A Proud Legacy, A New Future:

Bringing Ottawa's Growth Management Strategy Into the 21st Century

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

As Canada's capital, the City of Ottawa has benefited from several comprehensive land use planning exercises since the early 1900s. Early plans carried out by the federal government were led by Prime Ministers who, in wanting to beautify the region, initiated long range plans that spanned both sides of the Ottawa River, providing land use goals and guidance for what are today the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau. The planning context changed through the 1970s, however. The federal government played a lesser role in land use planning as regional and area municipal governments grew and an expanding technically trained staff developed local plans. It was in the absence of a strong regional plan aimed at controlling outward expansion that there was rapid growth of low density suburban communities outside of the National Capital Commission greenbelt.

Today, planning policy in Ottawa recognizes the environmental, social, and economic benefits of compact development and encourages by, in part, directing growth to the existing built-up area. Unfortunately, residential intensification efforts in the City have been disappointing. While the City has developed a variety of policies and programs to encourage and support residential intensification, it appears site level constraints have prohibited it to occur in a significant way.

This research is concerned with identifying weaknesses in the City of Ottawa's current growth management strategy. The purpose of this research is to provide recommendations that can be used to strengthen Ottawa's growth management policies and programs to more effectively achieve the compact urban form desired by the municipality.

The findings demonstrate that there is some level of disconnect between what recent literature and key informant interviews identify as the barriers to residential intensification at the site level and the motherhood principles for compact development at the municipal level. More specifically, barriers can be summarized as community and political resistance, regulatory challenges, and policy vs. market realities. It is recommended that the City of Ottawa adopt a strengthened strategy that establishes achievable growth and intensification targets; encourages community support for compact development; considers growth over the longer term and with a regional perspective; and is advocated by strong leaders. Only in this way can the City create an improved strategy that will, like earlier plans, make Ottawa once again a proud leader in urban planning efforts in Canada.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the many colleagues and friends who have shown interest, provided insights, and generally supported me through this process. Dr. Trudi Bunting was always a wealth of information, a person who could provide perspective on something as large in scope as growth management trends across North America to something as small as development of an infill site in Stittsville. She was always available to provide much needed guidance and advice through the thesis writing process. I would also like to thank my professors and committee members – Dr. Mark Seasons, Dr. Pierre Filion, and Dr. Jeff Casello. I thoroughly enjoyed their courses and respected their opinions on planning matters. I benefited tremendously from their efforts in class and got exactly what I wanted to out of the Masters program because of their hard work.

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My family also deserves a big thank you for their keen interest and encouragement through this process. They were excited to learn of my interest to pursue the degree and have always listened attentively to my research progress. Despite not knowing much about the topic originally, they have learned a lot with me.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

As Canada's capital, the City of Ottawa has been subject to a series of comprehensive planning processes since the early 1900s. Early plans were encouraged by Prime Ministers and carried out by federal planning bodies. These long range regional plans included growth projections and guided urban and rural land uses in both Ottawa and Hull. While not all of the elements of each plan came to fruition, their legacies are apparent in Ottawa today, particularly in its many parks, boulevards, employment campuses, transportation routes, and, most notably, the National Capital Commission (NCC) greenbelt.

The last regional land use plan for the capital was prepared by Jacques Gréber in 1950. Over the following twenty years, the NCC, a federal body responsible for the planning of federal lands, used expropriation powers, land ownership, and infrastructure budget to implement the Plan. During the 1970s, however, federal proposals were met with increasing criticism from progressively more sophisticated local and regional planning authorities and a growing number of community advocacy groups. At the same time, the population in the national capital area grew at a much faster rate than projected due to the post-war baby boom and rapid government expansion. Local and regional planning authorities could not plan for growth fast enough. The result was rapid development of low-density suburban municipalities outside of the NCC greenbelt.

Today, these suburban centres form part of the new City of Ottawa. The City was created in 2000 with the amalgamation of eleven former Region of Ottawa-Carleton local municipalities. The City of Ottawa is growing and is set to experience significant population, employment and household growth over the next two decades. The City's 2003 Official Plan presents a contemporary approach to accommodating this future growth. Through policy, it encourages higher density, mixed use development in an effort to make efficient use of infrastructure, to support alternative modes of transportation and transit initiatives, and to maintain the city's environmental integrity. The City has adopted what they see as a comprehensive growth management strategy that is based on Smart Growth principles for the

purpose of improving the quality of life of residents by enhancing liveability, improving economic health, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The policies and programs that form Ottawa's growth management strategy encourage compact development by, among other things, promoting and supporting the implementation of residential intensification projects in the built-up urban area. Recent development trend data, however, suggest that infill and redevelopment projects are not occurring in a significant way and the degree to which intensification of the built-up area can accommodate future household growth is debatable. It is apparent that while motherhood growth management objectives promoting a compact urban form are accepted at the municipal level, the implementation of intensification projects in already developed areas is constrained at the site level. The apparent disconnect between the strategy to encourage compact development and limitations to the implementation of intensification projects has implications for the City's ability to achieve municipal-wide goals for a compact urban form.

The key question motivating this research is: *How can the City of Ottawa's growth management strategy be strengthened to better support residential intensification in order to achieve the compact urban form promoted in the Official Plan?* This research is timely considering the municipality will be embarking on its mandatory 5-year Official Plan review in 2008. The City has already begun assessing recent development trends and met with stakeholders to outline the review process. Using the findings from recent literature and key informant interviews, this thesis identifies weaknesses in Ottawa's current growth management policies and programs. It concludes with recommendations for a strengthened strategy that more effectively supports compact development through the promotion of residential intensification.

A qualitative method was used to carry out this case study. The research involved a review of academic literature; a review of City of Ottawa planning documents, including Official Plan policies and staff reports; and, key informant interviews with City and National Capital Commission planning staff, representatives from the development industry, private consultants, and local citizen groups. During this research the policies and programs that

make up Ottawa's growth management strategy were defined and strengths and weaknesses of each initiative were identified. This provided a base on which to develop recommendations that should be implemented to better support residential intensification efforts in the City in order to achieve the Official Plan vision for a more compact urban form.

This thesis is organized into seven Chapters. Chapter 2 provides a chronology of Ottawa's urban plans and identifies the challenges currently facing the municipality as it embarks on its 5-year Official Plan review. Chapter 3 presents a review the academic literature to demonstrate the benefits of compact development, to discuss planning movements that addressed the issues of shaping growth patterns, and to identify policies and programs that can together encourage and support intensification. Chapter 4 provides details on the research methodology, including the research purpose and objectives, justification for a case study approach and the qualitative method, and the weaknesses and strengths of both. Chapter 5 relates the literature to the City of Ottawa context. It provides a review of City of Ottawa growth management policies and programs and presents the findings of key informant interviews. A discussion of the findings and important recommendations are presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 restates the research objectives and findings from previous chapters and identifies opportunities for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: Ottawa's Historic Plans and the Current Context

2.1   Introduction

Over the last 150 years, Ottawa has evolved from a small, remote, and dirty industrial town to one of Canada's most beautiful cities. Ottawa was an unlikely choice for the seat of Canada's government in 1857. At that time it housed the largest woods-based industry in the world and had a population of just over 10,000 people (Taylor, 1989). Most politicians and civil servants were unhappy with Queen Victoria's choice of locations for the capital city, as existing buildings near parliament hill lacked architectural design and the city had no utilities, no paved streets, no sewers, no gaslights, and no piped water supply – services that were common in other major cities at the time (Taylor, 1989). The natural beauty of Ottawa was diminished by the dominant lumber and pulp industries which damned Chaudière Falls for power and used the banks of the Ottawa River as piling grounds. Still, Queen Victoria believed that Ottawa was the best choice because of its relative location – in Upper Canada but directly adjacent to Lower Canada – and because other potential cities were in constant competition with one another (Taylor, 1989).

Efforts to improve the capital city did not begin until the end of the century, over three decades after the parliament buildings were constructed. Early planning efforts were led by Prime Ministers who created commissions mandated to improve the image of the capital city. The first plans for Ottawa focused on greening the urban area through the creation of parks and parkways. Over time, plans became more sophisticated and were concerned with the location and relationship of land uses, the movement of goods and people, and the consideration of longer-term growth.

Today, planning in the City of Ottawa is carried out by the National Capital Commission, which is responsible for the planning of federal lands, and the municipality (under the direction of the Province), which is responsible for privately and municipally held lands. The City's Official Plan presents a vision for development to 2021, a vision that emphasizes a compact urban form. Recent development trends, however, suggest that there are weaknesses

in City's strategy for accommodating growth that are impacting Ottawa's ability to achieve that vision.

This Chapter presents a chronology of the federal commissions that directed early planning efforts in Ottawa and identifies the major components of historic planning documents. Ottawa's existing planning context is then discussed, with an emphasis placed on the goals for compact development and the role of residential intensification.
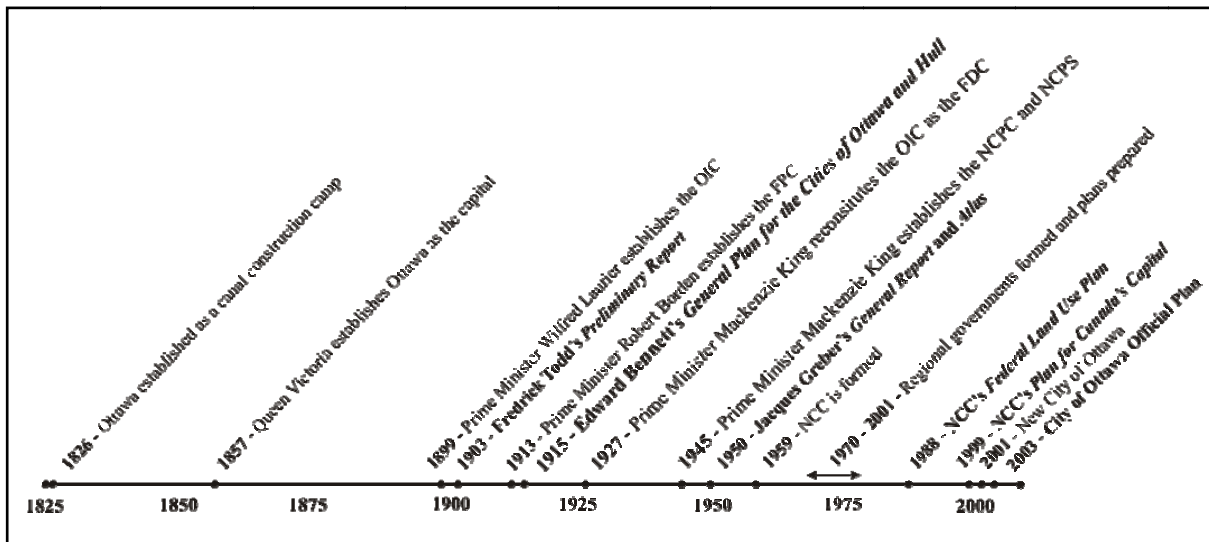
Figure 2.1: Chronology of Commissions and Plans

2.2   Federal Government Plans

As the nation's capital, Ottawa has been subject to a series of planning efforts since the early 1900s. Early plans were initiated by Canada's Prime Ministers who had personal interests in beautifying the capital. Plans were prepared by renowned professionals with expertise in important planning movements and they represented the most detailed and comprehensive planning work carried out in Canada at the time. Ottawa's federally owned parks and boulevards, inner suburban federal office campuses, train station, and the National Capital Commission greenbelt are a result of planning efforts that took place 50 to 100 years ago.

2.2.1 Ottawa Improvement Commission's Preliminary Report

Politicians spent little time in Ottawa in its early years as a capital. Legislators typically stayed in hotels and left as soon as parliamentary sessions ended because they did not enjoy residing in, "one of the roughest, booziest least law-abiding towns in North America" (Gordon, 2001, p. 9). Ottawa's local economy at the time was focused exclusively on one industry – lumber – not government.

An effort to improve the nation's capital did not begin until the end of the 19th century. In 1893 Wilfred Laurier was the new leader of the Opposition and, recognizing the importance of creating a beautiful capital, made it his personal quest to improve the city. He declared that he would transform Ottawa into "Washington of the North" if he were elected Prime Minister.

> *I consequently keep a green spot in my heart for the city of Ottawa, and when the day comes, as it will come by and by, it shall be my pleasure and that of my colleagues I am sure to make the city of Ottawa as attractive as possibly could be; to make it the centre of the intellectual development of this country and above all the Washington of the North.*
>
> *Source: Gordon, 2001, p. 10*

When Laurier was elected Prime Minister three years later he stood by his promise to improve the city and in 1898 established the **Ottawa Improvement Commission** (**OIC**) (Gordon, 2001). While it had no legislative mandate or authority over local government, the commission's agenda was to improve and beautify Ottawa and the area around it by acquiring land, maintaining and improving parks, squares and boulevards, and constructing buildings (Gordon, 2001).

Laurier took personal interest in the work of the OIC, which was credited with clearing the west bank of the Rideau Canal, building a parkway, building two bridges across the Rideau and generally beautifying Ottawa through the creation and maintenance of parks (Gordon, 2001). Soon the OIC decided they would benefit from a general plan that would identify all of the improvements envisioned for the capital. In 1903 the OIC sought the advice of landscape architect Fredrick G. Todd, Canada's first resident landscape architect (Gordon,

2001). Within six weeks of being retained by the OIC, Todd completed a report that identified a preliminary plan for a regional parks system linked by parkways and boulevards. Todd's plan looked as far as one hundred years into the future and considered the region as a whole, proposing improvements in both Ottawa *and* Hull. As demonstrated in *Figure 2.2*, Todd's *Preliminary Report* recommended both large and small-scale improvements, from playgrounds, to suburban parks, to large natural parks.   One of his important recommendations to the OIC was that they acquire thousands of acres of woods and retain them as wilderness parks, including land in the Gatineau Valley and around Meach Lake (Gordon, 2002a).

Figure 2:   Parks and Pathways Proposed by Todd in 1903 for the Ottawa-Hull Region
Source: Todd, *Preliminary Report to the Ottawa Improvement Commission*, National Archives of Canada file 6885 T-56. Based on National Capital Commission 2000 Ottawa base map. Drawing by Jeffrey O'Neill.
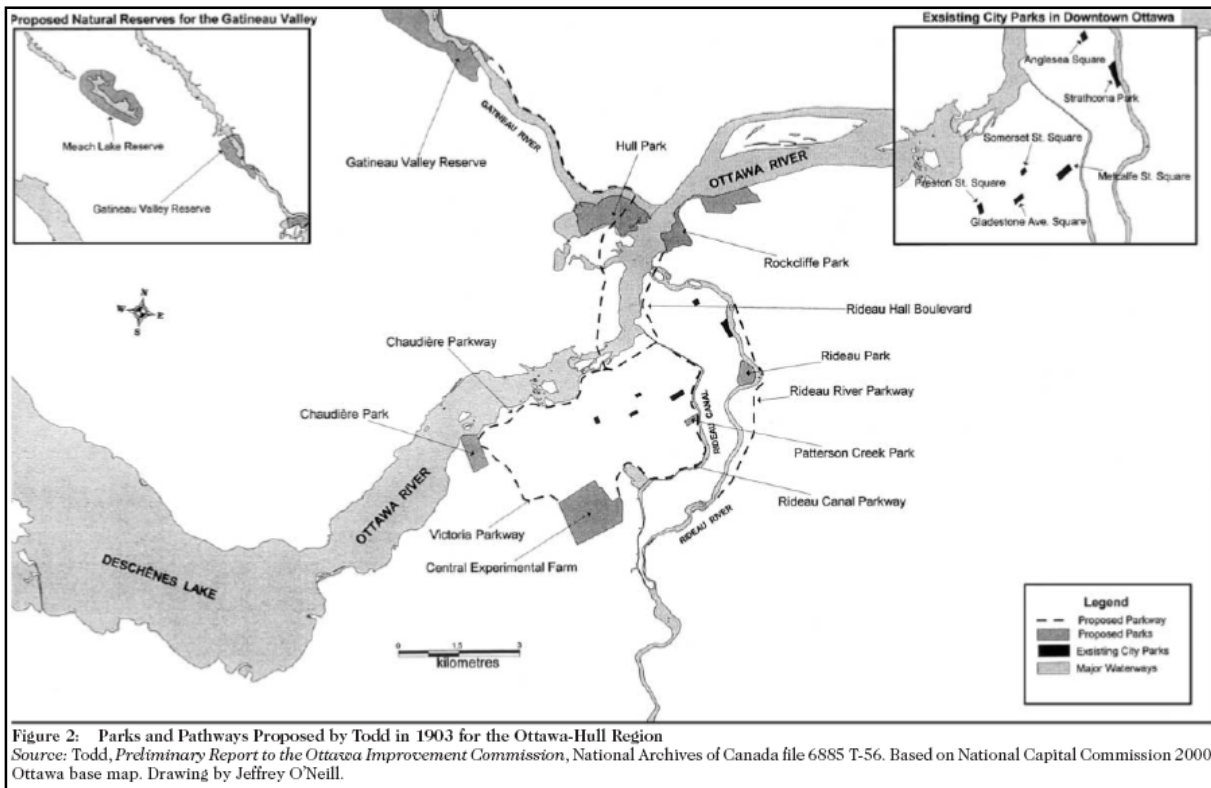
Source: Gordon, 2002a

Figure 2.2: Parks and Pathways Proposed in Todd's Preliminary Report, 1903

At first, the *Preliminary Report* was well received by the OIC and it appeared that Todd would be retained to design Ottawa's parks system. Disputes, however, occurred over his high fees and the printing costs of the report. It was the OIC's opinion that they had sufficient design knowledge and construction supervision on staff and did not require his assistance to

carry out park development. The OIC declined to retain Todd as a regular consultant and instead designed and constructed their own projects (Gordon, 2002a).

Despite the OIC's poor treatment of Todd and his work, his parks proposals were incorporated into subsequent plans for the region and many of his recommendations were eventually implemented. Jacques Gréber's 1950 *Plan for the National Capital* in fact criticized the actions of the OIC and recognized the importance of Todd's long-range planning approach (Gordon, 2002a).

2.2.2 Report of the Federal Plan Commission on a General Plan for the Cities of Ottawa and Hull (The Holt Commission Plan)

In the years following Todd's 1903 *Preliminary Report* the OIC made incremental additions to Ottawa's parks and driveways (Gordon, 2001). It was recognized, however, that a comprehensive plan was still required to guide the city's development. The OIC advocated that the new plan for Ottawa should be prepared by a commission of technical experts – Commission for Ottawa Beautification – and should be modeled on the successful 1902 McMillan Commission plan for Washington (which had previously been rejected by Todd) (Gordon, 2002a). Then Prime Minister Robert Borden, however, was concerned about establishing a commission of independent expert professionals who were not under his direct political control (Gordon, 1998). Ultimately, Borden decided to create a new planning commission in 1913. The **Federal Plan Commission (FPC)** was composed of a group of conservative businessmen and chaired by Herbert Holt, the president of the Royal Bank. The mayors of Ottawa and Hull were also appointed (Gordon, 2001). The FPC was to,

> *… draw up and perfect a comprehensive scheme or plan looking to the future growth and development of the City of Ottawa and the City of Hull, and their environs, and particularly providing for the locations, laying out and beautification of parks and connecting boulevards, the location and architectural character of public buildings and adequate and convenient arrangements for traffic and transportation within the area in question.*

> *Source: Federal Plan Commission 1915 from Gordon, 1998, p. 277*

The Commission chose Chicago architect Edward Bennett to be the chief consulting architect and planner. Bennett was one of the foremost American planners at the time and a leading proponent of the City Beautiful movement (Gordon, 1998). Work began immediately and between 1913 and 1914 Bennett and his team of engineers and draftsmen prepared surveys and completed detailed technical analyses of Ottawa. The *Report of the Federal Plan Commission on a General Plan for the Cities of Ottawa and Hull* was completed in 1915. Like Todd, Bennett took a regional approach to planning, including both Ottawa and Hull in the plans, and planned for growth over the long-term. For example, the 1915 plan projected that Ottawa's population would be 250,000 by 1950. Recognizing the importance of reserving park land for an even larger population, Bennett's 1915 plan provided parks for a city of 350,000 people (Gordon, 2002a). Some of the parks Bennett proposed were similar to those presented by Todd in 1903, including a large forest reserve in the Gatineau Hills, though the authors failed to credit Todd with the idea (Gordon, 2002a).

Bennett's plan was arguably Canada's first comprehensive plan (Gordon, 1998). It included technical analyses of land uses, population projections, population densities, and railway and streetcar traffic and included urban design requirements, zoning, parks, and a government building analysis (Gordon, 1998 and 2002a). As demonstrated in *Figure 2.3*, the plan proposed that urban development in Ottawa and Hull take a circular form with businesses in the centre, warehouses and high density residential uses adjacent to the CBD and along the transport lines radiating from the centre, and lower density residential spreading beyond that. It also recognized that to efficiently accommodate the expected population growth over the coming forty to fifty years, it would be necessary to redevelop existing uses as well as expand into undeveloped areas (Federal Plan Commission of Ottawa and Hull, 1915).
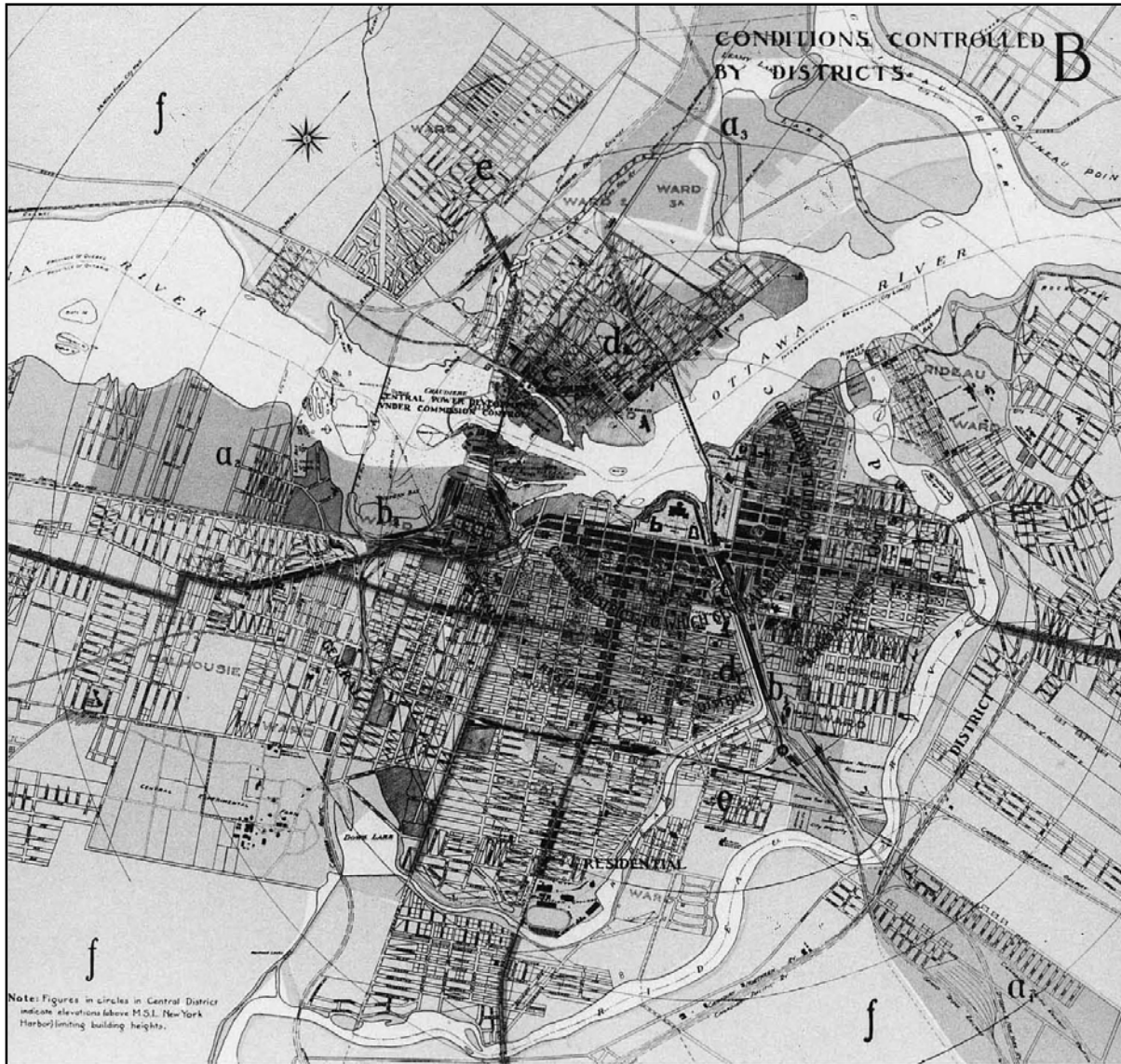
Figure 2.3: Proposed Zoning for Ottawa-Hull

Another important component of the plan was the recommendations, particularly the recommendation to establish a Federal District like that established for the District of Columbia in the United States.

> *"We are of the firm opinion that the future improvements in the area about the Capital at Ottawa and Hull should not be attempted without first establishing a Federal district and securing for the Federal authority some control of local government."*

Source: General Plan for the Cities of Ottawa and Hull, 1915

Despite the significant work carried out in preparing the *Report of the Federal Plan Commission on a General Plan for the Cities of Ottawa and Hull*, Bennett's plan was effectively shelved for a number of reasons relating to timing, politics, leadership, and criticism to the planning movement. The report was tabled in 1916, a month after the Centre Block of the Parliament Building burned down and at a time when the First World War being fought in Europe was going poorly for Canada. This meant there was little press exposure about the plan and little capital available to implement it over the short term (Gordon, 1998). One of the reasons the Plan was not implemented over the longer term was because the proposition of a Federal district was vigorously opposed in the City of Hull, where the City was uninterested in giving up territory or sovereignty to a federal government body. Divisions between English and French participants was worsened by the fact that the FPC conducted meetings in English without an interpreter for the benefit of Hull's French speaking mayor and the report was never translated into French (Gordon, 1998). Another implementation constraint related to the fact that the entire Commission was composed of Conservatives. The Commission was disbanded after the Plan was printed and when the Conservative government fell in 1921 to the Liberals, there was nobody to advocate for the Plan (Gordon, 2001). Also, there was serious opposition to the City Beautiful movement at the time of the Plan's tabling (Gordon, 2002a). Opponents suggested that Bennett's plan was impractical and argued in support, instead, for a City Scientific approach (Gordon, 2002a).

2.2.3 *The Plan for the National Capital (The Gréber Plan)*

The election of William Lyon Mackenzie King as Prime Minister in 1921 marked a new era in the national capital's planning efforts (Gordon, 2001). The new Prime Minister took control of the OIC and in 1927 reconstituted it as the **Federal District Commission (FDC)**. It had expanded powers, a mandate to plan in both Ontario and Quebec, and an increased budget. Between 1927 and 1935, the Commission was primarily concerned with planning a major public plaza southeast of Parliament Hill, Confederation Square. At the time, Canadian designers could not unravel the mix of congested streets, bridges, streetcars and canal located adjacent to the downtown railway station, Ottawa City Hall, the main Post Office, and a large Hotel. In 1936, Mackenzie King found the planner that he needed to design Confederation

Square when he was visiting Paris – the chief architect of the upcoming World's Fair, Jacques Gréber. Upon Mackenzie King's invitation, Gréber visited Ottawa and quickly grasped the complexity of the infrastructure problems at Confederation Square and produced a series of designs that resolved them. Gréber was then retained to prepare a plan for an expanded National Capital Region but plans were put on hold after the outbreak of the Second World War (Gordon, 2002b).

In 1945, three days after Japan surrendered, Mackenzie King summoned Gréber from France and retained him to prepare a plan for the national capital with the intent, "that construction of a national capital for Canadians would be the principal memorial for those who fell during the Second World War," (Gordon, 2002b, p. 111). Mackenzie King then established the **National Capital Planning Committee (NCPC)**, a committee headed by the Prime Minister that was independent of the FDC that had the mandate to prepare a regional land use plan for Ontario and Quebec, urban plans for Ottawa and Hull, a regional infrastructure plan, and an urban design plan for downtown Ottawa. Gréber became the head of the **National Capital Planning Service (NCPS)**, which had a team of architects, landscape architects, engineers, technicians and information officers and was considered to be the only full time professional planning organization in Canada at the time (Gordon, 2005). Over the next five years, Gréber and his team prepared background studies and carried out public relations campaigns across the country to improve the perception of the nation's capital and promote the new plan.

Gréber tabled the *Plan for the National Capital* in 1950 which consisted of two Volumes: the *General Report* and the *Atlas*. The plan included the following components:

- Projected a doubling of the population from 1950 to 2000;
- Relocation of rail roads and industries from the core to the suburbs;
- Construction of cross-town boulevards and bridges;
- Decentralization of some government offices to the inner suburbs;
- Slum clearance and urban renewal of LeBreton Flats;
- Establishment of a greenbelt around Ottawa and Hull's urban areas; and,
- Development of a wilderness park in the Gatineau hills and a parks system along canals and rivers.

Source: Gordon, 2005
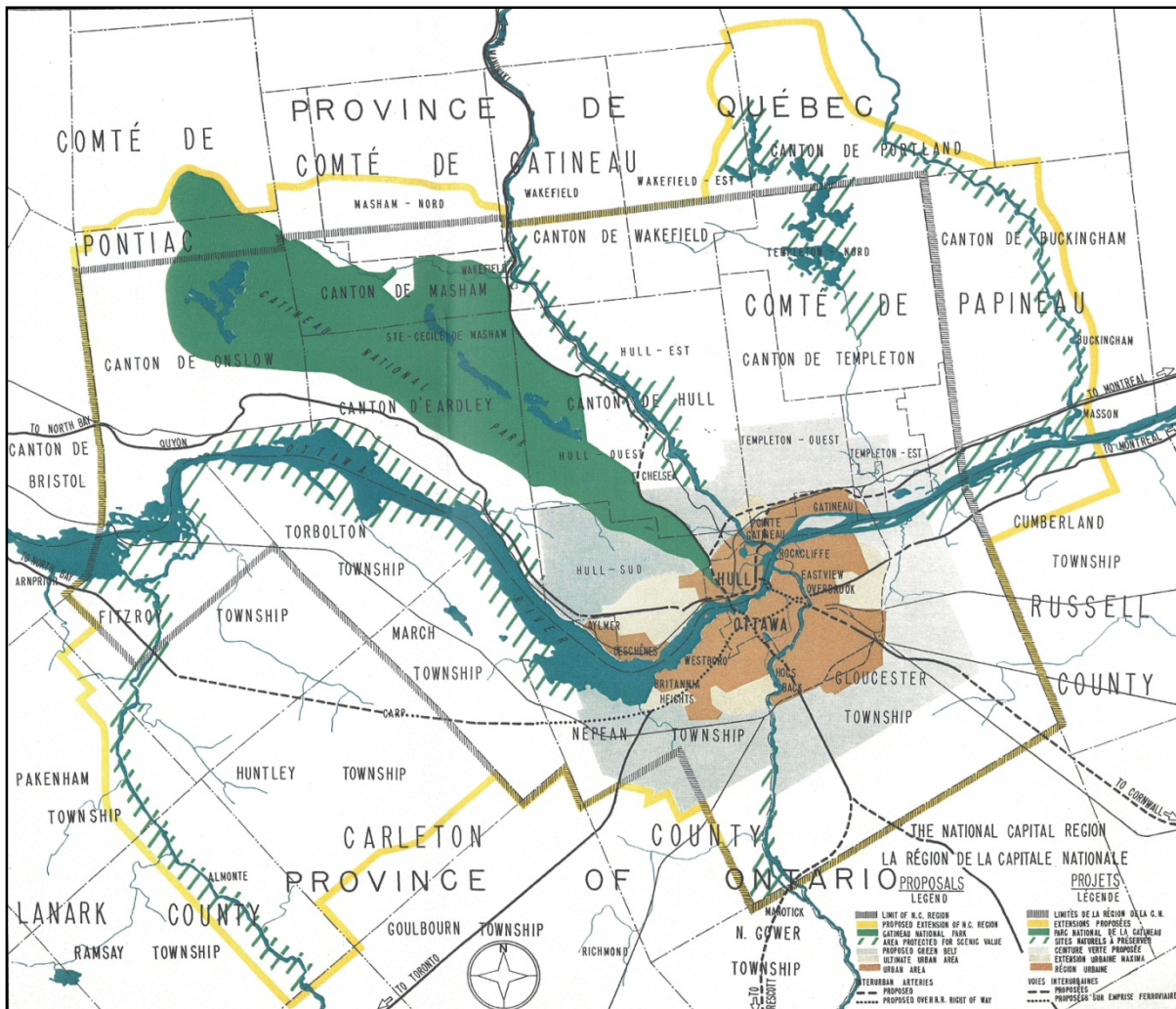
Figure 2.4: The Gréber Plan for the National Capital Region

The *Plan for the National Capital* is arguably the most important Canadian plan of the mid-twentieth century (Gordon, 2001). Gréber used anticipated development densities to project that the capital's population growth could be accommodated within the plan's urban area, illustrated in *Figure 2.4*. The plan defined four residential areas with decreasing densities from the core to the suburbs. It also defined existing and future federal government campuses and commercial and industrial areas. The plan's Green Belt marked the limits of the urban area and was to be used to protect, "against all undesirable or linear subdivisions or developments" (National Capital Planning Service, 1950, p. 191). The land within the belt was to be used solely for agricultural purposes. Beyond its boundary, the plan permitted

"new cities" in the rural area to act as satellites to the capital, accommodating about 20,000 to 25,000 people each.

Gréber's 1950 plan was implemented slowly at first, impeded by weak provincial legislation and a lack of consensus amongst local governments (Gordon, 2001). Following a Senate-Parliamentary enquiry in 1956, it was determined that the federal government would have to implement the plan alone. The **National Capital Commission (NCC)** was created from the FDC in 1959 and absorbed the NCPC and NCPS. The NCC used its expropriation powers, land ownership, and infrastructure budget to implement the Gréber Plan.

By the 1970s, many of the Gréber Plan elements were implemented, including the decentralization of government offices to inner suburb campuses, the establishment of the greenbelt in Ontario, expansion of Gatineau Park in Quebec, the construction of new suburban railway lines and yards, and the development of the cross-town expressway, the Queensway (Gordon, 2005; NCC, 2006). However, over 50 years after their initial proposal, some of the elements of the Gréber Plan are only now being realized, including the redevelopment of LeBreton Flats and the NCC's Confederation Boulevard initiative to improve streetscapes on major streets and boulevards (Gordon, 2005). Some elements did not come to fruition due to local opposition, such as a greenbelt in Quebec and a Federal district.

2.2.4 National Capital Commissions' Plans

One of the most significant shortcomings of the 1950 Plan for the National Capital was erroneous population projections. The growth anticipated over the 50 year planning period was reached in half that time due to the post-war baby boom and rapid government expansion (Gordon, 2001). While the land within the greenbelt was sufficient to accommodate the Plan's projected population of 500,000, growth after the 1970s increasingly located outside the greenbelt. The urban planning context had changed dramatically by this point, with local and regional planning authorities in both Ontario and Quebec developing their own urban plans with ever increasing technical staff. The NCC's proposals were faced with increasing criticism from both local planning bodies and an increasing number of community groups

who were increasingly involved due to the emerging citizen participation planning process (Gordon, 2001).

Over the following years the NCC produced a number of documents to guide planning in the National Capital Region, including the *Federal Land Use Plan* in 1988 and the *Plan for Canada's Capital* in 1999. These plans differed from those of previous federal planning bodies in that they were concerned exclusively with the existing and future use of federally-owned land in the National Capital Region. Today, the latter of the two documents sets out the goals and policies for federally owned land and is supported by a hierarchy of other plans, specifically Master Plans, Sector Plans, and Area Plans. The National Capital Region 2050 Concept is provided in *Figure 2.5*.
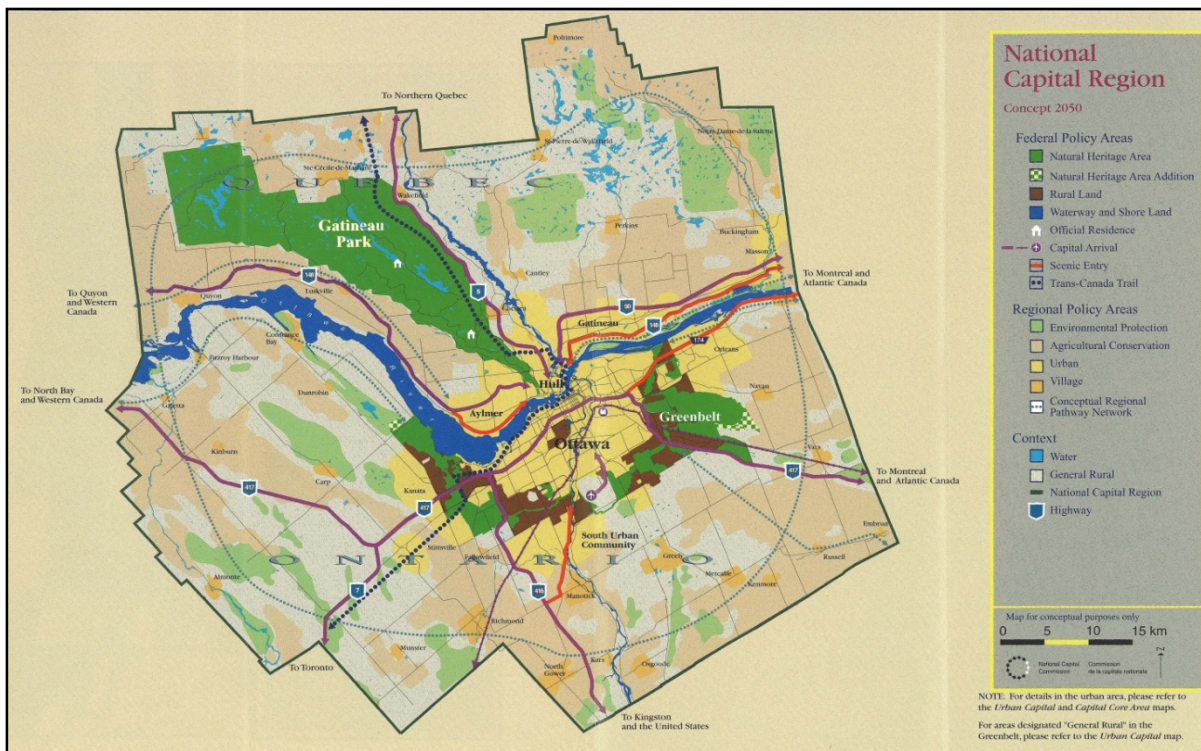
<div align="right">Source: National Capital Commission, 1999</div>

Figure 2.5: National Capital Commission's Plan for Canada's Capital

2.2.5 Summary of Federal Government Plans

Ottawa has been subject to numerous comprehensive planning efforts over the past 150 years which incorporated elements of nearly every planning movement (Taylor, 1989). While not all of the plans have come to fruition, each subsequent plan has included elements of previous work. Important similarities exist amongst Ottawa's federal government-led plans:

- Early plans were driven by Prime Ministers who had a personal interest in beautifying the city for the benefit of the country;
- Plans applied to both the Ontario and Quebec sides of the Ottawa river; and,
- Plans considered growth over the longer term, 50 to 100 years out.

Also similar amongst the early plans were challenges to implementation. The Federal District recommendation was never seriously considered because of territory and sovereignty concerns, particularly on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. The evolution of planning movements, particularly reaction to the City Beautiful movement, also impacted the success of Ottawa's early plans.

Despite these challenges, there are obvious signs of the successes of federal-government led plans in Ottawa today, particularly in its many parks, boulevards, employment campuses, and, most notably, the NCC greenbelt. The greenbelt was implemented as a land use control in the tradition of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City model and the NCC successfully expropriated land to create a distinct green area around the City that is generally accepted by everyone today as a protected area.

2.3 Today's Plans

The Gréber Plan was the last of the federal government plans for the National Capital Region that defined long-range growth projections, identified land uses, and established development controls. In the absence of a strong regional plan aimed at controlling outward expansion, there was rapid growth of low density suburban communities outside of the NCC greenbelt after the 1970s.

This section discusses provincial and municipal planning policies that are currently in place to guide growth in the City of Ottawa and contrasts policy directions with actual development trends.

2.3.1 Provincial Planning Policy Context

In Canada, municipalities are, "wholly a creature of the provincial legislature … it derives all powers from statute," (Makuch, 1983, p. 81). As such, municipalities may only assume powers that are conferred on them by the province and are subject to provincial provisions on all planning matters. The Ontario Planning Act, 1990, defines the roles of municipalities and the province and includes provisions that ensure that the province is the ultimate decision maker in planning matters. For example, it is responsible for approving all new Official Plans and administering the Ontario Municipal Board.

Some of the province's planning requirements are presented in the *2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)*, a document that provides policy direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development (MAH, 2007). The underlying principles of the PPS relate to the province's long-term economic prosperity, environmental health, and social well-being. These depend on efficient land use and development patterns which support healthy communities while protecting the environment and public health and safety and facilitating economic growth (MAH, 2005).

A main goal of the PPS is to direct urban growth to built-up areas, where possible, to achieve a more compact urban form. Policies encourage higher density, mixed use development to make efficient use of infrastructure, to support alternative modes of transportation and transit initiatives, and to maintain environmental integrity. To accomplish this, infill and redevelopment are encouraged in existing built-up areas and greenfield development is confined to land designated for future development. These policies are to be complemented by local land use planning which is carried out by regional and municipal planning bodies (MAH, 2005).

2.3.2 Local Planning Policy Context

The Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton was created in 1968 with the amalgamation of the former Carleton County and Cumberland Township (Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, 1997). Over the next thirty years its geographic extent grew and political boundaries shifted so that by 1999 it included eleven local municipalities. In 2000, these municipalities were amalgamated to create the new City of Ottawa, shown in *Figure 2.6*.

Figure 2.6: City of Ottawa's Municipal Boundaries

Prior to amalgamation, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton had established policies to encourage a more compact urban form. In the years that followed amalgamation, City planners, engineers, and economic development officers worked to prepare a 20-year plan for Ottawa that built upon and strengthened policies for compact development.

The current Official Plan was adopted by Council in 2003 and provides a broad approach to shaping and accommodating future growth in the municipality. The policies are consistent with those established by the province in the PPS and reflect contemporary planning principals of Smart Growth. It incorporates goals for managing growth, providing infrastructure, maintaining environmental integrity, and creating liveable communities. Growth has been expressed as targets for population, housing, and employment Inside the NCC Greenbelt, within three suburban communities, and rural areas. The spatial extent of the suburban areas is demonstrated in *Figure 2.7*.
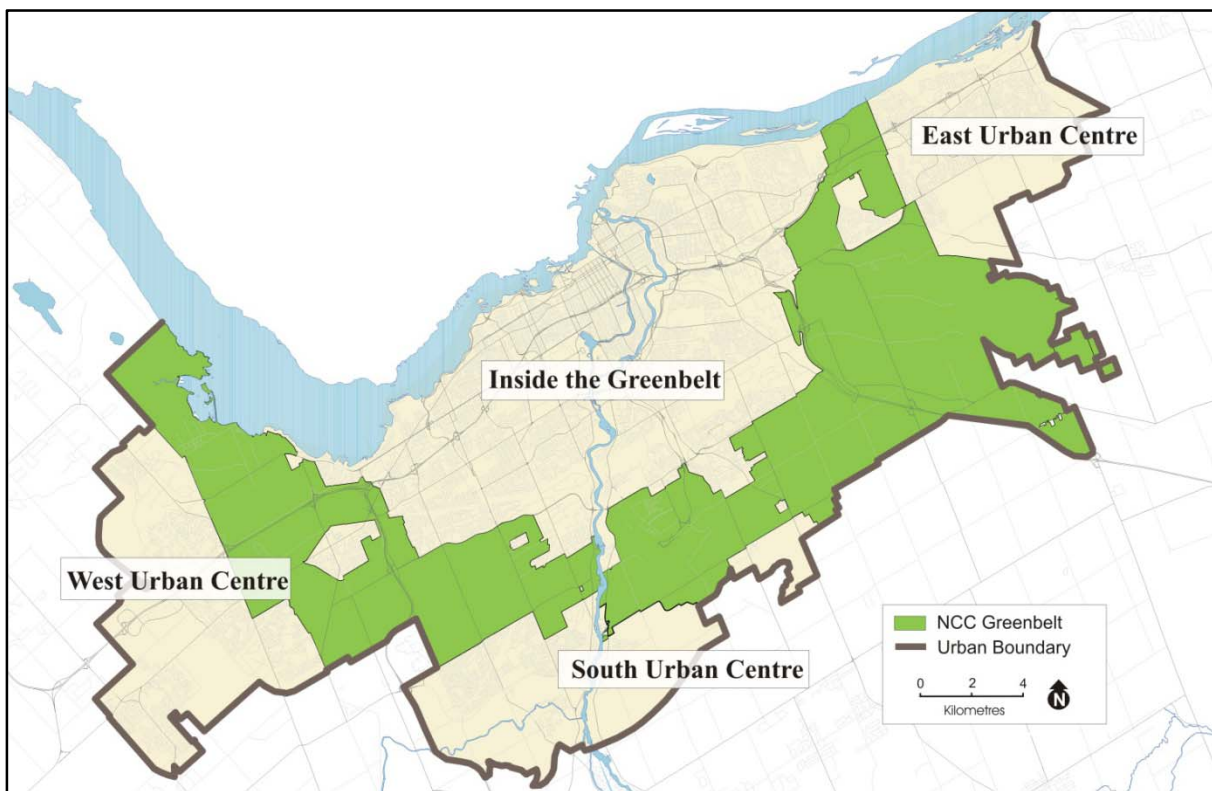
Source: Based on City of Ottawa, 2003a

Figure 2.7: City of Ottawa's Urban Area

Official Plan policies support compact development by managing growth in two ways: it encourages residential infill and redevelopment in the existing built-up area; and, greenfield development is confined to land within an urban boundary. Intensification, promoting better use of existing urban infrastructure, and minimizing the rate of consumption of greenfields are important goals for Ottawa.

A review of development policies in the 1994 and 1997 Regional Official Plans indicates that the City of Ottawa's 2003 Official Plan contains similar provisions to its predecessors with respect to encouraging infill and redevelopment. *Table 2.1* presents a comparison of policies pertaining to residential infill and redevelopment in the 1994, 1997, and 2003 Official Plans.

Table 2.1: Official Plan Policies Regarding Infill and Redevelopment, 1994 to 2003

		Region of Ottawa-Carleton 1994	Region of Ottawa-Carleton 1994	City of Ottawa 2003
Infill		Encouraged	Encouraged with an emphasis on conversion of non-residential buildings and intensification Inside the Greenbelt	As 1994 but also encourages redevelopment of older commercial sites and does not permit the downzoning of residential sites.
Medium/High Density Residential	Employment Areas	Permitted within Primary and Secondary Employment Areas	Permitted within Primary and Secondary Employment Areas and Town Centres	50% of Enterprise Areas may develop for residential
	Transitway	In Orleans, high density residential permitted within 400 metres	High density residential permitted at all transitways	Mixed land uses permitted within 600 metres of transitways
Mixed Use		Encouraged where local zoning permits	Mix of residential and non-residential development permitted on Mainstreets and Regional Roads with transit.	Mixed use buildings permitted along both Mainstreets.
Housing Forms		One third of new housing must be medium or high density	One third of new housing must be medium or high density and apartments are permitted in most residential areas	Minimum density of 29 units per hectare set for Developing Communities and 40% of homes to be medium or high density
Urban Boundary Expansion		Must meet Official Plan policies and demonstrate requirement for land	Must meet Official Plan policies and demonstrate requirement for land	Must meet Official Plan policies and demonstrate requirement for land, will only be assessed during the five-year Official Plan review process

Source: Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, 1994 and 1997; City of Ottawa, 2003a

Policies in the former Regional Official Plans and those in the current City Official Plan have been consistent in permitting residential development in well-serviced locations as well as permitting mixed use development along arterial roads. Additional policies have been added in the most recent Official Plan, however, to help facilitate compact, mixed development. Specifically, the 2003 Official Plan includes policies that state the City will:

- Investigate financial incentives for residential development within mixed use projects;

- Review use of municipal land to facilitate compact and mixed use development;

- Consider how to reduce the amount of land used for parking;

- Partner with others in building commercial and residential development over transit stations, municipal parking structures, and municipal offices and facilities; and,

- Negotiate an increase in building density in exchange for developing municipal facilities, transit stations, and public cultural facilities.

Source: City of Ottawa, 2003a

Despite the fact that favourable policies encouraging intensification and the creation of a compact mixed use form of development were in place since at least the mid-1990s, significant amounts of such development has not occurred.

2.4   Recent Growth and Development Trends

Over the course of the past decade, Ottawa has experienced rapid urban growth. This can be credited to the shift in the City's economy from one based on primarily federal government employment to one that includes a significant number of private sector jobs. After Ottawa's unemployment rates peaked in 1995, a result of federal government cutbacks and layoffs, the local economy rebounded due to the influence of the advanced technology sector (City of Ottawa, 2003b). Rapid growth in this industry resulted in unprecedented population, housing and employment growth in Ottawa in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as shown in *Figure 2.8*.
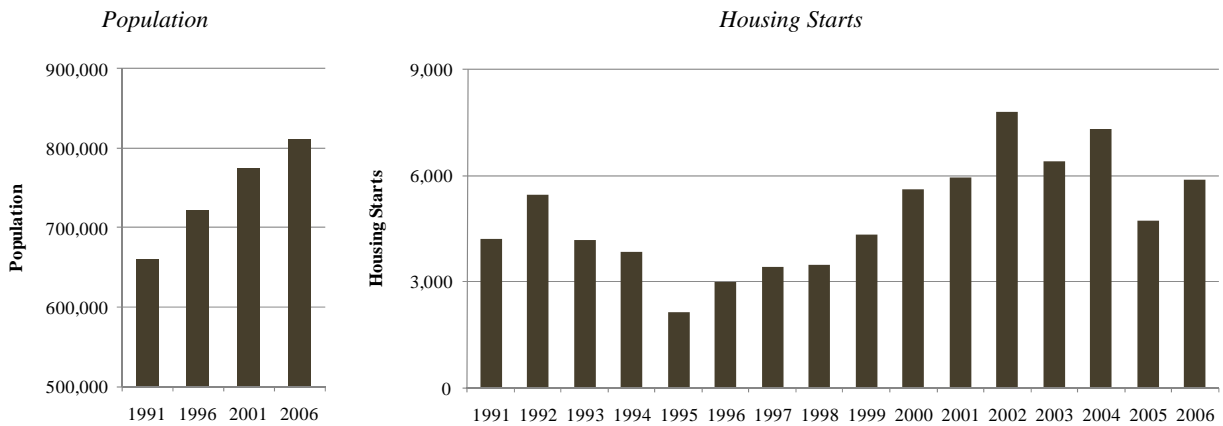
Figure 2.8: Population Growth and Housing Development Trends, 1991 to 2006

Historically, Ottawa's homebuyers have preferred single detached or townhouse units, a built form that has made up the vast majority of housing starts in the City over the past ten years. These trends are shown in Figure *2.9*.

Singles Multiples Apartments
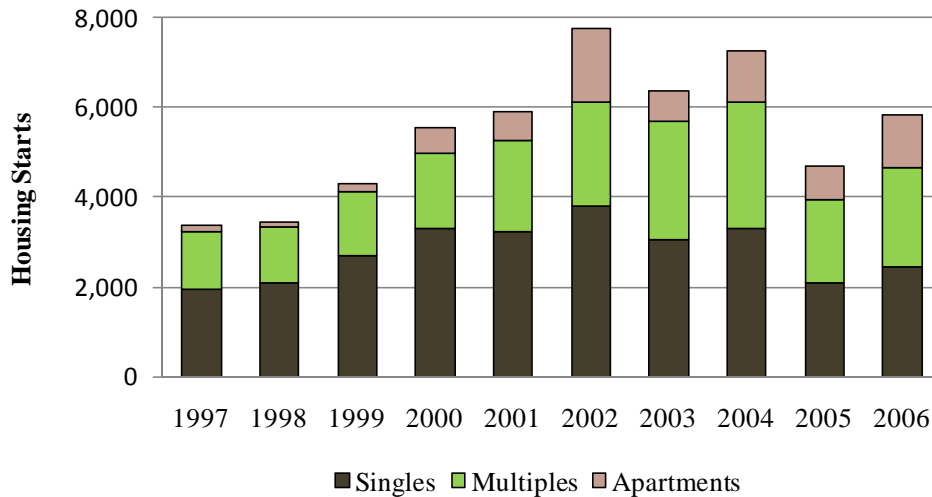
Figure 2.9: Housing Starts by Type, 1997 to 2006

Despite policies encouraging a compact urban form and support for intensification, recent housing start data indicates that between 2001 and 2006 about three-quarters of the City's housing starts were located outside of the urban boundary in its three suburban centres (see map presented in *Figure 2.7*). These trends are demonstrated in *Figure 2.10*.
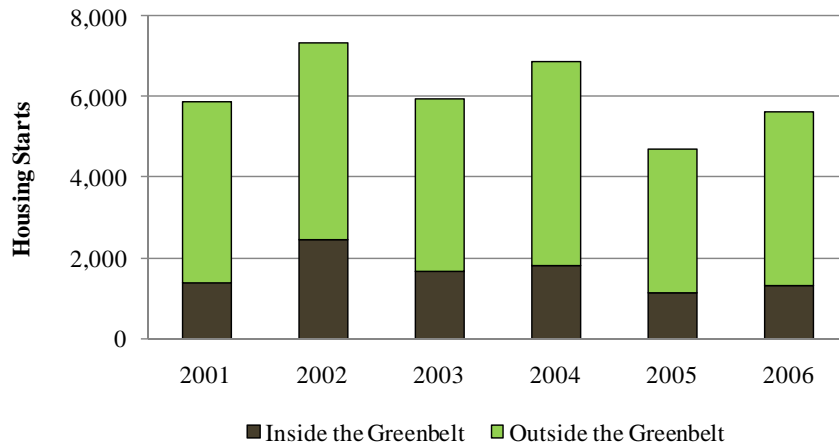
Figure 2.10: Location of Housing Starts in the City of Ottawa

Development trends demonstrate that the bulk of Ottawa's vacant urban land development in the past ten years has occurred outside the greenbelt, primarily in the West Urban Centre. Demand for residential land was influenced by the supply of serviced land, the number of builders and sites, the range of housing products, the desirability of community infrastructure, and proximity to work. By comparison, federal government and high tech employment growth drove the demand for employment land Inside the Greenbelt and in the West Urban Centre. *Figure 2.11* demonstrates the proportion of vacant land consumed for residential and employment development in Ottawa's four urban areas.
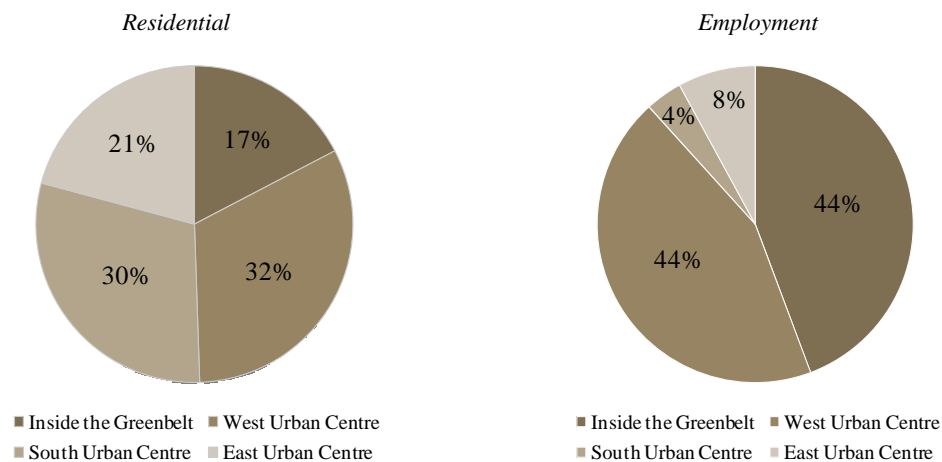
Figure 2.11: Vacant Land Consumption by Urban Area, 1996 to 2005

While Ottawa has supported a compact urban form for years, it has not seen a significant amount of intensification occur in locations where higher density development is encouraged. Since 1998, a City of Ottawa monitoring program has tracked the number of new residential building permits issued for land targeted for intensification, namely land in the Central Area, along Mainstreets, in Mixed Use Centres and suburban Town Centres, in the Vicinity of Rapid Transit Stations (600m); and in Enterprise Areas (see map presented in *Figure 5.4*). Since 1998 and 2006, between 10% and 20% of new residential units have been built on land targeted for intensification annually. As shown in *Figure 2.12*, over the nine years of monitoring, an average of 15% of new residential construction has been in intensification target areas.
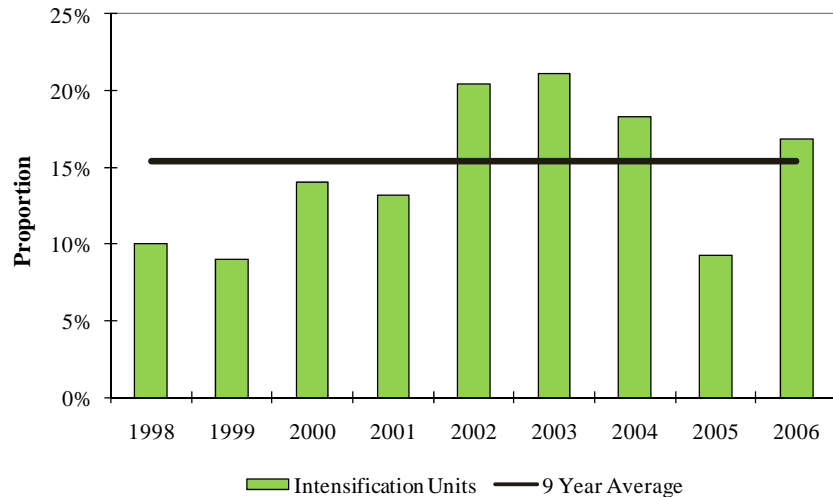
Figure 2.12: Proportion of Residential Units Built in Intensification Target Areas, 1998 to 2006

While the City of Ottawa does not have an intensification target, one planning document suggested that the City should aim for a 40% intensification rate in the built-up urban area (City of Ottawa, 2006a). The report, however, did not define either the "built-up area" or "intensification", making it impossible to compare infill and redevelopment trends in intensification areas to the 40% built-up area target.

It should be recognized that over-optimistic assumptions about the amount of housing demand that can be satisfied through infill and redevelopment projects could lead to unrealistic unit supply counts, which has implications on the amount of vacant residential land set aside in the urban area when residential supply and demand analyses are carried out. Erroneous unit supply and demand estimates can lead to a constrained land supply, higher land values, and the out-migration of residents to neighbouring municipalities that have lower housing costs and weaker growth management strategies. These trends are currently being realized in Ottawa today.

The City of Ottawa is located in the Greater Ottawa-Gatineau Metropolitan Area, a region that includes municipalities that are either adjacent to Ottawa or Gatineau and/or have a high percentage of their employed labour force working in one of the two cities (City of Ottawa, 2007a). The geographic extent of this area is illustrated in *Figure 2.13*.

Figure 2.13: Greater Ottawa-Gatineau Area
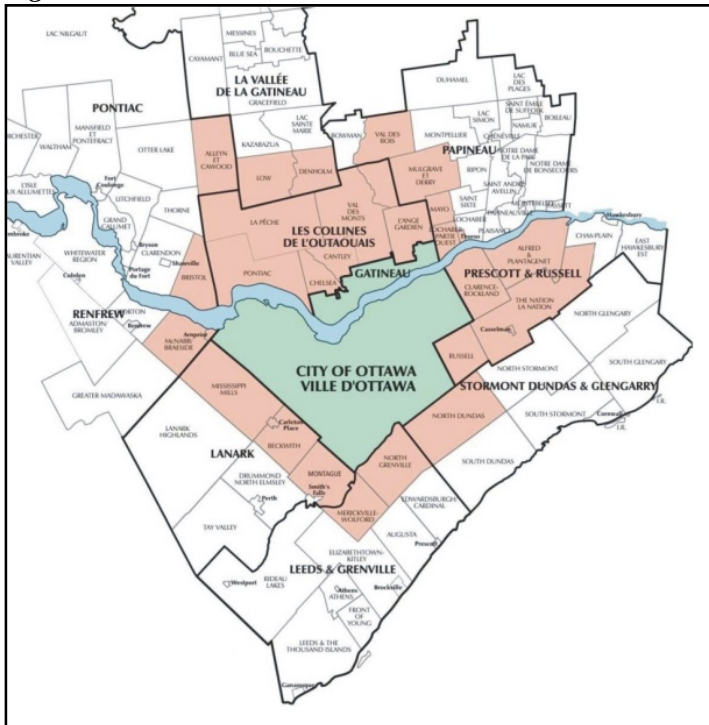
Recent growth trends in the larger region provide an indication of how well Ottawa's growth management strategies are working to contain growth and encourage a compact urban form and how well they correspond to those strategies in neighbouring municipalities. Recent growth, migration, and commuting trends indicate that Ottawa's policies do not effectively relate to those of its neighbours.

Source: City of Ottawa, 2007a

Since 2000, Ottawa has experienced a net loss of residents moving between the City and surrounding municipalities. Between 2004 and 2005, just over half (52%) of the residents who moved from Ottawa to other Canadian cities moved to Gatineau or surrounding municipalities (City of Ottawa, 2007a). The City has attributed this phenomenon to improved road access and the increased cost of housing in the City (City of Ottawa, 2005a). Migration trends are demonstrated in *Figure 2.14*.
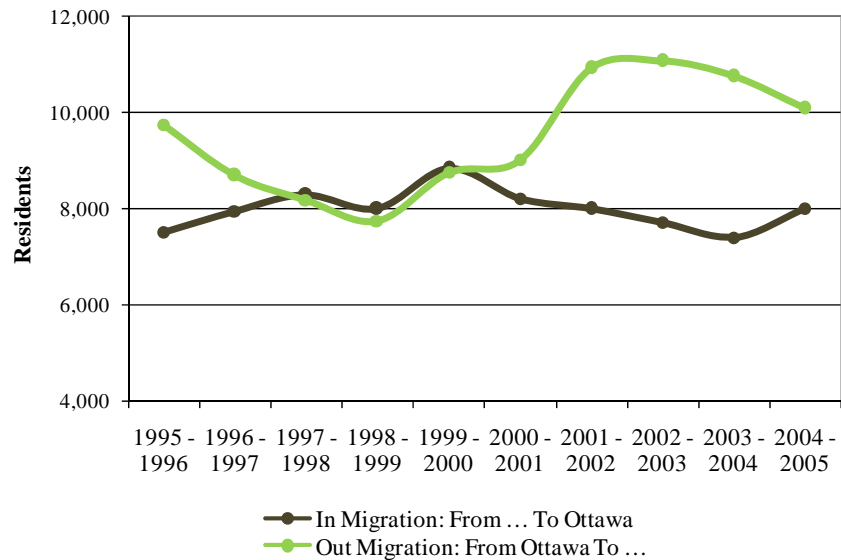
Figure 2.14: Migration Trends in Ottawa and Surrounding Municipalities

As shown in *Figure 2.15*, the high proportion of in-bound commuters in 2001 from adjacent municipalities reflects the fact that residential growth in those communities is linked to job growth in Ottawa.
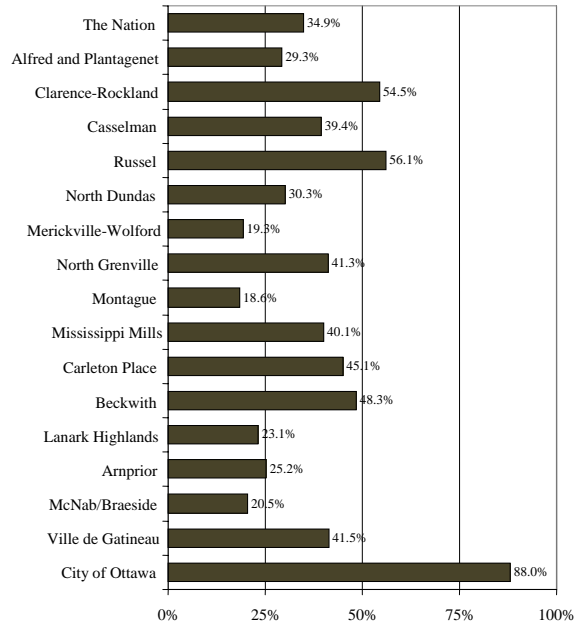
Figure 2.15: Surrounding Municipalities' Employed Labour Force Working in Ottawa, 2001

While Ottawa's population has been growing, adjacent municipalities have experienced significant growth as well. In fact, 1996 to 2006 census data demonstrate that Quebec municipalities grew at a faster rate than the City of Ottawa over the 2001 to 2006 period. This is demonstrated in *Figure 2.16*.
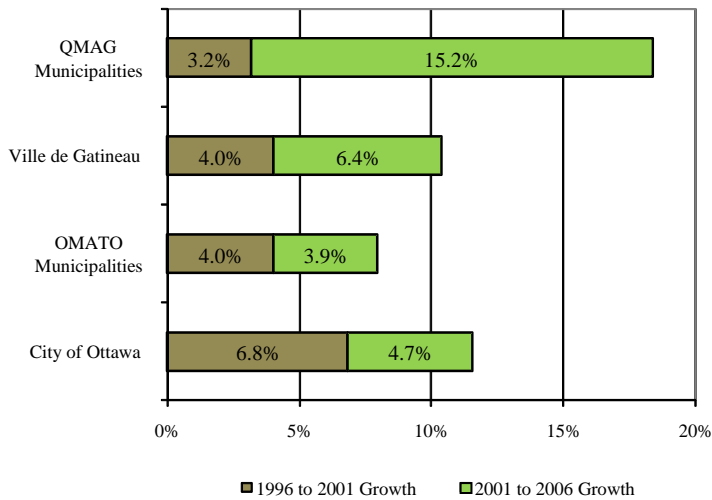
Figure 2.16: Population Growth, 1996 to 2006

The leapfrogging of urban development to surrounding municipalities represents a lost opportunity for Ottawa to increase transit ridership and to reduce environmental impacts from automobile use. In-bound workers place stress on the city's infrastructure and services but do not contribute to development charge and property tax revenue.

Recent development trends demonstrate that there is some disconnect in the City of Ottawa between municipal-wide objectives for compact development and the actual implementation of intensification projects on the ground. While the City has developed a variety of policies and programs to encourage and support residential intensification, it appears site level constraints have prohibited it to occur in a significant way. The implication of these trends is that the municipality will find it increasingly difficult to achieve its objectives for compact development as designated vacant residential land and easier sites are developed.

2.5   Conclusions

Early planning efforts in Ottawa were encouraged and endorsed by Prime Ministers who made it their quest to beautify the capital. They retained renowned professionals to prepare plans that were some of the most comprehensive and sophisticated documents of their day. In contrast, urban planning in Canada's capital region since the 1970s has been carried out primarily by local and regional municipalities that prepare forecasts and land uses exclusively for their own jurisdictions. These urban plans have shorter time frames than historic plans and deal exclusively with growth projected within a particular local or regional municipality. The City of Ottawa has adopted an Official Plan that promotes compact development and encourages it primarily through the intensification of residential land uses. Recent development trends, however, demonstrate that there are weaknesses in the City's current strategy, which has implications for achieving its vision for a more compact urban form. There is an opportunity now, as Ottawa embarks on its 5-year Official Plan review, to create a growth management strategy that evokes the same pride as historic planning efforts and guides the City boldly into the 21st century.

CHAPTER THREE: Encouraging Compact Development

3.1   Introduction

The City of Ottawa's vision for a more compact urban form reflects current trends in urban planning. This Chapter provides a review of the traditional approach for accommodating growth and identifies environmental, social, and economic costs of sprawling development. Planning movements in North America are traced from the 1960s to demonstrate how planning approaches have evolved to encourage a more compact urban form. The strengths and weaknesses of policies and programs that are intended to support residential intensification efforts are discussed. The Chapter concludes with a review of the challenges to implementing intensification projects at the site level.

3.2   Urban Dispersion

There are two important reasons why urban growth is important for residents and municipal governments: economic benefits and social improvements. Growth means expansion of the municipal tax base, which is important for local governments who derive the majority of their funding from property and sales taxes.   With the continued downloading of fiscal responsibilities from the provincial government, local municipalities are increasingly left to fund physical and social infrastructure projects. In the interest of attracting new investment, municipalities compete for new jobs and businesses by promoting themselves as growth centres (Boyle, et al., 2004). Local governments offer incentives in an effort to encourage new business development, ultimately lowering the costs for businesses in an effort to get a larger property and sales tax base. Growing communities benefit by attracting a more specialized service sector, broadened cultural diversity, and established social programs.

The physical manifestation of urban growth is important because urban planning and urban policies must together address transportation, land use, economic development, and public service provisions (Ding and Bingham, 2000). Historically, the shape and distribution of urban areas was limited by transportation and communication technologies (Gordon and

Richardson, 1997). Today, technological advances have contributed to, among other things, a more dispersed urban form whereby more people live and work in the suburbs than in the core area (Robinson, et al., 2005). The location, form, and spatial extent of urban growth has direct implications on the efficient provision of public services, the assurance of social equity amongst different races and classes, the overall achievement of sustainable development, and the protection of sensitive areas.

Urban sprawl is a derogatory term often used to describe expansive, sometimes poorly planned, development of a suburban area. It was historically used to describe the predominantly commercial *ribbon* development that emerged adjacent to highways (Gordon and Richardson, 1997). The term now implies a number of characteristics of a built area including low-density development, distinct specialization of land uses with little mixing, and locations near the fringe of an urban area with all land uses served primarily by private automobile (Filion, 2003; Miller and Hoel, 2002; Pucher, 1998; Sewell, 2003).

While numerous factors have been cited for causing urban dispersion, the literature points heavily to the influence of transportation improvements:

- *1880s* – Electric-powered street railroads made it possible for those working in the city centre to live on the periphery of the city and commute easily to their jobs (Fishcel, 2004).
- *1920s and 1930s* – The private automobile gained popularity and residential neighbourhoods were built on the vacant land between streetcar corridors. Suburban residents became increasingly dependent on private vehicles because of the low-density nature of their communities and the dispersed and segregated land uses (Muller, 1995). Trucking meant that industry was no longer dependent on locating near downtown railroad stations and docks and jobs moved out to suburban "industrial parks" where land was cheaper (Fishcel, 2004). The dispersion of employment areas meant that workers did not need to go to the Central Business District for employment but required vehicles to get to suburban jobs. Similarly,

commercial development began to slowly decentralize, with commercial strip development occurring adjacent to major roads (Muller, 1995).

- *1940s and 1950s* – In the United States, a series of federal initiatives promoted the development of interstate highways. City plans at this time were dominated by car dependent scenarios and failed to integrate other modes of transportation, such as mass transit, with the highway system (Ellis, 2001). The major land-use impacts of freeway construction were the massive expansion of urban growth into exurbia and the reduced reliance on the Central Business District. Highway systems reduced the competitive locational advantage of the central area because all areas along the road network could be reached easily by car, thus leading to an acceleration of non-residential decentralization (Muller, 1995). The decentralization of employment meant workers could access places of employment via high-speed freeways, thereby expanding their residential location choices (Fishcel, 2004).

In addition to transportation improvements, infrastructure investment as a whole, by both the private and public sector, has led to a decrease in urban densities over time. In the 1800s, private companies built transportation and other infrastructure as a means to encourage home buyers to move to locations outside of the central area owned by the very same companies that provided the infrastructure (Muller, 1995; Pendall, 1999; Fishcel, 2004). Later, government investment in urban water supply and sewage treatment facilities and the highway system encouraged lower density development by providing suburban residents with services that they did not pay for directly (Ellis, 2001; Pendall, 1999). Because of these subsidies, the true value of rural land is not reflected in its sale price because infrastructure development costs are not covered in the average-cost pricing system employed in most municipalities, and the social and environmental costs (congestion, emissions) of private vehicle use is not paid by motorists (Byun and Esparza, 2005).

Government policies and initiatives that influence the spatial pattern of land prices have an impact on the shape of cities because subsidies result in an increase in the demand for housing and land in the suburbs (Voith and Gyourko, 2002; Daniels, 2001). There are three ways in which government investment can influence land absorption: it reduces the relative price of

land; it reduces local government or private household spending resulting in an increase in discretionary income and effectively increased demand for residential space and housing investment; and supports business activities outside the central area ultimately influencing the residential location choices for employees (Persky and Kurban, 2003).

Market demand and consumer preference have also played an important role in influencing the spatial pattern of urban development. Lifestyle choices favouring single-family homes, automobile ownership, and low-rise workplaces have contributed to sprawling development. With support from increasing incomes, the demand for suburban life is self-perpetuating (Carruthers, 2002). The suburbs and countryside are perceived to be safer and cleaner places to live compared to urban centres and houses on the periphery of urban areas are expected to have considerable appreciation potential (Daniels, 2001).

While the diffusion of residential development from the core to the edges arguably causes the decentralization of supporting land uses, such as commercial and employment areas, there is the theory that the development of commercial and employment areas *themselves* causes the outward movement of people from the core and encourages urban sprawl (Ding and Bingham, 2000; Walker and Lewis, 2001). The historic decentralization of factories and manufacturing districts to the metropolitan fringe has continually played an important role in creating multi-nodal cities. Property investment in fringe locations have the potential to generate large profits because of low property values and the relative ease of land assemblage and speculative development has the potential to pull urban infrastructure and investors to the suburbs and, in turn, attract residents from the core to the fringe (Walker and Lewis, 2001).

Clearly, the spatial pattern of development has changed dramatically since the 1950s and the shape and role of our urban and suburban areas is continuously evolving. Muller (1995) identifies five stages in our current suburban era. The first was the *bedroom community stage* (1945-1955) in which residential development in the suburbs outpaced non-residential development. The second phase was the *independence stage* (1955-1965) when industrial and office parks began to emerge in the suburbs followed by regional shopping centres. The *catalytic growth stage* (1965-1980) followed with the clustering of office, hotel and restaurant

developments around large suburban shopping centres. During the 1980s there was the *high-rise/high-technology stage* in which suburban downtowns grew with the introduction of high-rise office buildings catering to companies in the high-tech industry. Muller dubbed the 1990s as the mature *urban centres stage* because suburban centres were increasingly diversifying to include social, cultural, civic, and recreational functions in addition to their existing residential and economic roles.

3.3 The Cost of Sprawl

Over the past 20 years, there have been increasing concerns over the environmental, social, and economic costs of the conventional approach to urban development. The following sections provide a summary of those costs.

3.3.1 Environmental Costs

Sprawling development involves the expansion of urban land uses from the periphery of metropolitan areas to surrounding rural land. The negative effects of urban dispersion can be seen when considering the subsequent increases in land consumption and energy consumption – both of which have implications on the quality of the environment.

Urban expansion comes at the expense of green space and ultimately reduces the supply of agricultural land on the urban fringe and negatively impacts environmentally significant areas. Concern about the implications sprawling development has on the consumption of land is demonstrated in numerous studies that have tracked the take-up of forest and agricultural land by urban development in cities across North America. Academic literature demonstrates that new development has the potential to destroy farmland, forests, and wetlands and replace it with impermeable surfaces, such as buildings, roads, and parking lots. The replacement of natural areas with impermeable surfaces, if not mitigated appropriately, could mean a rise in water temperatures and an increase in erosion, which ultimately reduce water quality (Paehlke, 1991; Hasse and Lathrop, 2001; Robinson et al., 2005; MacDonald and Rudel, 2005).

The environmental costs of lower density development on the fringe of urban areas are also reflected in the increased energy demand for transportation, heating and cooling larger homes, and powering appliances (Gonzalez, 2005; Alexander and Tomalty, 2002). Similarly, there is a tendency to use excess water in low density singles due to the interest in watering lawns, gardens, and washing cars (Alexander and Tomalty, 2002). Increased greenhouse gases and airborne emissions emitted by private vehicles can contribute to climate change (Tomalty, 1997). Reliance on private automobiles to access segregated land uses increases fuel usage, air pollution, and energy consumption (Paehlke 1991; Jackson, 2005). Meanwhile, sprawling low density development impacts the viability of alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking and transit. More dense urban areas, with smaller living quarters, lessen the demand for land, automobiles, electricity, gasoline, appliances and furniture (Gonzalez, 2005).

3.3.2 Social Costs

The option to move to low-density living in the suburbs has a lot to do with the mobility of particular social and economic classes (Ding and Bingham, 2000). Homeownership in the suburbs by white, middle class residents ultimately led to the wide adoption of fiscal and exclusionary zoning (Byun and Esparza, 2005). Urbanists argue that Euclidian zoning, "generally a single-use layer zoning, separating individual land uses into individual, defined areas," (Jackson, 2005, p. 300), is a physical expression of an exclusionary white society who moved from the urban core to the suburbs due to class and racial segregation (Tomalty, 1997). This protectionist perspective is manifested in not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) opposition to less advantaged groups (CMHC, 1993).

The segregation of classes is enhanced in the suburbs by a need for private vehicles to access different activities, such as residential, commercial, and employment land uses, because of the distinct separation of those uses. Ewing (1997) refers to *access deprivation* as the difficulty associated with moving around a sprawling community without private transportation. Ellis (2001) and Jackson (2005) support Ewing's argument that low income people, seniors, or others who do not have access to private vehicles experience stress; lack of access to jobs,

housing and open space; and suffer from a generally feeling of isolation. Alternative modes of transportation, such as biking and walking are sometimes not an option because of the sheer distance between land uses and vehicle congested fast moving arterials. The lack of viable transportation options creates a problem for equitable access to municipal services by disadvantaged groups (Canadian Urban Institute, 1991). Those residents with access to private vehicles express frustrations with increasingly longer commuting distances, traffic congestion, and parking options (Canadian Urban Institute, 1991).

The homogenous, monotonous, and unaesthetic characteristics of traditional suburban development impact the liveability of those communities (CMHC, 1993). Ewing (1997) uses the term *environmental deprivation* to refer to the lack of action or stimuli in a sprawling community. Low-density, segregated land uses pose challenges for place-making due to the lack of vitality, intimacy, neighbourliness, and social ties in neighbourhoods (Ewing, 1997; Freeman, 2001; Canadian Urban Institute, 1991).

In contrast, more compact, mixed use development has the opportunity to improve the quality of life of residents as it provides proximate services and amenities, allows for pedestrian friendly neighbourhoods thereby improving the vibrancy of a community, and provides greater security through constant surveillance (Alexander and Tomalty, 2002). The reduced reliance on the automobile and the increased use of alternative forms of transportation, such as walking and bicycling, improves the quality of life of residents because there is reduced emissions; reduced auto congestion; reduced impact of the automobile on social effects, such as having to commute to work from the suburbs; reduced spatial effects, such as the sheer amount of land used for roads; and, reduced class division, with lower income residents able to move about the city using public transit (Miller and Hoel, 2002).

3.3.3 Economic Costs

The segregated land uses and lower development densities typical in sprawling suburbs make them more expensive to service than compact areas. Monetary costs can be measured through the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and the provision of public services.

Sprawling suburban development does not make efficient use of existing infrastructure capacity and requires expensive financial investment in the development of services on the urban fringe. Speir and Stephenson (2002) found that the cost to provide water and sewers increased with the increased dispersion of development; the increased distance from existing service centres; and large lots, the latter being the most cost-sensitive spatial attribute. Similarly, Carruthers and Ulfarsson's (2003) analysis of per capita spending on twelve measures of public expenditure, including garbage collection, police and fire protection, education, and libraries, indicated that the per capita costs of these services increased with decreased density.

The financial investment required to service growing suburbs has the potential to lead to the economic decline of the core area and can result in an underutilization of existing servicing capacity (Tomalty, 1997). The failure (or inability) to invest in public services, particularly in the urban core, can result in a self-perpetuating situation of tax increases and property value and tax base decreases, resulting in the increased movement of residents to the suburbs (Jackson, 2005). This cyclical situation is reflected in the White Flight era of the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, a time when low-income and ethnic minorities moved to central cities after World War II, placing an increasing tax burden on middle class and non-Hispanic whites. In response, middle class city dwellers and businesses moved to the suburbs, causing a further reduction in tax revenues which resulted in a decline in physical and social infrastructure in core areas (Byun and Esparza, 2005; Pendall, 1999).

3.4 A Move to Compact Development

Academic literature traces efforts to control unplanned urban dispersion back in history as far as cities themselves. However, it has only been within the last century, and more specifically since the mid-1900s, that sustained efforts have been made to stop sprawling development (Bruegmann, 2005). Planning movements over the past half century can be distinguished in part by their response to environmental, social, and economic concerns of the day and in part by implementation strategies, which have shifted from relying exclusively on regulatory controls to the use of financial incentives to achieve land use objectives (Godschalk, 2000).

This section provides a brief history of the evolution of planning movements from the mid-1900s that have influenced the current Smart Growth movement.

3.4.1 *Influence of the Garden City Concept*

Bruegmann (2005) has recognized an interesting paradox in urban planning: today's solutions for controlling sprawling development and lessening its environmental, social, and economic costs are similar to the remedies developed to combat high density blight over a hundred years ago. Specifically, he refers to Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept and its goals for a clear urban boundary; a balance of people, households, and jobs; and a balance of built land to green space.

The Garden City concept emerged out of a reaction to the plight of Industrial Cities and was first proposed in Howard's 1898 book *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. The concept was prepared as a response to what Howard believed were the corrupt, immoral, and inhumane political and economic structures of Industrial Cities. 'Planned dispersal' was a conscious and organized effort to move people and businesses out of Industrial Cities to the countryside (Ward, 1993), a move in which a citizen could, "vote with ones feet against the concentration of power and wealth that the cities represented," (Fishman, 2003, pp. 38). Howard recognized that decentralization had to happen in a balanced manner, providing for residential, employment and leisure opportunities so that communities could be self-contained. He also acknowledged the importance of accommodating a mix of social classes and providing full access to urban and rural amenities (Simmonds, 2001).

To reach this end, Howard proposed that Garden Cities take the form of a perfect circle, ensuring that each land use would be placed to ensure maximum utility and convenience. The Garden City concept provided for low-density land uses while recognizing that some concentration was necessary to capitalize on efficiencies in the built form (Fishman, 2003). Also, what could be argued as the most defining feature of the Garden City, Howard proposed that the entire urban centre be surrounded by a band of agricultural and natural land: a greenbelt. Howard's model was realized in the development of two Garden Cities:

Letchworth (1903) and Welwyn Garden City (1920). Unfortunately, the focus on economic and political reform that was the driver for his Garden City concept was disregarded as concerns for the towns' development shifted to architectural detail and physical design.

While Howard's Garden City concept was never fully realized, it did mark the beginning of the New Town planning era that was important in shaping Britain's urban areas in the years following the Second World War. In 1944, Sir Patrick Abercombie's *Great London Plan* was released. It recognized the problems associated with a crowded central city and sprawling development on the edges. The plan recommended the decentralization of the central core's population, a strengthened greenbelt around the existing built-up area, and the creation of New Towns (Bruegmann, 2005; Ward, 1993). Abercombie's plan was radical in that it required a high level of government intervention in the planning of land uses and was very much an example of top-down planning (Bruegmann, 2005).

Legislation was passed in the late 1940s to implement Abercombie's plan but, when the government changed in 1951, so too did support for planning control at the national level. While the London plan was successful in lower densities, it arguably did so at the expense of high land values within the greenbelt and new towns and increases in commuting times and traffic congestions in the core due to a more decentralized population beyond the greenbelt (Bruegmann, 2005).

3.4.2 The Quiet Revolution – 1960s and 1970s

While not all of the planning efforts in Britain were beneficial, planning reformers in North America in the 1960s saw advantages to Britain's move to push land use planning up in the government hierarchy (Bruegmann, 2005). First, the fragmentation of local governments meant that municipalities adopted their own land use regulations; which could have the implication of inducing competition as municipalities focused primarily on their own well-being at the expense of larger anti-sprawl efforts (Pendall, 1999; Byun and Esparza, 2005). Also, a more regional approach meant that more funds could potentially be available to pay for more highly skilled professional planners (Bruegmann, 2005).

The planning movement that emerged in the 1960s in the United States was primarily a move to create statewide plans. It was dubbed the Quiet Revolution, "because it was done state by state and apparently by many individuals and groups acting without any centralized command structure," (Bruegmann, 2005). While the academic literature is not conclusive about the beginning and end dates of this planning period, there is general agreement that it began in 1961 with the enactment of Hawaii's statewide land use planning law (Weitz, 1999). While an estimated 34 states had statewide planning legislation by 1960, only Hawaii had developed a plan that addressed *land use* (Weitz, 1999). The legislation basically implemented statewide zoning, as it divided the state into four zones: urban, rural, agricultural, and conservation, and directed growth to locate in the urban zone (Daniels, 2001).

While the Quiet Revolution was originally prompted by planning reformers who desired a more regional approach to curbing sprawl, the real revolution in *land control* did not begin until the environmental movement grew in the late 1960s (Weitz, 1999). Environmental laws were strengthened to protect environmentally significant areas and the requirement for mandatory environmental impact statements was introduced (Bruegmann, 2005).

At the same time, "No Growth" and "Slow Growth" initiatives that effectively limited the pace and geographic extent of development were implemented. In theory, low-density-only residential zoning places an upper threshold on population while building-permit caps or growth limits on residential development can stabilize property tax increases (Pendall, 1999; Jackson, 2005). Municipalities adopt such policies in an effort to build higher quality homes that sell for higher prices and have the potential to attract empty nesters that typically place a lower demand on the school system (Pendall, 1999).

Growth limiting actions, however, can have dramatic impacts on new urbanization because the adoption of such policies often results in competitive responses in adjacent municipalities, ultimately leading to an expansive area that has low-density residential uses (Pendall, 1999; Jackson, 2005). Reduced construction rates of all homes under building-permit caps or of attached or rental housing under low-density-only zoning policies means higher rents leading to increased racial and class divisions (Pendall, 1999).

Such results are best exemplified in Boulder, Colorado, a municipality that intentional slowed growth rates through growth control initiatives in an effort to preserve its existing character; limit crime, pollution and urban decay; and prevent urban sprawl (Jackson, 2005). It did so through the creation a greenbelt, the implementation of increased taxes and development fees, and by restricting growth rates by limiting the number of residential building permits issued (Bruegmann, 2005; Jackson, 2005). The implication is that while growth slowed within the greenbelt, the constrained land supply drove up the price of land inside and pushed growth even further out (Bruegmann, 2005).

Another example of the anti-growth attitudes of the 1960s and 1970s was reflected in the State of Oregon's enactment in 1973 of the Land Conservation and Development Act. Oregon governor Tom McCall supported efforts to slow growth, stating, "Come visit us again and again. This is a state of excitement. But for heaven's sake, don't come here to live," (Bruegmann, 2005, p. 203). The Act was introduced to curb sprawl and protect forest and farmlands by, among other things, requiring that cities and counties work together to create "urban growth boundaries" large enough to accommodate growth over a 20 year period (Daniels, 2001; Katz, 2002). The comprehensive plan included statewide goals and the act set up the Land Conservation and Development Commission whose role it was to ensure plan compliance.

The strengths and weaknesses of the Oregon system, particularly its implementation in Portland, is the subject of significant academic debate. Supports recognize the livability of the central area and the preservation of greenspace within and around its urban area. Opponents argue that growth controls have caused land prices to increase inside the growth boundary and low density development to locate in the suburbs at the expense of agricultural land. Academic literature does not provide conclusive evidence on either the success or failure of Oregon's planning efforts.

In general, the Quiet Revolution was characterized by planning efforts that used statewide regulatory means to control land use, including traditional zoning and subdivision ordinances and growth boundaries (Godschalk, 2000). The end of the planning movement came in the

late 1970s as economic growth slowed in the United States. Some regions that had adopted No Growth or Slow Growth planning policies abandoned their planning efforts in an attempt to encourage new economic growth (Bruegmann, 2005). Others modified their plans to reflect the goals of the new movement, growth management.

3.4.3 Growth Management – 1980s to early 1990s

While government interest in regional and statewide planning and environmental protection programs began to wane in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the overhaul of Florida's growth management legislation in 1985 is credited as being the first in a second wave of statewide planning efforts (Weitz, 1999). Florida's *State Comprehensive Plan* and *Growth Management Act of 1985* together sought to establish an integrated system of local, regional, and state plans (Nicholas and Steiner, 2000). Similar growth management laws were passed a few years later in Delaware, Maine, Rhode Island, and Vermont (Weitz, 1999).

This second wave in combating urban sprawl still used planning regulations to direct growth but also recognized the need to have interjurisdictional coordination to ensure consistency (Godschalk, 2000). Carruthers (2002) recognizes that growth management programs must be vertically consistent (local plans are consistent with upper-tier policy objectives), horizontally consistent (local plans are consistent with each other), and internally consistent (local plans are consistent with development regulations such as zoning) to be effective. Growth management policies that merely require local municipalities to plan without considering horizontal and internal consistency can actually promote sprawl because of inconsistencies between competing municipalities' growth strategies and a fragmented approach to growth management which could encourage leapfrog development (Carruthers, 2002).

Around the time of the overhaul of Florida's growth management legislation, there was also a move by the United Nations Generally Assembly to recognize the link between the economic and social costs of environmental degradation caused by development. In 1983 the United Nations convened the Brundtland Commission and in 1987 they published *Our Common Future*, a report that established policies for 'sustainable development'. The report defined

sustainable development as, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," (Montgomery, 2006, p.58). The definition recognized the objectives for economic development while identifying the need to protect the environment. In general, the sustainable development concept recognizes the realities and necessity for growth but encourages it to occur in a more efficient form.

Around the same time as the Brundtland Commission was preparing their report, the World Health Organization (WHO) was beginning work on its Healthy City initiative. The initiative, beginning in 1986, "recognized that health can be improved by modifying living conditions, namely, the physical environment and the social and economic conditions of everyday life," (Werna et al., 1999, p. 28). The projects were based on the premise that the health of citizens could be improved if health promotion and protection were included in development activities, such as housing, industry, and infrastructure (Werna et al., 1999). The WHO were responsible for establishing Healthy City projects, projects that supported health authorities and local governments to gather information, analyze results, implement policies, and advocate for healthy development (Werna et al., 1999). Like sustainable development, this approach to building and managing cities recognized the interconnection between the environment, the economy, and the social well-being of residents.

Growth management has evolved from the 1980s to become a regional approach to shape and accommodate growth in a compact form while balancing environmental, social, and economic objectives (Tomalty, 1997). The planning approach recognizes the realities and necessities of urban growth and, rather than trying to stop or slow it like the previous movements, it *manages* it while balancing other costs (Leo et al., 1998). Planning at a regional level makes use of economies of scale, thereby maximizing the benefits of development and minimizing the costs of sprawl by more efficiently managing such things as transportation, water and sewage treatment and distribution, and parks and open space (Jackson, 2005; Boyle, et al., 2004).

Comprehensive growth management strategies consist of a package of responses that together address the rate, amount, type and location of growth while also considering development costs (Nelson and Peterman, 2000). Strategies can include population growth targets, targeted growth areas, urban growth boundaries, policy innovations, partnerships, and protection programs. The success of such policies can be measured in density, spatial extent of the urbanized area, property values, public investment in infrastructure, and population change (Carruthers, 2002).

3.4.4 Smart Growth – 1992 to present

The planning movement influencing today's urban plans, Smart Growth, evolved out of the growth management movement. In fact, recent academic literature frequently uses the terms "Smart Growth" and "Growth Management" interchangeably. The main difference between Smart Growth and previous generations of growth management is that advocates state Smart Growth actually *promotes* economic development and population growth by giving confidence that an urban area can support it (Danielsen et al., 1999; Daniels, 2001). Tregoning et al. (2002) suggest that Smart Growth more directly links environmental, economic, and social concerns of sprawl by broadening the audience, "by shifting the focus from self-sacrifice to self-interest," (p. 342). In this way, environmentalist, farmers, developers, planners, politicians can come to the table together to discuss growth issues (Tregoning et al., 2002). Smart Growth does not interfere with market forces but instead controls where government chooses to invest, thereby curbing government subsidies that support urban sprawl (Daniels, 2001).

The current planning movement began with the enactment of Maryland's Neighbourhoods Conservation and Smart Growth Act (Godschalk, 2000; Weitz, 1999). It differed from previous growth management efforts in that it added state-funding incentives to encourage compact development. Specifically, the legislation had five main components: Priority Funding Areas, The Brownsfield Redevelopment Programme, The Job Creation Tax Credit Act, The Live Near Your Work Programme, and the Rural Legacy Programme (Daniels, 2001). The legislation had elements of earlier growth management land use regulations but

specifically used funding to encourage local governments to prepare plans and to support growth in target areas (Daniels, 2001; Tregoning, et al. 2002). By providing state funds to finance infrastructure in target growth areas, the legislation, "drew a clear connection between a healthy economy and a healthy environment, a link that had often been missed in the past," (Tregoning, et al., 2002, p. 343).

The Smart Growth planning concept today responds to sprawling urban development through a set of principles aimed at guiding development and good planning practice (Daniels, 2001; Jackson, 2005; Johnson, 2004; Curran and Tomalty, 2003). It can be defined by the outcomes of six main goals:

- **Neighbourhood liveability** by being safe, convenient, attractive, and affordable;
- **Better access and less traffic** by building mixed use developments and offering alternative forms of transportation;
- **Thriving cities, suburbs, and towns** by investing in already developed areas;
- **Shared benefits** for all income and social classes;
- **Lower costs and lower taxes** by encouraging compact growth; and,
- **Keeping open space open** by focusing new growth in developed areas.

Source: Smart Growth America, 2006

Smart Growth promotes and manages growth so that it occurs in an environmentally sensitive way, is financially feasible, and it creates an acceptable quality of life (Filion, 2003). It emphasizes an urban form that is more compact for the purpose of: encouraging transit use and walking as major forms of transportation; protecting natural and agricultural land from development; and, providing for efficiencies in the provision of physical and social infrastructure. Finally, it addresses equity issues such as affordable housing, who pays for growth, and gives consideration to the environment and the economy (Curran and Tomalty, 2003; Robinson, et al., 2005). As demonstrated through the Maryland initiative, Smart Growth is implemented through a set of multi-layered and flexible programs that together address such things as land use patterns, transportation, open space, and infrastructure.

In Ontario, the provincial government has taken a lead role in stressing the importance of Smart Growth programs. Ontario's Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal's (2006a) *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* is a comprehensive plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe that indicates where growth will occur, identifies the infrastructure requirements necessary to support that growth, and protects the region's natural resources and agricultural areas. The Place to Grow Concept is presented in *Figure 3.1*.
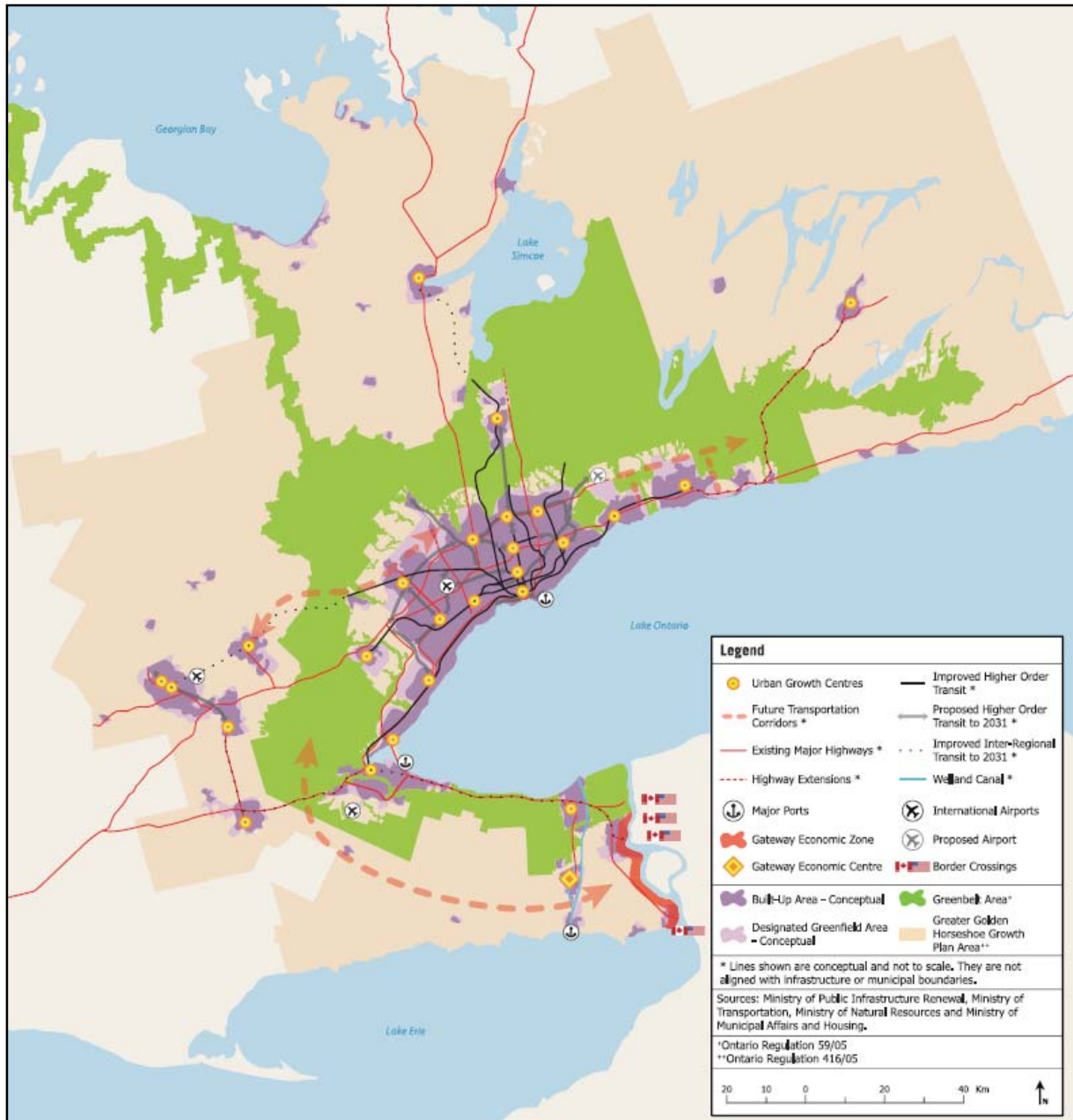
Source: MPIR, 2006a

Figure 3.1: Places to Grow Concept (Schedule 2)

Places to Grow presents broad strategies for achieving the objective of a more compact form of development and links intensification to infrastructure investment. The plan identifies urban growth centres and intensification corridors and introduces policies that would strengthen transportation linkages, encourage more compact development, and protect natural spaces and agricultural lands. To help achieve these goals, the provincial government is expected to invest in infrastructure, create legislative and regulatory planning framework, and provide fiscal tools to help area municipalities attract and locate growth strategically.

While incorporated into urban planning strategies across North America, the Smart Growth movement is not without its critics. It is argued that the term is so broad it can be used to support virtually any sort of urban development and has been used to argue against sprawl while at the same time acting as a defense for developing the urban fringe (Curran and Tomalty, 2003). Other weaknesses with the concept include: its focus on fast growing urban areas with little attention to slow or declining growth communities; its failure to consider situations in which growth should be limited, for example in areas with sensitive environmental features; and the promotion of initiatives that may not be possible given market realities, like mixed use buildings in suburban areas (Curran and Tomalty, 2003).

As Filion (2003, p.54) acknowledges, implementing Smart Growth regulations could provoke, "a heavy political toll, probably beyond what most governments are willing to incur". This can be attributed to NIMBY opposition to such things as high density residential projects and new transit right-of-way provisions in already established neighbourhoods. Similarly, pressure from residential and commercial developers on political leaders has the potential to sway politician's decisions about the implementation of Smart Growth principals in policy and in individual development projects.

Other criticisms of Smart Growth also exist. In her review of the new City of Toronto Official Plan, Bunce (2004) argues that the municipality has used Smart Growth as a technique to support its own economic development agenda. She suggests the City has garnered public support for urban intensification by heralding the environmental aims of Smart Growth, which is, protecting the natural environment from sprawling development.

Bunce suggests that Toronto's new Official Plan uses the environmental impacts of urban sprawl as a guise to attain economic and land use development goals. By focusing on the ecological concerns of urban development, the City has not had to, "challenge the structural dilemmas of capitalist development" (Bunce, 2004, p. 180).

Despite the arguments that surround the merits of Smart Growth principles and their application, a more intense, compact urban form does provide community wide benefits. This strategy for development has environmental, financial, and social benefits over the alternative of urban sprawl. Intensification efforts protect the country side, reduce dependence on the automobile, encourage a mix of other forms of transportation, and provides for more efficient infrastructure and public service development.

3.5 The Link Between Smart Growth and Residential Intensification

Smart Growth promotes economic development and urban growth in a compact urban form. This can be accomplished by reducing regulatory constraints that inhibit the development of housing and other economically productive land uses inside designated growth boundaries (Danielsen et al., 1999). The ability of Smart Growth policies and programs to encourage more compact residential land uses is important because housing comprises a major share of the built environment; residential uses influence the size and composition of a population; and, housing influences the locational decisions for other land uses (Danielsen et al., 1999; Tomalty, 1997). As Danielsen et al. (1999) recognize, "the most basic smart growth housing strategy is the creation of higher density housing," (p. 1). The development trend toward higher densities than previously achieved and the policy objective of such development is termed *intensification* (Tomalty, 1997). Objectives for intensification are consistent with Smart Growth principles:

Social objectives: provide affordable housing and improve equitable access to community amenities such as health and social services and schools.

*Economic objectives***:** reduce the per unit cost of hard and soft infrastructure and make more efficient use of existing service capacity. Intensification units are unlikely

to cost more than new suburban development, even when considering grants awarded to encourage compact development.

Environmental objectives: reduce reliance on the use of private vehicles by increasing the feasibility of alternative modes of transportation and reduce land consumption. Smaller units also reduce the demand for construction materials and have the potential to reduce energy consumption.

Canadian Urban Institute, 1991; City of Richmond, 1993

The ability to meet these objectives means an opportunity to remedy the social, economic, and environmental costs of conventional development.

It is possible to distinguish between intensification in the built-up area and on greenfields. There are four ways in which residential intensification occurs at the site level within built-up areas:

Conversion/Addition: the creation of additional residential units in an existing structure through renovations or additions. This can occur through such things as the addition of a secondary suite, the conversion of a single family house to a duplex or fourplex, or the addition of residential units above a commercial use. The benefit of this form of intensification is that it has minimal impact on surrounding uses, it provides additional accommodations in an already serviced area, and it can provide income for home owners.

Infill: the construction of new housing on a vacant or underutilized site in the existing built-up area, in a form that is compatible with the existing community. Unit yield is dependent on the size of the lot, its orientation, and access. This type of intensification project can increase a municipality's tax base with a limited increase in capital and operating costs and is advantageous because it can fit in with the existing scale of development.

Redevelopment: the development of new housing or mixed use development on underutilized residential or non-residential sites. It typically occurs on a larger scale than infill and requires significant infrastructure upgrades. Appropriate sites for redevelopment are usually located where existing structures and infrastructure are aging and can include along arterial roads or in obsolete commercial, industrial, and institutional areas.

Adaptive Reuse: the construction of new housing units within non-residential buildings. This can include the renovation of warehouses, factories, schools or offices for residential purposes.

Tomalty, 1997; Canadian Urban Institute, 1991; Ottawa-Carleton, 1990; CMHC, 2004

Greenfield intensification, or *suburban densification,* refers to the more efficient use of land by both increasing the variety of new housing types through the development of more medium and high density housing and by encouraging smaller lot sizes (Tomalty, 1997; Canadian Urban Institute, 1991; CMHC, 1993; Ottawa-Carleton, 1990).

While many of the objectives of Smart Growth are generally supported by the public, such as increasing transportation options and preserving open space, it is the goal to increase densities that is the most controversial aspect of the movement (Alexander and Tomalty, 2002). While 'motherhood' principles of compact development are generally accepted by communities at the municipal level, there are significant challenges to implementing intensification projects at the site level, particularly in well-established neighbourhoods. These constraints can slow or inhibit intensification projects, thereby limiting the opportunities to achieve a compact urban form.

NIMBY opposition to intensification projects is perhaps the greatest inhibitor and stems primarily from concerns over property values, crowding, and the loss of community values. Community opposition is typically more intense in well-established residential neighbourhoods surrounding intensification projects and can serve to limit residential yield and lengthen the planning approvals process (CMHC, 2004).

Concerns regarding intensification can be linked to the image of the low-quality, sub-standard public housing projects developed through the 1940s and 1970s. These high-rise buildings did not often fit with the low-rise character of surrounding neighbourhoods or the architectural fabric that had previously been established. The lack of compatibility between intensification projects and neighbouring developments had implications for the community atmosphere. Privacy and safety have always been a central concern of suburban dwellers who may feel uncomfortable with higher densities and perceive development to be an assault on their neighbourhoods (Paehlke, 1991). The public holds deeply entrenched notions that

higher density development is associated with lower incomes, undesirable neighbours, increased crime, strained community services, and lower quality neighbourhoods.

Also of concern is the perceived loss of community values. Low-density suburbs were largely shaped by traditional family units. Today, cities are formed of diverse communities that are shaped by different values of community based on ethnicity, lifestyles, and sexual and political orientations (Canadian Urban Institute, 1991). Opposition to intensification can actually be related to a reaction to rapid social change and the feeling that residents have little control over the changes taking place in their community (Canadian Urban Institute, 1991; Paehlke, 1991).

Market demand and consumer preference also play an important role in influencing the spatial pattern of our cities. Higher-density projects may appeal to empty nesters, single-person households and other non-traditional households; however, they do not always appeal to families. Marketing to young families could be challenging as it is complicated by the fact that institutional uses, such as schools, may not be able to accommodate an increased residential population in already developed areas and land prices in central areas may be too high to support affordable, market-rate housing. Land assembly, unique construction costs, and infrastructure improvements could raise infill and redevelopment costs, requiring a population that has the purchasing power to support it (Peirce, 2002). Gordon and Richardson (1997) suggest that while there is a "boutique appeal" for higher density living, there is still a strong consumer preference for low-density, single family homes. While compact development does offer consumer choice, the authors believe there are not a sufficient number of projects to make an observable difference on land use patterns. For this reason, intensification of developed areas typically proceeds too slowly to offset the need for greenfield development.

3.6   Implementing Intensification

Strategies that aim to intensify urban development typically require a shift in funding priorities and a change in planning policy through incentives and penalties. Policies must

steer clear of barriers to implementation by avoiding agitating politically powerful opponents and being financially feasible (Filion, 2003). This can only be realized through a comprehensive strategy that takes into consideration environmental, social, and economic considerations and requires the involvement and commitment of politicians, the public, and the development industry.

The following section examines policies and programs that can be implemented as part of a comprehensive Smart Growth growth management strategy. It begins with a discussion of the need for *Collaboration* amongst different levels of government, citizens, and the development industry during policy and program formulation and implementation. Two main categories of programs are then discussed: *Land Use Controls,* which are implemented through Official Plan policy and facilitate the regulatory process, and *Financial Incentives and Disincentives*, which are permitted through Official Plan policy but implemented through specific municipal initiatives. Both categories include a number of policies and programs that can be tailored to the needs of a particular planning jurisdiction.

3.6.1 Collaboration

Because community planning is a political activity that impacts different segments of the population in different ways, the public has a right to be involved in the process of creating future plans. Open communication between politicians, planners, and the public is important for two reasons: citizens can develop a clear understanding of the problems and the impacts of proposed solutions; and, politicians and planners have an understanding of the resources available to implement solutions and of the procedures that must be followed to implement change (Hodge, 2003).

Coordinated land uses require cooperation between regional governments, local governments, and residents. Collaboration is a communicative and participatory process that can be defined as a group of stakeholders, often with competing agendas, who examine their different approaches to a common problem to reach an agreed upon solution (Margerum, 2005). An effective collaborative process in growth management includes: participation of a full range

of stakeholders; a common understanding of the problem and sufficient information to solve it; and, an appropriate problem solving process that is organized, establishes ground rules, and encourages consensus (Margerum, 2005).

Interest in collaboration efforts between regional and local municipalities and citizens have increased in recent years, as is illustrated through the increasing number of visioning exercises conducted by different levels of government (Margerum, 2005). In Canada, regional authorities have been particularly important in responding to regional issues such as transportation, solid waste, public sewers and water, and future growth (Curran and Tomalty, 2003; Daniels, 2001). That said, strong citizen advisory groups are necessary to keep governments on track with respect to promoting compact urban growth (Curran and Tomalty, 2003). Currie (2006) recognized the importance of engaging community members at the outset of the planning process, by allowing multiple community engagement opportunities throughout the planning process, and encouraging two way communication to allow mutual learning. It provided mutual benefits for planners and the public.

Challenges to carrying out a collaborative planning process have been identified in the literature. Creating policies can be complicated by the large number of decision-makers and potential lack of communication and direct interaction between participants (Margerum, 2005). Also, the concept of collaboration assumes that a common goals exists and can be achieved, which is not necessarily the case in diverse communities that are shaped by different values of community based on ethnicity, lifestyles, and sexual and political orientations (Shipley, 2002; Canadian Urban Institute, 1991). Successful implementation of policies requires on-going communication and interaction between participants, which can be challenging with a large group of stakeholders who have other commitments and who are constantly changing (Margerum, 2005). For example, Currie (2006) recognized the challenges of engaging a representative sample of community members to participate in a long-range, non-controversial planning issue, especially when the issue was city-wide and not constrained to a particular site.

Fortunately, solutions to these challenges have been suggested, including: ensuring policies and tools for implementation are included in the collaborative growth management plan; using local forums to address local or sub-regional issues; and ensure that the public representative or stakeholder be the appropriate person, be accountable for their decisions, act responsibly, and be accessible to those they represent (Margerum, 2005).

3.5.2 Land Use Controls

Regulatory issues can impede intensification efforts, particularly in suburban locations where there is little variation in housing intensity and mix. Zoning amendments required to change municipal standards such as dwelling type, minimum lot size, setbacks and parking requirements costs both time and money (Ottawa-Carleton, 1990). Similarly, urban design requirements instituted to ensure compatible development often require creative solutions, lengthy negotiations, and compromises on behalf of both the municipality and the developer (CMHC, 2004).

Academic and planning literature point to the opportunities offered by planning policies that control the use of land for the purpose of encouraging denser development. These land use controls are typically included in Official Plan policies and address the rate, amount, type, and location of urban growth in a municipality. Such policies enforce municipal objectives for encouraging compact development thereby aiding in the regulatory process. The following section considers land use controls that can be implemented to encourage intensification.

Urban Growth Boundaries

Municipal Official Plans distinguish between urban and rural areas for the purpose of encouraging compact, contiguous growth in an effort to protect environmentally significant or important agricultural areas from development and to encourage improved social and economic conditions in an urban area (Jackson, 2005; Ding, et al., 1999; Burby, et al., 1999). A growth boundary defines the geographic extent to which a planning jurisdiction will permit urban growth and beyond which development is discouraged or prohibited.

The interpretation of a boundary's role tends to differ between interest groups. Environmental and farmland protectionists tend to view growth boundaries as permanent, inflexible lines between urban and rural land uses while new urbanists argue that it is a tool to increase urban densities and promote transit use (Knaap and Hopkins, 2001). Most strategies that implement growth boundaries include provisions that allow for expansions over a certain interval of time based on a set of criteria (Jackson, 2005).

Perhaps the greatest argument against the use of urban growth boundaries is the impact it has on affordable housing. There are two ways in which containment boundaries can cause housing price inflation: supply effects and demand effects (Dawkins and Nelson, 2002). Urban boundaries limit vacant land supply and have the potential to cause an oligopoly of landowners which can lead to a minimum price floor for new housing. Due to the increased cost of developable land in a constrained market, affordable housing units tend not to be built because projects become economically infeasible. As new higher priced homes are built, the average housing price increases. If the demand for new housing is relatively inelastic, the impact of an urban containment policy will be reflected in housing prices. Demand can be influenced by the positive externalities associated with urban containment, such as additional localized and regionalized amenities. As demand increases, so to does the cost of housing. The problem is exasperated with a constrained land supply (Dawkins and Nelson, 2002).

It should not be surprising that urban containment policies lead to increased housing prices (Dawkins and Nelson, 2002). One of the main reasons for containing an urban area is to increase the potential for infill and redevelopment projects and such land should be expected to command a premium. Developers tend to compensate for higher land prices by building at higher densities (Burby, et al., 1999). To be effective, planning strategies that include an urban boundary must also permit sufficient opportunities for higher density, infill or redevelopment projects, as exclusionary zoning only perpetuates low density development and increased housing prices. Policies that include provisions for affordable housing and a continuous monitoring program are also necessary to reduce the impact of housing price inflation (Dawkins and Nelson, 2002).

Another consequence of urban growth boundaries is the increased exposure to natural hazards. Inflated land prices resulting from containment policies can create a pressure to develop less-expensive hazard lands (floodplains, coastal areas, and slopes) which are vulnerable to natural disasters and can lead to the loss of life or increased property damage (Burby, et al., 2001).

Conclusions concerning the success of growth boundaries are varied. Avin and Bayer (2003) suggest that while there is a fair amount of research that considers the effects of adopting growth management strategies as a whole, there are few studies that isolate the impacts of growth boundaries exclusively. In contrast, Fulton (1999) cites positive feedback directly attributed to the growth boundary encompassing Seattle. Planners for the area remarked that close-in suburbs, particularly older ones, are experiencing renewed growth and there is a significant amount of new investment in Seattle's downtown since the enactment of the boundary in 1991. Pendall (1999), however, cites research that suggests that empirical studies do not prove one way or another that implementing land use controls forces growth to infill development sites, to fringe areas, or neither. He also cites a national survey that concludes that urban boundaries do not impact the spatial extent of urban development. A reason why this may be so is the concern for market factors – providing sufficient vacant land for competition and choice – when preparing urban boundaries. If it is assumed that the boundary is permanent, consideration for market factors is imperative. In fact, one could not assume a percentage of vacant land too high. If it is recognized, however, that the boundaries are flexible, there is no need to consider market factors because an assessment will occur before the land is exhausted and in advance of land price inflation (Knaap and Hopkins, 2001).

New Urbanism

New urbanism came about in the early 1980s as an approach to designing compact communities. The key design features of the approach are: *higher densities* through the creation of smaller lots and apartments; *mixed uses* allowing for a range of residents from varied income groups; and, *pedestrian orientation* to reduce the prevalence of private vehicles

and encourage the use of transit (Brown and Cropper, 2001). Neo-traditional neighbourhoods and transit-oriented development fall under the label of new urbanism.

Historically, local planning jurisdictions unintentionally encouraged sprawling development by adopting Euclidian zoning. The distinct separation of land uses fostered a need for private vehicles to access different activities, such as residential, commercial, and employment land uses. Over time, some suburban centres emerged as market forces forced a clustering of activities in accessible locations, specifically, at the intersection of major arterial roads and highways (Filion, 2001). Recognizing the appeal of "spontaneous" centres, mixed designations are being increasingly incorporated into Official Plan and Secondary Plan policies for the purpose of intensifying development, reducing urban land requirements, and promoting alternative modes of transportation including bike riding, walking, and transit.

Mixed designations can be described as locations where pedestrian-friendly, mixed use projects are encouraged within walking distance of a public transit facility (Boarnet and Compin, 1999). The result is higher density, compact development which reduces reliance on the automobile and, in turn, improves the quality of life of residents by increasing the vitality and liveability of a community (Tumlin, et al., 2003). The mixed use nature provides opportunities for affordable housing, a residential form occupied by lower income individuals who tend to use transit more frequently (Tumlin, et al., 2003).

Carrying-out new urbanist goals is an incremental process that can be slowed by implementation barriers related to local opposition, fragmented land ownership, market demand, and fiscal pressures. While there may be a market for higher-density, mixed use projects in inner suburban areas, the regulatory planning framework favouring low-density residential and segregated land uses are difficult to modify where existing residents are resistant to high-density development (Levine and Inma, 2004). Mixed designation policies encourage a true mix of land uses, including the integration of different uses in a single structure. Often, however, uses may only be integrated at a block level because of the challenges associated with financing mixed use buildings. Financial institutions are often specialists in a particular real estate development niche. As such, they have established

standards on which to evaluate proposals and tend to be conservative in their lending when a project does not fit a particular lending category. The lack of investor understanding and confidence is reaffirmed by the few comparable projects that exist. As such, developers and bankers are more confident developing and financing products that are familiar, predictable, and have a low level of risk on conventional, well-proven segregated land use designations. To obtain funding, developers often have to demonstrate a sufficient amount of demand for each project component.

Official Plan policies can include land use designations that permit mixed use development to help capitalize on transportation efficiencies. There is an important relationship between intensification and transportation due to the fact that the coordination of these two elements has the potential to increase development densities, increase transit use, and address social issues. Opportunities to support alternative modes of transportation include implementing non-auto transportation improvements in existing neighbourhoods and directing residential intensification to corridors and boulevards (Miller and Hoel, 2002). A complication, however, is the fact that rail transit alignments intended to support mixed centres often follow pre-existing freight right-of-ways that are surrounded by legacy uses, typically industrial or, to a lesser extent commercial, which impact the feasibility of future land uses. The fiscal pressures experienced by local municipalities can result in land use policies that favour the development of easier commercial projects over more difficult residential, an option that generates both property and sales tax for the municipality (Boarnet and Compin, 1999; Levine and Inma, 2004; Boarnet and Crane, 1998).

The concept of manipulating land uses to alter travel behaviour is a relatively new concept in North America and evaluating its success is complicated by such as things as neighbourhood demographics and neighbourhood self-selection (Boarnet and Compin, 1999; Levine and Inma, 2004). In general, land use policies that are intended to encourage transit use can only be successful if supported by a system to manage transit demand, such as parking management, discounted transit passes for residents or employees, investment in other alternate forms of transportation, and walkable street designs (Tumlin, et al., 2003). Local governments can also encourage mixed uses by aligning new rail lines and transit stations in

high-growth areas that have both developed and undeveloped land. In this way, mixed use plans can be consistent with other planning development strategies. Because land acquisition costs can be high in high-growth areas where there are no pre-existing rail right-of-ways, transit ridership goals should be balanced with anticipated development costs. Balancing competing interests requires a high degree of collaboration between the local governments that plan land uses and the regional transit authorities that plan transit lines (Boarnet and Crane, 1998).

3.5.3 Financial Incentives and Disincentives

Demographics, including age, social needs, family lifecycle, lifestyle, and housing experiences all influence the demand for, and satisfaction with, housing. Singles and seniors are most apt to reside in higher density developments because of the opportunities for social interaction, reduced maintenance responsibilities, and the lower costs associated with apartment living. Families, however, typically opt for suburban living because of amenity and open space opportunities, larger housing units, perceived safety and privacy, and the greater ability to monitor children in common areas (City of Richmond, 1993). While intensification sites may be available, marketing to young families could be challenging, as it is complicated by the fact that institutional uses may not be able to accommodate an increased residential population and land prices in central areas may be too high to support affordable, market-rate housing (Paehlke, 1991). Land assembly, unique construction costs, and infrastructure improvements could raise construction costs, requiring a population that has the purchasing power to support it. Market demand and interest in high density projects can inhibit residential intensification efforts. Public sector regulations that are politically desirable could be in conflict with what the market dictates will be commercially viable.

NIMBY, market, and regulatory issues pose huge risks to the development industry in the form of time delays and cost overruns. The need to integrate architectural features to respond to neighbourhood concerns about compatibility and the time associated with the approvals process, including public input, makes intensification development more risky than greenfield development. Higher development costs are also associated with higher construction costs of

upgrading and restoring heritage buildings, cleaning up contaminated sites, and the general costs of working on an urban site, including paying for road closures, parking, and security (CMHC, 2004)

Financial techniques can be used by municipalities as a control over development in an effort to achieve land use objectives. Financial incentives can be used to encourage development in targeted areas and levies can be imposed to discourage growth in others (Needham, 2000; Sewell, 2003). The land market is the most important factor in spatial development patterns, as it influences the locational decisions of households and developers and controls the density of development (Carruthers, 2002; Pendall, 1999). The spatial distribution of development can be influenced by land use policies, which can constraint the land supply, and consumer preference, which influences demand (Carruthers, 2002). In general, more sprawl occurs where land values are lower.

Growth-inducing incentives can be linked directly to growth management techniques for encouraging compact development in existing urban areas. For example, financial incentives that support intensification projects both increase property values and the tax base in the core, and create residential, commercial, or employment opportunities in a developed area. Property taxes, development charges, building permits, fuel taxes, and parking fees influence citizens' and developers' choices about where to locate and, for that reason, can be brought in line with planning objectives (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003).

While financial incentive and disincentive programs are typically established in Official Plan policies, they are usually implemented through specific municipal programs. The following section considers Financial Incentives and Disincentives that can form part of a comprehensive growth management strategy.

Development Charges

Development charges are collected by local municipalities to help pay for the capital costs of new development. In Ontario, the Development Charges Act, 1997, allows municipalities to,

"…impose development charges against land to pay for increased capital costs required because of increased needs for services arising from development of the area…" (Development Charges Act, 1997). The basic principle of Development Charges is that new development should pay its own way, rather than as was the case in the past, making existing landowners pay for new growth through general taxation (Needham, 2000). The Development Charge Act sets out the charges developers are expected to pay, which includes hard infrastructure, such as roads and sewers, and soft infrastructure, such as municipal offices and police (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003).

The Development Charges Act permits municipalities to establish sub-areas over which an average charge could be applied. This system mimics a marginal cost approach by basing development charges for a sub-area on the efficiency of the delivery infrastructure to that specific area (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003). This makes it possible to command higher development charges for projects located away from existing major infrastructure and charge lower rates on development in designated growth areas, such as infill or redevelopment locations. The approach has been favoured by developers in Markham and Richmond Hill, Ontario because money generated is spent exclusively in the newly developing area and there is less political control in the phasing of projects (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003).

It is possible under the Development Charges Act, 1997, to differentiate development charges based on density or targeted service standards, a provision that could be used to link planning goals with development charges and, in turn, influence development patterns. Also, the Act permits the exemption of charges on affordable housing projects and accessory units at the discretion of the municipality (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003).

Some argue, however, that, in reality, development charges' sole goal is to ensure fiscal stability of municipalities. As such, development fees are not linked to planning objectives, they fail to account for the full social costs of development, and they ignore a project's mix of uses, density, location and affordability. Instead, a marginal cost approach to determining development charges has the ability to encourage investment in targeted areas and to shift development interests away from less efficient locations (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003).

Although the area-specific development charge design could be used to encourage mixed use developments, higher densities, or development in preferred locations, there are few municipalities who actually adopt such a design (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003). Most municipalities argue that such a system requires greater administrative work and that it unfairly increases the costs of development in areas with higher growth related costs.

The continued downloading of financial responsibilities from the provincial government to the local government enforces the revenue-generating goal of development charges and further reduces the importance of linking charges with the opportunity to influence development patterns (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003). As a solution, the Province could provide subsidies to local governments to offset the costs of reducing development charges on development patterns that conform to planning goals (Tomalty and Skaburskis, 2003)

Tax Increment Financing

Since the 1970s, tax increment financing (TIF) has become an increasingly popular economic development tool used for encouraging development and redevelopment of "blighted" districts of cities in the United States. The purpose of TIF programs is to encourage development in areas that would not otherwise attract private investment (Man, 1998). This financing tool, managed by municipalities, uses the future increased property taxes that a new or improved real estate development will generate to finance the initial cost of land improvements (Michael, 2003). The result is the attraction of private development and businesses to a targeted area by using the increased taxes a developer would typically pay on an improved property to cover development costs and the provision of infrastructure related to the development (Man, 1998; Michael, 2003). TIF programs are beneficial because they give confidence to developers because their property taxes are directed to the TIF District in which they are investing and are not being allocated to general municipal services (Man, 1998).

TIF programs are relatively new in Ontario. In 2004, the Ontario Provincial government introduced the Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program. This financing tool encourages investment and development on vacant, underused, or abandoned land in an effort to curb

sprawling growth, to promote more compact development in existing urban areas, and to make the best use of existing infrastructure (Ministry of Finance, 2004). Eligible properties are entitled to receive municipal tax assistance and those municipal contributions may be matched by the Ministry of Finance. The municipality is responsible for administering the program and establishing eligibility criteria while the Ministry of Finance is responsible for reviewing applications for provincial contributions on a case-by-case basis. The total amount of assistance available is equal to the cost of rehabilitating the site and tax assistance is applied to the costs of remediation.

In order to be eligible for TIFs in Ontario, the property must be in a designated Community Improvement Project Area which is identified in a provincially approved Community Improvement Plan which includes provisions for tax assistance. As well, a draft by-law must be prepared by the municipality for the property authorizing tax assistance. An application must then be sent to the Ministry of Finance for approval by the once-annual submission date. If approved by the Ministry, the municipality may enact the by-law and provide tax assistance. Some examples of tax assistance include a cancellation of some percentage of the property taxes or to freeze some percentage of property tax increases (Ministry of Finance, 2004).

Opponents to TIF programs, however, warn that incentive and equity concerns could be raised if there are increments on the property tax base that are not a result of the TIF (such as new development or inflationary increases) or if the TIF relocates development that would have otherwise located elsewhere in the jurisdiction. They also view TIF programs as a method of taking from other governments revenues associated with increased property values that would have occurred even without the TIF (Dye and Sundberg, 1998)

Density Bonusing

Section 37 of the Provincial Planning Act allows municipalities to enter into an agreement with developers, typically through a zoning by-law amendment, to share the increased value that may result from increased density or height of a development project. *Density Bonusing*,

"is an incentive for developers to provide community benefits" for higher density projects but it is not a tool for increasing density (City of Ottawa, 2005b). Instead, it is a method in which municipalities can negotiate increased height or density to secure particular public amenities.

Funds generated through Section 37 agreements may be used to support initiatives above and beyond development charges and other items agreed to through the development approvals process such as affordable housing, additional parkland, and other provisions. OMB decisions on the matter of density bonusing indicate that the community benefits secured through the Section 37 agreements must be provided in the same area or close to the development site so that the development itself benefits. This requirement may change as the provision is tested further at future hearings.

While the objectives of Section 37 are understandable, there have been serious concerns from the public and the development industry that has inhibited its application. The greatest argument from the development industry is the perception that they are being penalized by the municipality for high density development. They contend that a project should be evaluated on its design and planning merits, not on the amount of public amenities provided to the municipality. Concerns expressed by the public stem from the fact that height and density approvals can be obtained from Committee of Adjustments, thereby circumventing the bonusing process, and that density bonusing negotiations do nothing to ensure that good building design is implemented.

Protection Programs

In addition to providing financial incentives and disincentives to encourage urban growth and economic development in targeted areas, protection programs can be established to protect heritage areas, rural areas or environmentally significant land.

The Ontario Heritage Tax Relief program was developed by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Finance and is presented in Section 365.2 of the Municipal Act, 2001. The program recognizes the role of heritage buildings in improving the quality of life of residents,

their aesthetic value, and their ability to attract residents, businesses, and visitors to a community. The Ontario Heritage Tax Relief financial tool allows municipalities to establish a program to provide property tax relief of 10 to 40% on eligible properties for the purpose of conservation. It recognizes the maintenance and restoration costs associated with heritage buildings, costs that are usually borne by private property owners. The program is funded in part by the province which funds the educational portion of the property tax and by the municipality which funds the municipal tax portion (Ministry of Culture, 2005).

Local municipalities are responsible for administering the tax relief program but must accept the mandatory eligibility criteria set by the province: the property must contain a "designated" building or structure; and the property is subject to a heritage conservation agreement which ensures heritage features are protected and there is appropriate property maintenance. In addition, municipalities may set their own eligibility criteria which can include the rehabilitation of certain types of properties, such as residential and the regeneration of a targeted area, such as a downtown. Municipalities are responsible for determining the amount of tax relief and the form in which it is provided, such as a reduction in taxes or a refund (Ministry of Culture, 2005).

The provincial government has also introduced a number of conservation programs to encourage the continued stewardship of environmentally significant land, forests, and farm land. The *Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program*, administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources, was established in 1998 and targets provincially significant wetlands, areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSI), land inhabited by endangered species, escarpment land in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and conservation land in communities. The program recognizes the importance of Ontario's natural heritage and encourages the private stewardship of land by providing a 100% property tax exemption on the eligible portion of the property. It does not, however, provide tax relief on buildings or structures that occupy the land (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2006)

In recognition of the social and ecological benefits of forests, the provincial government also introduced the *Ontario Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program* in 1998. This program,

administered through the Ministry of Natural Resources, reduces the property taxes by 75% for landowners who willingly conserve and manage their forests. The program applies to privately owned forest land over 4 hectares in size that have an approved Managed Forest Plan. Previously, such land was assessed at the same rate as farm land but changes in assessment criteria in 2003 now requires lands' tax rate to be based on the current use of the property (Ministry of Natural Resources, 2006).

Farmland is another important land use in Ontario. In 1998 the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs *Farmland Taxation Program* replaced the Farm Tax Rebate Program. Now, lands that are identified as Farmlands Property Class are taxed at 25% of their municipal residential tax rate (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2006).

3.7   Conclusions

Academic and planning literature demonstrates that compact development has social, economic, and environmental benefits over low density, sprawling development. Smart Growth principles respond to the concerns of the conventional approach to development through a set of principles aimed at guiding development and good planning practice. Growth management strategies are implemented at the municipal level to encourage compact development through a variety of policies and programs. A comprehensive, multi-layered strategy should be sufficient to respond to community and political opposition to residential intensification by using a collaborative approach; to regulatory challenges by modifying land use controls; and, to market constraints through the use of financial incentives and disincentives.

CHAPTER FOUR: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides details on the research problem, purpose, objectives and approach. This research is illustrative of an intrinsic case study method. Strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative approach and case study method are discussed.

4.2 Problem Statement

The City of Ottawa claims to have adopted a collaborative approach to growth management and implemented numerous policies and programs to achieve a compact urban form that reflects the contemporary planning principles of Smart Growth. Growth trends, however, demonstrate that much of Ottawa's growth over the last 15 years has and will continue to be in the City's three suburban centres. At the same time, actual rates of intensification as witnessed on the ground have been disappointing. A constrained land supply in the hands of only several large land owners has resulted in an increase in land values and, in turn, an increase in housing costs. This, as well as provincial funding for new roads, the market's desire for low density housing, and weaker growth management policies in surrounding municipalities has resulted in negative net migration in Ottawa and high growth rates in neighbouring municipalities.

The review of the literature suggests that the low rates of residential intensification in Ottawa could be a result of some level of disconnect between the acceptance of the broad, motherhood principles of compact urban form as a policy objective at the municipal level, and prohibitive constraints on development observed at the site level. Increases in residential intensification will require a strengthened growth management strategy that can respond to site level constraints.

The key research question motivating this thesis is: *How can the City of Ottawa's growth management strategy be strengthened to better support residential intensification in order to achieve the compact urban form promoted in the Official Plan?*

This research is timely because the City of Ottawa will embark on its mandatory 5-year Official Plan review in 2008. There will be an opportunity during that process to establish municipal-wide intensification targets and to strengthen the growth management strategy policies and programs that support residential intensification projects.

4.3 Purpose Statement

This research is concerned with identifying weaknesses in the City of Ottawa's growth management strategy. The purpose of this research is to provide recommendations that can be used to strengthen Ottawa's growth management policies and programs to more effectively achieve the compact urban form desired by the municipality.

4.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- To identify the City of Ottawa's individual policies and programs that together form the growth management strategy;
- To evaluate the degree to which individual growth management policies and programs support residential intensification;
- To identify general themes concerning weaknesses in the City's growth management strategy;
- To provide recommendations on how the growth management strategy can be strengthened to better support intensification projects at the site level thereby achieving municipal-wide goals for a compact urban form.

4.5   Intrinsic Case Study

Case study research can be defined as a holistic inquiry that aims to investigate, explore, and depict a setting or phenomenon for the purpose of advancing understanding of it (Harling, 2002, Cousin, 2005). It is typically used to answer "how" and "why" questions in an effort to provide an understanding of a particular phenomenon (Tellis, 1997). The "phenomenon" can be almost anything, including a program, an event, a problem or an individual(s) (Harling, 2002). In case studies, the researcher works within the natural setting of the phenomenon, defined as the contextual conditions. Context is important in case studies because, "many factors in the setting impinge on the phenomenon or because the separation between the phenomenon and the context is not clear or evident," (Harling, 2002). While researchers attempt to develop a holistic understanding of the research setting, the work is bound by temporal and spatial boundaries (Cousin, 2005; Harling, 2002)

Case studies can involve one or multiple cases. Three types of case studies have been identified in academic literature: *intrinsic case studies*, which are concerned with a particular case; *instrumental case studies*, which use a single case to provide a general understanding of a phenomenon; and *collective case studies*, which use a number of cases to provide a general understanding of a phenomenon (Harling, 2002, Cousin, 2005).

This research was carried out as an intrinsic case study, an appropriate approach given that the purpose of the research is focused on the unique circumstances facing the City of Ottawa and given that the resulting recommendations will apply strictly to the case study city. While other planning jurisdictions may experience similar development patterns and pressures to that of the case study area, the findings and conclusions of this research will not be generalized to apply to similar circumstances in other municipalities. The City of Ottawa is unique from other Canadian cities in that, as a capital city, it has been subject to a relatively long history of planning efforts. Ottawa is subject to federal as well as provincial and local planning efforts and it borders on the Province of Quebec, a province with a distinct culture and its own territorial and sovereignty concerns. Although one may make generalizations of

the findings, "the research aims to generalize *within* rather than from the case." (Cousin, 2005, p. 422).

4.6   The Qualitative Method

Case studies typically rely on qualitative research, a method that permits unique responses. The benefit of this approach is that it, "seek(s) to understand social action at greater richness and depth …," than a quantitative method (Orum et al., 1991). The latter assumes that a behaviour or relationship can be measured numerically through scores, counts of incidents, ratings or the like (Jupp, 2006). An inherent weakness of the quantitative method is that social meanings are eliminated in the process of converting non-numerical values to numbers (Jupp, 2006). Instead, a qualitative approach places, "an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency," (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p. 13). The approach recognizes the complexity and plurality of relationships and permits flexibility in judgments (Orum et al, 1991).

The research conducted for this thesis relies heavily on qualitative data because it aims to provide an understanding of a complex problem that defies simple explanation. A qualitative method is best employed in this situation because many variables need to be considered (Harling, 2002).

The most common sources of qualitative information are interviews, documentary analysis and participant observation (Somekh and Lewin, 2005; Tellis, 1997). Interviews are one of the most important sources and can be characterized as: *open-ended*, in which informants are asked to talk about key events and where they may propose solutions or provide insights; *focused*, a short interview in which a set of questions is typically asked in an effort to confirm data collected from another source; and *structured*, in which informants are asked a detailed set of questions developed in advance (Tellis, 1997).

This research relied heavily on key informant interviews with City of Ottawa and National Capital Commission planning staff, development industry representatives, and leaders of community associations. Most of the interviews were open-end, however, several focused interviews were carried out with key informants who had authored particular reports and thus had intimate knowledge of one or several aspects of Ottawa's growth management policies and programs. A significant amount of time was spent in advance of the meetings reviewing planning policy documents, staff reports, and Council minutes.

4.7   Methodological Steps

This research was accomplished in four main steps: identification of policies and programs; key informant interviews; data sorting and analysis; and, interpretation.

4.7.1 Identification of Policies and Programs

The first step in the research process was the collection of all applicable planning documents related to managing growth in the City of Ottawa, including policy documents, planning staff reports, and private consultant reports. These documents were reviewed for the purpose of identifying the policies and programs that formed the City's growth management strategy. In accordance with the findings in the review of the relevant recent literature (*Chapter 3: Encouraging Compact Development*), policies and programs were categorized as being either an example of a Collaborative Approach, a Land Use Control, or a Financial Incentive or Disincentive. *Table 4.1* provides a summary of Ottawa's growth management policies and programs identified during the review process.

Table 4.1: Growth Management Policies and Programs

Collaborative Approach
Official Plan
Community Design Plans

Land Use Controls
Urban Boundary
Target Areas
Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law

Financial Incentives and Disincentives
Development Charges
Brownfields Development Strategy
Draft Density Incentive Guidelines

The preliminary review of the documents provided an initial understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the policies and programs. City of Ottawa planning staff reports were particularly useful in providing a chronology of various initiatives, highlighting their applicability to municipal goals for compact development, and outlining opportunities and constraints for implementation. The document review was also useful in providing an initial contact list of possible key informants.

4.7.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were carried out with City of Ottawa, surrounding municipalities, and National Capital Commission planning staff; members of the development industry; private planning and real estate consultants; and community associations. A list of potential key informants was initially prepared based on personal contacts, the document review, and a review of municipal and corporate web sites. An effort was made to ensure that there was sufficient diversity in the preliminary list of key informants to make certain that a broad range of perspectives would be represented. Potential interviewees were contacted by telephone, a call that informed them of the study, its purpose, and their possible role. Those interested in participating were e-mailed an information letter explaining the research and the process. After several days, those who had expressed interest were contacted, their participation was

confirmed, and interview dates were established. Key informants were then asked if they could recommend and provide contact information for additional potential participants. Those potential interviewees were contacted and recruited using the same process. Similarly, at the end of each interview, each participant was asked if they could provide the name and contact number of possible participants. By the end of the interview process many of the same contact names were provided.

Key informant interviews were carried out in person over a two week period in mid-October 2006. As *Table 4.2* demonstrates, a total of 23 interviews were conducted with participants from a diverse range of local businesses and organizations.

Table 4.2: List of Key Informants by Sector

Organization	Number of Key Informants	Quote Sector Code
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	6	CO
Development Industry (including greenfield and infill residential, commercial, and industrial developers and the Ottawa-Carleton Home Builders Association)	8	DI
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	3	P
Surrounding Municipalities	3	SM
Community Association Representatives	2	CA
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	1	NCC
Total Key Informant Interviews	**23**	-

During face-to-face interviews, key informants provided verbal opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of Ottawa's individual growth management policies and programs for which they were familiar. In some situations the individual was familiar with all of Ottawa's growth management initiatives, while in others the key informant specialized in a particular aspect of the strategy. Questions covered in interviews are presented in *Appendix A*.

All of the interviews were digitally recorded. After all of the interviews had been carried out, a summary of each interview was prepared in Microsoft Word format using the digital

recording. Each respondent's text summary was organized by growth management policy or program identified in *Table 4.1*. Additional comments made during the interview that pertained to the issue of intensification were placed at the end of the text summary for further reference.

4.7.3 Data Sorting and Analysis

All of the text files summarizing the 23 interviews were gathered into one Microsoft Word file and respondents' comments were categorized by policy or program. This data was then sorted into favourable and unfavourable comments. Quotes that best summarized respondents' opinion's were then retrieved from the digital audio files and transcribed. Quotes were coded by respondent by organization based on their Quote Sector Code identified in *Table 4.2*.

The open-ended interview process allowed many respondents to comment on general observations about the City of Ottawa's growth management strategy, barriers to intensification, or opportunities for improvement. After 23 interviews, general themes clearly emerged. *Table 4.3* classifies these themes.

Table 4.3: Emergent Themes

Barriers to Intensification
Community and Political Resistance
Regulatory Challenges
Influence of the Market

Opportunities for Improvement
Use Education and Demonstration Projects
Establish Definitions
Stronger Political Leadership

In most cases, respondents did not either completely condone or condemn a particular policy or program. A serious attempt was made to try and balance the complicated opinions expressed by respondents. In an effort to summarize the responses, a synoptic table was

prepared for each policy or program to highlight respondents' varied opinions. The response of each key informant to each of the identified policies or programs was categorized into one of four response categories depending on how well they believed the initiative in question effectively supported residential intensification efforts in the City of Ottawa. Response categories are presented in *Table 4.4*.

Table 4.4: Synoptic Table Response Categories

Effective	• While the respondent recognized there may be some opportunity for small improvements, they generally saw the policy or program as effectively supporting compact development
Somewhat Effective	• The respondent indicated that the current policy or program is appropriate for encouraging intensification but some elements required strengthening to be more effective
Not Effective	• Respondent did not believe the initiative effectively supported residential intensification efforts
Not Addressed	• Policy or program was not discussed or respondent refused to comment because they were not familiar with the initiative

Individual responses were summarized by key informant sector, presented in *Table 4.2*. The purpose of this summary was to illustrate how each sector generally responded to a policy or program, as it is recognized that some key informant sectors may be biased in their responses. For example, City of Ottawa respondents may be thought to always respond favourably to municipally-led intensification initiatives while the Development Industry, by nature of their relationship in the planning process, may consistently be unfavourable. The synoptic table helps to provide some understanding of the responses by key informant sector.

4.7.4 Interpretation

The interpretation process involved an evaluation of how effectively each of the City of Ottawa's current growth management policies and programs responded to what the literature review and key informant interviews identified as barriers to intensification, namely: Community and Political Resistance, Regulatory Challenges, and Market Realities. Based on key informant interviews, policies and programs were deemed to be either *Effective*,

Somewhat Effective, or *Ineffective* at responding to barriers to intensification. Greater details defining effectiveness are presented in *Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations*.

Recommendations that could be used to strengthen policies and programs were prepared based on the findings of the interview process and reference to recent relevant literature.

4.8 Challenges of the Approach and Method

Despite the general acceptance of the use of qualitative methods in the case study approach, the issue of reliability is a common criticism. Reliability generally refers to, "the ability to replicate the original study using the same research instrument and to get the same results." (Orum et al., 1991). In qualitative research, personal interpretation plays a large role in analyzing and synthesizing data (Harling, 2002). The results of the research reflect the subjective judgements of biased researchers, meaning that results could be unreliable because of multiple realities and cannot be used to construct solid, scientific evidence (Harling, 2002; Orum et al., 1991).

To resolve these issues, an analytic strategy that organizes data into themes allows researchers to focus on common results and distance themselves from the trends that they want to see (Cousin, 2007). Similarly, a variety of data sources, including multiple key informants, can be used to cross-check findings in a strategy called triangulation (Orum et al., 1991). While researcher judgment is a necessary part of the case study approach, "the great strength of this form of research is that it does permit the observer to assemble complementary and overlapping measures of the same phenomena," thereby supporting the validity of the observations (Orum et al., 1991, p. 19).

This research used triangulation and an analytic strategy to help overcome the complications of perceived researcher bias. Once data was collected, it was summarized, organized into themes, and then analyzed, thereby reducing the opportunities for subjective judgement. It should be noted that because this research relied exclusively on qualitative data, every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the emergent trends. Many of the themes and trends

identified in this research had been observed by the researcher in previous work. In instances where there was some question about the accuracy of the interpretation of responses, the researcher checked with objective others. If this research was to be replicated, it is suggested that each key informant be formally asked whether a policy or program was, after defining the terms, *Effective*, *Somewhat Effective*, or *Ineffective*. This would help eliminate much of the interpretation requirements and reduce the opportunity for the influence of researcher bias.

Also, while this research attempted to reflect opinions of respondents from a broad group of businesses and organizations, including community associations, responses from members of the general public were somewhat limited. Attempts were made to correspond with additional members of community associations but it was impossible to coordinate meetings with more than two representatives during the research period. While meetings with two executive members of local community associations were carried out, respondents' knowledge about specific policies or programs was somewhat limited. Still, their opinions about certain growth management policies or programs were useful and they provided valuable insight into what they perceived to be barriers to intensification and opportunities for growth management strategy improvement.

Seeing that politics plays such an important role in planning decisions, it would have been advantageous to have some representation from municipal politicians. Because this research was carried out several weeks before municipal elections, no City Councillors were available for the key informant interviews. Similar research in the future should consider the inclusion of perspectives from political representatives.

CHAPTER FIVE: Findings

5.1   Introduction

This Chapter provides a description of each of Ottawa's growth management policies and programs designed to support compact development. Each is followed by key informants' opinions about the policy or program's ability to implement the vision. The Chapter includes a discussion of the broader challenges to intensification that were observed through the interview process but not addressed in each individual policy or program discussion. Similarly, it also provides a summary of what key informants thought were opportunities for strengthening the strategy.

5.2   A Collaborative Approach to Managing Growth

The literature review indicates that a collaborative approach is necessary to create, implement, and achieve intensification goals. Because community planning is a political activity that impacts different segments of the population in different ways, this communicative and participatory process can, theoretically, help stakeholders, with often competing agendas, develop a common understanding of a problem and reach an agreed upon solution. City of Ottawa planning staff provided examples throughout the key informant interviews of ways in which they have attempted to include stakeholders in the development of planning policy and program initiatives. Two initiatives in particular stand out as being examples of a collaborative approach to community planning: the Official Plan and Community Design Plans.

5.2.1 Official Plan

The City of Ottawa has stated that they recognized the importance of taking a collaborative approach to developing their growth management strategy with the understanding that implementable solutions require key stakeholder input. Growth management efforts for the new City began soon after amalgamation with a multi-day *Smart Growth Summit*. The event

examined the concept of Smart Growth, how it could be applied to Ottawa, and launched the *Ottawa 20/20* initiative - a framework for managing growth in the City over the next 20 years. The City then released *A Window on Ottawa 20/20 – Ottawa's Growth Management Strategy*, a document that outlined the City's growth management principles, growth management plans, implementation challenges and opportunities, and monitoring efforts.   After interdepartmental discussions and community feedback, seven growth management principles were established and used to guide the development of the City's *Official Plan*, *Economic Strategy*, *Humans Services Plan*, *Arts and Heritage Plan*, and *Environmental Strategy*, documents which are collectively referred to as the City's growth management plans. Together they contain municipal-wide policies intended to encourage a compact urban form, with a particular emphasis on the intensification of the built-up area.   There are several key policies in the Ottawa Official Plan that are particularly salient to the issue of intensification.

Intensification means that the density of development, measured in households or employment per hectare, increases. Intensification occurs along a continuum, from expansion of an existing use or infill on a vacant lot, right up to large-scale redevelopment of an area such as Rockcliffe Airbase. Within the designated urban area, growth will be directed to locations with significant development potential, specifically those designated as Central Area, Mixed use Centres, Employment Areas, Enterprise Areas, Development Communities, and Mainstreets. These areas include locations that are centred on the rapid-transit network, major roads, busy commercial streets, and large tracts of vacant land.

Section 2.2.3, City of Ottawa Official Plan, May 2003

The City supports intensification and infill development throughout the urban area, including areas designated General Urban Area. The City will promote opportunities for intensification and infill in the following cases, provided that all other policies in the Plan are met:

- *Lands within 600 metres of future or existing rapid-transit stations;*
- *Lands with legacy uses that are no longer viable for the purposes for which they were intended;*
- *Lands that are currently used but are under-utilized;*
- *Lands used for parking lots or extensive storage areas; and,*
- *Brownfields*

Section 2.2.3.3, City of Ottawa Official Plan, May 2003

Introducing new development in existing areas that have developed over a long period of time requires a sensitive approach to differences between the new development and the established area … In general terms, compatible development means development that, although it is not necessarily the same as or similar to the existing buildings in the vicinity, nonetheless enhances an established community and coexists with existing development without causing undue adverse impact on surrounding properties.

Section 2.5.1, City of Ottawa Official Plan, May 2003

There was a clear division in respondents' opinions about the success of the collaborative approach to the Official Plan visioning exercise, particularly between the City's planning staff and the development industry. Respondents disappointed in the visioning process suggested that it was completed under a very tight timeline, leaving little opportunity for a true consultation process and resulted in policies, many relating to residential intensification, being brought in with little or no debate.

The whole OP process was one that was fast tracked from the private sector's perspective, and you may find that the community groups feel the same way. The Council and the administration set a timeline for completing the Official Plan exercise that basically led to a process that was rushed through. There were some areas where policies were added into the plan at the 11th hour because they just never were dealt with in terms of consultation with the development community or the community associations. The intensification policies were one, quite frankly, where I think the administration decided it was a good thing, and I don't think anyone is going to say it was not a good thing, but then they developed policies to make it happen, and those policies weren't developed with a whole lot of consultation with the private sector or the development community. (P – 2)

I think there were certainly cases where very specific interests managed to insert things in the Official Plan that we may not have liked. (CA – 1)

Some development industry respondents felt they were not fairly consulted because they had limited opportunities to express their opinions and felt that the concerns they did raise were not adequately addressed.

From where I sit on a greenfield land development side, it was clear that the city was not looking to expand the boundary and not interested in planning for more than the next five years. I was disappointed with the results. (DI – 4)

The development industry was not fairly consulted during the Official Plan visioning process and there is consensus that we weren't listened to either when we were consulted. (DI – 7)

The development industry was not very involved in the visioning process. It was very much a grassroots, community driven process and the development industry was not well represented. (P – 3)

Some respondents expressed concerns that they had no representative on the *Smart Growth Summit* panel, a panel that instead included invited academics, planners and city officials from around the world, many of them from the United States, who had differing perspectives on growth controls. Industry representatives were frustrated that they were left to attend sessions as general audience members.

The speakers were very much into slowing growth, controlling growth. Most of them came out of the United States where they have very different experiences with growth patterns and intensity of growth. We'd be considered a fairly intensive city by any American standards. You'd have people coming up from South Carolina talking about controlling growth in a state where they are facing tremendous sprawl ... it is a different sort of discussion than we are having here. I don't think it was a full discussion of issues of growth that surround this City. (P – 3)

They held a weekend visioning exercise where they brought in a bunch of experts where they created these panels and, despite many expressions of interest to participate as a panel member, there was nobody from the industry invited to sit on any of the panels ... And yet they brought in, quote-unquote, experts from the United States and western Canada and they telelinked to some guy in Oxford, England. They debated 20/20 and Smart Growth and visioning exercises and had all these panels of experts debating the issues and yet nobody from the industry was invited. (DI – 5)

Similarly, respondents expressed frustration with the fact that their only forum for voicing concerns on draft Official Plan policies was during large public meetings, meetings in which they had to share time with special interest groups and the general public. Because of the development industry's role in shaping Ottawa's urban form, they believed it was not unreasonable to expect exclusive meetings with City staff. Similarly, respondents also complained that they did not have sufficient time to comment on draft documents.

It was clear that the City wasn't as interested in what we had to say as we thought they should be. Then we went into the consultation process and it didn't go very well. We would be provided a document, we would provide comments and questions, but by the time we would get answers, the document would have changed 180 degrees. (DI – 7)

We'd be circulated on something and be asked for comments in the next week. They'd be working on a document for a year, and suddenly they'd say, "Here it is and give us your comments by Monday." We would review the documents in detail and submit recommendations and none of them would ever appear anywhere. There was never any discussion. It was like things went in a black hole and disappeared. (DI – 8)

The visioning process left many in Ottawa's development industry feeling as though the City was not interested in addressing their arguments and had taken a token approach to consultation. Most agreed with the intensification principles expressed in general policies but believed the lack of developer input meant a lack of understanding about the market for high density products and about their economic feasibility. There was also a concern expressed that there was no political will or community support to actually achieve policies related to intensification. They felt this lack of development economic knowledge in turn led to over optimistic assumptions about the ability for infill and redevelopment opportunities to respond fully to the housing demands of the growing population. For many, the implications of being left out of the process lead to a theoretically based Official Plan that did not recognize market realities or the challenges associated with political or community opposition to intensification projects.

The development industry was concerned that the intensification policies were not realistic or achievable, not necessarily because the development sector thought the market potential or even the demand wasn't there for the form of housing ... it was the reality that it has been demonstrated time and time again that there wasn't the political will or community support for it to happen. (P – 2)

The opportunities (for intensification) exist, but I don't think it is right that you do that by eliminating consumer choice in more traditional greenfields product. There was an attempt in the Official Plan to do that. I think it was a mistake not to recognize that market component. The City didn't do a good job of understanding that part of it. (DI – 7)

The result of the failed visioning process, some respondents felt, was the adoption of a controversial Official Plan that the development industry generally opposed and lead to a significant number of appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board.

> *It has resulted in a lot of policies that as an industry we oppose quite strongly and not something that is a historic trend. Other OPs have gone through the process over the last few decades with far less controversy and far less opposition from the industry. (DI – 5)*

In contrast to the development industry's views, City planners felt that the process was comprehensive and effective and cited City Council's unanimous support for the Official Plan as evidence of a successful visioning process. Planning staff argued that all special interest groups were well represented and indicated that the development industry was, in their opinion, fairly consulted as a stakeholder group and larger landowners were consulted on an individual basis.

> *I am sure you have heard from the development industry that they were not included in the process and that anything they had to say we disregarded. That, I don't believe, was the case. We certainly did involve them in a variety of ways in the development of the new Official Plan … Council agreed with staff's recommendation that we impose a fixed urban boundary and not consider any revisions to it at a minimum during the five-year review period and likely over a longer period of time. (CO – 1)*

> *The Commissioner was a very eloquent supporter of the vision and had the complete backing of Council, which is refreshing. The plan was carried unanimously, which is a very good accomplishment. (CO – 2)*

Some City planning staff respondents suggested that the development industry's criticisms to the Official Plan visioning exercise stemmed from the fact that most of Ottawa's developers were in the business of building single and medium density homes in suburban locations. Intensification policies and a tight urban boundary make it more difficult to continue to build those dwelling types and, for that reason, the industry was reluctant to accept the new policies.

In general, key informant respondents who were critical of the collaborative approach to the visioning exercise felt the process was rushed and did not fairly take into account the opinions of all stakeholders. It is important to note, however, that critics did acknowledge that the City is currently attempting to improve their consultation process by including key stakeholders early in the 2008 Official Plan review process.

Once the city planning department realized it was right to do the right thing and that they weren't going to lose their jobs just to listen to us, and that we had some good ideas, things started to go better. In the last year we have made progress. They have included us in a lot more. We have discussed the run-up to the 2008 OP. Everything has to be done – transportation plans, population projections – they have assured us that we will be involved in all of those activities all the way through. At this point, we don't have reason to doubt that, I think it will happen. (DI – 8)

Going into the next OP, the City has tried to fix previous problems by initiating consultation and going through more factual information. They are doing a better job now of going through the vacant land inventory, doing proper market studies, demographic projections, all those sorts of things, or so far they have been. They have included us in some meetings. I think what we want to be able to achieve is to come to a consensus about what the existing needs are and what the forecasts are, even if we don't know how to treat them … So far I feel more comfortable with the process. (DI – 7)

With respect to other stakeholders, community associations and National Capital Commission respondents generally supported the City's approach to their visioning exercise.

The City did a great job. They had a 20/20 Growth Summit. It was brilliant! They had speakers and workshops and everybody was talking about Smart Growth. (NCC – 1)

I think we were quite involved … We had all of the subsequent drafts that came out. Though, it was like so many of those processes that start off slowly and, as we reach the end, they seem to come quicker and quicker so toward the end we were having difficulty in keeping track as we went into draft 3 to 4 and in a few weeks time in was in front of Council. We certainly had a chance to comment and I certainly went down to comment as an individual and I certainly felt that we were listened too. (CA – 1)

In general, the interview findings suggest that the vision prepared for the City did not appropriately respond to the issue of community and political resistance. While the motherhood principles of a compact urban form had obvious social, economic, and environmental benefits, the "vision" did little to address the concerns of the public at the site level and Councillors often failed to uphold the policies for compact development in their own wards by supporting higher density proposals. Similarly, respondents were concerned that the lack of involvement of Ottawa's development industry but the inclusion of academics and urban thinkers from other cities meant that local market factors, such as the market demand for and the economic feasibility of higher density projects, were disregarded, leading to a very theoretical, academic based Official Plan.

On the positive side, there is no doubt that raising the profile of the benefits of intensification will improve, if only somewhat, the perception of high density infill and redevelopment projects. Similarly, the City's attempt to package residential intensification as a legitimate way in which to accommodate a growing population is an appropriate approach.

Table 5.1 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of the collaborative approach to create an Official Plan that effectively supports residential intensification. The definitions and operational characterizations for the response categories in the following table and other tables in this Chapter are presented in *Section 4.7.3 Data Sorting and Analysis*.

Table 5.1: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of the Official Plan in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	2	1	0	3
Development Industry	0	1	6	1
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	0	0	2	1
Surrounding Municipalities	0	0	2	1
Community Association Representatives	1	1	0	0
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	1	0	0	0
Total Responses	**4**	**3**	**10**	**6**

The interview process demonstrated that respondents were more content with the City's more recent attempts to include a broad range of stakeholders in the visioning and Official Plan review process. The fact that planning staff have consulted stakeholders a year in advance of the next review demonstrates their eagerness to encourage more productive dialogue and makes participants feel that their ideas and concerns are being legitimately addressed. As Currie (2006) recognizes, a shift in the role of city planners from facilitators to facilitators *and* technical experts should improve the collaborative process in the 2008 Official Plan review. The City has made an attempt to seek out stakeholders and convey information at each stage of the process, efforts that will ensure the community is informed and allow for more meaningful dialogue between stakeholders and planners.

5.2.2 Community Design Plans

The Community Design Plan (CDP) initiative was introduced in Ottawa's 2003 Official Plan in an effort to better address the challenges of land use compatibility in both the built-up area and on large greenfield sites. The intent of the CDP process is to translate the principles and policies of the Official Plan to the community scale prior to introducing any significant changes in the community. This planning process has two distinct features: it attempts to encourage community involvement early in the community planning process with the expectation of landowner, community, and political buy-in to the proposed plan; and, in recognizing the weaknesses in a land use documents' ability to ensure compatible, tasteful design, it is used to implement urban and architectural design guidelines. City planning staff provided some evidence of how these objectives were accomplished.

> *The key words about CDPs are 'public participation' and 'design', and design has to do with vision. That is why it is called a "Community Design" not a "Community Plan" and that is what differentiates it from a Secondary Plan, which is a land use plan based document. A CDP has a greater design focus because we recognize that higher densities require a higher quality of design. Land use planning documents cannot ensure high quality design. (CO – 3)*

> *Planning is land use oriented and we are not held accountable for the final product. In a land use document, you may have all of the greatest thoughts on land use but the*

product looks awful. We have to take ownership of that, and that is the beauty of the CDP process, you can look at everything. In the CDP process, land use is actually secondary. (CO – 4)

CDPs can be carried out in either the existing built-up area or in Developing Communities, which are defined as large, undeveloped tracts of land within the urban boundary designated for new development. As *Table 5.2* and *Figure 5.1* demonstrate, eleven CDPs have been completed or are currently being carried out in the City of Ottawa.

Table 5.2: Community Design Plans in Ottawa

Developing Communities

1	Fernbank Community Design Plan
2	Barrhaven South Community Design Plan
3	South Nepean Town Centre Community Design Plan
4	Riverside South Community Design Plan
5	Leitrim Community Design Plan
6	East Urban Centre Community Design Plan
7	Mer Bleue Community Design Plan
8	Rockcliffe Airbase Community Design Plan

Existing Built-up Area

9	Old Ottawa East Community Design Plan
10	O-Train Corridor Community Design Plan
11	Wellington Street Community Design Plan
12	Richmond Road Community Design Plan
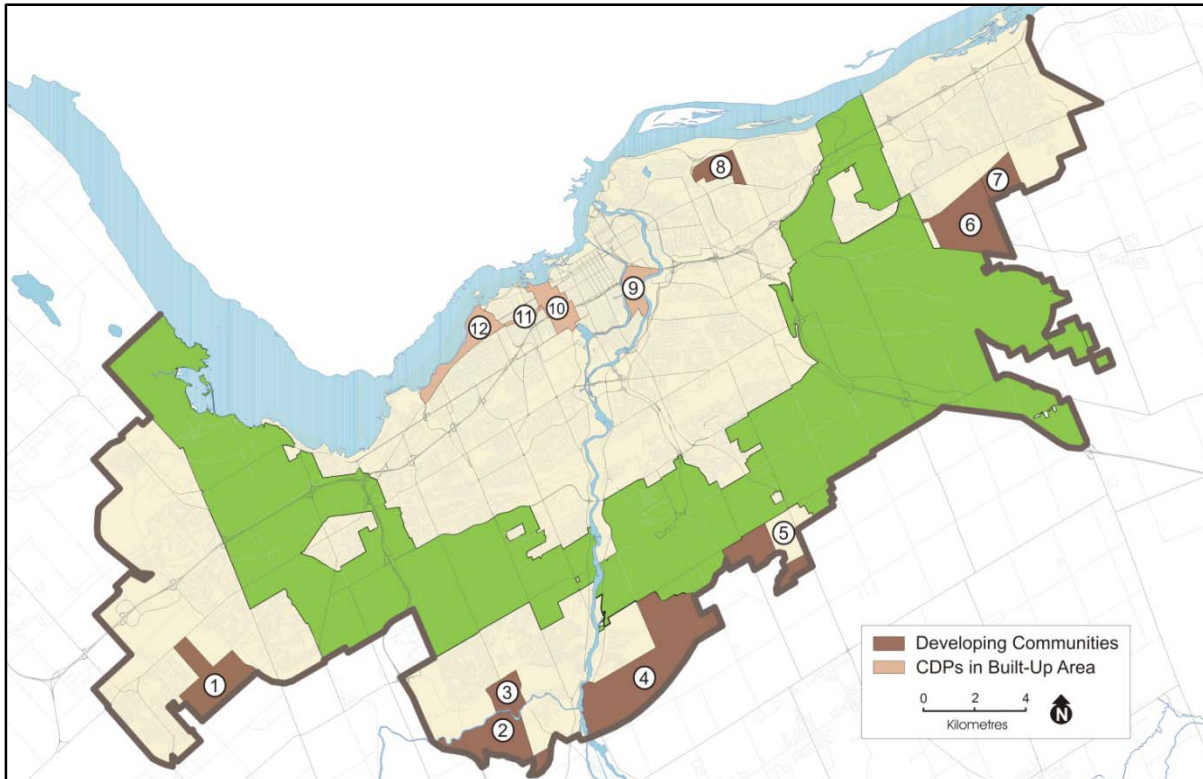
Figure 5.1: Community Design Plans in Ottawa

CDPs can be initiated by the City, a landowner, or community association. In existing built-up areas, CDPs are typically carried out in neighbourhoods that are experiencing growth pressures. They are intended to provide an opportunity for the community to prepare a plan that locates sites that are best suited, in the opinion of stakeholders, for higher density development.

By comparison, greenfields with the Developing Community land use designation are subject to the comprehensive planning process for the purpose of encouraging a mix of housing and a balance of jobs and households in an effort to create a complete community at the outset. The plans may include no more than 60% single-detached and semi-detached residential units so that at least 40% of the units are multiple dwellings. Ten percent of the units must be apartments. Policies also require that residential uses develop at higher densities than in the past and that a broader mix of land uses is provided. The overall average density of 29 units per net hectare for singles, semis and townhouses must be achieved for areas outside of the

Greenbelt. The plan must also demonstrate how the proposed mix of land uses will achieve a balance of jobs and households, measured by the provision of 1.3 jobs for each new housing unit.

Figure 5.2 demonstrate the mix of land uses proposed for Barrhaven South established through the CDP process. The plan locates residential, commercial, and employment areas as well as major open space in the community, ensuring there is an appropriate balance of land uses as per Official Plan policies. Residential unit mix and development densities comply with Official Plan requirements. The CDP document provides further design guidelines for the built area, guidelines that development approvals planners are expected to consider when plans of subdivision are submitted for the area.

Land Use	Land Area (hectares)
Residential	182.1
Mixed Use Centre	5.9
Employment	9.8
Commercial	1.0
Institutional	29.5
Parks and Open Space	147.6
Major Roads	118.1
TOTAL	**492.2**

Figure 5.2: Barrhaven South CDP and Development Statistics

Stakeholders in the CDP process are reached through a variety of means including announcements in newspapers, mass mailings, and the invitation of community associations and special interest groups by the City. Participants in the process can include multiple city departments, residents, landowners, businesses, and other interested parties. Input by

stakeholders is typically obtained through workshops, questionnaires, and meetings held at key stages in the community planning process.

In general, key informants agreed that, in theory, the CDP process is an appropriate approach to garner community support for locating higher density projects in the existing built-up area and increase development densities and broaden unit mix in suburban communities. Frustration, however, was expressed about the length of the process, the monetary expense, and confusion over the status, and thus the implementation potential, of the resulting plans.

When the process was originally contemplated, it was expected that CDPs would be completed efficiently, generally within a year. In actuality, only one of the City's approved CDPs was completed in that timeframe and only because it was a small area, it was owned by the city, and it was in relative isolation from existing communities. Ottawa's other CDPs have taken much longer to complete, a common frustration amongst all respondents.

> *I agree that it is an appropriate vehicle, but I think it takes way too long. It just always takes twice as long as you think. (DI – 4)*
>
> *The consultants, subconsultants, the landowners and the core project team established here in the City would meet every two weeks for a half day for the whole duration of the process, say a year and a half. It was very, very time consuming for everybody. (CO – 5)*
>
> *Greenfield CDPs are easier in the fact that the expectations are clearer but they have been more challenging in terms of getting these things through the municipality and approved. They take a long time … I don't think they (the City) really knew how long they were going to take, to be perfectly honest. (P – 3)*

The lengthy process was blamed by some respondents on the level of detail required for each CDP and the general lack of internal organization at the municipal level. Many complained that CDPs in greenfields required much more detail than previously required secondary plans and were virtually equivalent to plans of subdivision. Frustration was expressed about the time and monetary expense required to complete detailed design work that would likely have to be revised by the time development was ready to be built.

They are trying to get into the equivalent of plans of subdivision – detailed engineering drawings for every road and every intersection, all the sewers, built design stormwater management ponds, parks, and their size and their orientation right down to the block size – all for this community. In the old secondary plan, they would just have a star. Theoretically, if all this stuff didn't change, then what you had in place would all work. But by the time this stuff starts happening, however, it will be old stuff. (DI – 3)

They are actually doing subdivision planning. They tell you that they aren't but they really are. You can look at a report and you can figure out how that 10,000th house is going to get serviced, from where and what drain it will drain to. I think they need to tone it down … now we are micro managed to the point that we are doing detailed design at the first level. (DI – 4)

More detailed plans are more costly to prepare. A consistent complaint about the CDP process was the dependence on City of Ottawa staff resources to lead projects, which are limited by budgetary constraints. The City of Ottawa carries out CDPs based on an approved work program and budget for the year. In an effort to overcome budgetary constraints and advance the CDP work program, front-ending agreements have been established between the City and some landowners to allow for the preparation of CDPs prior to their work program date. The CDP process is thus managed by the City of Ottawa but the project consultants are paid directly by the developers, who regain some of their expenses in the future from the City in the form of an area charge that is part of the development charge. This approach has made the development industry concerned about the optics of the resulting plan to the general public.

There is a grey line because the bills are being paid by the developers for a City-run project. So the consultants get pulled in both directions. You have the City saying, "We want you to do this, this, and this," and the developer's saying, "While you are considering that, can you do this and this." If, for what ever reason, it goes the developer's way, it comes back to, "Well, you were being paid on the behalf of the City by the developer." (DI – 6)

It puts the planning department into a huge conflict because now they are relying on consultants picked by developers. (DI – 3)

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Another concern raised by respondents was the issue of the plan's status when it was complete, particularly the enforcement of design guidelines. In theory, plans are expected to be supported by Official Plan or zoning by-law amendments. Council is expected to approve these amendments at the same time as they approve the CDP. There are, however, examples where zoning amendments have not been implemented but the CDP has been approved by Council and is in place.

> *Requirements are put in the design guidelines. How enforceable are they? Who knows! (DI – 3)*

> *The plan is to implement them through zoning, but that is a bit unclear as well. The original Official Plan said they would be approved by Council as Council resolutions. The difficulty with that is there is no right of appeal, not like a secondary plan that you bring into the Official Plan and you get the right of appeal. That is problematic from the developer's point of view because if Council makes a silly decision, there is no right to challenge it. From a community's point of view, if they make a silly decision on behalf of the developer because he happens to have the ear of Council, there is no right of appeal. It hasn't really been tested yet. (P – 3)*

A City planning staff respondent arguing in favour of CDPs made a similar point but saw the flexibility of the status as a positive feature of the CDP initiative.

> *I think they are great documents because they aren't tied to the Planning Act. They are adopted by Council. At the OMB they have the status of guidelines and decisions can be rendered based on them, though they may have a little less power than if they were a secondary plan. The beauty of them is that you can put anything you want in them. (CO – 4)*

The respondent indicated that CDPs contained design and architectural detail guidelines that are expected to be implemented at the development application stage and suggested that there is sufficient information within each CDP for development approval planners to make informed decisions.

Related to this issue is the development industries criticism about the lack of consistency amongst CDP requirements. While the Official Plan very specifically outlines CDP

requirements, some of the resulting plans are very detailed while others provide only high level guidelines.

> *They are still struggling to figure out what a Community Design Plan is. There are different ones out there that have different flavours and different requirements for research. The City did one in a community in the east that has virtually no backbone, no studies, but resulted in a plan. There are others in the west or the south that require extensive study beyond anyone's expectation. (P – 3)*

City planning staff defended the differing scopes by stating that each CDP *should* be different because they each represented different local contexts. They argued that each neighbourhood is different and some stakeholders asked for more precision in their document than others. A number of respondents also acknowledged that differing project managers have differing skill sets and interests in planning. These values are reflected in the CDP process and in the end product.

> *The CDP process depends on the experience of the planner. So you have social planners vs. land use planners vs. design planners. This is not necessarily a bad thing. The most important aspect of the CDP process is management. Management must assign a planner that has the particular knowledge set for the area in which the CDP is being conducted. (CO – 3)*

> *It takes on the flavour sometimes of the project manager or consultant who has been hired to do it. (NCC – 1)*

Despite the complaints raised about the process, City planning staff respondents were content about the success of CDPs. They indicated that all of the greenfield community design plans completed to date had been successful in reaching the residential unit mix and density targets.

> *CDP's start to change their perception of what the Official Plan says and what they are actually going to see as a community, and I think that helps … The CDPs are definitely achieving the 60/30/10 split. (CO – 5)*

> *Developers are buying in and are willing to have CDPs reflect higher densities. (CO – 1)*

To the City, it demonstrated that the development industry was confident that they could successfully market townhouses and stacked townhouses in the suburbs. That said, they did acknowledge that the higher average density was achieved by increases in the proportion of medium density units, not by increases in the density of singles. Development industry respondents agreed that density increases for singles had stalled. Also, there was general agreement that high density units would be difficult to achieve in suburban communities.

Blocks will be set aside for stacked townhouses or maybe even a block set aside for an apartment and the real question is going to be, when it actually gets developed, how will it get developed? So that in terms of your applications and approvals process, you may meet the target and may meet the policy, but does that last block that actually achieves the density ever get built? (P – 2)

Whether the higher development densities on the greenfield CDPs are the result of stricter policies and a more collaborative planning process is debatable. Several respondents stated that the CDP process is no different than any other secondary plan process in terms of public participation or stake holder buy-in. In addition, City staff and development industry respondents recognized that while Official Plan policies and zoning facilitate development, it is the market that dictates the type of product that is built. Ottawa is a fast-growing City that is experiencing significant housing demand.

I think the market has driven the development community to higher densities generally because of the simple cost of housing has required that they put a variety of marketable products in their subdivisions. So typically, without a forcing of the hand of the municipality, we are getting a very strong blend of towns, back-to-back townhouses, terraced houses, and small lot singles. I think the market was going there regardless. (P – 3)

There has been a huge increase in intensification and it has partly been an accident of timing. The condo market was, for whatever reason, barely non-existent in Ottawa for the last 10 years, from the late 80s to the late 90s. There was that negative cycle going on. But the market has been driving the change since 2000. (CO – 2)

Developers will tell you that the market will dictate what they build, not the city. The City can have a policy and that policy can be fine now but if the market isn't there, it

isn't going to get built. In the end, the market will tell you if you can do what you want to do. (P – 1)

Several respondents involved in the CDP process suggested ways in which the planning process could be improved.

I don't think they should be a 2 year process. They should be a couple of community meetings, a vision statement, and a general sense of what a mainstreet should look like. (DI – 4)

A good CDP requires: a good terms of reference; a good reference point for receiving feedback, such as a steering committee; and a good steering committee should be composed of a mix of participants – developers, community business owners, key city staff, and rate payers – because it encourages good discussion. (P – 3)

In general, respondents were optimistic about the potential for neighbourhood-specific Community Design Plans for encouraging higher densities. Most of the frustrations about CDPs were process related, such as the lengthy timeline, unclear report component requirements, and the status of design and architectural guidelines. The collaborative approach seemed to be successful in attracting key stakeholders and used a variety of formats to solicit input from the general public, developers, and politicians. There is an expectation that these efforts will help thwart community and political resistance and overcome regulatory challenges when development applications come forward in the future. There is also the expectation that the approvals process will be faster and easier because detailed background work has been completed. Only time will tell if the collaborative approach to neighbourhood planning has been successful in implementing higher density projects in existing developed areas. Expectations are high that they will.

Table 5.3 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of the collaborative approach to create Community Design Plans that effectively support residential intensification.

Table 5.3: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of Community Design Plans in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	2	4	0	0
Development Industry	1	4	3	0
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	0	3	0	0
Surrounding Municipalities	0	1	0	2
Community Association Representatives	2	0	0	0
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	0	1	0	0
Total Responses	**5**	**13**	**3**	**2**

5.3 Land Use Controls

The literature review demonstrated that intensification policies and programs can be implemented through land use controls, which are typically implemented through Official Plan policies and help to facilitate the regulatory process. The City of Ottawa Official Plan land use policies manage growth in two ways: direct new growth to land within the urban boundary; and encourage compact, mixed use development on greenfields and infill and redevelopment in existing built-up areas.

5.3.1 Directing Growth within the Urban Area Boundary

City of Ottawa Official Plan policies manage growth by directing new development to land within the urban boundary. Policies state that there is to be a sufficient amount of land in the urban boundary to meet the city's 20-year requirement for housing, employment and other purposes. It is expected that about 90% of population growth will be directed to land within the boundary. The remaining 10% is projected to be dispersed throughout the rural area, primarily in villages. The spatial extent of Ottawa urban boundary is shown in *Figure 5.3*.
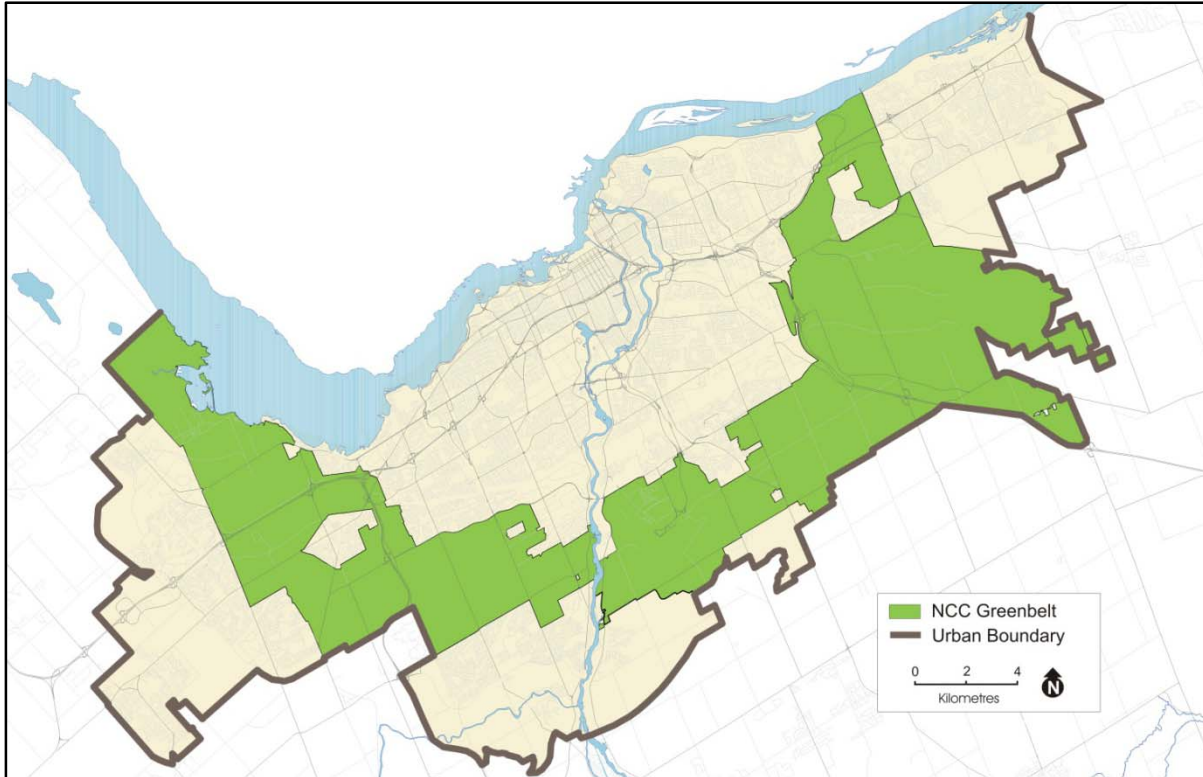
Figure 5.3: Ottawa's Urban Boundary

In an effort to encourage compact urban development and intensification, the ability to expand the urban boundary has been made increasingly difficult in recent years. Policies in the former Region of Ottawa-Carleton permitted boundary expansion through a Regional Official Plan Amendment application process. In contrast, one of the cornerstones of the new Official Plan is that the city will only consider expanding the boundary after it has completed a comprehensive review of the need for additional land, a process that will only be carried out as part of the five-year Official Plan review process. If it is determined that additional land is required, alternative locations for expansion would be identified, compared, and evaluated based on a number of criteria and would include consultation with stakeholders. Only large plots of land that are sufficient in size to complete a new or an existing community would be considered.

To ensure that the land supply within the urban boundary meets the policies in the Official Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement, the City of Ottawa continuously monitors the

supply of vacant residential and employment land. While municipal documents state there is a sufficient amount of land within the urban boundary to meet policy requirements, recent Ontario Municipal Board decisions supporting incremental expansions to the urban boundary and Council's decisions to redesignate large parcels of urban land for alternate uses calls into question the accuracy of the City of Ottawa's assumptions and conclusions about supply. OMB decisions have recognized that there is a shortage of residential land for low-density housing and that supply has fallen short of Provincial Policy Statement guidelines.

The issue of "sufficient supply" is often debated in attempts to expand the urban boundary or to obtain large land use redesignation approvals. Attempts to quantify the supply of residential and employment land is complicated by opposing assumptions about total demand, locational preferences, unit/employment mix, development densities, influence of infill or redevelopment opportunities, vacancy/demolition/in-production rates, and net-to-gross ratios.

> *I think what was lacking when policies were devised was the proper inventory of existing supply and that market factor and whether it was supportable. (DI -7)*

Urban boundaries limit vacant land supply and have the potential to cause an oligopoly of landowners which can lead to a minimum price floor for new housing. Opponents of the spatial extent of the current urban boundary argue that there is not a sufficient amount of vacant residential land and it is having a negative impact on the provision of affordable housing.

> *Urban boundary expansion is a very political topic and there was no way the mayor was going to allow it to expand. As a result, land values have sky rocketed and now you see unzoned rural lands selling for what 5 years ago urban greenfield lands would sell for. So people are really betting on land at high prices. (DI – 4)*

> *The whole problem of freezing the boundary is it has driven up home prices, has created a situation where developers aren't selling serviced lots to anybody else because all of a sudden their land supply is so finite that they wouldn't dare do so, and it has shut out a lot of smaller builders who can't afford to purchase serviced lots. That, therefore, affects the consumer and the type of house they can have. (DI – 7)*

We deal a lot with those who acquire land for builders and they tell us land prices have tripled since 2003 when the original plan came into effect. (P – 3)

What is driving up the cost of residential land right now is the boundary and the fact that there are few parcels of land remaining. Any land left in the boundary is conflicted with two elements: one, all of the easy sites are gone, so what is left probably has issues; two, because it is still available, the price has gone up. So what you have left is very expensive land that has unusual costs associated with bringing it on for development. (DI – 5)

In response to the complaints, the City of Ottawa commissioned a study to provide an objective opinion the causes of the increase in local vacant land prices in recent years. The February 2005 report *Trends in Residential Land Costs in the City of Ottawa and Factors Affecting Them (2005)* demonstrated that the residential market was performing at or near peak levels from the time the new urban boundary policy was implemented, but cautioned that increased demand and escalating land prices were the result of a variety of market influences and economic cycles and not just the implementation of a more restrictive growth management policy.

The report concluded that while there was no evidence that the policy caused a "spike" in prices, it did contribute somewhat to the upward pressure on urban residential land prices. This pressure was attributed primarily to the highly concentrated ownership of urban residential land and the reluctance of larger landowners to sell serviced lots to small builders under the current municipal policy context. The report stated that while the development and building community understood that the policy would be reviewed in 2008, many believed the current boundary would be held for a much longer period. With demand for residential land high and supply low and under the current policy context, many larger developers and builders preferred to retain their lots for their own use and resist selling to smaller builders, thereby ensuring a secure supply of serviced lots. Thus, when serviced lots become available to smaller builders competition is high and land prices are pushed upward. The report stated that the difficulty in obtaining lots has pushed some builders to carryout projects in other communities or shift to other forms of residential development, such as infill projects inside the Greenbelt. Several respondents had similar theories about the influence of the urban boundary and land prices.

In Ottawa we have a very concentrated ownership of land. We've got about five guys who own most of the designated land. So those five guys have a big say about where it happens, how it happens, and when it happens ... There is tons of land out there but there is a constrained supply in terms of ownership. (P – 1)

Some of the respondents argued that high land prices in recent years have forced homebuyers to seek lower cost alternatives in municipalities beyond the city's borders. The City of Ottawa (2005a), attributing this phenomenon to improved road access and the increasing cost of housing in Ottawa. The out-migration of Ottawa residents to other Canadian locations is weighted heavily to those municipalities around Ottawa and Gatineau. The high proportion of in-bound commuters from some adjacent municipalities shows that residential growth in those locations is linked to jobs in Ottawa.

City of Ottawa planning staff and private consultant respondents argued, however, that the movement of residents to surrounding municipalities could be linked to provincially-funded transportation improvements as much as they could be to urban boundary policies.

How do you balance the tightening up of policies against the development of a 4-lane highway? The development of Highway 7 to Carleton Place has an impact on development. They did the 416 several years ago which now allows people from north Grenville to be in the City of Ottawa in 20 – 25 minutes. So, which is it? Is it the fact that the rules are so tight in Ottawa and the rules are so cumbersome compared to outlying areas or is it the fact that we have better transportation networks? It is a bit of both. (SM – 2)

Over time, as the City gets bigger, that commutershed is getting bigger and bigger. Because of the 417, there have always been a lot of commuters from Russel Township. What we are seeing now is that they have extended the 416 so that area is going crazy. They are 4-laning Highway 7 to Carleton Place so that area is booming. (CO – 2)

The "leapfrogging" of urban development increases travel to work mostly by automobile, which can represent a lost opportunity to increase ridership and serves to increase environmental impacts from automobile use. Also, those who work in Ottawa but reside in surrounding municipalities do not contribute to the City's main revenue-generating sources:

development charges and property taxes. The City thus provides services without the benefit of collecting fees.

In general, respondents did not respond negatively to the use of an urban boundary to identify the spatial extent of the urban area. In several interviews, key informants actually recognized the risks of making it too large. The concern of many, instead, was that they did not believe there was a sufficient amount of vacant designated land within the boundary to accommodate growth over the 20-year planning horizon. The implication was that land values were increasing dramatically and housing was becoming unaffordable. Families wanting a single detached house with a large lot were therefore moving to adjacent municipalities just beyond the City's borders to find desirable accommodations. This has implications on appropriate planning over the larger region, for which there is not a comprehensive plan.

While respondents were quick to recognize that land values were increasing due to a constrained supply, most failed to associate this with the trend to compensate for higher land prices by building at higher densities. Interestingly, most agreed that the market for townhouses was increasing because housing prices were increasing and not as many first time homebuyers could afford singles. The literature review does caution, however, that containment policies must be accompanied by strategies that ensure sufficient opportunities for higher density, infill or redevelopment projects, something the development industry argues does not exist in Ottawa. Similarly, urban boundaries must also include provisions for affordable housing and continuous monitoring programs to reduce the impact of housing price inflation. Based on many respondents' opinions about the low demand for rental units and lack of government incentives for the creation of affordable housing, the provision of lower cost housing was not considered economically viable by many in the development industry.

To most respondents, Ottawa's tight urban boundary did nothing to address community and political resistance of intensification projects at the site level and did not help with regulatory challenges. Similarly, it failed to respond to market realities, thereby causing Ottawa residents to move to other communities that have less rigorous policies.

Table 5.4 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of the urban boundary to effectively support residential intensification.

Table 5.4: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of the Urban Boundary in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	1	0	0	5
Development Industry	0	1	3	4
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	0	1	1	1
Surrounding Municipalities	0	0	2	1
Community Association Representatives	0	0	0	2
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	0	0	0	1
Total Responses	**1**	**2**	**6**	**14**

5.3.2 Intensification in Target Areas

Within the urban area, residential and employment growth is encouraged to develop at higher densities on greenfields and through infill or redevelopment of the existing built-up area. Official Plan policies support intensification throughout the General Urban Area and promote it particularly in five target land use designations: Central Area; Mixed Use Centres; Enterprise Areas; Mainstreets; and, in the Vicinity of Transit Stations. The City suggests that these designations provide the greatest opportunities for compact development because of their orientation to alternative forms of transportation and opportunities available for the provision of mixed land uses. *Table 5.5* provides a summary of the policies applicable to these designations and *Figure 5.4* demonstrates their location in the municipality.

Table 5.5: Summary of Official Plan Policies for Intensification Target Areas

Central Area	• the focal point of economic and cultural activities • while a wide range of uses are encouraged to expand in this area, there is particular emphasis on increasing residential opportunities • increased residential development will enhance the downtown experience by supporting day and night, and year-round activities
Mixed Use Centres	• located on rapid-transit network which lies adjacent to major roads • situated within the Greenbelt and in suburban communities • focal point for housing, jobs, and commercial services over time • emphasis is placed on encouraging transit-supportive land uses • mixed uses offer greater variety and enhanced choice and strengthens the Centre's role as both a destination and an attractive place to live
Enterprise Areas	• business parks that are achieving, or able to achieve, higher employment densities due to the presence of multi-storey office buildings • policies have evolved to permit retail and commercial services in an effort to make them more attractive and convenient places to work • in an effort to transform these areas into more compact, mixed use areas, policies permit attached residential dwellings in Enterprise Areas so long as a set of criteria are met • may also consider Official Plan amendment to redesignate into a Mixed Use Centre so long as minimum employment targets are met and a CDP is prepared
Mainstreets	• arterial roads that have evolved as focal points for shopping, offices, and community activities • they provide opportunities for infill and redevelopment, particularly on surface parking lots and brownfield sites, with the expectation that a more densely developed form will in turn reinforce the mix of uses currently present, support transit initiatives, contribute to the continuity of building facades, and integrate with the adjacent community • mixed residential and retail uses are encouraged in the same buildings
Vicinity of Transit Stations	• generally consistent with Mixed Use Centres
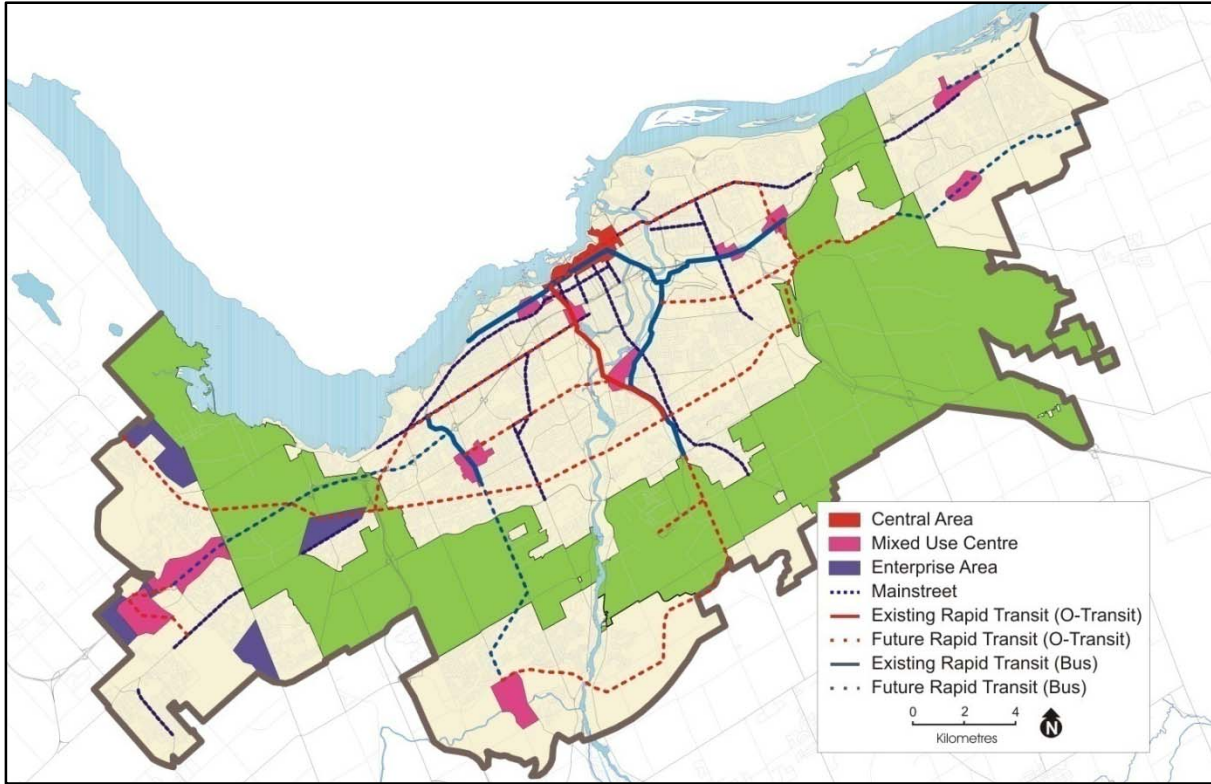
Figure 5.4: Ottawa's Intensification Target Areas

Some respondents acknowledged that the strength of the land use policies is that they bring awareness to the issue of intensification opportunities in target areas. Others argue that the major weakness is that the policies are not entrenched in municipal programs that can actually lead to the implementation of intensification projects. Interview respondents suggested that policies permitting higher densities are only now being incorporated into the zoning by-law, which is still in draft form, and are not supported by other initiatives. As Alexander and Tomalty (2002) point out, policy planners fail to get the support of engineering, transportation, or public works staff when it comes to getting intensification projects approved due to the fact that they tend to be concerned exclusively with codes and standards of conventional design instead of broader policy objectives.

> *In terms of what the City has actually done, they have certainly promoted the idea (of intensification). The policies have a lot of intention, so it has changed the mindset of planning committee and council in terms of what they would approve, and even the mindset of the development industry, and maybe even some members of the general*

public. But ... the attitudes that engineers have at looking at sewer capacity have not changed. (CO -2)

Development industry respondents expressed reservations about the market's interest in locating in the areas targeted for residential intensification. In particular, they had very low expectations about the ability to achieve high density residential uses in suburban mixed use areas because of the low market demand for higher density residential and the strong role of existing commercial uses on many of the sites.

Mixed used centres haven't been particularly successful anywhere, expect for maybe in Orleans. Frankly, the market is not there for what they want to do. It is very hard to create something that doesn't occur in a natural economic way. (P – 1)

We think the mixed use centre policies are off the wall. I don't have a problem with mixed use centres being promoted for residential. What I have a problem with is the City suggesting that new residential growth will be directed to commercial areas that are already developed. (DI – 4)

Some infill developers highlighted the challenges associated with trying to achieve the City's Mainstreet objectives *and* be a good neighbour. In most cases, vacant or underdeveloped Mainstreet parcels do not have a significant amount of buffering from existing residential uses because available sites are narrow, setbacks are minimal, and adjacent properties are often occupied by single detached dwellings. Many agree that NIMBY opposition and lack of political support makes it virtually impossible to implement the City's vision in target areas. Some development industry respondents complained about the need to constantly rely on the Ontario Municipal Board to get approvals in this case.

It is nearly impossible to achieve the Mainstreet policies in the Official Plan at the same time as being a good neighbour. Infill sites don't allow you to have huge buffer zones. Conflicts arise when the Official Plan policy states the infill project must be, "compatible with existing development," and it is interpreted by the public as saying it must be, "the same as existing." (DI – 6)

There are examples where great projects on Mainstreets have to go to the Board because the community wasn't prepared to accept the level of intensification

proposed. These are legitimate sites on arterial roads with lots of existing shopping and other uses around them and the developers have to go to the Board. (P – 2)

Some respondents suggested that a more appropriate approach for defining and supporting target areas would be to more accurately assign growth to specific neighbourhoods rather than applying it to City-wide Official Plan designations.

If the City was forced to take responsibility to establish intensification targets, determine how many buildings they needed and heights, and then distributed it through the wards and vote on it and approve it, then we'd be okay. But right now, our industry is still spending hundreds of thousands or millions at OMB hearings just to get the zonings to do an intensification project. (DI – 8)

We should determine how much growth we should accommodate, where is the best location for it, what is the best form of that growth – should it be in clusters in one area or applied generally across the board – and we are going to provide the incentive for that to occur. Right now, the intensification issue has got very little sharp tools to secure the implementation of it. (P – 3)

In general, the main criticism of the City's intensification target areas stemmed from the concern that there where no implementing policies or programs beyond the high level Official Plan policies to encourage intensification in those areas. Most of the respondents criticized this land use control by suggesting that the land use designations identified to accommodate higher densities did not necessarily correspond to the locations where there was a market for such a product. A major criticism was that general intensification policies applied to entire land use designations were not strong enough to respond to community and political resistance at a site level. Community and political resistance to higher density projects in existing developed areas often led to lengthy and expensive battles at the Ontario Municipal Board.

Table 5.6 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of the collaborative approach to create Community Design Plans that effectively support residential intensification.

Table 5.6: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of Target Areas in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	0	2	0	4
Development Industry	0	3	3	2
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	0	1	2	0
Surrounding Municipalities	0	0	0	3
Community Association Representatives	0	0	0	2
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	0	0	0	1
Total Responses	**0**	**6**	**5**	**12**

5.3.3 Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law

Since amalgamation, the City of Ottawa has been working with 36 inherited zoning by-laws from the eleven former municipalities. In late 2004, the City began a process to harmonize the existing zoning categories and regulations. The process involved three phases: project initiation and the creation of an Advisory group; pre-consultation with stakeholders and the preparation of a draft zoning by-law; statutory notification; and broad public consultation of the draft zoning by-law. Stage 3 began in May 2006 with the release a *Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law – Urban Area* for public comment. After consultation is complete, the by-law is expected to be passed by Council in the fall of 2007.

The new zoning by-law is important for a number of reasons, particularly to provide administrative efficiencies in the:

- provision of zoning information to the public;
- consistency of interpretation;
- processing of development applications; and,
- compatibility with other municipal regulations.

City of Ottawa, 2007b

The zoning by-law is an important document for implementing the policies of the Official Plan and other growth management documents. In an effort to implement the City's vision

for growth, the draft zoning by-law process began with the development of zoning "strategies" for many of the Official Plan land use designations. This process enabled staff to identify appropriate zones based on Official Plan direction. A "purpose statement" was then developed for each of the identified zones; a statement intended to provide details and linkages to the Official Plan policies. The next step in the zoning by-law process was the preparation of the each zone's individual by-laws. *Table 5.7* provides an example of the purpose statement for one of the City's five residential zones.

Table 5.7: Purpose Statement for Zone R1 – Residential First Density Zone

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the R1- Residential First Density Zone is to:

(1)   restrict the building form to detached dwellings in areas designated as General Urban Area in the Official Plan;

(2)   allow a number of other residential uses to provide additional housing choices within detached dwelling residential areas;

(3)   permit ancillary uses to the principal residential use to allow residents to work at home; regulate development in a manner that is compatible with existing land use patterns so that

(4)   the detached dwelling, residential character of a neighbourhood is maintained or enhanced; and,

(5)   permit different development standards, identified in the subzone, primarily for areas designated as Developing Communities, which promote efficient land use and compact form while showcasing newer design approaches.

Source: City of Ottawa, 2006c

The main criticism of the draft comprehensive zoning by-law expressed in key informant interviews was the expectations of the development industry, rightly or wrongly, that it would go further to implement the policies of the 2003 Official Plan, which included the expectation that there would be upzoning in intensification target areas. Instead, some in the development industry were frustrated to learn that it was simply an amalgamation of the former zoning by-laws.

While some respondents understood the city's position and supported their approach, others were very critical of what they perceived to be a missed opportunity to implement the visions of the Official Plan, indicating that height and density restrictions are the biggest inhibitors with respect to intensification and zoning issues. Their opinion was that the simple

standardization of the zoning by-law will have no effect on greenfield development and represents a lost opportunity to create significant changes in the inner area.

> *The City makes it clear at the beginning that this is a consolidation and a regularization of the by-law. But it truly doesn't implement the intensification policies of the Official Plan by any stretch. (P – 3)*

> *The government is not doing enough to make the rules work. The zoning changes, which are the guts of the rules, have not been changed to reflect intensification. If the City is serious about intensifying, they should permit it. If they are not putting in the permitted densities in the by-laws, then it is not permitted. (DI – 3)*

> *When going to all of the effort of adopting a new comprehensive zoning by-law, you would have expected the city to have attempted to implement the policies of the new Official Plan, which they aren't doing. The City has made it quite clear that this is basically an amalgamation of the former by-laws. What a huge waste of an opportunity. If you are going to go to all of that effort to create a new by-law, for heavens sake, implement the policies. (P – 2)*

City planners responsible for the creation of the new zoning by-law made no apologies for the content and stressed that their mandate was not to upzone, but to compile the existing by-laws into one comprehensive document. They argued that Official Plan policies specifically state that intensification should only happen through a comprehensive planning process. In their opinion, upzoning sites would have circumvented the public consultation process and would have been in conflict with Official Plan policies.

> *We are taking the broad policies of the Official Plan and translating it into more site-specific policies and looking at ways of implementing policy objectives in a more fair and reasonable way. We are usually in the middle of two diametrically opposed positions. Nobody is going to be totally happy with the results. Our job is to make everyone equally unhappy. That is the reality of zoning, trying to find a happy medium between people who are trying to maximize profits and those that are trying to bar the door on development. (CO – 6)*

While large amounts of upzoning did not occur, staff were confident that the process has helped intensification efforts. For one, they say it cleans up the zoning by-law, making it easier to understand and creating consistent rules across the municipality. According to staff,

draft zoning has increased heights along traditional Mainstreets, allowed for a broader mix of uses to encourage residential development, and reduced parking standards. In an effort to encourage higher density development in the vicinity of transit stations and transit initiatives, building height limits have been eliminated in the centre of designated areas.

Similarly, parking standards were changed across the municipality. Parking maximums were introduced in the vicinity of transit stations and lowered in all other designations in a decision based mostly on transit objectives. This change, however, raised concerns amongst development industry respondents who argued that they market their products on the availability of parking. City staff respondents acknowledged their concerns but stated that while demand is important, it cannot be the only consideration. An abundance of cheap parking undermines transit initiatives and means there is less incentive for transit use.

City staff were not disillusioned, however, with their understanding of role zoning plays in encouraging intensification. They recognized that zoning is an enabling mechanism but it does not guarantee that development will happen as envisioned.

> *If you can't market high rise in a certain area then, obviously, zoning isn't going to make any difference. They are going to go with whatever they can market … zoning provides an opportunity and it is up to the development industry to determine if they can do it or not. Zoning doesn't make things happen, unfortunately. It just facilitates it. (CO – 6)*

Community associations seemed, in general, supportive of the draft by-law, though individual Chapters were reviewing it at the time of the interviews. Their opinion was that the existing zoning by-law provided plenty of opportunities for intensification.

> *Our position is that the existing zoning by-law for the City of Ottawa provides lots of opportunity for intensification. Just look out on the street, there are one storey buildings on Bank Street. I didn't force them to build one storey buildings on Bank Street. There is the possibility of building four storey buildings there and there has always been the possibility. So don't tell me you need spot zoning to intensify. Our starting position is, get out there and intensify under the existing zoning and when*

you are finished doing that, then come back and tell me why you need spot zoning.
(CA – 2)

In general, the draft comprehensive zoning by-law, perceived by many as the document that could have the potential to support the implementation of intensification projects in target locations, failed to upzone sites appropriately. As such, zoning amendments or variances would still be required to implement what many developers argue are the policies in the Official Plan. This process can often be lengthy and costly for controversial projects, a fact that can dissuade developers from pursuing intensification projects. While the draft comprehensive zoning by-law process may have not been the appropriate forum for granting substantial upzoning across the city, the new by-law does little improve regulatory conditions.

Table 5.8 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of the Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law to effectively support residential intensification.

Table 5.8: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of the Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	2	0	0	4
Development Industry	0	0	7	1
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	0	1	2	0
Surrounding Municipalities	0	0	0	3
Community Association Representatives	0	1	0	1
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	0	0	0	1
Total Responses	**2**	**2**	**9**	**10**

5.4 Financial Incentives and Disincentives

The literature review demonstrated that Financial Incentive and Disincentive programs can be used to encourage development in target areas and discourage it where urban development is undesirable. Ottawa has implemented a number of programs that use financial incentives and disincentives to influence the location of new growth.

5.4.1 Development Charges

The City of Ottawa collects development charges for the purpose paying for the capital costs of new development. Recognizing that the cost of accommodating new growth is higher in newly developing communities and less in the built-up area because of the presence of existing services, the City has established three development charge areas: Inside the Greenbelt, Outside the Greenbelt, and Rural Areas. Fees are the lowest for the rural area and highest for the suburban centres.

In addition, residential development can be exempt from development charges in some cases to recognise the fact that the replacement of an existing use does not necessarily require investment in new infrastructure. The City also recognizes that the waiving of fees encourages residential development in targeted areas by reducing some of the financial risks for developers. Exemptions or reductions apply to: conversions; contaminated lands; non-profit housing; any development in a development charge fee zone in the core area; and within 500 metres of a light rail or transitway station. Spatially defined development charge areas and exemption areas are illustrated in *Figure 5.5*.
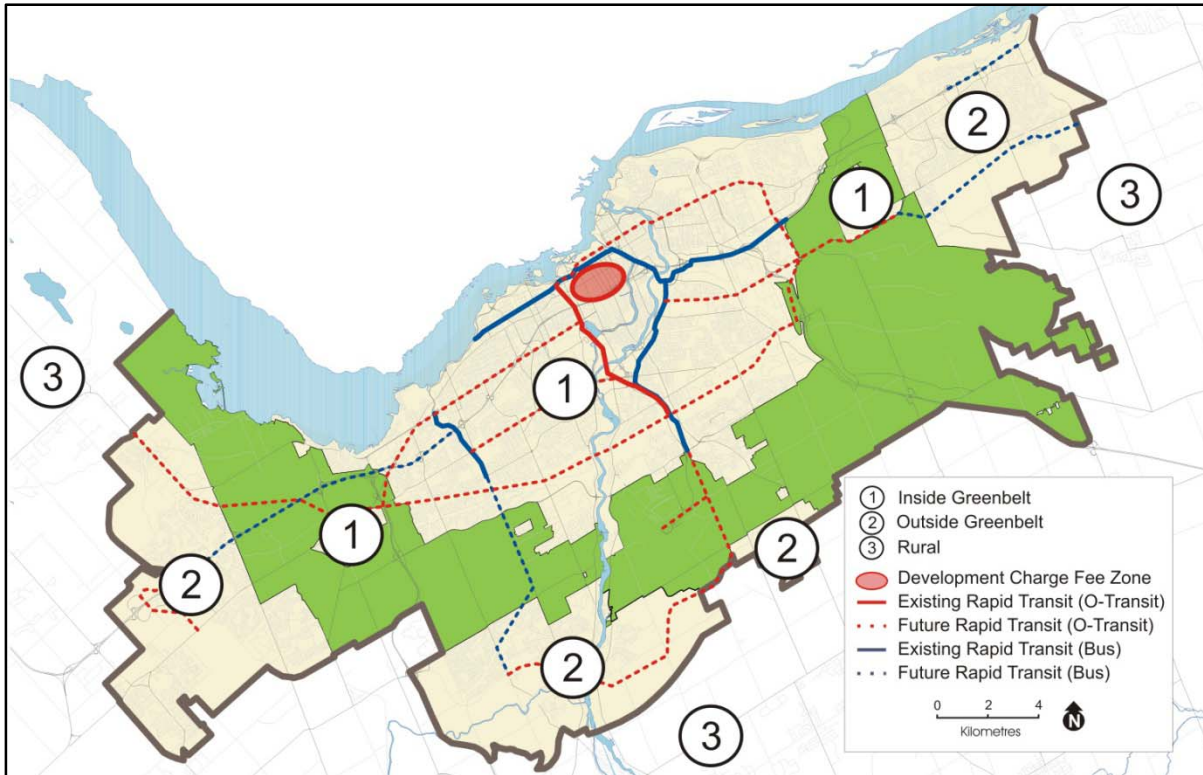
Figure 5.5: Development Charge Areas and Spatially Defined Exemption Areas

Most of the key informants agreed that reducing or waiving development charges was an effective method of encouraging development in some areas and discouraging it in others. They complained, however, that the City of Ottawa's current Development Charge system did not go far enough in reducing fees in target areas.

In my opinion, it doesn't go as far as it should have or could have. It is a very watered down version of what it should have been or could have been. In my opinion, there should be a separate DC for the inner area because that is virtually where all of the condo activity and intensification activity is occurring. (CO – 2)

Respondents suggested the City's development charges should be strengthened not only for monetary reasons but also for symbolic ones. For one developer, the waiving of fees in the core's development charge free zone reflected a positive attitude by politicians at the time about redevelopment, giving developers more confidence in proposing higher density development.

A former mayor came up with the idea that to stimulate development in Centretown there would be no development charges. She lured me right into development aggressively. It was the attitude, it wasn't just the money. She was sending a message. (DI – 2)

Many respondents, however, doubted that the City could afford changing its development charge structure. Most believed the fees could never be waived in target areas because of the City's reliance on the revenue. The City collects approximately $60 million in development charges every year, however, even this, according to staff, is not sufficient to cover the full cost of growth (City of Ottawa, 2002b).

If you are trying to encourage condo development in the suburbs, the only way you can do that is by reducing the development fees, and I don't believe that is going to happen because it was kind of a stretch for them to do it in the downtown … I believe economic incentives are the most important. (DI – 4)

I think it would help but the City can't afford anything. My sense is that the City is becoming more and more reliant on development charges to pay for City services. (DI – 9)

In general, planners and developers alike thought that the Development Charge by-law could be strengthened to achieve the City's intensification objectives. While they appreciated the waiving of fees in the downtown and a few other locations, most respondents did not think the current development charge by-law went far enough and there was little optimism that it would change due to the City's reliance on that revenue generator.

Table 5.9 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of current Development Charges structure to effectively support residential intensification.

Table 5.9: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of Current Development Charges Structure in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	1	0	1	4
Development Industry	0	0	5	3
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	0	0	1	2
Surrounding Municipalities	0	0	0	3
Community Association Representatives	0	0	0	2
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	0	0	0	1
Total Responses	**1**	**0**	**7**	**15**

5.4.2 Brownfields Redevelopment Strategy and Community Improvement Plan

In 2005 City of Ottawa began a Brownfields Redevelopment Strategy for the purpose of developing a coordinated approach to identifying, cleaning up, and redeveloping brownfield sites in the municipality (City of Ottawa, 2006d). This process recognized that redeveloping brownfields creates a cleaner, healthier city; revitalizes communities; and provides an opportunity to limit greenfield consumption by accommodating new growth within the existing built-up area. The result was the adoption of a Community Improvement Plan that provides a framework containing financial incentive programs and a municipal leadership strategy for promoting the redevelopment of brownfields. Five financial incentive programs identified in the CIP are Financial Feasibility Study Grant Program; Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program; Property Tax Assistance Program; Rehabilitation Grant Program; and, Building Fee Grant Program. Together, these financial programs help to alleviate some of the risks associated with brownfield redevelopment thereby encouraging the development industry to carryout intensification projects.

In general, there was a very positive response about the initiative from most respondents. Development industry respondents shared stories about the challenges of building on brownfields, most of which highlighted the risks associated with the inability to know the extent of contamination until work beings. Most were content with Ottawa's Brownfields Strategy process and appreciated the competency of the city staff members who oversaw the development of the strategy.

I think it is a wonderful initiative and an important one because the infill sites we deal with, most of them have an issue. Gas stations are the most obvious ones but you take a building down and you have asbestos. It is an issue on most infill sites so we drill and test our brains out because we are concerned about what lurks under the surface. Those sites would lie dormant. So I think what they are doing is a great idea. (DI – 2)

We support the policy. We were very impressed with the policy. We think the City has been very proactive. (DI – 7)

I actually wrote, I think, the only congratulatory letter ever written to a city official on brownfields. I think the guy that worked on it did a great job. Not only was the city out of the gate faster than other cities in Ontario but he worked very closely with the province to come up with incentives, both provincial and municipal, and consulted with industry. We were pretty impressed with it. (DI – 8)

Respondents not only acknowledged the importance of the monetary incentives introduced under the program, but thought that the brownfields strategy represented a change in the attitude of the City.

It is more than just incentives … It is a City-wide policy document that says that the city is encouraging development, the City is going to provide incentives, and the City is showing that it is making brownfield development easier. This is a wonderful document because it provides not only incentives but it is also an education document. It is saying that brownfield redevelopment is good. (CO – 3)

While there was no dispute that the incentive program is helpful in supporting intensification, there was some question about whether or not it was necessary given that a development project will only be successful if there is a market for the product. A couple of respondents suggested that if the market is there, then perhaps incentives are not required.

There are examples in Ottawa and other cities where there were no incentives but brownfields were still built on because the market was there. There are other examples where the government provides huge amount of incentives in order for development to happen. I don't know which is more important, the market or the government incentives. (CO – 3)

In general, there was little disagreement about the fact that Ottawa's new Brownfields Strategy was an excellent step in the right direction in terms of financial and symbolic support for higher density projects. Most respondents appreciated the efforts of the City and thought that it had significant potential for alleviating some of the financial risks borne by brownfield developers.

Table 5.10 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of the Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy to effectively support residential intensification.

Table 5.10: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of the Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	1	2	0	3
Development Industry	3	0	0	5
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	1	1	0	1
Surrounding Municipalities	0	0	0	3
Community Association Representatives	2	0	0	0
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	0	0	0	1
Total Responses	**7**	**3**	**0**	**13**

5.4.3 Draft Density Incentive Guidelines

As discussed in the literature review, Section 37 of the Provincial Planning Act allows municipalities to enter into an agreement with developers to share the increased value that may result from increased density or height of a development project. Funds generated through Section 37 agreements may be used to support initiatives above and beyond development charges and other items agreed to through the development approvals process such as affordable housing, additional parkland, and other provisions listed in the Official Plan extract above.

City of Ottawa Planning and Development staff recognized that developers were requesting that details concerning density incentive agreements be included in the Official Plan. The

City also acknowledged their lack of experience in using Section 37 of the Planning Act. In June 2004, City Council directed staff to establish a framework for the application of Section 37. The intention of the process was to establish a set of guidelines to assist in the implementation of density incentives.

A limited number of stakeholders participated in a process to generate a preliminary set of guidelines to assist in further discussions. The draft guidelines were approved in principle by Ottawa's Planning and Environment Committee in September 2005 and refined in April 2006. The main points were:

- Incentives will be focused on areas targeted for intensification;
- The application of Section 37 will be directed to projects of a significant size, i.e. over 25,000 sq.ft. or 25 residential units and where the proposed density will exceed 20% of the project's gross floor area or five residential units;
- Incentives must be negotiated if the proposed building height exceeds 25% of the maximum allowable for developments whose overall project size exceeds 25,000 sq.ft.;
- The proposed development must represent good planning; and,
- The rate of exchange of benefits for increased density and height shall be 50% of the net increase in land value resulting from the density increase, with some exceptions. The increased value of the land and the value of the benefit to be provided will be determined by a real estate appraiser listed through Real Estate Services.

Source: City of Ottawa, 2006e

The approved draft guidelines acted as a basis for further discussions with a broader number of stakeholders, including the development industry. The response to the draft guidelines, however, was so controversial that the City of Ottawa decided in early 2006 to put the initiative on hold. City planning staff recommended that Council defer the implementation of the guidelines until the new comprehensive zoning by-law was enacted. This by-law can not be expected to come to Council again until 2008, after the draft zoning by-law has been approved.

Responses from key informants demonstrated how controversial this topic was in Ottawa. The basic argument against density bonusing was that the approved height and density of a project should be based exclusively on its planning merits. If the height and density proposed is compatible with the surrounding area, if it can be integrated into the neighbourhood, and if it represents good planning, then it should not be subject to bonusing requirements.

I am not keen on it because I think you should get the density pushed because it is appropriate. It is either appropriate or not appropriate. Period. (DI – 2)

I don't believe in density bonusing … What I read into it is, if you want to come in and rezone in a neighbourhood to a higher level, the city would basically extort money out of the developer. Basically, the city would give you approval if you gave a cash donation, or some other contribution, based on the approved appraised value of the property. Zoning should stand on its own merit. Is it legitimate? Does it comply with what the neighbourhood already is? Can it be integrated into the neighbourhood? (DI – 7)

We don't want to see density bonusing at all. A project either stands on its own merits or it doesn't. (DI – 8)

Similarly, respondents argued that there is the potential that height and density bonusing could be demanded by the City on sites where legacy zoning does not reflect the policies in the current Official Plan.

In the broadest sense I support it. The difficulty is that it may be used by the City as a negotiating tool where it shouldn't be used. You shouldn't be forced into a situation where you are negotiating a density bonus on a site simply because the site's current zoning doesn't respect current Official Plan policy. It is not what the zoning provisions should be dealing with … If all you are doing is changing zoning to respect current policy, you shouldn't be subject to that kind of cost, or dare I say blackmail, on the application. (P – 2)

There is this grey area where it isn't known if any zoning application means that you are bonusing if you are upzoning in any way. How do we determine what is legitimate and appropriate zoning in the first place? Without the zoning by-law being designed to comply with the existing Official Plan, there is no way to properly assess what bonusing is on any individual site. (DI – 7)

Another major argument against bonusing was that it compromised the intent of the zoning by-law in an effort to achieve the City's affordable housing goals, an objective that some thought was beyond the development industry's responsibility.

I am against that. I think that it is so socialistic. It just real makes me puke. It is like, "oh, the common good". I think what people should do is good planning. Don't try and bribe me and tell me to put a shrub in and then give me a little height. The City wants me to do something for the poor guy. Well, the poor guy that walks by my place is going to get enjoyment. We just try to create things that are liveable. I don't think I should be penalized for creating good space. I think this bonusing idea is kind of goofy. (DI – 1)

This notion that we are going to pay for affordable housing? Well, we are against that right off the bat. Councillors are saying that new home buyers should be paying for affordable housing and I don't agree with that. Why should that responsibility be loaded on to the shoulders of such a small minority in society? We think affordable housing should come from the city or the province. Grocery stores don't give a 40% discount to people who make less than $40,000 a year. Car dealers don't give away cars. Why should new home buyers be paying more for the same house? It is such a socialist country. (DI – 8)

In response to the complaints regarding the guidelines, the City argued that it is their responsibility to think of the larger community.

They (developers) are thinking purely bottom line and we have to think bigger picture than that. As much as they are not happy about how we are directing development, we are doing it for a very specific reason. (CO – 6)

In general, there was a total lack of support for the initiative that was expected to secure public amenities for the City. Almost all respondents resented the idea, as they felt that height and density should be granted on a project's planning merits, not on the public uses that can be provided by a developer.

Table 5.11 provides a summary of responses by individual of each key informant group concerning the ability of the Draft Density Incentive Guidelines to effectively support residential intensification.

Table 5.11: Summary of Responses Regarding the Effectiveness of Draft Development Incentive Guidelines in Supporting Residential Intensification

	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	Not Addressed
City of Ottawa Planning Staff	1	0	1	4
Development Industry	0	2	4	2
Real Estate and Private Planning Consultants	0	2	0	1
Surrounding Municipalities	0	0	0	3
Community Association Representatives	0	0	0	2
National Capital Commission Planning Staff	0	0	0	1
Total Responses	**1**	**4**	**5**	**13**

5.5 Barriers to Intensification

Key informants provided their opinions about each of the City of Ottawa's policies and programs intended to encourage a compact urban form. During these discussions, many respondents spoke generally about what they perceived to be barriers to intensification that transcended individual initiatives. This section summarizes several of the themes that emerged during the discussions.

5.5.1 Community and Political Resistance

Despite the fact that weaknesses were identified in Ottawa's intensification policies and programs, most respondents were complimentary of the City's attempts to control sprawling development and encourage a more compact urban form. No one disagreed with the merits of the policies or programs intended to implement the City's vision for compact development. What they did argue, however, was that city-wide policies were not strong enough to support residential intensification projects at a site level because they did not adequately respond to the most significant inhibitors to intensification: community and political resistance.

It is very easy to accept motherhood. It isn't until people see it in the zoning by-law that they realize what we meant. That is always the problem when you are doing an implementation exercise. It is the first time when people clue in about what the implications of the policy are because the policies are very broad and generic in the way they are explained. (CO – 6)

There is, generally speaking, a total lack of buy-in from the Councillors. They all like to talk Smart Growth, they all like to talk vision and 20/20, and they all like to talk about how they are taking into account existing infrastructure and they think it is all wonderful and everything. And as soon as it shows up in their ward it is all gone. (DI – 5)

Complaints about a conservative populous resistant to change and weak politicians who failed to uphold city-wide intensification policies were discussed hand-in-hand. Developers and planners alike provided numerous examples of projects that failed to gain approval or were approved with reduced densities after substantial public pressure. Respondents suggested that while the public supported intensification efforts in theory, it was their concern about neighbourhood change that caused them to fight infill or redevelopment projects proposed near their homes. This opposition led to time delays and cost overruns.

The public will support intensification as a value. When the Official Plan was passed everyone thought the policies were great and we were going to have this wonderful city. It is when you get into their neighbourhoods that it is a problem. The public will be very, very clear that they expected it to be somewhere else. (DI – 7)

Many respondents linked neighbourhood resistance to political opposition. Some suggested that too often politicians cave to community pressure in an effort to retain their popularity and win another term on Council. They claimed that the "career politicians" that have emerged in Ottawa over the last couple of decades have eroded the quality of planning decisions. These politicians are accused of making decisions based on re-election strategies rather than upholding planning policies for the betterment of the city.

Politics is no longer a part-time job, it is a career, and that is the difference. "I've got to keep making people happy if I want to be employed and I may want to move up to the next level of government." There are some Councillors that still have very strong ideas but there are many of them who go with the flow and I think that is a frustration for the developers. And it is frustrating for the planners too because we'll quite often recommend approval of these things and they'll get turned down because politically it is suicide to approve them. (CO – 3)

Since amalgamation, it is impossible for a Councillor to do the job part-time. It is too much work, too many issues, and too much involvement. Offhand, I don't know of

any Councillor who has another job. So, they are making decisions to support their livelihood as oppose to doing the best thing for the City. And that is one reason why they are so responsive and reactive to community association input. They don't want to lose their livelihood. (DI – 7)

There are some, the best of the lot I think, who are very good at engaging their constituents, which by the way I am in favour of ... There are some politicians who really do hold up the policies, the umbrella, that has been placed over the whole city, but many will just twist and bend them to suit the needs of the neighbourhoods at times. (DI – 2)

The quality of the municipal politician has declined so dramatically over the last 40 years. Forty years ago, people on Council, generally speaking, were people who had already succeeded in life and really wanted to give something back to a system that supported them and allowed them to succeed. So they let the administration do the work. They knew they were decision makers and they weren't tinkerers or interferers. They had a very different perspective on the decision making process. The quality of decisions was much higher. You have politicians who couldn't get a real job if their life depended on it. They have to get re-elected or they'd be out on the street. So they will do anything to get re-elected. So you end up with a very low quality of Councillor. The whole citizen participation now is a real mess because all that has done is created a situation that has put even more pressure on Councillors. It makes Councillors much more vulnerable to attack and they can no longer remain objective. They can't make decisions on principle; they have to make it on survival. (DI – 8)

Some suggested that community and political resistance slowed the development applications process so much that it was prohibitive for some developers to carry out higher density projects in existing built-up areas.

I have heard about projects being abandoned, in particular small infill projects being abandoned, because of the political challenges and the amount of time it will take a developer to get through those, including going to the OMB. I live downtown and there have been projects abandoned in my neighbourhood, good projects, because they don't want to go through all that. (DI – 7)

Development industry respondents were clear to point out that a lot of their frustrations about intensification approvals were not geared to City planning staff, but to the decision makers. Some provided examples of projects in which staff wrote favourable reports in support of

development applications but they were later rejected by Council. In general, the respondents were appreciative of staff's efforts but criticized their bosses.

Planners recommend, they don't make decisions. Even if you are the top planner at the City, you are writing a report that you put before Council or Committee who then decides whether or not they will endorse your report. (DI – 6)

Planners get beat up by Councillors all the time on zoning issues. (DI – 3)

You'll get the Councillors telling the planning guys that they are in the pocket of the developers. I don't know how the staff actually stays. I would find it demoralizing. Imagine if you had a job and your boss didn't stand up for you. Well, the mayor isn't standing up for his staff. And subjecting staff to comments that are almost liable?! Well, do they (politicians) have planning degrees? They don't! Why don't they listen to the guys that do. (DI – 1)

It should also be noted that while some respondents were frustrated with public opposition, they did appreciate knowledgeable, well-informed community members. Many noted that they saw the benefit of engaging the public early in the planning process, especially on what they perceived to be controversial applications.

Having an informed public is good. Statistically speaking, we have the highest educated and most well off family households anywhere in Canada. Most neighbourhoods have very articulate spokespersons so they can come forward with an opinion and good information to counteract the developers. But it is also a very conservative city. Historically it has been a very sleepy, federal bureaucracy place. They'd never really like change, or need change. Their properties increased in value 2% to 3% or sometimes 5%. Everyone had a good salary. It was always very family-oriented. So there was never really any reason to accept big city things. It is changing and I think it will continue to change. (OC – 2)

Staff usually makes contact with the community association. If it is a high profile application, we'll often make appearances at community association meetings, and with some files even more than once, to try and keep those channels of communication open. It is more than just a courtesy call on the larger projects. Some community associations are so strong that you dare not talk to them. The Federation of Community Associations and neighbourhood associations should be part of this process, especially when we are talking about intensification. (P – 2)

Intensification requires community trust that you have thought about the issues that bother them – traffic implications, whether or not there is enough space in the playground or the community centres to deal with increased growth. They don't always get a good sense that there is. With all of the budget cutbacks over the last number of years they don't get a good sense that the City can come up with providing the services they said they would do should this development happen ... Building a City and working together very much depends on if you say you are going to do something, you do it. (CO – 1)

Similarly, some respondents, while criticizing the efforts of some Councillors, recognized the realities of their situations and acknowledged the personal challenges they are faced with when having to make controversial decisions.

Councillors are just residents of the community that have been elected to council so they reflect the attitudes of the people that elect them. Their opinions, because they are the decision makers, carry more weight than the people that elected them but they are still based on the same value set. (CO – 1)

I think because Councillors represent and live in a particular ward, they can't help but be influenced by a strong interest group, particularly before an election. (DI – 3)

Clearly, NIMBY opposition and political resistance go hand-in-hand in acting as a significant barrier to intensification efforts, particularly in older, well-established neighbourhoods. The issue is complicated by emotional ties to a community and the fear of change.

5.5.2 Regulatory Challenges

City planning staff did not remain unscathed throughout the interviews. Both development industry and city planning staff respondents acknowledged that there are divisions within and between city departments when it comes to approving intensification projects. The greatest conflicts arise between policy planners, who plan at the city-wide level, and development approvals planners, who are responsible for implementing projects at the site level. The latter are concerned with the integration of intensification projects into existing neighbourhoods and infrastructure and look to codes and standards to base their approval decisions.

The difficulty that we see is that Planning and Growth Management staff support our applications. But there is a whole war going on between Planning and Growth Management, which has some engineers in approvals, and Transportation and Public Works, which have different engineers. The difference between the two is that the Growth Management engineers review the engineering drawings and approve them, while in Transportation and Public Works, they approve the drawings from the point of view that the City is going to take ownership of them in a couple of years. They want to see how it integrates into the existing system. Well, the problem is that in infill situations the existing system is often very poor ... So there is this on-going battle in City Hall that Growth Management and Planning supports intensification, but how it knits into infrastructure and infrastructure management is always an issue. (DI – 5)

There is a lot of pressure on staff to recommend things a certain way. In fact, there are often splits within staff. I've totally disagreed with some stuff done by policy and especially disagreed with some stuff approvals has done. You get a lot of sleazy deals that are made with pressure from the mayor's office. But it is like that in any administration. (CO – 2)

Other respondents also complained that the planning process in Ottawa is too cumbersome and bureaucratic. There was an expectation from those in the development industry that the amalgamation in 2000 would make the planning process faster and easier. Six years later, applicants complain of even lengthier approval timelines.

When amalgamation was announced I had this huge sense of optimism. We could take the models that worked and implement them everywhere. Unfortunately, what happened is they took the worst practices! The consensus was, don't do anything the way the old City of Ottawa did it. Unfortunately, they only took Ottawa's. So everything really slowed down. Having said that, the City is doing a very good job of trying to find out why it slowed down and are trying to fix it. (DI – 7)

Amalgamation isn't working. It has totally screwed things up. They are still using that as the excuse as to why everything is such as mess down there – permitting, planning, you name it. The planning department is a mess, and they admit it, and it needs to be reorganized to suit amalgamation but they haven't gotten around to it. (DI – 8)

Our guys are telling us it takes 2 to 3 times longer to get approvals than pre-amalgamation for both infill or greenfield development. (P – 3)

The approvals process is no faster since amalgamation. The City tends to say it is a staffing problem but no one from the development industry thinks it is. It is a process problem and there are two aspects to it: one is that there is a process that is very formalized that they are stuck with and don't seem to be flexible on and there is the difficulty in getting administration to make decisions to keep a project moving. (P – 2)

City planning staff acknowledged the frustration expressed by applicants but defended their process, indicating that it took a long time to develop appropriate planning policies and processes for the new City. Now that the first Official Plan has been fully approved and the draft comprehensive by-law is out for comment, they are optimistic about the future.

Amalgamation presents an opportunity for change, but comes with a lot of baggage. Unfortunately, we had so many Official Plans and Zoning By-laws that they actually competed with one another. It was difficult to know which one was working and which the best was because we always had to patch things together. Having one Official Plan that we can use as a springboard for others is a big step. (CO – 1)

Certainly the regulatory process in Ottawa's planning department has to improve to advance intensification projects in a timely manner. Divisions between staff only slow projects and weaken the creditability of the city's attempts to encourage a more compact urban form.

5.5.3 Influence of the Market

Market demand is a vital component for building much encouraged high-density residential units in existing urban areas, as it is the local market itself that is the main driver of intensification. Infill and redevelopment processes occur on land that has been skipped over, is underused or not currently used at its best or highest potential, or has been abandoned. It may be that sites have been avoided because of locational characteristics or because of complications on the property, such as soil contamination from a previous occupant. Even with strong market demand and political will, repopulating older neighbourhoods is typically a slow process. Similarly, intensification of the existing urban area is difficult to achieve when viable economic land uses and the fabric of stable neighbourhoods are altered by new development.

Most respondents recognized the role market demand plays in the implementation of residential intensification projects. They acknowledged that while policies and programs can be used to facilitate the development process, they cannot in themselves force higher density projects to be built. Instead, the development industry has to see an interest in the product before they begin the long and expensive process of designing, marketing, and building such a project.

You can't force developers to build something they can't sell and you can't force them to build something they can't make a profit on. They aren't going to build something just for the hell of it. Or you are going to end up with some God awful building because you have taken away the opportunity for the developer and the architect to create something innovative. You are forcing them to compromise. (P – 2)

At the end of the day, a developer won't be building something unless they can market it. This is their livelihood. If the demand is for a 50 wide, 100 foot deep urban lot with a single detached dwelling on it, then the policies can say all they want about townhouse development or highrises. But developers crunch numbers and they prepare proformas and they know what the market is demanding far better than any municipality. I am a planner so I know why we are trying for higher densities but there has to be a better understanding of the implications for the developers and just needing more communication. (SM – 2)

Apparent through the interviews was a general understanding that the intensification of the built-up areas happen through an organic process, not a prescriptive one. An older neighbourhood may become popular because of a unique characteristic, such as its location on a transit line or a clustering of retailers. Once a critical mass of new residents begin reinvesting in the neighbourhood, more people are attracted to it, improvements are made by both the private and public sectors, including infrastructure improvements and transit services, and the area becomes more popular for higher density development.

For example, Ottawa's Westborough Village has experienced this transition over the past decade and is now witnessing significant pressure for higher density infill and redevelopment projects. As such, it is currently part of the Richmond Street Community Design Plan process. The location of the Westborough neighbourhood is shown in *Figure 5.6* and photos of the community are shown in *Figure 5.7*.

Figure 5.6: Location of Westborough Village in the City of Ottawa

Figure 5.7: Images of Westborough Village

Many respondents used the Westborough Village experience as evidence to prove that intensification of the built-up area is more of an organic process than a regulated one.

> *A trend that you see in terms of intensification in Ottawa is the gentrification of older neighbourhoods with new retail and then residential. Westborough is a good example where it is an older neighbourhood but, through renewal, it is getting hipper. (P – 1)*

Over time, the area became more attractive and there is now more investment in it. People buy in the area, they start to renovate homes, they start to raise families, the school population increases … (DI – 5)

Policies aren't making it any easier to intensify. If you read the OP, mainstreets are expected to look like Bank Street in the Glebe and Richmond Street in Westborough. Westborough evolved naturally and became a very popular and trendy area naturally. Young families wanted to live there, more than downtown it seemed. Good schools, they can walk to the stores, there is a whole bunch of boutiquey-type shops. Everyone likes to shop there and they like to visit. That popularity and attraction is what caused the strong market out there. You can't replicate the market, especially in suburban areas where they don't have that historical foundation. (DI – 7)

The recognition that residential intensification occurs naturally by responding to market demands of the day may lie in conflict with City of Ottawa policies and programs that locate intensification potential to target areas. While established Mainstreets and transit stations are appropriate places to encourage higher densities, the general urban area holds significant potential as well. CDPs in neighbourhoods in transition could help the process, so long as it is prepared well in advance of the demand. The challenge is that there is often little indication of where the next popular spot will be.

There are some people who are into neighbourhoods before others. Generally people with an artistic background tend to be leaders. Other people are just logical in their thinking and have figured out where it is happening. (DI – 2)

Most respondents agreed that the market dictates where growth will locate and in what form it will develop regardless of what zoning and Official Policies state. For this reason, policies should be rigid enough to encourage particular forms of development, but flexible enough to respond to market demand.

5.6 Opportunities for Improvement

While the City of Ottawa's residential intensification policies and programs were criticized to varying degrees by key informants, no respondent was completely critical of Ottawa's objective for a more compact urban form or the approaches for achieving it. Instead, responses were tough but fair and lengthy discussions demonstrated the complexity of the

planning process and the varied challenges to intensification at the site level. Some respondents suggested ways in which the current growth management strategy could be improved to better support intensification objectives.

5.6.1 Use Education and Demonstration Projects

Recognizing the challenges to intensification posed by community and political resistance, some respondents suggested that education programs geared to the public and Council could reduce their protectionist fears. Many suggested using some of Ottawa's successful intensification projects to demonstrate the community benefits of residential intensification.

The solution is the education of the community associations and the Councillors about what they have to learn to live with if we are going to achieve these goals. Quite frankly, I think staff have tried to do this with Council and following this election, I trust they will try again. But that is really the key. (P – 2)

As a whole, we still have work to do with Council. The best education is to have the projects that have been built be there for a year or so, take them back and show them that, "yes, there was a big fight about this, but, Mr. Ward Councillor, have you heard any complaints about this property since it has been built?" You really need those projects in place to go that next step. (CO – 1)

Demonstration projects really fell by the wayside in the late 80s. CMHC were really well known for their demonstration projects, but then they became politically unacceptable. Some elements of the private sector objected to the fact that the public sector was actually building projects so they fell out of favour, which is too bad. I think CMHC did a lot of really nice demonstration projects. I think they were just leading the pack that allowed other municipalities to do them as well, albeit at a smaller scale. It is only through demonstration projects, I feel, that we can clearly illustrate benefits. (DI – 8)

We've had a number of seminars where we have invited people to discuss and we usually have everyone leaving with the same opinion that they came in with, and that is the unfortunate thing. They will arrive at this session with their own agenda to protect it, not really to listen to what people are saying but to draw the line. That is a mindset and it is something that is going to have to change over time. We have made some progress but people don't like change. People see intensification as a devaluation of their neighbourhood. They are concerned about traffic, about income,

about the whole neighbourhood going down. That is the constant battle we are dealing with; people are really hesitant to make change because they are afraid of the implications. We have to really demonstrate to them that the change is good before they can accept it. The only way you can do that is by doing projects and demonstrating to them that it worked. That is the advantage of these test projects and watching them for 5 years to see how they are affecting the neighbourhood. (CO – 6)

Other respondents, however, disagreed with education and demonstration projects' abilities to achieve higher densities through community understanding and buy-in, arguing that planning is a complicated process and the public is not interested in learning the city-wide benefits of such an initiative.

Demonstration projects don't help. They don't want change, they don't want different people in their neighbourhoods. It is very prejudicial. (DI – 7)

I don't think residents or politicians can get the point of intensification. I think the whole thing is too complicated to convey to residents in a concise, compact, understandable manner. It is only after extended exposure to these issues that you can begin to understand it. I don't know how you could ever educate residents on the details of it. And most of them aren't interested anyway. 99% of them just want to go about their lives and hope that there is someone responsible down at City Hall spending their tax dollars and making the right decisions. (DI – 8)

Despite what the nay-sayers say about increased education and demonstration projects, there was a general feeling amongst respondents that these efforts would go a long way in influencing decision makers' understanding of the benefits of intensification.

5.6.2 Establish Definitions

To improve the regulatory process in Ottawa, some respondents suggested establishing some clearer definitions for terms that are used rather loosely throughout planning policy documents. Several respondents suggested that the City should establish a clearer definition for "intensification". They claim that the term currently represents many different project types to different people and is not defined clearly by height, density, or proportional measurements.

For example, as quoted at the end of *Section 4.4.3 Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law* of this thesis, community association respondents were of the opinion that a new four-storey building on a Mainstreet, which is permitted in the zoning by-law, on a lot that had previously accommodated a one-storey building was a form of intensification. It was their opinion that the development industry assumed intensification was anything greater than existing zoning. The development industry argued that what community associations were proposing as intensification was not economically feasible to build.

The City must define what intensification is because four- and five-storey buildings are very difficult to build. At that height, you are on the edge of building using a wood frame. You can't put in elevators because it is too expensive and nobody would walk up the stairs. So, you either build a three-storey building or an eight-storey building. So you either build with a wood frame and don't worry about elevators or you build with concrete. When people say they want a cute little four storey building, you can't do it. It isn't that we don't want to, it just isn't economical. Whether an elevator is going up 5 floors or 12, it will cost half a million dollars. (DI – 8)

This difference in opinion demonstrates that the City needs to do more to describe what intensification is, how it can be achieved, and how it can be integrated into the existing built environment.

I think as an industry and as a City, we have to do a better job of explaining what is meant by intensification and what its parameters are and what its guidelines are ... I think the City, especially in the inner city areas, has to establish better what its principles are, what its priorities are, what its vision is in terms of the integration of an infill project. And it has to do it quicker. (DI – 5)

City planning staff responded to these suggestions by referring to their recently published document *Understanding Residential Density* (City of Ottawa, 2005c), which demonstrates, using examples from Ottawa, the different forms higher density development can take in different neighbourhoods.

Figure 5.8: Images from Understanding Residential Density

> *We've recently released a very good publication on what density is and it uses examples of existing projects all over the City and compares the density of projects, illustrating that a fairly dense looking project could be less dense than surrounding housing that is on the street. It does some good work and we need to get more out in the community and use those things. Good looking projects that have been built by local developers are sometimes referred to. (CO – 1)*

Respondents also suggested that it would be useful for the City to define what they considered to be a "successful" amount of intensification. Similarly, respondents considered how success could be measured over time.

> *On any parcel of land, all different elements come together to determine if it is going to be a success. The City may say a policy has been a success but the policy is only a success because the other land uses are there to support it. I don't know how they measure success in terms of intensification. People may argue that intensification may cause more problems, like higher crime or more congestion. (SM – 3)*

> *I don't think there were a lot of tangible targets in the visioning or OP for us to evaluate our progress to. How do you measure success? Increase by 5 to 10% the number of people living in apartments or do we compare ourselves to other municipalities. (P – 1)*

> *My major issue is, what is the measure for intensification? What should we be measuring? Number of people per hectare – okay, net or gross? What time of day are they talking about? Is it the number of households per hectare? And if there is a deficiency in a particular neighbourhood, how do we figure out to fix it. What is the intensification trend in the city? More or less now that in the past? Is a percentage appropriate? How much of our city is dedicated to streets and parking? How many people can walk less than ten minutes to get a tea bag? (CA – 1)*

Certainly, there would be a great advantage for the City to establish definitions for planning terms so that all stakeholders had a clear understanding of the issues being discussed. Such definitions would also make it possible to develop appropriate measures in which to determine success.

5.6.3 Stronger Political Leadership

What many respondents claimed is one of the biggest problems in Ottawa's attempts to intensify is a lack of leadership, the lack of someone who will uphold city-wide intensification objectives without the fear of opposition from the public and politicians. Recognizing the weaknesses of the political system, some respondents reflected on the days when urban planners were solely responsible for making planning decisions and were less influenced by community opposition or political pressures. This sentiment was echoed by those who thought Councillors are too involved in the planning process.

> *It should go back to 20 years ago when planners were planners and Councillors worried if your garbage got picked up and the snow got removed. They are not planners. (DI – 8)*

> *The problem with some Councillors is that they are micro managers. (DI – 2)*

Most respondents were in agreement that leadership needed to come from the mayor and other political leaders. The way they saw it, it was Council that adopted the motherhood intensification policies and *they* should be required to implement them.

> *From the development industry's perspective, any business needs some certainty so they can plan, organize, and get things done. From that stand-point, it would be nice if someone could be a leader and decide whatever they wanted. Once the private sector understands what the rules are, then the private sector will adjust. Either they'll leave town if it is that bad, or they'll figure out how to make it work. And if they figure out how to make it work, the worst thing they want is a surprise. (DI – 3)*

> *A lot of people today are just ducking their responsibilities. No one wants to make a decision because then they'll be accountable and no one wants to be accountable anymore and I think that comes from the leadership. So if you have got weak leadership where no one wants to be accountable then everyone just follows suit and*

you don't get anywhere. I think the mayor could have a much better influence. (DI – 1)

The City government has to take the lead. Rather than passing an OP policy and waiting for applications to come in, they have to change the rules and create an environment in which they can implement that policy. (DI – 7)

It has got to be the political world because they set the policy. They are advised, but they set the policy and the tone. When you know you've got the real support of the political world, then you've got the courage to take on things that are challenging because the process is a very complex approvals dance. (DI – 2)

We have to have ward Councillors that will stand up to their own constituents and say, "You may not like this idea but it is good design and good for the public at large so suck it up and get used to it because that is what we are going to have to do." That, or keep spreading. Everyone says that spreading is the wrong thing to do, but no one is stepping up to remove the pressure. (DI – 8)

Political leadership in planning is what Ottawa had in the years prior to regional and municipal planning bodies. Ottawa's early plans are still referred to today because of the bold visions they presented for encouraging and accommodating growth. It is clear that new leadership is required to direct future growth in the City.

5.7 Summary

As the findings demonstrate, community opposition to a development application can sway political leaders' opinions and delay, or even prevent, the approval of a residential intensification proposal. A collaborative approach to planning is, in theory, an approach that can be used to achieve stakeholder buy-in to achieve a common vision. While consensus may not often be achievable amongst a variety of stakeholders with competing agendas, agreement on common goals can help to advance the planning process. The findings of the research demonstrate that while the City of Ottawa has taken steps to include politicians, the development industry, and the public in both the 20-year visioning exercise and the creation of community plans, respondents expressed frustrations with the processes, stakeholders' varied level of involvement, and the City's response to their concerns. The real or perceived

inadequacies to the collaborative process have considerable impact on the City's relative ability to achieve a compact urban form.

Official Plan policies that address the rate, amount, type and location of growth and encourage residential intensification are intended to aid in the regulatory process. Ottawa has strengthened urban boundary policies, identified intensification target areas, and prepared a draft comprehensive zoning by-law all in an attempt to improve the regulatory environment to facilitate development at higher densities than previously experienced. The perception of respondents, however, is that these land use controls do not reflect market realities and are not strong enough to respond to community and political pressure against intensification projects. The result is higher land values, an increase in negative net-migration, and the proliferation of vacant or underutilized sites.

The land market is the most important factor in spatial development patterns. Financial incentives can be used to encourage development in targeted areas and fees can be imposed to discourage growth in others. Most of the respondents' agreed that financial incentives and disincentives were the most appropriate way in which to support intensification projects. Not only could they help cover the cost of more risky projects that take longer to complete, the fact that they exist provide developers with the confidence that the City would support intensification efforts. Some respondents' doubted, however, that the City had the financial capacity to support financial incentive and disincentive programs. It goes without saying that key informants from the development industry were consistent in their responses that the waiving of fees would encourage development and the implementation of levies would be opposed. This was evident in respondents' strong support for the City's Brownfield Strategy vs. the contentious Density Bonusing Guidelines.

Even with a broad, multi-layered approach to growth management, implementing intensification objectives at a site level is a challenge in the City of Ottawa. A complex of mix of policy, market, and community and political support is required to achieve higher densities in built-up areas. The City of Ottawa has implemented a collaborative approach to planning, land use controls, and financial incentive and disincentive programs to support

intensification efforts. Response to these initiatives, however, is mixed, and there is definitely

no consensus on success.

CHAPTER SIX: Discussion and Recommendations

6.1   Introduction

Chapter Five provides a discussion of the issues that are inhibiting compact development in the City of Ottawa. It examines how each of the growth management policies or programs responds to what both recent literature and key informants identified as the main inhibitors to intensification efforts. The Chapter also provides recommendations on how the City can strengthen the growth management strategy to address these issues. It should be noted that this Chapter deals exclusively with the City of Ottawa context and recommendations are not intended to be generalized to apply to the planning situation in other jurisdictions.

6.2   Effectiveness of Current Programs

The general approach the City of Ottawa has taken to accommodate growth reflects contemporary planning principals of Smart Growth – a relatively new generation of growth management that does not attempt to *control*, or *manage* development, but actually *promotes* growth (Danielsen et al., 1999). Recognizing the environmental, social, and economic costs of sprawling development, Smart Growth programs encourage growth to occur in a compact form. Compact residential land uses is particularly important for Smart Growth programs because housing comprises a major share of the built environment; residential uses influence the size and composition of a population; and, housing influences the locational decisions for other land uses (Danielsen et al., 1999; Tomalty, 1997).

Encouraging residential intensification has been accepted as policy in Ottawa at several levels and in different programs and strategies, but the implementation of intensification projects is not happening in a significant way, which, as recent development trends demonstrate, has implications for the City's growth objectives and goals for a compact urban form.

This thesis is concerned with identifying the weaknesses in the City of Ottawa's growth management strategy for the purpose of providing recommendations for improvements. This

section considers how each of the City's policies and programs respond to what recent literature and key informant interviews argue are the greatest barriers to intensification: Community and Political Resistance, Regulatory Challenges, and the Influence of Market Realities.

6.2.1 Response to Community and Political Resistance

Recent literature and key informant responses indicate that NIMBY opposition to intensification projects is one of the greatest barriers to achieving a more compact urban form. Community opposition typically stems from concerns over the potential decrease in property values; the impact of crowding on the transportation system, existing infrastructure, and community services; and, the perceived loss of community values (CMHC, 2004; Canadian Urban Institute, 1991; Paehlke, 1991). For this reason, the decision to support controversial intensification projects can have a political toll on political leaders. As evidence, many key informants felt that many Councillors in the City of Ottawa tended to make planning decisions based on election strategies rather than considering the betterment of the municipality.

Based on the literature review and key informant interviews, *Table 6.1* provides a basis on which to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the City of Ottawa's policies and programs' ability to respond to the issue of community and political resistance to intensification. *Table 6.2* provides a summary of how effectively the City of Ottawa's current growth management policies and programs are working based on the evaluation criteria.

***Table 6.1: Growth Management Policy and Program Evaluation Criteria –
Community and Political Resistance***

Collaborative Approach

Effective	• A timely process that includes a broad range of stakeholders, including planners, development industry, community members, political leaders, local businesses, and surrounding municipalities • Information is shared through two-way communication to provide for mutual learning • Stakeholders are the appropriate person, accountable for their decisions, act responsibly, and be accessible to those they represent
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Collaborative Approach but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Collaborative Approach

Land Use Controls

Effective	• Reduces regulatory challenges, typically through official plan policy or zoning, to facilitate intensification projects in target areas which could otherwise be stalled by community and political opposition • Target areas are defined spatially within the municipality so residents and politicians understand if and/or how they could be influenced by future development
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Land Use Control initiative but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Land Use Control initiative

Financial Incentives and Disincentives

Effective	• Financial incentives and disincentives are significant enough to achieve land use objectives • Growth-inducing incentives reduces financial risks for development industry, giving greater incentive to develop in existing built-up area and/or on sites that may have greater community or political opposition
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Financial Incentive /Disincentive program but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Financial Incentive/Disincentive program

Table 6.2: Ability of Programs to Respond to Community and Political Resistance

Policy or Program	Effectiveness	Discussion
Collaborative Approach		
Official Plan	Ineffective	• Community and political involvement in the preparation of municipal-wide vision but development industry and surrounding municipalities were left out of the process • There was an insufficient amount of time to respond to information coming from the municipality • Municipal-wide policies were not strong enough to respond to local constraints, as Councillors often failed to uphold the policies in their own wards and residents were resistant to change • No measurable intensification targets established
Community Design Plans	Effective	• Process appears to be successful in attracting key stakeholders by using a variety of formats to solicit input from the general public, developers, and politicians • There is an expectation these efforts will help thwart community and political resistance when development applications come forward in the future
Land Use Controls		
Urban Boundary Policy	Ineffective	• Municipal-wide policy that does not address neighbourhood or site specific concerns
Target Areas	Somewhat Effective	• Ottawa has established some targets areas for intensification • General policies, however, applied to entire land use designations are not strong enough to respond to community and political resistance at a site level
Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law	Ineffective	• No upzoning created to implement the policies of the Official Plan, therefore does little to address NIMBY opposition to higher density uses on a site
Financial Incentives and Disincentives		
Development Charges	Ineffective	• The spatially defined development charge areas and exemption areas not strong enough to encourage intensification in some areas and low-density development in others
Brownfields Redevelopment Strategy	Somewhat Effective	• Provides incentives for the clean up contaminated sites which could mean reinvestment in a community • There are still occasions, however, when neighbourhood would still oppose new development over a Brownfield site
Draft Density Bonusing Guidelines	Somewhat Effective	• Clearly identifies cases in which more public amenity space could be provided if residents and politicians accept higher densities • But completely opposed by development industry respondents

In general, Ottawa's growth management policy and programs' abilities to address site level constraints posed by community and political resistance are very weak. Most are municipal-wide policies that provide general guidance but lack the teeth to support intensification efforts on the ground.

6.2.2 Response to Regulatory Challenges

As Downs (2005) and Farris (2001) recognize, the approvals process for infill and redevelopment projects is significantly more cumbersome than for greenfield development. Official Plan amendments, zoning amendments, or variances are usually required to carry-out a project in a developed area, potentially costly processes in terms of both time and money if the application is caught up by neighbourhood opposition. Similarly, conflicts between municipal policy planners' visions for compact growth can be in conflict with engineering and public works officials who have to approve a project based on a pre-determined set of codes and standards (Alexander and Tomalty, 2002). Key informant responses suggested that this is the case in Ottawa today, where even after amalgamation the process is lengthy and approvals are unpredictable.

Based on the literature review and key informant interviews, *Table 6.3* provides a basis on which to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the City of Ottawa's policies and programs' ability to respond to the issues of regulatory challenges to intensification. *Table 6.4* provides a summary of how effectively the City of Ottawa's current growth management policies and programs are working based on the evaluation criteria.

6.3: Growth Management Policy and Program Evaluation Criteria – Regulatory Challenges

Collaborative Approach	
Effective	• Broad range of stakeholders recognize the importance of intensification efforts and accept it as a principle • Tools for implementation, monitoring programs, and evaluation of success are included in the collaborative plan including locating target areas and creating measurable targets
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Collaborative Approach but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Collaborative Approach

Land Use Controls	
Effective	• Demonstrates the municipality's symbolic support for intensification products • Facilitates intensification efforts by addressing the amount, rate, type, and location of future projects through policies and zoning, thereby reducing lengthy approvals process • Target areas are defined spatially within the municipality • Policy objectives for higher densities correspond to sites with servicing opportunities
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Land Use Control initiative but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Land Use Control initiative

Financial Incentives and Disincentives	
Effective	• Financial incentives and disincentives are significant enough to achieve land use objectives • Growth-inducing incentives reduces financial risks for development industry, giving greater incentive to develop in existing built-up area which typically requires cutting through more "red tape" than greenfields • Financial incentive programs correspond to sites with servicing opportunities
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Financial Incentive /Disincentive program but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Financial Incentive/Disincentive program

Table 6.4: Ability of Programs to Address Regulatory Challenges

Policy or Program	Effectiveness	Discussion
Collaborative Approach		
Official Plan	Somewhat Effective	• The City's attempt to package residential intensification as a legitimate way in which to accommodate a growing population is appropriate • However, municipal-wide policies do not improve the approvals process because it does not address site level constraints
Community Design Plans	Somewhat Effective	• General agreement that a common community vision and a general land use plan will help reduce regulatory challenges during the application stage • However, the process is lengthy, costly, and there is a lack of consistency amongst plans • Also, there is a concern about the status of the plans and their implementation
Land Use Controls		
Urban Boundary Policy	Ineffective	• Municipal-wide policy that does not address regulatory challenges
Target Areas	Somewhat Effective	• Locating land use designations that can appropriately accommodate higher densities is a good strategy • However, municipal-wide land use policy is not necessarily appropriate on some sites, mostly in the existing built-up area, because they have constraints that make them unattractive for infill or redevelopment because of servicing issues that have to be addressed through engineering techniques
Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law	Ineffective	• Fails to upzone sites appropriately and zoning amendments or variances would still be required to implement policies in the Official Plan • Process can often be lengthy and costly for controversial projects
Financial Incentives and Disincentives		
Development Charges	Somewhat Effective	• Waiving or reduction of fees is a symbolic gesture of the City's support for intensification projects • Current development charge by-law could better associate financial incentives to planning objectives
Brownfields Redevelopment Strategy	Somewhat Effective	• Step in the right direction in terms of symbolic support for higher density projects • Sites, however, may have specific constraints making them unattractive for intensification because of servicing issues that must be addressed through engineering techniques
Draft Density Bonusing Guidelines	Somewhat Effective	• Would clearly define when Section 37 of the Planning Act should be used and would facilitate negotiations between the development industry and city • But completely opposed by development industry respondents • Fails to consider engineering constraints on sites

In generally, the City of Ottawa's growth management strategies' policies and programs attempt to reduce regulatory constraints by supporting higher density development in municipal-wide land use policies. This symbolic gesture could provide some confidence that the City is strengthening their encouragement for a compact urban form. The problem with motherhood policies, however, is that they do not address the challenges approvals planners and engineers have when trying to integrate new development in an existing built-up area. Financial incentives improve the regulatory process by reducing some of the financial risks of taking on infill and redevelopment projects, however, the current initiatives do not go far enough to ensure an efficient approvals process.

6.2.3 Reflection of Market Realities

While a compact urban form has environmental, social, and economic benefits over sprawling development, it was clear through the literature review and the interview process that improvements to regulatory constraints do not simply make high density, infill development "happen". Lifestyle choices favouring single-family homes and automobile ownership have contributed to sprawling development and, with support from increasing incomes, the demand for suburban life is self-perpetuating (Carruthers, 2002). The suburbs and countryside are perceived to be safer and cleaner places to live compared to urban centres and houses on the periphery of urban areas are expected to have considerable appreciation potential (Daniels, 2001).

Recent development trend data in Ottawa shows that the construction of higher density residential units has increased in recent years. Both city planning staff and other respondents, however, were clear to acknowledge that this has little to do with regulatory changes and a lot to do with market demand. It was recognized that reinvestment in a neighbourhood is an organic process that is *facilitated* but not *created* by regulatory improvements. The respondents were consistent in their understanding of the fact that the market drives the demand for intensification units.

While demand for higher density units has been increasing, the majority of Ottawa residents still favour low to medium density housing forms. Migration trends demonstrate some residents will move to neighbouring municipalities to find the housing form they desire at a price they can afford. This has implications on the development of land across the region.

Based on the literature review and key informant interviews, *Table 6.5* provides a basis on which to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the City of Ottawa's policies and programs' ability to reflect market realities. *Table 6.6* provides a summary of how effectively the City of Ottawa's current growth management policies and programs are working based on the evaluation criteria.

6.5: Growth Management Policy and Program Evaluation Criteria – Reflect Market Realities

Collaborative Approach	
Effective	• Ensures all participants understand the benefits and challenges of a compact urban form • Takes into consideration the local market context, including historic growth and future economic prospects, by including a broad range of stakeholders familiar with past trends and future opportunities • Implement comprehensive but flexible targets capable of responding to changing market demand
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Collaborative Approach but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Collaborative Approach

Land Use Controls	
Effective	• City intensification policies and zoning are flexible enough to respond to the market for higher density development, supporting it in appropriate locations that emerge organically • Recognizing the weaknesses associated with the application of intensification objectives to land use designations that are spread around the municipality, identify specific target areas
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Land Use Control initiative but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Land Use Control initiative

Financial Incentives and Disincentives	
Effective	• Financial incentives and disincentives are significant enough to achieve land use objectives • Recognizing that intensification target areas must correspond with locations where there is demand, growth-inducing incentives must be applied to specific sites rather than across municipal-wide designations
Somewhat Effective	• Includes most of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Financial Incentive /Disincentive program but some weaknesses exist
Ineffective	• Fails to include any of the parameters identified in an *Effective* Financial Incentive/Disincentive program

Table 6.6: Ability of Programs to Reflect Market Realities

Policy or Program	Effectiveness	Discussion
Collaborative Approach		
Official Plan	Ineffective	• The vision was developed by "experts" from cities across North America but did not include the local development industry • Official Plan was based in theory and did not reflect market realities
Community Design Plans	Effective	• Developers' involvement in the process demonstrates that they believe they can market the balance of units required (60% singles, 30% multiples, 10% apartments) • Generally achieving the density target of 29 upnh by increasing the number of multiples but not apartments • Uncertain if the last apartment block that actually implements the density will ever be developed in suburban locations
Land Use Controls		
Urban Boundary Policy	Ineffective	• Insufficient amount of land held by few landowners has resulted in an increase in land prices and in turn housing prices • Does not provide for a sufficient amount of land to accommodate greenfield demand
Target Areas	Somewhat Effective	• Appropriate to locate higher density development in these locations because of transit and road access • Because applied to a broad land use category, it does not necessarily correspond with locations where there is a market for such development • Commercial market so strong in some locations it would not make economic sense to develop for residential
Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law	Ineffective	• Fails to implement the policies in the Official Plan • Even if there was a market for higher density development in target areas, draft zoning by-law fails to provide the zoning to allow it to occur
Financial Incentives and Disincentives		
Development Charges	Somewhat Effective	• By-law needs to be strengthened to reduce charges where market is located for intensification efforts, such as target areas
Brownfields Redevelopment Strategy	Effective	• Reduces development costs on sites that may not otherwise attract investment
Draft Density Bonusing Guidelines	Ineffective	• Provides no incentives for developers who believe it is basically blackmail for permission to build a good project

In general, the policies and programs that make up Ottawa's growth management strategy do not respond appropriately to market realities. While it appears that the market will accept medium-density units, it is less likely that it will support significant amounts of higher density forms of housing. The attempt to force future residents into higher density units on smaller lots could have further implications for Ottawa's constrained land supply and negative net-migration. Incentives designed to encourage high density units do not necessarily correspond to locations that are deemed desirable by the market, particularly suburban sites.

6.3   Recommendations for Strengthening the Strategy

The review of the weaknesses of the City of Ottawa's growth management policies and programs provides a base for which recommendations can be developed to strengthen the strategy. The following is a list of recommendations that pertain to the City of Ottawa planning context.

1.   Set ambitious but achievable targets for intensification

The City of Ottawa must set an achievable target for residential intensification in the built-up area to track the success of intensification efforts. A high target will require an aggressive action plan and buy-in from the communities that may be affected. Clearly, Ottawa's current climate of resistance to infill and redevelopment efforts would make too high a target difficult to achieve, which could lead to erroneous vacant residential land supply estimates and a greater constrained land supply.

A more appropriate solution would be to generate a residential intensification target higher than recent trends and plan for incremental increases over time. This will require a strict definition for "intensification" and identification of the current built boundary. The work being completed for the province's Places to Grow planning effort in the Greater Golden Horseshoe demonstrates how difficult this process can be (MPIR, 2006b). Lessons learned there, however, can be used to inform Ottawa's process for establishing an appropriate but achievable target.

2. Recognize the importance of a diverse housing choice

Ottawa is facing risks to its economic competitive position relative to other urban centres in Ontario and elsewhere. The findings demonstrate that Ottawa's expectation that higher density units will accommodate a significant proportion of future growth means that additional land has not been brought in to the urban area and the constrained land supply means uncompetitive markets. Also, the expectation of higher land costs in the future reduces the incentive for large land owners to build, which in turn reduces available supply and increases costs to builders and home buyers. A constrained supply and higher prices is an incentive for development to leapfrog to surrounding municipalities. An upward pressure on household expenditures can affect the City's attractiveness to industries where higher salary costs outweigh the quality of life benefits of living in Ottawa.

Much of the City of Ottawa's population growth in the coming years will be through the in-migration of workers attracted to employment opportunities in Ottawa. The City must understand the changing demographics so as to ensure that the available vacant land supply is consistent with market demand. If demand is for lower density residential, the City may have to add additional land to the urban area. The consequence of not doing so could mean increases in negative net migration and faster growth in adjacent municipalities at the expense of Ottawa's economic, social, and environmental growth management goals. It should be acknowledged that there are excellent opportunities available to create efficient, liveable communities on greenfields. Similarly, if demand is for higher density units, the City must ensure that these can be constructed in desirable areas.

3. Create public awareness of the importance of a compact urban form

Recent literature and the findings of the key informant interviews demonstrate that one of the greatest barriers for residential intensification is community and political opposition. Tregoning et al. (2002) recognize the importance for planners to link development patterns with issues that resonate with the public, such as linking sprawling development and segregated land uses with increasing amounts of obesity or reduced family time due to longer

commutes. In doing so, the larger public can relate development patterns to their own situations and individualize the benefits of a more compact urban form.

4.   Celebrate the success of recent infill and redevelopment projects

Residents' concerns about intensification often relate to the issue of the compatibility of new development with the existing built form and the worry that a new project will be of lower quality than what currently exists in a neighbourhood (Paehlke, 1991). A public education campaign about the shape infill and redevelopment projects can take should be carried out by the municipality. A campaign that promotes recent projects can be used to demonstrate the design features that can be integrated into a building to ensure compatibility with existing development at the same time as promoting the community-wide benefits associated with intensification efforts. Local infill developers such as Charlesfort and Domicile have been successful in creating attractive residential projects in the existing built-up area for decades and their projects can be used as excellent examples of highly designed buildings that fit in well with their environment.

Figure 6.1: Recent Infill and Redevelopment Projects in Ottawa

Similarly, during the interview process, several developers joked about the fact that residents who once opposed their buildings are now living in them. Rather than simply being an interesting antidote, these success stories should be shared with residents opposing similar projects in other communities. Content residents living in communities that have had

successful infill or redevelopment projects carried out should be encouraged to attend meetings in support of similar initiatives elsewhere. A large number of YIMBY (yes-in-my-backyard) supporters would be an appropriate challenge for NIMBY opposition (Tregoning et al, 2002).

5. Develop a long term strategic plan to guide future growth management decisions

Ottawa's Official Plan is focused on a 20-year time frame as required by provincial policy, a short time considering most planning approvals generally take several years. Unlike historic planning efforts, the City has not considered growth beyond the legislative planning horizon. The implication is that Ottawa will continue to plan incrementally, thereby making boundary expansion and infrastructure investment decisions based on immediate short term needs rather than on a strategic vision for the future.

A longer term outlook would recognize that Ottawa will continue to grow long after the horizon of the existing Official Plan policies. A 50-year strategic plan would provide a long term vision, an indication of where the City is expected to grow, and where major infrastructure investments will take place in the more distant future. A long term plan would maximize the benefits of development and minimize the costs of sprawl by more efficiently managing such things as transportation, water and sewage treatment and distribution, and parks and open space. While the strategic plan would not have the benefit of planning act legislation, it would be imperative in establishing long range planning goals and give stakeholders confidence in shorter term planning decisions.

This process could be driven by a re-invigorated National Capital Commission. In a new role, the NCC would not only be responsible for beautify the City, but be given the opportunity to turn the national capital into a model of sustainable planning efforts for the country. A top-down planning approach is what the City of Ottawa and neighbouring municipalities clearly need to unify planning efforts.

6. Establish partnerships with municipalities outside of the City of Ottawa

Responses to growth management techniques are typically observed at a regional level. Political fragmentation can undermine large land use planning efforts, as individual municipalities adopt their own land use regulations and growth targets. In the absence of a large, regional approach to planning, neighbouring municipalities can implement growth management measures without considering the impact of such measurers on adjacent municipalities. "Spillover" can occur between municipalities who have adopted controls to those who have not.

The negative net migration trends experienced in Ottawa in the last several years and the higher growth rates experienced in surrounding planning jurisdictions demonstrate that this is a reality. There has been no indication that the City has consulted with neighbouring municipalities in past growth management efforts. To lessen the impact on adjacent communities, the municipality must recognize the impact Ottawa's growth management strategy has on surrounding municipalities and partner with them to develop a comprehensive plan that covers a larger geographic area.

The major challenge to preparing and implementing a regional plan would be in developing consensus amongst the various levels of government and planning authorities. The idea of implementing recommendations through one approval board or a Federal District is unrealistic, as demonstrated in the failure of some earlier planning efforts. Only a provincially-led process, like the Places to Grow effort, could realistically carryout a regional plan. For the time being, Ottawa's simple recognition of growth trends and planning visions in adjacent municipalities would go a long way in supporting their growth management strategy.

7.   Create champions

The infill, redevelopment, and intensification process is lengthy and requires consensus from developers, the public, and the local government to be completed efficiently. Creating trust through partnerships can help fast-track this process and create champions for the cause.

The findings of the research clearly demonstrate that there is very weak leadership in the City of Ottawa, including both the planning department and Council. The City's approach to the Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law is evidence of a weak attempt to implement the Official Plan's motherhood principles for intensification. Planners must advocate for higher densities and for the tools to make them happen if they truly believe that compact development is in the public's best interest. Developing education programs and demonstration projects is essential to support their arguments. Staffs' complaint that there are insufficient resources to support intensification efforts is unacceptable. More creative solutions to NIMBY opposition and political resistance must be explored. A leader in the City's planning department must make this a priority.

On the same note, if City Council truly desires a more compact urban form they must demonstrate their intentions through the allocation of monetary resources to the planning department at budget time. Similarly, politicians, and in particular the mayor, must make the tough decisions to support controversial proposals that may not be supported by the public but are beneficial for the community at large.   Strong political leadership would best demonstrate the Council's commitment to the development a compact urban form, giving confidence to both planning staff and the development industry.

6.4   Conclusions

The research findings were very much consistent with the literature review. The City of Ottawa has adopted a growth management strategy that promotes compact development through infill and redevelopment of the existing built-up area and higher densities on greenfields. The City has developed numerous policies and programs to encourage such

development, just as the literature review indicated is appropriate. Still, intensification efforts are challenged by community and political resistance which has not be resolved through a collaborative process, by regulatory issues that have not been satisfied by land use controls, and by market constraints that have not been resolved by financial incentive and disincentive programs.

As the City embarks on its mandatory 5-year Official Plan review, it has the opportunity to strengthen its growth management strategy to better support its vision for a compact urban form. It is recommended that the City adopt realistic and achievable projections for growth and intensification; consider growth over the longer term with a more regional perspective; and, play a much stronger role in leading intensification efforts. There is an opportunity for the City to create an improved strategy that will, like earlier plans, make Ottawa once again a proud leader in urban planning efforts in Canada.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusions

7.1   Introduction

This Chapter summarizes the research problem, the findings, and the recommendations that form this thesis. It begins with a statement of the purpose of the study and provides a summary of the findings. It also identifies areas for further research.

7.2   Purpose of the Research

The City of Ottawa will be embarking on its mandatory five-year Official Plan review in 2008. Policies in the current Official Plan support a compact urban form and programs have been developed to encourage the intensification of the built-up area, particularly for residential uses. The City, however, has not, to date, achieved a significant amount of residential intensification. The key question motivating this research was: *How can the City of Ottawa's growth management strategy be strengthened to better support residential intensification in order to achieve the compact urban form promoted in the Official Plan?*

7.3   Research Findings

Ottawa has developed policies and programs to encourage intensification, implementing the very same initiatives that the literature review suggests is appropriate for achieving compact development. The problem is that the City's policies and programs are not robust enough to respond to the concerns, legitimate or otherwise, of the public. Strong community opposition forces some "career politicians" to vote based on re-election strategies rather than upholding planning policies for the betterment of the city. While motherhood principles are integrated into visioning documents and Official Plan policies, they are not strong enough to support development applications as they come to Council, even in instances where planning staff support the proposal. Land use controls have not sufficiently addressed regulatory challenges. While time and monetary costs of controversial intensification projects could be offset by

financial incentive and disincentive programs, the Brownfields Strategy is the only one that appears to have significant support across the City.

This thesis provided a number of recommendations for strengthening City of Ottawa's policies and programs in an effort to bring its growth management strategy into the 21st century:

- Set ambitious but achievable targets for intensification;
- Recognize the importance of a diverse housing choice;
- Create public awareness of the importance of a compact urban form;
- Celebrate the success of recent infill and redevelopment projects;
- Develop a long term strategic plan to guide future growth management decisions;
- Establish partnerships with municipalities outside of the City of Ottawa; and,
- Create champions.

With a strengthened strategy that establishes achievable growth and intensification targets; encourages community support; considers growth over the longer term and with a regional perspective; and is advocated by strong leaders, the City of Ottawa can be confident in its short term planning decisions and move boldly into the future.

7.4   Further Research

The recommendations presented in this research highlight a number of areas that require further study. Education and demonstration projects, clearer definitions for intensification and measurements for success, and stronger leadership were thought to be possible ways in which to better achieve intensification at the site level. An opportunity exists to explore each of these options in depth, identifying opportunities and constraints for each, and applying findings to the Ottawa context.

The challenges to implementing compact development objectives are not unique to the City of Ottawa. The provincial government of Ontario is playing a leading role in promoting a compact urban form and requires municipalities to do the same in their local planning efforts. Frustration was expressed about both the federal and provincial governments' downloading of responsibilities to local municipalities and the elimination of important programs that could support intensification projects, namely funding for affordable housing and financial support for things like public education and demonstration projects, initiatives that had previously been carried out by the province. Further study could focus on the role of higher-level governments' should play in supporting municipal intensification efforts.

7.5   Concluding Statements

Growth management needs to be given high priority on Ottawa's urban agenda. Growth management is always a difficult subject that often takes lower priority than the immediate and pressing issues that call on the attention of Council. But the City will be forced to face this issue as growth exhausts the supply of vacant urban land and investment decisions for transit and infrastructure demand certainty about the long term direction and character of growth.

The complex demands of urban growth are not an "inconvenient truth" but an opportunity. Planning for growth presents an opportunity to renew the fundamental vision for Ottawa and to engage in a process that will take the City well into the 21st century. It is important that the City engage in a fulsome debate and a comprehensive exploration of its future to address the issues of growth head on. Ultimately, the updated growth management strategy will come down to the type of city the residents and civic leaders want to leave as their legacy to the next generation.

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APPENDIX A   ***Key Informant Questions***

The following is the script that was generally followed during the key informant interviews. The interviews were carried out in a conversational way, with the interviewee generally leading the discussion. In situations where the interviewee was intimately familiar with a City of Ottawa growth management policy or program, more detailed probing questions were asked.

As you know, I am conducting this study as part of my Master's degree in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Professor Trudi Bunting. I would like to thank you for volunteering to participate in my research. Your knowledge about the subject will no doubt offer valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the existing strategy.

May I obtaining the following information prior to the formal interview commencing?
- Company
- Position
- Number of Years Working in Planning Matters
- Number of Years Working in Ottawa
- How familiar are you with growth management and the City's intensification policies and initiatives – play a role in the development of Official Plan policy?

The City of Ottawa has worked hard to produce a comprehensive strategy to address growth concerns. The policies presented in the Official Plan help city staff and Council balance competing priorities by providing strategic direction for day-to-day decision making. The City of Ottawa Official Plan policies manage growth in two ways: directing new growth to land within the urban boundary; and encouraging compact, mixed-use development on greenfields and infill and redevelopment in existing built up areas. Since the Official Plan has been introduced the City has undertaken a number of important initiatives to support the policies in the document. It is these initiatives that I would like to talk about today.

The purpose of this study is two fold: to evaluate Ottawa's growth management strategy in an effort to identify which initiatives are perceived to be successful and which could be improved; and to consider additional initiatives that may also help the City of Ottawa reach its social, economic, and environmental goals as presented in its 2004 Official Plan.

I am confident that this research will help to identify opportunities to expand Ottawa's existing programs and introduce new strategies that have been tested in other jurisdictions.

Is the City of Ottawa's vision correct?

- Has the City of Ottawa effectively engaged stakeholders in the growth management process?
- What has the current level of collaboration meant for the success of the growth management strategy?
- Are residents and politicians ready to see more intense development occur in their neighbourhoods?
- Is there market demand for the type of units that the City is encouraging?
- Is there demand for infill and redevelopment projects in the target locations identified in the Official Plan?
- Are Official Plan policies concerning unit and use mix being carried out on greenfield sites?
- Should there be stricter policies concerning denser commercial and industrial development?
- Are there sufficient opportunities for infill and redevelopment to substantially reduce the need for greenfield development?

Are current initiatives working?

- Is growth successfully being directed to *target areas*?
- Are *community design plans* successively encouraging communication between the city, developers, and the public?
- What has been the response to the City's *Brownfields Strategy*?
- What has been the response to the *density incentive guidelines*?

- Do the policies in the *Draft Comprehensive Zoning By-law* make it easier for infill and redevelopment to occur?
- What is the impact of NIMBY? What is the solution?
- What is the impact of political resistance? What is the solution?
- What additional incentives or disincentives do you think would be appropriate to encourage a more dense urban form?
- Are the financial incentives to encourage denser development sufficient?

Concluding Questions
- What do you think about the role of the Province?
- The current plans for the City of Ottawa concern only the land that is within its municipal boundary. Should long-range urban planning in Ottawa be done at a more regional level? Would it be appropriate to establish a regional body consisting of elected officials from Ottawa, Gatineau, and surrounding municipalities to be responsible for long-range urban planning in the capital region?
- Do you think a 20-year planning horizon is adequate time-frame for long-range planning efforts?
- Do you mind if I contact you for additional comments during my research process?
- I don't have any other formal questions to ask but I wondered if you had any other comments that you would like to add about growth management in the City of Ottawa?

Thank you so much for your time and insight. It is expected that the findings of this study will benefit both the scientific community and society. The results will be written up and submitted to journals, thereby expanding the literature on growth management in Canada and in a national capital. The results will also be compiled and shared with City of Ottawa planning staff with the expectation that it will inform their growth management strategy review process which is just beginning.