serve as a basis for realizing our collective vision of a liveable, prosperous, and sustainable city.

1.2 – Structure of the Official Plan

This Plan is organized into four main sections (in addition to this introduction), which move from the most general planning principles to practical implementation measures. Section 2 lays out the strategic policy directions the City will follow over the coming years. Section 3 of the Plan establishes land-use designations and the associated policies. Section 4 covers matters related to the review of development applications, while Section 5 deals with more specific issues related to implementation and interpretation of the Plan, including the monitoring framework. Volume 2 includes secondary plans, site-specific policies and Village plans.

The various sections are closely linked and are not meant to be read in isolation. Individual topics, such as the desire to create more transit-friendly communities, are raised in the various sections of the Plan as the text moves from an articulation of general principles in Section 2, to the more practical details related to implementing the principles found in later sections of the Plan. In order to help the reader navigate the Plan, an index and glossary are provided at the end of this document.

1.3 – The Ottawa 20/20 Process and the Guiding Principles

This Official Plan has been prepared within the broader context of the Ottawa 20/20 initiative, a two-year planning process that will prepare the City to better manage the growth and change that it will experience over the next 20 years. The goal of the Ottawa 20/20 initiative is sustainable development. The classic definition of sustainable development is: “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”¹. Sustainable development is a strategy that requires the integration of economic growth, social equity, and environmental management. It is about ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come.

Ottawa 20/20 is a framework for managing growth through five-growth management plans to be completed by the spring of 2003. Taken together, the five growth management plans provide long-term strategic direction and form a comprehensive blueprint for the future of Ottawa and its communities. The five plans complement each other and will work together. In the spring of 2002, Ottawa conducted a series of public consultations designed to help establish the principles that would guide the city's growth. The "Charting a Course" consultations produced seven guiding principles that were endorsed by City Council in June 2002 and have become the backbone of the Ottawa 20/20 initiative. In addition to guiding the preparation of all growth management plans within the City of Ottawa, these principles will also guide the municipality's day-to-day decision-making.

The seven principles and accompanying objectives are equally important and must be balanced when making decisions.

The principles are:

A Caring and Inclusive City

- **Personal Safety and Security** – All people feel safe in their homes and communities.
- **Access to the Basics** – All people have access to adequate income, food, clothing, housing, transportation, health services and recreation.
- **Citizen Engagement** – Everyone has the opportunity to fully participate in the life of their community.
- **Diversity** – The people of Ottawa respect and celebrate cultural and social diversity, and have access to services that are responsive to special and differing needs.
- **Seniors** – Seniors have access to community services that respond to their needs.

A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity

- **A Proud City** – The people of Ottawa are proud of their city and treasure its identity as a wonderful place to live.
- **A Capital City** – We cherish the city's amenities, recognizing that as Canada's capital city, we have a rich variety of things to do. Being the nation's capital brings us tourists, gives us the national cultural perspective and a window to the world.
- **Vibrant Local Arts and Heritage** – Local arts and heritage give us community vitality; a path to creativity and innovation; and a sense of who we are.
- **Culture in Every Community** – Culture is present in every community through libraries, local museums and archives, the preservation of our heritage buildings, opportunities for artistic expression, and places that present and connect local arts to people.
- **Distinct Rural Countryside** – Ottawa's rural areas are distinct from the urban areas – its rural landscapes, Villages and heritage are valued by all.

A Green and Environmentally-Sensitive City

- **A Green City** – Ottawa preserves natural habitats and has a network of green spaces. Trees are an important way of maintaining environmental integrity.
- **Development in Harmony with the Environment** – Using land wisely, development builds within the current urban boundary and avoids outward sprawl.
- **A Focus on Walking, Cycling and Transit** – Ottawa implements policies that favour walking, cycling and public transit over the use of private motor vehicles, thereby facilitating the use of modes of transportation that are socially accessible, environmentally healthy and economically feasible.
- **Clean Air, Water and Earth** – All people work to improve the quality of the natural environment; limit noise and light pollution; and protect natural resources and agricultural lands.

A City of Distinct, Liveable Communities

- **A Sense of Community** – All communities look right and feel right. They have an identity that defines them and fosters pride and belonging among residents.
- **Complete Communities** – Ottawa’s communities have a variety of housing choices, employment, parks and a wide range of services and facilities accessible by walking, cycling and transit.
- **Easy Mobility** – Communities are easy to get around and barrier-free for the disabled. There are wide sidewalks and recreational pathways; there is frequent, accessible transit service.
- **Beauty** – Ottawa’s communities are pleasing to the eye. They are interesting, clean, and benefit from an abundance of trees.

An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All

- **Strong Export-Based Economic Generators** – Ottawa develops and supports local innovators to create a critical mass of knowledge and experience that attracts venture capital, more talent, and spins off new companies.
- **Strong Local Business** – Ottawa’s local businesses thrive in an environment that provides opportunities for entrepreneurship, tourism and commerce.
- **Strong Rural Economy** – All people recognize and support the special role of agriculture, rural businesses and tourism in our economy.
- **Connecting People to Opportunities** – Citizens have access to quality training, information, education and community services that provide support to overcome barriers; increase employment; reduce poverty; and create opportunities to participate in the community.
- **Connecting Businesses to a Skilled Workforce** – Ottawa’s skilled workforce attracts businesses to our city that in turn provide quality jobs.

A Responsible and Responsive City

- **Accountability** – The City demonstrates leadership by following through and sticking to its decisions and by conducting on-going strategic monitoring and making appropriate adjustments.
- **Fiscal Responsibility** – The City does not spend more than it can afford. It looks for innovative ways to fund and deliver services and makes efficient use of its infrastructure and resources.
- **Conduct an Open and Participatory Process** – The City conducts business in a broad and open way that makes it easy for everyone to participate and collaborate.
- **Partnerships** – The City works with other levels of government, the private sector and community-based organizations to achieve objectives.
- **Public Awareness** – The City educates the public about important issues in order to raise awareness and understanding to enable the public to make knowledgeable choices.

A Healthy and Active City

- **Recreation and Sport** – Citizens have the opportunity to participate in a broad range of recreational pursuits, personal fitness and sport activities.
- **Community Facilities** – Recreation, arts and heritage facilities are provided to meet both local and city-wide needs.
- **Accessibility** – Citizens have access to affordable and barrier-free facilities, programs and services.
- **Health Protection and Promotion** – Citizens have access to community-based social and health promotion services.

¹ *Our Common Future (1987), final report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission).*

1.4 – Ottawa’s Growth Management Plans

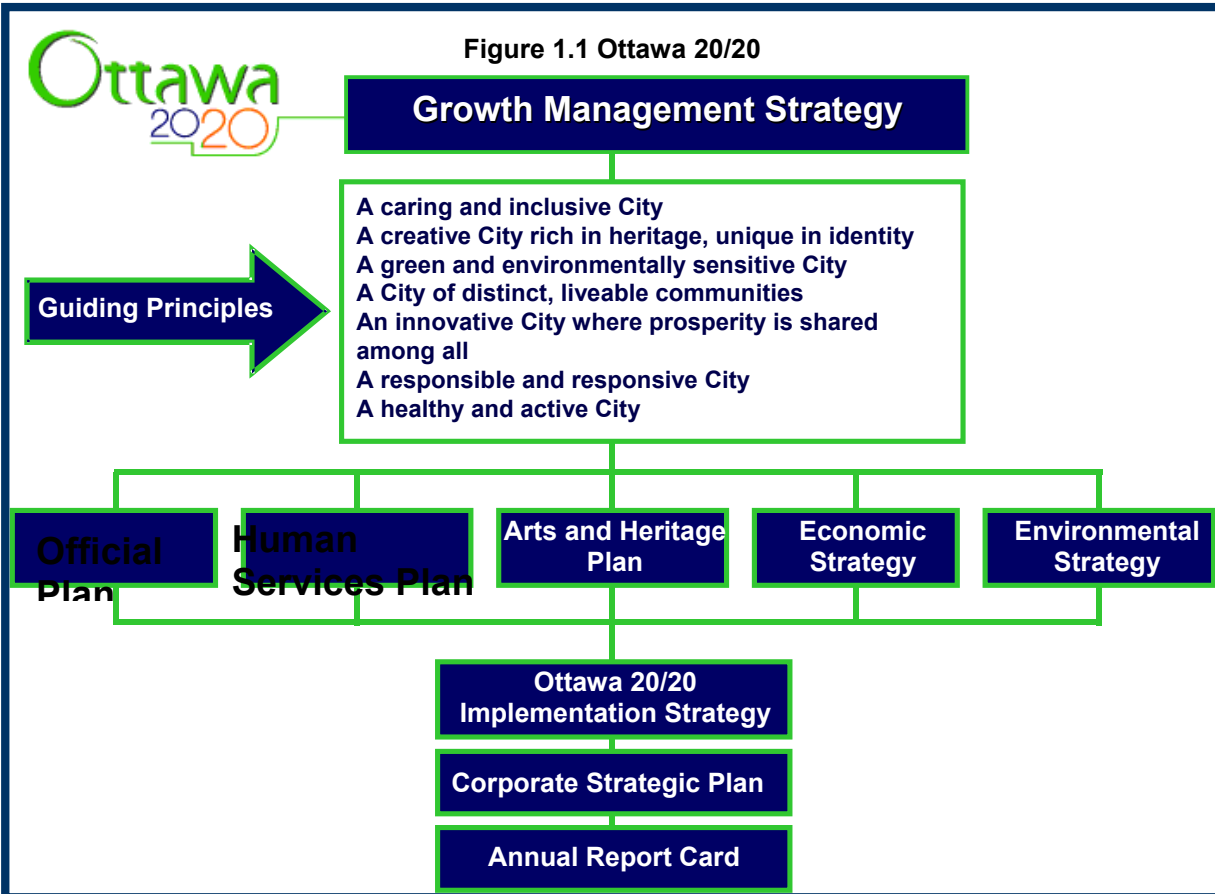
The five growth management plans focus on the strategic priorities needed to turn these principles into more concrete policy directions that can guide staff and City Council in their decisions as they balance competing priorities. Besides the Official Plan, the City’s growth management plans are:

- **Human Services Plan** – From libraries to affordable housing, respecting our cultural diversity, emergency services, self-sufficiency through employment, celebrating the arts and consideration of our seniors, the Human Services Plan describes what People Services and Emergency and Protective Services can do and how the City will meet the needs of citizens in the future.
- **Arts and Heritage Plan** – Champions culture and creativity. Identifies new initiatives and actions in areas such as access to cultural opportunities, public art, heritage preservation, cultural facilities development and tourism.
- **Economic Strategy** – Building on the success and momentum of the Economic Generators Initiative, the Economic Strategy establishes policies to continue growing a strong and diverse economy. It includes plans for key Ottawa business markets: the export sector, the local market and the rural sector.
- **Environmental Strategy** – Focuses on the responsible management of all aspects of the City’s environment. It sets the direction and establishes a comprehensive approach to create sound environmental management in City practices and policies.

With these other growth management plans in place, the Official Plan focuses on the land use, community design, transportation and infrastructure policies necessary to direct the physical development of the city. Consequently, some of the non-land-use policies found in the Official Plans of the former municipalities making up the new City of Ottawa are not contained in this Official Plan. Thus, it is important to interpret this Plan in the context of the overall Ottawa 20/20 initiative, which provides a comprehensive framework for managing growth in the City. Figure 1.1 illustrates the relationship among the various components of Ottawa 20/20.

The Implementation Strategy will link the strategic priorities from the Ottawa 20/20 plans with the long-range financial planning and budgeting processes and will establish a framework for collaborating with the City’s many partners. The Corporate Strategic Plan, to be developed during 2004, will provide internal administrative and organizational processes necessary to support Ottawa 20/20 and its associated plans.

Progress towards implementing the strategies expressed in the plans will be assessed on an annual basis through the production of a Report Card based on quantitative and qualitative indicators. The report card will help track the cumulative effects of incremental decisions and their interactions, and help monitor whether public spending is serving real needs and achieving the desired results. The Ottawa 20/20 plans will be reviewed every five years to assess whether amendments are necessary.



1.5 – Supporting Plans

The Official Plan provides direction to several supporting plans that provide a greater level of detail on important issues than is practical in the Official Plan itself. These plans contain infrastructure program elements and strategies supportive of the policy directions contained in the Official Plan. For example, the Official Plan sets direction for the Transportation Master Plan by expressing Council’s strategic policies on transportation, such as its targets for the share of trips by transit and other modes of travel. The Transportation Master Plan enhances the Official Plan’s policy framework and describes the infrastructure and transportation networks needed to meet Council’s objectives, based on more detailed analysis and network modeling. The Official Plan includes the transportation networks developed through the Transportation Master Plan, but not at the same level of detail. In all cases, the supporting plans are building on the substantial base of policy and direction that was in place in former municipalities. The Official Plan clearly indicates where it links to specific supporting plans. [OMB decision #1582, June 17, 2005]

The main supporting plans that have been or are being developed are:

- **Transportation Master Plan** – A comprehensive plan that sets out the City’s approach to managing and meeting the demand for transportation facilities, including walking, cycling, transit and roads;
- **Infrastructure Master Plan** – An integrated planning and system management document which coordinates the City’s efforts in meeting the demand for public water, wastewater, and stormwater services;

- **Greenspace Master Plan** – Characterizes and evaluates all components of greenspace in the city as a basis for a range of policies related to protection, acquisition and management.

Throughout the Official Plan are references to studies and plans that will enhance existing land-use policies. These have been gathered together in summary format in Section 5. Official Plan policies or land-use schedules may be needed to implement any of these plans. In these cases, implementation will require an amendment to the Official Plan, following the requirements of the *Planning Act*. Other mechanisms for the implementation of Master Plans and other plans or studies may include such initiatives as demand management programs, improved management or operation of infrastructure, and public education programs. These actions would not require an amendment to the Official Plan. [OMB decision #1582, June 17, 2005]

1.6 – How the Guiding Principles are Addressed in the Official Plan

Each of the five growth management plans addresses the guiding principles from its unique perspective. The Official Plan addresses the principles from a land-use and community design perspective. The following points indicate some of the ways that the Official Plan responds to each principle. The details and scope of each are found in Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Official Plan.

A Caring and Inclusive City

- Housing policies support increased availability of affordable housing and address the integration of a range of housing into all neighbourhoods to meet the varied needs of all household types including families, seniors and young people.
- Safety and security is addressed by policies on community design, flood plains, contaminated sites and unstable slopes, as well as a safe transportation system.
- Community design plans will be prepared for growth areas of the city using a collaborative planning approach that directly involves residents and other stakeholders.
- A better-balanced transportation system, which puts more emphasis on transit, cycling and pedestrian facilities, and improves mobility and access for all citizens, including those who do not own a car.

A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity

- Compatibility criteria address urban and rural historic sites and strengthen the identities of local communities.
- A series of policies preserve Ottawa's built heritage of architectural, historical, and cultural significance.
- Community design plans help create complete communities.
- Amenities are protected and enhanced (river shores, parks, trails).
- A design-oriented strategy places greater emphasis upon quality design. How the pieces go together in a three-dimensional way, through quality buildings, streets and open spaces, will become more important than traditional planning criteria.
- "Context" and "fit" are important considerations in terms of the evaluation and approval of compact, mixed-use development.
- The incorporation of public art in buildings, civic works, and landscapes is encouraged.
- The City supports the Central Area as a focal point. More people choose to live downtown because of the quality of life it offers.
- Rural development is focussed on Villages, and agricultural lands and environmental features are preserved.

A Green and Environmentally-Sensitive City

- Planning on the basis of natural systems to protect and enhance natural processes and ecological functions (e.g., watershed planning, groundwater and surface water protection and greenspace policies) is supported.
- Policies to protect natural diversity (e.g., urban and rural woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat) are provided for.
- Natural resources (e.g., agricultural land, minerals, and natural environment areas) are designated and protected.
- Soil contamination is identified and dealt with.
- Focusing on alternative modes of transport and reducing the reliance on the automobile improve air quality.

A City of Distinct, Liveable Communities

- Community design plans provide specific criteria for areas identified for intensification and ensure planning policies respond to the specific needs and opportunities of those communities.
- The qualities that make neighbourhoods special and contribute to their identity are valued in any consideration of land-use change.
- A mix of land uses, housing types, compact and inclusive development, clustering of neighbourhood facilities and services and excellent pedestrian connections make communities more complete as well as walkable. Their attractiveness is increased by proactive urban design guidelines extending to the public realm and the desired relationships between land use, built form, and landscape. and pedestrian functions are increased by proactive urban design that improves the relationships between public and private land uses, built forms and the surrounding landscape.
- Liveability is addressed by accommodating new growth and development in a more sustainable manner utilizing compact, mixed-use built form principles, including a moderate increase in density.
- In underdeveloped areas, density is increased by adding more buildings in appropriate locations.

An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All

- Sufficient serviced urban land is provided to meet long-term employment needs and move towards a balance of jobs and housing in communities.
- The attractiveness of the city is actively cultivated as a major contributor to its economic health and vitality.
- A full range of commercial goods and services for residents is available at appropriate locations throughout the city.
- A strong, healthy business community is supported by the city.
- Home-based businesses are permitted throughout the city.
- A full range of employment activities are accommodated in the Central Area and a strong and vibrant downtown is actively supported.
- A wide range of economic development activities – from farming and tourism to home-based businesses – is permitted in the rural area.
- The transportation system is keyed to land use, such as high-quality transit to employment nodes.
- Land-use intensification, infill development, and mixed-use development are reinforced in order to improve the business environment, make service provision more efficient and enhance the quality of life.
- Partnerships and innovative approaches are explored to work with the business and development community to achieve a compact, mixed-use pattern of development.
- The provision of affordable housing by the public and private sectors is promoted as a key vehicle for sharing economic prosperity and stimulating growth.

A Responsible and Responsive City

- The existing infrastructure is used more effectively. More compact and infill development reduces the need to extend infrastructure to new areas.
- Urban growth is contained within a firm boundary that maintains good quality agricultural lands and the rural countryside, and minimizes impacts on the natural environment.
- The link between development and public transit is strengthened.
- Growth and development is accommodated in a more sustainable manner, utilizing compact, mixed-use urban form in appropriate locations.
- The existing housing stock is protected and conserved.
- The City uses the community design plan process and collaborative planning to both empower the community and achieve the objectives of the Official Plan at the local level.

A Healthy and Active City

- Human and ecosystem health issues are addressed through such means as reducing the reliance on the private automobile to lessen the impact on air quality.
- The provision of parklands, recreational pathways and facilities, community gardens, walking and cycling provide opportunities for a healthy lifestyle.
- Policies that foster the development of more compact, mixed-use development and design policies provide opportunities for walking in a pedestrian-oriented environment.
- Policies to protect groundwater help to ensure potable drinking water in the rural area.

**1.7 – Interpretation and Implementation
of the Official Plan**

The policies contained in this Plan are designed to help guide day-to-day decision-making on land-use issues in the city. One key to translating Official Plan policies into consistent decisions “on the ground” is the zoning by-law. This comprehensive municipal regulatory document, based on wide public consultation, sets out the permitted uses, densities, and other important rules for development.

Another key tool for implementing this Plan is the provision for creating community design plans. These plans, to be developed in close collaboration with the affected communities, will provide detailed direction to development in specific areas of the city. Community design plans focus on providing solutions that are innovative and attractive while respecting the policies expressed in the Official Plan. They help interpret the general policies found in the Official Plan and ensure their relevance to each of Ottawa’s diverse communities. In all cases, it is the intent of the City to build on work that has already been completed, such as existing secondary plans, and to enhance it, where required, to achieve the objectives of this Plan.

It is important to recognize that the assumptions that lie behind the policies expressed in the Official Plan may change over the timeframe of the Plan (from 2003 to 2021). For instance:

- Population growth may differ from current projections;
- The demand for housing or other types of land uses may change due to emerging economic trends;
- The supply of serviced land may be consumed more quickly or slowly than foreseen in the current Plan;
- The City’s ability to invest in infrastructure may be restricted by financial constraints.

While the Plan is conceived in a way so as to remain relevant despite minor changes in these and other variables, major changes may require the Plan to be updated from time to time. Towards this end, the

City will monitor relevant conditions and make adjustments to the Plan or the implementing actions as necessary, as part of the five-year review.

The impetus to amend the Plan may also come from the planning applications, such as when a property owner requests a change in land use that is not consistent with the provisions of the Plan. Under these circumstances, City Council may consider the proposed amendment while taking into account the impact the proposed change might have on the City's ability to achieve the policies set out in the Plan. City Council will consider the compatibility with existing communities; whether the change in land use is really needed given the supply of already-designated land in the same category; and the effect of the proposed change on the need for water, wastewater, transportation, and other City services.

Finally, implementing this Plan will require the cooperation of a wide variety of actors outside the municipal administration, not only because they must respect the Plan but also because they have the mandate, experience and expertise to implement much of it. The City must partner with the provincial and federal governments, including the National Capital Commission, as well as the City of Gatineau and the Province of Québec, on issues related to transportation infrastructure, management of natural resources, economic development, and more. The private sector, including builders and developers, has an increasing role to play through partnerships with the City. Examples include building and managing facilities and services, economic development, provision of mixed-use projects, and more. A host of agencies such as the Conservation Authorities, school boards, and non-profit and cooperative housing associations have responsibilities that contribute to the quality of life in Ottawa. Finally, individuals and community groups do much already to define public issues and solutions and their on-going participation is essential to implementing this Plan.

Each of these diverse entities, groups and interests has resources to bring to the table, whether they are financial, knowledge-based, motivational, or physical. The City will make the best use of this web of resources by seeking out new partnerships and innovative approaches to achieving the vision laid out in this Plan.