

# Rural Settlement Strategy

## 2008 Official Plan Review



City of Ottawa  
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## Foreword

The City’s review of the rural policies in the Official Plan was under taken to: fulfil a requirement the *Planning Act* that the Plan be reviewed every five years; bring the Plan into consistency the new Provincial Policy Statement; incorporate changes to the *Planning Act*; and address issues identified by the rural community

The purpose of this Rural Settlement Strategy is to provide direction for the physical development of the rural area and to position policies for development in rural Ottawa within the context of the city as a whole. The most important tool for doing this, and the primary focus of this report, is the Official Plan. But not everything is appropriately delivered through an official plan. Some aspects of this Strategy are procedural – relating to how the City does business. Many more recommendations delivered by residents to support the Review are not particularly strategic, solely rural-oriented or impact the Official Plan. While not included as strategies, these recommendations have been documented along with actions that the City has or will take in regard to these matters.

The following strategic recommendations are categorised in two areas:

- those supporting changes to the Official Plan
- those that recommend other actions outside of the Official Plan

		<b>Summary of Proposed Strategies</b>
Overall Strategy	Official Plan	1) Support continued development in both Villages and outside villages in Country Lot Subdivisions
Villages	Official Plan	2) Recognize villages as an integral part of the city. 3) Manage growth in villages to ensure that the pace and amount of growth retains the rural nature of villages and can be supported by existing or planned infrastructure and community facilities. 4) Ensure that any major change in a village is supported by a community design plan. 5) Provide a process for all village plans to undergo a policy review every five years. 6) Promote the development of villages as complete communities.
Villages	Other Actions	7) Prepare Village Design Guidelines to provide guidance to new development and public works in order to conserve Village character. 8) Establish priorities for the preparation and review of Village Plans.

	<b>Summary of Proposed Strategies</b>
<i>General Rural Areas and Rural Natural Features</i> <i>Official Plan</i>	9) <i>Encourage the development of Conservation Subdivisions in the General Rural Area as a means to maintain rural character and protect the Natural Heritage System.</i>
<i>Rural Services and Groundwater</i> <i>Official Plan</i>	10) <i>Incorporate the Groundwater Management Strategy, approved by Council in 2003, into the Official Plan and the Infrastructure Master Plan</i> 11) <i>Enhance the language in the Official Plan to commit to including innovative technologies in any assessment of public servicing alternatives.</i>
<i>Rural Services and Groundwater</i> <i>Other actions</i>	12) <i>Implement Phase 2 of the Groundwater Management Strategy</i> 13) <i>Co-operate in research, groundwater monitoring and the promotion of sustainable servicing technologies</i> 14) <i>Complete and adopt Hydrogeological and Terrain Analysis Guidelines.</i> 15) <i>Develop and disseminate information about “Best Practices” for the maintenance and operation of private water and wastewater systems.</i>
<i>Agricultural Resources</i> <i>Official Plan</i>	16) <i>Removing existing policies that are inconsistent with Provincial Policy Statement..</i> 17) <i>Permit the consideration of variances to the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) for expanding livestock operations.</i>
<i>Agricultural Resources</i> <i>Other actions</i>	18) <i>Undertake a review the City’s LEAR evaluation system.</i> 19) <i>Ensure that farmers are consulted when any new non-farm development is proposed adjacent to their land.</i> 20) <i>Review new municipal regulations and ensure that they do not inadvertently prejudice accepted farming practice.</i> 21) <i>Continue to actively promote local farming initiatives and products.</i>
<i>Natural Heritage System</i> <i>Official Plan</i>	22) <i>To provide made-in-Ottawa definitions of significant woodlands, wetlands, valleylands and wildlife habitat</i> 23) <i>To require Environmental Impact Statements when development is proposed within or adjacent to significant features, regardless of whether the feature is designated.</i> 24) <i>To strengthen the process for completing Environmental Impact Statements and the guidelines those apply.</i>
<i>Natural Heritage System</i> <i>Other actions</i>	25) <i>The City’s initiatives towards compensation to owners of wetlands and other environmental lands will focus on a stronger commitment to publicly-</i>

	<b>Summary of Proposed Strategies</b>
	<i>funded stewardship initiatives</i>
<i>Mineral Aggregate Resources</i> <i>Official Plan</i>	<i>No Action required</i>





### 1. *Introduction*

#### a. **Rural Ottawa**

The City of Ottawa is unique among cities in Ontario. Soon to exceed 1 million people, it is the most highly populated urban centre outside of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. It is also among the Province's most geographically extensive areas. Fully 90% of the city's 2,760 square kilometres lies outside of the urban boundary, in the rural area.

Even after accounting for the protection of significant rural resources, there are hundreds of hectares of land generally available for development. And, the development opportunity provided in these areas is totally different from what is offered in the urban area. A market for this lifestyle continues to exist at a fairly consistent level.

In addition, the City boasts 26 villages. While rural residents generally look for the same sort of liveable community as do urban dwellers, they value the slower pace of growth and the perceived enriched quality of life in villages.

So what sorts of tensions have driven the debate on the rural settlement strategy?

With amalgamation, some residents feel they have lost touch with City Hall. They are not consulted early enough on matters affecting them and they believe they have no information on local concerns such as proposed developments. There is a perception that Provincial and municipal land-use policy is 'urban-centric' but has a much greater impact on individual landowners in the rural area than it does in the urban area. For example, rural residents are restricted from creating a single lot in an Agricultural Resource Area but urban expansion can remove hundreds of hectares of agricultural land at a time.

There is a desire to have a made-in-Ottawa solution to land-use issues that arise in Ottawa. Finally, there is no consensus within the rural area on policy direction. As much variability exists within a group of rural residents as does between rural and urban residents.

Given these sentiments, the objective is to develop a rural settlement strategy that is community driven. This report delivers that strategy.

#### b. **Purpose of the Rural Settlement Strategy**

The purpose of the Rural Settlement Strategy is to provide direction for the physical development of the rural area and to position these policies within the context of the city as a whole.

The most important tool for implementing the rural settlement strategy, and the primary focus of this report, is the Official Plan. The Official Plan provides a vision of the future growth of the city and a policy framework to guide its physical development for a 20-year planning period. Some of the policies in the Official Plan apply to the entire city. The citywide policies include such matters as the provision of sufficient and affordable housing, energy and air quality, the protection of the natural environment and the regulation of development on hazard lands. Some policies are exclusively rural or have a greater impact on the rural area such as the protection of agricultural resource lands, country lot development, the protection of significant wetlands, mineral resources and village policies.

But not everything is appropriately delivered through an official plan. Typically the scope of the Official Plan is as defined by the *Planning Act* and is limited to physical land use. In Ottawa a larger initiative was undertaken in 2003 to prepare a suite of growth management plans. These are being reviewed and updated on their own schedules and may provide opportunities to address some additional rural growth management issues.

Finally, some aspects of the rural settlement strategy are procedural – relating to how the City does business. Many of these are not particularly strategic or solely rural-oriented. However they are part of the package delivered by residents to support the strategy. A document outlining these recommendations is attached at Annex A.

The proposed Strategy has the following scope:

- Building Strong Communities
  - Growth Management in the Rural Area
  - Villages (Settlement Areas)
  - General Rural Areas
  - Rural Services and Groundwater
- Wise management of Resources
  - Agricultural Resource Areas
  - Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas
  - Environmental Areas in the rural Areas

This report makes *strategic* recommendations in the following two areas:

- to support proposed changes to the Official Plan
- to recommend other actions outside of the Official Plan

The Report also collects together all of the Procedural recommendations of the rural working groups and identifies how they will be dealt with.

### **c. Public Consultation**

At the Rural Summit held in 2005, rural residents stated that they want to be consulted early and have more say in the policy directions in the Official Plan that impact the rural area. As a consequence, the City adopted an intensive public process that had the residents create working groups on specific topic areas. Each group prepared a set of recommendations to amend the Official Plan or to change the way things are done at City Hall. Annex A provides a comprehensive list of all recommendations and the staff response to each. Of the 71 land-use recommendations made by the working groups, 62 are recommended for inclusion or are already found in the Official plan. Of 116 procedural recommendations, 110 have already been implemented or staff are pursuing means to implement these.

Table 1 following, identifies key milestones during the preparation of the rural settlement strategy.

**Table 1- Public Consultation for the Rural Settlement Strategy**

Date	Event	Outcome
March 2007	Rural Workshop 1	Issue identification and establishment of working groups: Development in Villages Development outside of Villages Rural Servicing Agriculture Process
May - Sept 2007	4 of the Rural working groups met regularly to discuss issues.	Working groups publish discussion papers with recommendations.
Nov 2007	Rural Café -Rural Workshop 2	Working Group presentation of reports and public feedback on Group recommendations. Staff presentation of recommendations on compensation
Oct -Dec 2007	"Ottawa Talks" - Online consultation	Public feedback on the working group recommendations via online chat rooms
Sept 08 - Jan 07	Agricultural Working group meets	Issue consolidation and working group report containing recommendations published in January 2008.
April 2008	Staff Preliminary Proposals released	Presented to Committee and publish on the Web
May 2008	Rural Workshop 3	Staff response to Rural Working Group recommendations and public comments presented and staff preliminary proposals for Official Plan review released for public comment
May -June 2008	Information meetings	Explanation of Staff Preliminary Proposals to community and special interest groups. This included meetings organized by Ward Councillors.
July 2008	Consultation on staff Preliminary Proposals closed	Public comments received and reviewed

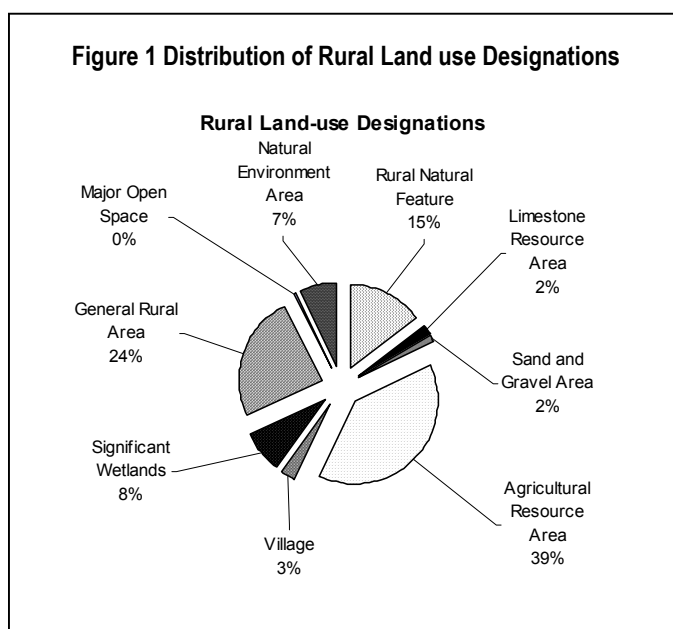
## 2. Profile of the Rural Area

### a. Landscape

The City of Ottawa is 2,760 square km in area and despite the fact that 90% of the total population of 870,000 lives in the urban area, the city is overwhelmingly rural when it comes to land area.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Official Plan land-use designations, which roughly reflect the landscape characteristics of rural Ottawa.

Close to 40% of the land is within an Agricultural Resource Area designation. Another 40% is marginal and forested lands in a General Rural Area or Rural Natural Feature designation, which permit residential and non-residential development. Significant Wetlands and Natural Environment Areas comprise 15% and the remaining designations, which include 26 villages, together comprise balance of the rural area.



## b. Population

The rural area has consistently attracted approximately 10% of the total city population growth and approximately 9% of the total household growth.

**Table 2 - Populations and Households**

	1976	1986	1996	2006
Urban Population	473,040	547,605	650,405	785,108
Rural Population	47,435	59,035	70,695	85,654
Total Population	520,475	606,640	721,100	870,762
Urban Households	160,735	209,765	253,285	321,417
Rural Households	13,580	18,375	23,265	29,796
Total Households	174,315	228,140	276,550	351,213

Source: Statistics Canada

The relationships between the rural and urban populations and the total population of the city are shown in Table 2.

Historically a little over 40% of the rural population has been accommodated in the 26 designated Villages with the balance living in rural estate lots, scattered country lots or on farms as shown in Table 3.

## c. Employment

The Rural area accounts for about 4 % of Ottawa's Jobs. The largest sector assigned to the rural area is the construction sector.

Of the total 22,000 jobs, one quarter are found in villages, one quarter in rural industrial/business parks and half are scattered throughout the rural area.

The majority of the rural workforce commutes to urban locations to work. Based on the 2005 origin/destination survey, six out of every 10 people in the rural workforce commute to urban Ottawa, one out of 10 commutes outside of the City and three out of 10 work in rural Ottawa.

**Table 3 - Employment by Sector in the Rural Area**

Employment by Major Sectors	Rural Employment 2006	
	Employment	Locations
Primary	1134	62
Utilities	57	8
Construction	4085	433
Manufacturing	1571	123
Wholesale	885	94
Retail	1677	262
Transportation and Warehousing	1367	79
Information and Cultural	136	32
Finance and Insurance	224	41
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	325	77
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1047	257
Management of Companies and Enterprises	337	8
Administrative & Support, Waste Management & Remediation Services	1814	151
Education Services	1235	68
Health Care and Social Assistance	870	97
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2409	102
Accommodation and Food Services	648	92
Other Services	1499	370
Federal Public Administration	0	0
Provincial Public Administration	15	1
Local Public Administration	440	13
Other Government	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21775</b>	<b>2370</b>

Source; City of Ottawa Employment Survey

### 3. **Current Rural Land-Use Policies**

#### a. **Strategic Directions Related to Rural Development**

The Official Plan currently is driven by a set of strategic directions, most of which apply to the City as a whole. Figure 2 includes those current directions that have a rural application. The consultation to date raises questions about the relevance of that direction that says “rural development will be directed to Villages”. This is discussed later in this report where it is recommended that this direction be changed.

**Figure 2 - Official Plan Directions with Rural Application**

<u>Strategic Directions</u>
<p><b><u>Managing Growth</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The City will manage growth by directing it to the urban area where services already exist or where they can be provided efficiently.</li><li>▪ Rural development will be directed to Villages to enhance their vitality, with provision for Village expansion where it is economically feasible and environmentally sound.</li></ul>
<p><b><u>Providing Infrastructure</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A transportation system that emphasizes transit, walking and cycling will be built.</li><li>▪ Development in the rural area will be primarily on the basis of private individual services where they are safe and environmentally sound.</li></ul>
<p><b><u>Maintaining Environmental Integrity</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Air quality will be supported by a transportation system that emphasizes transit, walking and cycling, and by policies that protect forests, wetlands and other natural environment areas.</li><li>▪ Provincially and locally significant wetlands and forests will be conserved.</li><li>▪ The City will preserve natural features and the integrity of natural systems by directing land use and development in a way and to locations that maintain ecosystem functions over time.</li><li>▪ Greenspaces will be valued and protected for their environmental, cultural heritage, recreational, educational and aesthetic qualities.</li></ul>
<p><b><u>Creating Liveable Communities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The City will provide opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing throughout the rural and urban areas.</li><li>▪ Growth will be managed in ways that create complete communities with a good balance of facilities and services to meet people’s everyday needs, including schools, community facilities, parks, a variety of housing, and places to work and shop.</li><li>▪ The City will provide for a wide range of rural and urban economic activities in suitable locations.</li><li>▪ The design of the city, the maintenance of greenspace and the high quality of life will enhance the attractiveness of the city for business development.</li><li>▪ Familiar landscapes and heritage buildings will be maintained despite on-going change.</li><li>▪ Rural communities will continue to be valued for their distinct economies and lifestyles.</li><li>▪ Attention to design will help create attractive communities where buildings, open space and transportation work well together.</li><li>▪ The process of community building in the urban and rural area will be open and inclusive.</li><li>▪ Agricultural lands will be preserved for future generations and mineral resources will be protected for extraction.</li></ul>

#### b. **Village policies**

Villages are identified on Schedule A of the Official Plan. The boundary of each village is fixed and an Official Plan Amendment is required to change it, based on a demonstrated need for additional land and the appropriateness of the location. The expansion of a designated Village requires the completion of a Community Design Plan to translate the policies of the Official Plan into detailed policies for the community and to carry forward the community vision and character.

Official Plan polices for villages currently permit the range of uses that are permitted in the urban area but obviously at a smaller scale. Retail/commercial service facilities are limited to 10,000 square metres of gross leasable area. Also, the scale of all development is often limited by the reliance on private individual wells and septic systems.

**c. Policies for Development Outside of Villages**

The rural area outside of villages is identified in the Official Plan by a number of land-use designations. Of these the majority of new growth will occur in the General Rural Area and the Rural Natural Features Area and the Carp Road Corridor Employment Area designations on Schedule A.

The General Rural Area provides opportunities for a variety of non-residential land uses that are appropriate for a rural location and residential development that does not interfere with the planned expansion of the urban area or villages.

Within the General Rural Area and Rural Natural Features designation, residential development is permitted as Estate Lot subdivisions and severed country lots. New residential lots must have a minimum area of 0.8 ha and only one lot can be created by severance from a lot of record that exceeds a specified size. Lots can be also created by plan of subdivision. Rural development in excess of 40 lots will not be considered unless the servicing capacity and water quality is confirmed in existing development.

The Plan permits commercial, industrial and recreational uses that must locate in the rural area because they have large land area requirements or present compatibility issues with urban or village locations subject to a zoning change. While existing zoned rural industrial parks are the preferred location for new uses the policies are flexible to encourage local business. Commercial uses and retail (up to 1,000 sq metres) that provide a local service function are encouraged to locate in villages but are also permitted where they provide local service needs and the needs of the travelling public.

The Carp Road Corridor Employment Area provides for a more intense mix of employment and industrial uses that include aggregate resource and associated fabrication industries, high technology businesses, wood an metal fabrications environmental services and other similar uses. This area also incorporates the Carp Airport, which will provide a range of employment and economic development opportunities.

The Rural Natural Features Area designation includes the same development policies as the General Rural Area designation. However, as these lands include elements of the Natural Heritage System, development is only permitted in these areas where an Environmental Impact Statement demonstrates that any significant features and functions will not be impacted.

**d. Agricultural Policies**

The *Prime Agricultural Land* is identified on Schedule A of the City's Official Plan as the Agricultural Resource Area designation. The policy framework of the City's Official Plan has two objectives:

- 1) protecting the lands identified as Agricultural Resource land from loss to other uses and
- 2) ensuring that land uses that would result in conflicts with agricultural operations are not established in or adjacent to these lands.

For the most part the land use polices in the Official Plan support these objectives by restricting the use and development of these lands to agriculture and agriculturally-related uses.

**e. Mineral Aggregate Resource Policies**

The Official Plan designates both Sand and Gravel and Limestone Resources Areas. These resources were identified through a comprehensive study undertaken for the 1997 Regional Official Plan. Permitted non-extraction uses include farming, forestry and other non residential uses provided they do not prevent the opening of new or the extension of existing pit or quarry operations on land within these designations. Current polices restrict residential development on land abutting the aggregate resource designations and require a separation distances for new development of 500m in the case of Limestone Resources Areas and 300 m for Sand and Gravel Resources.

**f. Rural Servicing and Groundwater Resource Policies**

The City's policies for rural servicing and for the protection of groundwater resources are found in both the Official Plan and the Infrastructure Master Plan. Watershed and Subwatershed planning is the ecological basis for land-use planning and these plans are to be a precursor to growth and development in many parts of the City. The intention is that most rural development will be on the basis of private individual wells and septic systems. However, public services (communal or central) will be considered in the rural area:

- To support growth in a village by a boundary change or intensification of uses
- To remedy a public health situation, or
- To support a unique economic development opportunity

In any of these cases a full range of servicing options will be examined and evaluated as part of the Environmental Assessment.

Development may be restricted in areas where the City's monitoring and characterization of the groundwater resource has indicated that a significant resource function exists or where degradation of the resource function may occur. Where wellhead protection areas have been identified on Schedule K, the Plan outlines the requirements for servicing studies and the possibility of zoning restrictions being applied within these areas. The Plan provides guidance to the study requirements for the wells and septic systems in subdivisions, and severances. It also explains where the City will consider small water and wastewater works.

The Infrastructure Master Plan addresses in more detail, municipal well systems, rural development on private water and wastewater systems, groundwater monitoring, public education and stewardship programs.

**g. Natural Environment including Wetlands**

The City protects woodlands, wetlands and other natural heritage features in its Official Plan in several ways. The Plan designates features on Schedules A and B in the Plan and attaches policies to each type of land about how it can be used. The natural environment designations in the Plan are;

- Natural Environment Areas and provincially significant wetlands, where no development is permitted;
- Rural Natural Features, where an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required to support development; and
- Urban Natural Features, which are owned by the City.

In addition Flood Plains, areas of Organic Soils and Unstable Slopes are identified on Schedule K. In addition to designations, citywide policies in the Plan guide development in terms of the kinds of studies that are required and the measures to be taken to protect surface and

groundwater, fish habitat, and the habitat of endangered and threatened species within the identified natural areas and on adjacent lands.



## 4. Managing Growth in the Rural Area

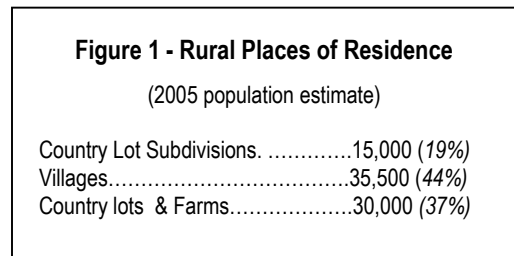
### a. Background

Projections prepared by the City show an overall demand for 146,200 dwelling units by 2031. It is estimated that approximately 9% of these, or 13,300 units will be in the rural area. As will be described in later sections, it appears that there is potential for approximately 7,500 additional units within existing village boundaries and approximately 15,700 units in the General Rural Area. On top of this is a great deal of potential in the Rural Natural Feature designation and on vacant lots of record (estimated to be in the thousands).

The largest challenge is building consensus around the differing philosophies for managing growth in the rural area. A number of potentially contradictory views exist.

First, the Official Plan states “rural development will be directed to Villages to enhance their vitality, with provision for Village expansion where it is economically feasible and environmentally sound.” However, more rural development actually occurs outside of villages and no policies exist to direct development to villages. In 2003 the staff-recommended policies for the rural area did not permit country lot subdivisions. A decision was made by Council to insert the provision for subdivisions but no associated change was made to the statement of village focus. So the inconsistency was introduced.

Second, the Provincial Policy Statement (P P S) directs municipalities to permit “limited residential development” in the rural area outside of villages. However, no indication is given as to what is meant by “limited”. The City of Ottawa currently directs country lot subdivisions to only two land-use designations: General Rural Area and Rural Natural Features (with conditions). The priority at the City, consistent with the PPS, is to protect rural resources in which little development is permitted. Based on our best estimates, the rural population is distributed as shown in Figure 2. About 56% of the rural population lives outside villages on severed lots, in hamlets and in country lot subdivisions and about 44 % live in Villages However, country lot subdivisions represent about 19% of rural development. The majority of rural development has occurred on scattered lots, on farms and in hamlets. Given that subdivisions therefore account for fewer than 3% of the City’s residential growth, should this not be characterized as “limited”?



Third, the community, although voicing all views, predominantly felt that there would not be capacity in the villages to support the demand for rural lifestyles. This was mainly in response to an overwhelming view that village growth should be slow-paced and limited so as not to overwhelm the village way of life. With that in mind the working group made various calculations as to the capacity of the General Rural Area for development at different development densities.

Finally, to make matters more complex, The Terms of Settlement, accepted by the Ontario Municipal Board for an appeal to the 2003 Official Plan requires the City of Ottawa to consider the ‘no country lot subdivision option’ in this Official Plan review.

## **b. Recommended Direction**

Growth management is discussed in more detail within the Village section and the General Rural Area section below. However, some key conclusions are included here and culminate in a recommendation to continue with current development policies.

The development of a Rural Settlement Strategy was a community-based process. The emphasis was on workshops, intensive working group meetings and proposals written by the residents. Staff took the position that if the residents' recommendations were consistent with the PPS, staff would likely support them. The residents said that they do not want to prohibit country lot subdivisions but that they had some specific concerns. In particular, concern was expressed about the potential cumulative effect on groundwater and the loss of wooded areas. These are addressed later in the report.

Taken as a package, it is felt that the proposed rural policies are consistent with the PPS. They allow country lot subdivisions to continue to locate in General Rural Areas and in Rural Natural Features provided an Environmental Impact Statement is provided. Policies are proposed to support community-based planning in villages and mechanisms to support a slower, more rural pace of growth as well.

What about the direction to consider the "no country lot development option"? In the end, the following factors contributed to its rejection:

- Approximately 2% of households are demanding or choosing this lifestyle option
- There is no documentation of issues that are peculiar to country lot subdivisions. Some participants identified them as unsustainable. But, the same issues exist for most villages. These are :
  - potential cumulative effect on groundwater;
  - contribution to climate change through the high level of commuting by private automobile to the urban area for work and shopping and other activities;
  - loss of rural landscape
  - negative impact on resource-based activities such as agriculture
- Policies exist or will be introduced to address the largest concerns:
  - Existing policies
    - All important resource areas are protected from development including agriculture, mineral aggregate, natural resource area
    - Separation distance from villages and urban areas
    - Separation distance from natural environment areas
    - Large lots to assist in the safe operation of wells and septic systems
    - Minimum distance separation from agricultural operations
  - Proposed policies
    - Proposed conservation subdivision to address the protection of wooded areas
    - Improved groundwater monitoring and hydrogeology studies
- No appetite exists to launch a battle with rural residents on this matter unless clear evidence exists of negative impacts of country lot subdivisions as compared with villages.

## **c. Proposed Overall Strategy**

### Policies Impacting the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 1. Support continued development in both Villages and outside villages in Country Lot Subdivisions*

## 5. Villages

### a. Description

The Official Plan designates 26 Villages, which accommodate approximately 4% of the City's population and 44% of the rural population. These communities will continue to vary in size and character. Villages play a significant historical role and typically developed at the junctions of major roads and railways, where they could efficiently provide retail, educational and other services to the surrounding rural communities. Development traditionally occurred on smaller lots serviced by private wells and septic systems. These historical settlements provide opportunities for a less urban lifestyle and play an important role in defining the character and diversity of the City.

Table 4 identifies the villages in order of size. Today all but the five Villages of Vars, Manotick, Richmond, Carp and Munster, are developed solely on private wells and septic systems.

### b. Growth Potential in Villages

There were approximately 11,800 dwelling units in villages in 2006. Based on the amount of vacant land and information on proposed residential lot creation, it is estimated that there is a theoretical potential for 7,561 additional units without any change in current village boundaries, as shown in Table 4. This estimate assumes that all vacant land will be developed for residential purposes. Many factors may affect the actual lot potential including the density of future development and the willingness of the landowner to proceed with development. However, these data imply a village residential land supply that exceeds 30 years. The planning period of the Official Plan is 20 years, so there is no requirement today for village boundary expansion.

### c. Public Consultation

The community was very vocal about the future development of Villages throughout the public consultation. This was stimulated in large part by the proposed development of part of the Village of Manotick and the concern,

**Table 4 - Potential Growth Capacity in Ottawa's Rural Villages**

Village	Village Area (Hectares)	Population (2006 est.)	Dwellings (2006 est.)	Potential Capacity 2006 (dwellings)	Total Dwelling Unit Potential
Marionville	33	48	16	82	98
Burritts' Rapids	14	69	23	3	26
Ashton	15	108	36	7	43
Galetta	35	177	59	25	84
Carlsbad Springs	31	240	80	2	82
Kinburn	68	288	96	102	198
Dunrobin	50	294	98	26	124
Kenmore	73	324	108	114	222
Fallowfield	72	372	124	21	145
Sarsfield	56	447	149	27	176
N-D-des-Champs	59	489	163	27	190
Vernon	154	612	204	182	386
Kars	188	648	216	97	313
Fitzroy Harbour	150	657	219	214	433
Vars	216	1035	345	283	628
Munster	104	1320	440	0	440
Navan	282	1443	481	115	596
Carp	264	1452	484	700	1184
North Gower	638	1791	597	520	1117
Cumberland	432	1812	604	140	744
Metcalfe	425	2136	712	419	1131
Constance Bay	679	2652	884	190	1074
Osgoode	382	2793	931	298	1229
Richmond	830	4308	1436	1848	3284
Greely	1212	4683	1561	1659	3220
Manotick	841	5250	1750	460	2210
<b>Total</b>	<b>7303</b>	<b>35448</b>	<b>11816</b>	<b>7561</b>	<b>19377</b>

Source: Rural Residential Land Survey - 2006 update - City of Ottawa

among others, that the proposed pace of growth could overwhelm the village. The working group supported many of the current Official Plan polices but sought:

- More emphasis on the contribution of villages in defining the character of the city;
- More emphasis on integrated planning for growth and the provision of infrastructure to support growth; and
- Mechanisms to ensure that communities have a greater say in the planning for their future;
- Mechanisms to ensure that Villages continue to grow at a slower pace and at lower densities than the suburban communities.

The rural community was supportive of the Community Design Plan process as the means of achieving their objectives.

#### **d. Policy Challenges**

The current Official Plan is generally consistent with the PPS with respect to villages. One matter that could be clarified is the point at which expansions to villages will be considered. Typically the boundary is considered in the context of a comprehensive review of the village through the preparation of a community design plan. It should be made more specific that the evaluation of the need for expansion should consider all village lands within the City and not just those in the village in question.

There is an overwhelming desire to see villages develop as complete communities with the necessary community facilities, retail and service functions and range in housing types. The Official Plan cannot cause this to happen. So many rural residents work in the urban area and pass by extensive facilities in the urban area on their way home. Also, certain population thresholds need to be met to justify a community centre or arena. Typically these will be in more accessible locations. What the Official Plan can do is engage the residents in planning for their communities through the community design plan process. Also, the Plan provides the opportunity for a wide range of uses even if it cannot cause them to happen.

Challenges around rural servicing are discussed in Section 7 following.

#### **e. Proposed Village Strategy**

The overall land-use strategy for villages follows.

#### Policies Impacting the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 2. Recognize villages as an integral part of the city.*

The preamble to the Section on managing growth in the city has been expanded to incorporate statements in support of villages as part of the defining character of the city as a whole.

*STRATEGY 3. Manage growth in villages to ensure that the pace and amount of growth retains the rural nature of villages and can be supported by existing or planned infrastructure and community facilities.*

The section of the Plan on urban and village boundaries has been revised and contains policies on:

- a. Limiting the planning period to 10-years for villages so that no village has large tracts of vacant land within its boundary;

- b. Obligating the City to undertake a review of village plans every five years to determine the need for additional village land;
- c. Permitting an assessment of village land requirements to be done at the time of a community design plan for a specific village but only if all villages are considered in the analysis;
- d. Requiring all boundary expansions to be supported by a community design plan.

The section of the Plan on community design plans will be revised to emphasize the need to assess the community facility requirements, infrastructure requirements and the impact on the character of the village.

*STRATEGY 4. Ensure that any major change in a village is supported by a community design plan.* Village policies have been changed to ensure that not only is a community design plan completed when a boundary expands, but also if public services are contemplated for a village or if large tracts of vacant land within the village are being developed.

*STRATEGY 5. Provide a process for all village plans to undergo a policy review every five years.* All villages have a secondary plan and/or a community design plan. Many have not been addressed for a number of years. Revised policies recognize the differences in sizes and growth rates of villages and provide for a simplified review process for villages experiencing little change every five-years.

*STRATEGY 6. Promote the development of villages as complete communities.* Policies have been re-organized so that a package of policies falls under the heading of Building Liveable Communities. In addition, cross-references to policies on affordable housing, compatibility and greenspace targets have been included.

#### Actions outside of the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 7. Prepare Village Design Guidelines to provide guidance to new development and public works in order to conserve Village character.*  
The policies commit the City to preparing guidelines to deal with such matters as village mainstreets, heritage and village residential styles. These will be completed before the revised Official Plan is approved.

*STRATEGY 8. Establish priorities for the preparation and review of Village Plans.*  
Since they cannot all be completed in the same year, the work program should identify the order of priority. The process used to review each Village Plan would be governed by the complexity of the land-use issues.

## 6. General Rural Areas and Rural Natural Features

### a. Description

The intent of the General Rural Area designation is to accommodate a variety of land uses that are appropriate for a rural location and a limited amount of residential development where such development will not preclude continued agricultural and non-residential uses. The Rural Natural Features designation contains woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat that are identified as significant within the context of the City of Ottawa. Any development within or adjacent to these lands must be assessed in terms of its impact. Together, these comprise about 39% of Ottawa’s Rural Area and provide for residential, commercial and industrial development. The balance of the rural area comprises resource lands such as Prime Agricultural Areas, Wetland and Significant Forests, which are discussed in more detail in Section 9 that follows.

There are approximately 50,000 people and 20,000 dwelling units in the rural area outside of villages in the General Rural Area, Rural Natural Features, Agricultural Resource Areas, Mineral Aggregate Areas. These include farms, hamlets, scattered rural lots and country lot subdivisions. Rural lots are an alternative to urban and village housing in a more rural setting, with access to larger and sometimes cheaper lots, and providing more opportunities for owners to build their own homes. Rural residential development is totally reliant on private water and sewerage services. The rural area outside of villages provides opportunities for a wide range of employment opportunities in the form of industrial and commercial use that service the farming industry, the travelling public or require an extensive land area or isolation from other uses. The rural area also provides many of the City’s tourist and recreational facilities.

### b. Growth Potential outside of Villages

Table 5 shows the total rural population and dwellings outside of villages (i.e. includes farms and hamlets etc.). It also shows the estimated additional unit capacity in General Rural Areas if the land is developed for country lot subdivisions.

The 2006 update of the Rural Residential Land Survey estimated that there were over 13,000 hectares of land with potential for development in the General Rural designation alone. Other forested lands designated Rural Natural Features (RNF) also permit residential development. Since the intent of the RNF lands is to preserve the natural features and functions, it is impossible to estimate the potential future residential capacity of these lands. As in the Villages many factors may affect the amount of future growth including factors such as accessibility, groundwater capacity or the willingness of the landowner to proceed with development. Rural development is also more random and less predictable than urban or village development. However, these data imply a substantial land supply.

Table 5 - Development Capacity Outside Villages

Rural Area	Population (2006 Census)	Dwellings (2006 est.)	Est. Capacity in General Rural Lands (Dwellings)
North east	5,854	2,256	1,385
South East	14,125	5,099	3,275
South West	12,271	4,497	4,450
North West	17,994	6,381	6,589
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,250</b>	<b>20,239</b>	<b>15,699</b>

Source: Rural Residential Land Survey - 2006 update - City of Ottawa

### **c. Public Consultation**

The public consultation held throughout 2007 highlighted a diversity of opinion on the current City approach to development in the rural area. Some expressed concern that there is too much residential development while others felt that more was needed particularly in the form of residential severances and smaller lot sizes. Public consultation also revealed a huge dichotomy in the amount of development and planning control residents were comfortable with. Generally there was support for the protection of significant natural areas, agricultural and other resource areas but there were also a strongly held views related to land owners rights where land is protected for the public good. A more detailed discussion on the issue of Landowner Compensation is included at Annex 2

While there was no consensus on how much rural growth is acceptable the participants were clear in their desire to have policies that continue to allow development in the rural area while at the same time:

- Protecting rural character by managing growth in an orderly manner that preserves the natural landscape
- Managing and addressing the cumulative impact of development on groundwater and other resources.
- Maintaining choice of where people can live.
- Encouraging complete and sustainable communities that include rural services and employment and allow for development of the rural economy.

Detailed records of the public input are contained in the Rural Working Group Papers and a summary of feedback is included in the Staff response to the background papers at Annex A to this Document.

### **d. Policy Challenges**

The Provincial Policy Statement directs growth to the urban area and villages and allows “limited residential development”. This challenge is addressed in Section 7 below.

The Provincial Policy Statement seeks to ensure that rural development is compatible with the rural landscape and can be sustained by rural service levels. These are the two areas that the public raised as concerns as well.

In order to address the compatibility with the rural landscape, it is proposed that the policies be revised to support *Conservation Subdivisions*. These are subdivisions supporting a density of 0.8 ha per lot averaged over the whole site. Actual lot sizes may be smaller but a portion of the property that contributes to the natural heritage system in some manner will be held in common ownership and protected in perpetuity. Existing policies in the rural area already protect Agricultural Resources, Mineral Aggregate Resources and Natural Environment Resources as a priority over rural development.

While the community was divided over the merits of rural subdivisions, residents felt that they were entitled to provide building lots for family members, or as a means of providing income to assist in their retirement. Most of the residential development outside of villages has been accommodate on existing and severed lots. The Official Plan introduced controls on lot creation by severance as a means to limit rural development outside villages. In some cases this control permitted severances where previously they were not permitted or landowners had maximised

their severance potential and in other areas this policy restricted lot creation. The current policies place a limit of one lot by severance and only where the property has sufficient area to provide a retained parcel of 10 ha (25 acres) or more. This limitation minimises strip development along rural roads and reduces the fragmentation of rural land that resulted from historical severance practices. Where a number of lots are to be created, the subdivision process is preferred since it is supported by hydrogeological and geotechnical studies. Applications for a severance do not require these studies and hence the minimum lot size of 0.8 ha provides a reasonable safeguard in a variety of development scenarios that both water supply and sewerage system requirements can be met on the new lot. No changes are proposed to the severance policies.

With respect to the City's role in ensuring the sustainability of rural services, legal responsibility is fragmented among a number of agencies, which limits the actions that the City can take. The proposed directions are to improve the monitoring of groundwater resources and enhance the terms of reference for hydrogeology studies. This is discussed in Section 7 that follows.

**e. Proposed General Rural Areas and Rural Natural Features Strategy**  
Policies Impacting the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 9. Encourage the development of Conservation Subdivisions in the General Rural Area as a means to maintain rural character and protect the Natural Heritage System.*  
Policies are to be added to Section 3.7.2 of the Official Plan to define the requirements associated with these subdivisions.

## **7. Rural Services and Groundwater**

**a. Description**

Outside of the City's Public service areas, all development in the rural area is serviced by private individual well and wastewater systems. Public service areas are found in the urban area and in some of the Villages where public water and/or public wastewater services have been provided. New public service areas, which include communal systems, are only permitted:

- To support growth strategies for the urban area
- To support growth in a village by a boundary change or intensification of uses
- To remedy a public health situation, or
- To support a unique economic development opportunity

Ottawa is blessed by a relatively good supply of groundwater but quality varies considerably throughout the rural area and can place limitations on the ability to accommodate development. Protecting the quality and quantity of groundwater is an environmental as well as a public health issue. Because wells and wastewater disposal systems are privately owned, the ongoing viability of rural groundwater supplies relies on private owners understanding the proper operation of their systems in order to protect their own health and that of their neighbours. It also requires the due diligence of developers and the City when designing and approving new development and when installing wells and septic systems.

**b. Public Comments**

The proliferation of agencies involved in the management of groundwater resources has led to some public confusion about individual responsibilities and, as a result, 'who to turn to with a problem'. In their discussion of major issues, the Groundwater Resources Working Group



touched on a number of areas related to the City's role in groundwater management including its role in: coordinating its own work and the work of others; identifying organizational responsibilities and where to obtain information; and collecting data and monitoring the impact of development on aquifers and on existing wells. The Working Group's concerns appeared to relate more to the effective and efficient implementation of current Official Plan and Infrastructure Master Plan policy rather than moving in a different direction.

There was also considerable concern in the rural area about the impact of development on existing wells and the cumulative impact of development over time. Therefore the main objectives was to improve the City's understanding of groundwater resources by monitoring, data collection and analysis of aquifers and to ensure private owners protect the aquifers by ensuring quality installation and maintenance of individual wells and septic systems. Some citizens wanted the City to take a more proactive regulatory role others preferred better Public education and communications.

With respect to communal services, concerns were raised in a number of groups. There is a perception that the city is biased towards the "big pipe" solution when public services are required to support development in a village. Secondly, some participants expressed a desire to allow country lot subdivisions to proceed on private communal systems that are not currently permitted. Staff does not support this because the cost would be prohibitive and the City would ultimately be responsible for these systems.

#### **c. Policy Challenges**

Groundwater management is a shared responsibility in Ontario. Groundwater is considered a resource by the Province and there are a number of Ministries with interest and responsibilities including: the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The local Conservation Authorities (CA) are concerned about groundwater as a resource within their watershed areas and recently CAs are leading the development of Source Water Protection Plans under the *Clean Water Act*. The City regulates land use and development that impacts groundwater resources; it operates public drinking water systems including public communal wells and other utilities; and it organizes and delivers public health programs and educational materials. The proliferation of agencies involved in the management of groundwater resources leads to some confusion about the City's responsibilities and authority to regulate and manage groundwater resources. Most city actions will lie outside of land use policy in the Official plan.

#### **d. Proposed Rural Services and Groundwater Strategy**

##### Policies Impacting the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 10. Incorporate the Groundwater Management Strategy, approved by Council in 2003, into the Official Plan and the Infrastructure Master Plan*

*STRATEGY 11. Enhance the language in the Official Plan to commit to including innovative technologies in any assessment of public servicing alternatives.*

##### Actions outside of the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 12. Implement Phase 2 of the Groundwater Management Strategy.*

This will develop a framework to identify, prioritize and complete the activities in the strategy.

*STRATEGY 13. Co-operate in research, groundwater monitoring and the promotion of sustainable servicing technologies.*

These actions will inform City design guidelines, materials specifications, operation and maintenance practices and procedures, construction specifications and life-cycle cost recovery models

*STRATEGY 14. Complete and adopt Hydrogeological and Terrain Analysis Guidelines.*

These will provide consistent technical requirements for the conduct of hydrogeological studies and terrain analysis for developments utilising private services

*STRATEGY 15. Develop and disseminate information about "Best Practices" for the maintenance and operation of private water and wastewater systems.*

This will build upon information currently available and will include and community stewardship of groundwater resources

## 8. **Agricultural Resources**

### a. **Description**

Once accommodating a diverse set of farming activities, producing a wide range of food products, today Ottawa's agricultural sector mainly produces beef cattle, cash crops and dairy products. Similar to other areas, farming operations are under increasing pressure to expand and diversify in order to remain economically viable. Bigger farms and greater mechanisation provides fewer job opportunities for young people to break into this industry. Local consumer interests in locally grown and organic food products are increasing and if promoted will provide an opportunity for greater diversity in Ottawa's farming sector.

Approximately 88,900 hectares or almost 40% of rural Ottawa is currently set-aside for agricultural purposes. There are no specialty crop areas identified in Ottawa so this agricultural area represents land where the higher quality soils and ongoing farm operations predominate. These areas were identified for the 1997 Regional Official Plan by the "Land Evaluation and Area Review for Agriculture (LEAR)" process developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The Ministry's LEAR evaluation was tailored to suit Ottawa by a local Agricultural Advisory Committee comprised of local farmers, farming organizations and former municipal staff. Unlike earlier systems that relied solely on soil capability LEAR acknowledged other factors that affect viability for agricultural use. It also recognizes viable farm operations on poorer quality soils.

### b. **Public Comments**

The public consultation process for the Official Plan review revealed that the rural community has similar objectives as the City's Official Plan to support the protection of Agricultural Resource Land. Of major concern was the potential future loss of Agricultural land to urban expansion. They did not identify any problems with the current land use policies for the Agricultural Resource Area but did point out that the protection of a land resource alone will not protect or encourage a strong farming industry. They identified mechanisms other than land use policy to assist in supporting the industry.

The community's recommendations include:

1. *Review of the LEAR criteria* used to identify Agricultural resource areas in order to reflect modern agricultural practices and to make it more difficult to redesignate Agricultural Resource land to other uses.
2. *Review the Minimum Distance Separation MDS formula* or impose greater separation distances between new developments and existing farm operations and give greater flexibility for expanding farm operations.
3. *Pre-consult with farmers* where urban or village expansions or other development is proposed next to their farm operations.
4. *Review Municipal regulations* and ensure that they do not inadvertently prejudice accepted farming practice.
5. *The City should actively promote local farming initiatives and products* in the community and support efforts of local farm organisations to lobby for farm and food industry reforms, provincially and Federally.

Additional recommendations suggested that the Official Plan should be amended to:

- Give 'Farmers' additional rights to severances outside the Agricultural Resource Area that would not given to other landowners in those areas and

- Deal with landowner compensation and give individual landowners rights veto Planning decisions by the City.

### **c. Policy Challenges**

The current approach to the protection of Prime Agricultural Areas in the Official Plan is consistent with the Provincial Policy, with the exception of some remaining policies where terms need to be harmonised with the Provincial Policy and changes are required to remove policies that permit development at Highway interchanges and within existing hamlets situated in agricultural resource areas. The harmonisation of terms and removal of the conflicting policies is proposed as part of this review.

Addressing the competing objectives of protecting Agricultural land and addressing the land needs of expanding urban and village communities onto contiguous land is being addressed in part by intensification in the urban area and by directing any expansion of the urban boundary to General Rural land where ever possible.

Reviewing the LEAR evaluations system that is used to identify the Prime Agricultural Areas may lead to changes in land use designations but does not directly influence policy or form part of the Official Plan. Similarly Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) impacts development but resides outside of the Official Plan and is a provincial guideline. Reviewing LEAR requires considerable work and co-operation with the Province and the farming industry and cannot be completed as part of the current review. The City will take what ever opportunities that arise to provide input into the MDS when it is again revised by the province.

Many of the other recommendations are not addressed through land use policy and some factors influencing the Farming Industry are related to provincial, federal and international trade legislation.

Providing farmers severance opportunities not afforded to other landowners cannot be justified and is not recommended. The issue of compensation is of interest to many landowners and there are many opinions and approaches on how this matter should be handled by the City. This topics is addressed in more detail in Section xxx.

### **d. Proposed Agricultural Resources Strategies**

#### Policies Impacting the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 16. Removing existing policies that are inconsistent with Provincial Policy Statement.*

This will remove policies that a permit development in the Agricultural Resource Designation at Highway Interchanges and as infill within Hamlets.

*STRATEGY 17. Permit the consideration of variances to the Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) for expanding livestock operations.*

This may provide relief for expanding livestock operations adjacent to village and urban areas or other non-farm land uses.

#### Actions outside of the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 18. Undertaking a review the City's LEAR evaluation system.*

The review will use the revised LEAR criteria developed by the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs.

*STRATEGY 19. The City will ensure farmers are consulted when any new non-farm development is proposed adjacent to their land.*

This provides an opportunity to take into consideration potential plans for expansion of existing farm operations.

*STRATEGY 20. The City will review new municipal regulations and ensure that they do not inadvertently prejudice accepted farming practice.*

*STRATEGY 21. The City will continue to actively promote local farming initiatives and products in the community and elsewhere.*

This may include support for the efforts of local farm organisations to lobby for farm and food industry reforms, provincially and federally.

## **9. Environmental Areas (Natural Heritage System)**

### **a. Description**

Successive municipal governments have adopted policies to protect the city's environmental lands, including its rivers and streams, significant wetlands, and woodlands. Since the mid-1970s, the features that are the most visible on the ground, such as the South March Highlands, the Richmond Fen, and Mer Bleue—have been identified in the Official Plan or have had policies put in place to conserve or enhance the feature. In the mid-1990s, natural areas were reviewed and ranked citywide to identify those that were the most valuable. More than one-quarter of the urban and rural area of the City (27%) is now included in an environmental designation that either prohibits development or requires an environmental study to ensure that development does not impact the features and functions for which the land was identified.

As part of the 2003 Official Plan Review, the current suite of policies was reviewed to see whether the Official Plan designations and policies met the requirements of the Provincial Policy Statement. In 2007 the White Paper, titled “Ottawa’s Natural Environment System – How Well Is It Working?” described the gaps between Ottawa’s Official Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement. It compared a draft natural heritage system for the city, based on the best available information about forests, valleylands, and other features, with the land included in natural environment designations in the Official Plan. The paper found that 16% of the system mapped then was not included within a designation that protected significant natural features, and proposed that an environmental impact statement be required in such cases.

The review also found that the language of the Official Plan was different from the language in the Provincial Policy Statement. Where successive Official Plans identified natural features generally called “Natural Environment Areas” and “Rural Natural Features”, the Provincial Policy used terms such as “significant woodlands” and “significant wildlife habitat”. The review proposes to define these terms in the Plan and require an environmental study if development is proposed within or adjacent to them. This new requirement for an environmental study will help fill gap between the Provincial Policy and the Official Plan, without requiring new designations in the Plan.

### **b. Public Comments**

Public comment showed that many people believe the City is doing a poor job of protecting environmental lands, especially where development is proposed. Comments indicated a

perception that the City fails to enforce its own Official Plan policies and undervalues features such as meadows and urban greenspaces. There was general support for expanded requirements for Environmental Impact Statements and a need for a more consistent process and community input. The Rural Discussion Paper on Development Outside Villages questioned whether development should be continued within Rural Natural Features and sought definition of significant features and a review of how environmental impacts are assessed.

Following publication of the Preliminary Proposals in April 2008, the following themes emerged from the comments from agencies and others:

*All of the natural heritage system should be designated in the Plan.* Most of the natural heritage system is included in environmental designations, based on studies completed over the last 30 years. The areas outside the designated areas were primarily identified in 2008 using forest cover data from provincial sources dating back to the 1970s. Provincial data developed since then are incomplete with respect to forest cover in Ottawa. The various data sets are not sufficiently reliable to support new land use designations, and would require field verification. The proposed policies require such verification and an environmental impact study if significant features are present.

*The natural heritage system should/should not be shown on a map in the Official Plan.* The map of the natural heritage system included in the Preliminary Proposals in April 2008 created confusion with respect to whether the system was a new designation, and has therefore been removed from the current draft.

*The definition of the natural heritage system is too limited, especially with respect to how significant woodlands are defined.* Some comments requested a ranking of woodlands as high, medium or low-quality and indicated that more or different criteria should be used. A city-wide ranking was conducted in the mid-1990s and while the criteria might change somewhat if natural areas were re-evaluated today, that study remains a valuable resource. Rather than recreate this work, the City is focussing its environmental planning effort on subwatershed studies and environmental management plans to build the knowledge base.

*The natural heritage system policies are deficient in terms of the level of protection.* No changes have been proposed to Official Plan policies regarding the habitat of endangered and threatened species. The Ministry of Natural Resources is developing potential habitat mapping and has proposed consultation with the City in the months ahead. The Official Plan policies will be amended if required, once the process for protecting these areas has been clarified. Questions were also raised about natural areas identified by the Province. All the Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest approved by the Province and all the candidate areas except for one are included in designated areas or are located by a symbol, in the case of small, earth-science ANSIs. The exception is Horseshoe Bay Shores, a candidate regional ANSI that is an aquatic vegetation community submerged by the Ottawa River for much of the year.

### **c. Compensation**

There was widespread support for a suite of broadly-defined compensation measures. Acquisition or compensation for potentially-lost property value in principle was generally supported, but there was no agreement about how to structure such a program. Acquisition was not attractive to owners who had strong ties to the land—perhaps forged through generations of ownership—or who viewed public ownership as an intrusion that brought public access too close

to home. As a result, many called for a suite of initiatives that could respond to different owners' needs and said that these policies should be clear and voluntary on the part of landowners.

Compensation is not supported by any Provincial policy or direction. The major decision is whether the City should compensate landowners for the loss of development potential and value that may occur when their lands are identified as provincially significant wetland or some other environmental designation. Staff have proposed that the City concentrate its efforts on publicizing Provincial property tax reduction and exemption programs, enriching the stewardship funding available through the City's Rural Clean Water Program, and monitoring federal action on valuing ecological goods and services. Council has also requested a public education program on the value of wetlands and the need to maintain municipal drains, a program that would further support stewardship.

#### **d. Proposed Environmental Areas (Natural Heritage System) Strategies**

##### Policies Impacting the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 22. To provide made-in-Ottawa definitions of significant woodlands, wetlands, valleylands and wildlife habitat.*

This will ensure that it is clear that the features designated in the Official Plan are the significant features protected by the Provincial Policy Statement and that these features can be readily identified in the field.

*STRATEGY 23. To require Environmental Impact Statements when development is proposed within or adjacent to significant features, regardless of whether the feature is designated.*  
Since most significant features are already shown in the Plan and are protected, general guidance can be provided in the Plan and through the development review process to indicate what features are significant and what steps need to be taken to determine the need for further study.

*STRATEGY 24. To strengthen the process for completing Environmental Impact Statements and the guidelines that apply.*  
Draft guidelines are being prepared for public comment in 2009, to support protection of the natural heritage system.

##### Actions outside of the Official Plan

*STRATEGY 25. The City's initiatives towards compensation to owners of wetlands and other environmental lands will focus on a stronger commitment to publicly-funded stewardship initiatives.*  
This will include an education and awareness program on the value of wetlands and the need to maintain municipal drains and other drains.

**10. Mineral Aggregate Resources**

**a. Description**

Approximately 4% of rural Ottawa is land that contains economic volumes of Sand and Gravel or Limestone resources that is currently being extracted in licence pit and quarry operations or is preserved for future. This material is mostly use in construction industry for building and major and major public works. The quality, amount and the distribution of these resources is important because trucking costs are a significant component of the price of these materials.

Figure 4 identifies the amount of land designated in the Official Plan as either Sand and Gravel or Limestone Resources Areas. These resources were identified through a comprehensive study undertaken for the 1997 Regional Official Plan. Interim non-extraction uses that include farming forestry and other non-residential uses are permitted on lands not being extracted provided that they do not prevent the opening new or extension of existing pit or quarry operations on land within these designations. Current polices restrict residential development on land abutting the aggregate resource designations and require a separation distances for new development of; 500m in the case of Limestone Resources Areas; and 300 m for Sand and Gravel Resources.

<b>Figure 2 - Area of land in Aggregate Resource designations</b>	
Sand and Gravel Resource Area .....	3510 hectares
Limestone Resource Area .....	4042 hectares
Licensed Operations.....	118

**b. Public comments**

There were no recommendations coming from the rural working groups directly related to mineral extraction although the impact that pits and quarries can have on groundwater resources and surrounding residential development was a considerable concern. The evaluation and understanding of existing Groundwater conditions and more detailed scrutiny, by the City, of groundwater impacts of new a pits and quarries was recommended.

**c. Policy Challenges**

The Mineral Aggregate Policies and designations are considered to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and were not further evaluated as part of this Official Plan Review.

**d. Proposed Mineral Aggregate Resources Strategy**

No changes to the current approach to the protection of mineral resources in the Official Plan is required



## **Annex A - Rural Working Group Recommendations and Staff Responses**

## **Annex B -**

### ***Compensation Policy for Wetlands and Other Natural Lands***

#### **Requirement**

As part of the resolution of wetland issues in the rural community, Council asked staff in July 2006 to prepare a policy on compensation as one of a suite of measures available to the City or its partners to conserve environmental lands. Compensation embraces a range of practices, from stewardship incentives that leave the title to the land with the private owner, through to acquisition of environmental land at market value. Little development is permitted on provincially significant wetlands, and some owners of these lands want to be compensated for lost development potential and property value, especially where land is newly-identified as a wetland. Other owners of wetlands, woodlands, and other natural features want to be compensated for the environmental benefit that results from maintaining their land in a natural condition.

#### **Current Policy**

Planning decisions throughout Ontario must be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. The Provincial policy does not permit development within provincially-significant wetlands and it permits development on other wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, and other features only if it has no negative effect on the feature or its functions. The Ministry of Natural Resources has the authority to identify wetlands as provincially-significant and to request that the City show these lands—or “designate” them--in the Official Plan.

Other natural features such as the South March Highlands and Marlborough Forest have been protected in municipal plans in Ottawa for many years. Previous municipal Councils have decided that some lands are too sensitive to permit any development, and these are shown in the Official Plan as Natural Environment Area. The City buys these lands on a “willing buyer/willing seller” basis. This approach reflects previous decisions of the Ontario Municipal Board, which has ruled that the municipality must buy environmental lands if no development is permitted. The landmark decision in this regard was made before the Province introduced restrictive wetland policies in the 1990s and there have been no examples since where the Ontario Municipal Board has ordered municipalities to permit development or else acquire a provincially-significant wetland. However, these decisions have led to the City paying market value for woodlands in the urban area, regardless of zoning for conservation purposes.

There is no legal requirement for municipalities to compensate landowners for changes in zoning or planning policy that increase or decrease development potential and property values. However, a landowner can appeal a municipality’s planning decision to the Ontario Municipal Board and seek to have it reversed or modified. Such appeals are considered on a case-by-case basis, with both parties needing to demonstrate that their position is consistent with the Provincial policy.

#### **Discussion**

During the consultation with urban and rural communities in 2007, there was widespread support for a suite of broadly-defined compensation measures. Acquisition or compensation for

potentially-lost property value in principle was generally supported, but there was no agreement about how to structure such a program. Acquisition was not attractive to owners who had strong ties to the land—perhaps forged through generations of ownership—or who viewed public ownership as an intrusion that brought public access too close to home. As a result, many called for a suite of initiatives that could respond to different owners’ needs and said that these policies should be clear and voluntary on the part of landowners.

The following themes emerged from the public consultation:

- **Affordability** – While many favoured some form of compensation as an investment in quality of life or fair treatment of landowners, the public did not believe Council would support any major expenditure over the long term. This reflected in part perceptions of Council positions, and in part recognition of municipal budget constraints.
- **Divergence of views** – Opinions were very divided, with two extremes adopting different value positions related to perceived property rights and the need to protect the public interest.
- **Eligibility** – Most people who favoured some form of compensation sought restrictions to eligibility rather than universal access to such a program, especially with reference to acquisition or other compensation for potentially-lost property value. The most common restrictions were:
  - No compensation for provincially-significant wetlands that were designated in the Plan when the owner acquired them;
  - No “windfall profits”, especially for land developers and speculators.

Other eligibility criteria were proposed by smaller numbers of people. These include:

- Compensate for lands identified as provincially-significant wetland after the current owner purchased the land.
- Compensate for provincially-significant wetlands that are created by poor drains maintenance, highway construction, and beaver activity, and not created by other more natural causes.
- Compensate only where the owner actually incurs an economic loss, say where a farmer foregoes cropping land adjacent to a wetland.
- Compensate for lost development potential and value at the time the provincially-significant wetland is designated in the Official Plan.

### **Proposed Direction**

The City’s next steps on compensation need to consider the following:

- Stewardship initiatives are needed in addition to any other form of compensation to meet the range of landowner needs.
- Any policies should be clearly worded and readily administered—an objective that rules out most of the eligibility criteria proposed during the consultation. For example, the cause of a wetland is difficult to determine and regardless, it is not a consideration in determining a wetland’s provincial significance. Lands that were not shown as “wetlands” in official plans of the day when they were purchased by the current owner may have been subject to other environmental constraints in effect at the time.

- Programs that build on existing initiatives and budgets are more affordable than new programs, especially programs requiring one-on-one discussions with affected landowners.

The major decision is whether the City should compensate landowners for the loss of development potential and value that may occur when their lands are identified as provincially-significant wetland. On the whole, staff do not support this direction because there is no legal requirement or custom in Ontario or Canada to compensate owners for changes in property values arising from planning decisions. While some may argue the Province should pay this cost, there is no government move in this direction elsewhere in Ontario, including large areas in southern Ontario where planning regulations no longer permit residential development in the rural area. City Council has asked the Province in the past to assist in creation of new financial incentives and other forms of compensation, without success.

Cost is also an issue, but it is difficult to estimate for many reasons:

- The extent of provincially-significant wetland in Ottawa is not known because large areas of wetland within Ottawa have not been evaluated and likely include significant areas.
- Administration costs would vary depending on the program's features. Different options could entail market value appraisal, a more complex estimation of potential lost market values, and preparation of covenants on property titles. One option, the "willing buyer/willing seller" approach now available to owners of certain natural environment lands, also provides access to the *Expropriations Act*. The City would carry all legal and property appraisal costs, and other administration costs would be high, to support detailed discussions over time with individual owners about the value of their property and opportunities for appeal.
- The cost of administering the program could become greater than the value of the potential compensation provided to certain landowners. This would be especially the case where:
  - the wetland covers a small portion of the property and there would be little or no potential loss of market value;
  - the property has little development potential, regardless of the wetland designation, because of its size, location or other characteristics.
- If the City proposed to acquire provincially-significant wetlands, it would assume the annual cost of maintaining these properties and controlling public access.

If Council compensates for loss of development potential on provincially-significant wetlands, it would also need to consider compensation for such losses on other natural lands. Development is permitted in Rural Natural Features, provided an Environmental Impact Statement demonstrates it has no adverse impact on the feature. The general approach has been to accommodate some lot creation, although this may not always be the case.

The City is already a partner in programs that compensate landowners for stewarding wetlands and woodlands. However, relatively few landowners participate in these programs and further work would be needed to identify program enhancements that make participation more attractive.

#### *Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program and Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program*

The Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) offers a property tax reduction to eligible landowners who agree to prepare a plan to manage their forest and undertake other commitments. About 165 properties in Ottawa receive a tax reduction through this program. The total tax that would be collected on these properties if they were in the Residential Class would be \$42,800 but with the reduction through the MFTIP, the actual payment is about \$10,700, and therefore the

program costs the City \$32,100 in foregone taxes. The Ministry of Natural Resources operates the program with the assistance of the Ontario Woodlot Association and the Ontario Forestry Association.

The Ministry of Natural Resources also manages the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program, which provides a property tax exemption on lands evaluated as provincially-significant wetlands and certain other lands. Only one-third of the 760 privately-owned, eligible properties in Ottawa are now participating in this program, about the same percentage as across Ontario. The program is not attractive to landowners who want to keep options open for agriculture use or tree cutting rather than commit to the “leave alone” approach that the program requires. As with the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program, some landowners may also be reluctant to provide property information to the government and be distrustful of how the program operates. The cost to the City in terms of foregone taxes is not available.

Promotion of the programs in partnership with their sponsors could help inform landowners’ decisions and increase uptake. However, such tax reduction programs are less attractive to farmers compared with non-farmers, because the farm tax rate is already reduced, depending on the quality of land, and thus tax reduction programs provide less reward.

#### *The Rural Clean Water Program*

The City now provides \$184,000 annually through the Rural Clean Water program for water-protection projects, many of which complement the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan program. Eligible projects for funding through the program include preservation of buffer strips alongside wetlands and watercourses. However, the program receives very few requests for such grants, perhaps because of the low level of funding available. The maximum grant provides \$150 per acre for a maximum of 10 acres for up to three years, a level that has not changed since the program started in 2000. The need to renew the City’s funding for the Rural Clean Water Program in 2009 creates an opportunity for the City, the Conservation Authorities and the rural groups that administer the program to consider new projects, priorities and funding levels that would compensate rural landowners for stewardship activities.

The policy framework for the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan Program and other federal-provincial farm programs is currently under review. Farm organizations and other groups in the past have supported Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS), wherein farmers and rural landowners receive income for the value of the ecological goods and services their land provides. The City can monitor the direction of this discussion for its implications for the Rural Clean Water Program or other stewardship activities.

#### *Public education and awareness*

A minor theme in the consultation in 2007 was the need for more public awareness of the value of wetlands, woodlands and other natural features, especially to support public funding for stewardship initiatives and landowner participation in programs. Council has asked staff to prepare an education and awareness program on the value of wetlands and the need to maintain drains, and such a program will be initiated in 2008.

#### **Draft Policy Amendment**

An Official Plan Amendment is not required to implement the recommended policy directions.

