

FINANCE THE CLIMATE TRANSITION



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A Plan for Inter-generational Fiscal Responsibility

Without financial information on the costs and share of costs, residents have no idea what they are committing to by allowing the draft Official Plan to go forward. This is not responsible planning or responsible citizenship.

1. We want to know the financial implications of key decisions in the Official Plan. One essential number is the cost for servicing the so-called “expansion lands” such as the proposed 445 hectare Tewin suburb outside the greenbelt. We also want to know what part of the total cost will be paid by the corporations pushing for urban expansion, wider roads further afield, and new publicly financed services and infrastructure.

Experience elsewhere shows that new low-density suburbs are not affordable, resulting in service cuts and tax increases in established communities, overbuilt roads and “stranded assets” without the potential to evolve into complete, walkable neighbourhoods. Show us in the Official Plan that these problems will not happen in Ottawa.

2. Show us in the Official Plan that the City is exercising financial foresight by committing the spending and fund raising needed for the community as a whole to reach carbon neutral by 2050.

We know that the financial cost of mitigating and adapting to the climate emergency will be very high. We know as well that the cost of climate disaster relief and reconstruction will be much, much higher not only in financial terms but in human suffering as well. We need to finance our part to avoid the worst effects of the climate crisis.

3. The burden of the climate crisis will fall on everyone, but most acutely on those who can least afford the rising prices brought on by the emergency. Marginalized and vulnerable populations are already disproportionately impacted by heat island effects, poor housing, low income and few transportation options.

Show us in the Official Plan that the City’s own finances will be directed to programs to soften the blow and provide a hand up for people unable to secure their own safety and wellbeing.

4. Climate delay amounts to climate denial. Delay also undermines our capacity to put in place the economic levers needed to be part of the low-carbon economy. Investing in deep energy retrofits of existing buildings, fostering renewable energy generation in rural and urban Ottawa, charging for congestion on roads and increasing parking fees are ways to help finance what needs to be done.

Show us in the Official Plan that the City will mobilize funding to finance climate and equity measures, by engaging and coordinating with higher levels of government and by putting in place mechanisms to finance the climate transition within its own areas of operation.