Development Vision for the City of Gatineau

Catherine Marchand
Head of Urban Planning and Economic Development
City of Gatineau

Establishing a land use and development plan

The development vision for the City of Gatineau took shape over several years and involved the participation of citizens in many different forms (coffee shops, public consultations, public hearings). The vision thus reflects the orientations, priorities and values of Gatineau’s citizens.

Aligning land use planning and transportation was one of the objectives targeted by the process to establish a land use and development plan. In one of the plan development phases, the city acquired tools for simulating the impacts that different forms of land use would have on mobility and the choice of mode of transportation.

The plan, which has been in effect since December 2015, comprises five land use policy directions:

1. **Manage urban growth**

Urban growth is expected to continue, even if it may be at a slower rate. To meet this growth, Gatineau defined the following objectives:

- Structure the region by **consolidating the existing hubs** and **creating new hubs along the rapid transit corridors**;
- Manage urbanization based on land use priorities: differentiate between the consolidation areas, where development is to be completed, and urban expansion areas, where it would eventually be possible to see new development once the demand has been met;
- Define the urbanization perimeter to accommodate the growth anticipated by 2051, which is an increase of 78,000 people and 47,000 households;
- Distribute the costs of urbanization and optimized services equitably.

The map below illustrates this concept of creating structured hubs, with the downtown hub and new hubs around existing and future rapid transit corridors, to **promote the concentration and densification of development**. We are also aiming at **mixed use** for these corridors. We want to get away from the segregated use approach taken since the 1950s, where the type of land use planning has people living, working, shopping and enjoying entertainment in different locations, because that means that we must constantly use our cars for our activities.
2. **Prioritize sustainable mobility**

Giving priority to sustainable mobility is not just investing in infrastructures or providing access to services. It is especially about modifying our ways of doing things and developing. It is necessary to work on:

- **sustainable transportation**;
- **interprovincial connections** (one of the major issues we face is symbolized by the Ottawa River, which links us but also separates us);
- **the transport of goods**.

Among the transportation issues we face, it should be pointed out that Ottawa’s needs are different from Gatineau’s. While 40% of Gatineau’s working population has jobs in Ottawa, only 5% of Ottawa’s population works in Gatineau. The pressure is therefore not the same on both sides of the river.

3. **Promote natural and cultural heritage**

The plan introduces a global, ecosystemic vision for managing natural habitats, with three objectives:

- Adopt and implement a natural habitat management plan;
- Enforce the *Protection Policy for Lakeshores, Riverbanks, Littoral Zones and Floodplains*;
- Contribute to implementing integrated water resources management at a watershed level.

Our cultural heritage is what defines us, what contributes to our identity. We must preserve it, but also ensure that it flourishes, through the following means:

- Ensure global, coherent management of heritage activities;
- Know and recognize heritage;
- Raise citizen awareness and adoption;
- Promote to protect and preserve heritage;
- Work in partnership and with consistency.

---

1 Complete map with legend available at [gatineau.ca](http://gatineau.ca).

Note: The land use plan identifies Allumettières as a potential option to become a structuring axis for rapid transit. If the study recommends the use of a different corridor, the plan will have to be revised.
4. Create comprehensive, eco-responsible living environments

In its urban and rural villages, Gatineau wants to create comprehensive, eco-responsible living environments (“eco-responsible” refers to the habitat – eco from “house” or “household” in Greek):

- In each urban village, promote access to sustainable transportation and a gradual, planned densification approach;
- Provide the living environments with the local businesses and services required;
- In the neighbourhood, distribute the resources and services needed for community and cultural life to flourish;
- Focus residential projects on sustainable development, creating eco-neighbourhoods and integrating natural and built spaces;
- Promote the diversification of residential typologies;
- Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in buildings.²

5. Protect people and property

Gatineau wants to protect people and property by applying the principles of prevention and precaution. The City has natural constraints that require it to:

- Protect the lakeshores, riverbanks, littoral zones and floodplains;
- Manage landslide risks;
- Update seismic microzonation.

It also has anthropogenic (originating in human activities) constraints and wishes to:

- Minimize the impact of traffic noise, namely by working on the quality of construction;
- Ensure the viability of the Gatineau-Ottawa Executive Airport and cohabitation with the neighbourhood;
- Ensure the protection of water resources;
- Oversee the exploitation of mineral resources;
- Minimize exposure to the risk of industrial accidents;
- Prevent the annoyances associated with odours in agricultural zones (38% of the Gatineau area);
- Ensure the viability of the industrial zone south of the airport;
- Take action with respect to contaminated lands and inactive waste disposal sites.

Implementing the land use and development plan

A land use plan proposes a vision, and long-term directions. The supplementary document makes it possible to translate these directions into regulations governing zoning, construction and subdivisions:

- Legislative framework governing the issuing of subdivision permits;
- Framework governing natural environments;
- Provisions regarding the protection of lakeshores, riverbanks, littoral zones and floodplains;
- Management framework for zones potentially exposed to landslides;
- Provisions regarding anthropogenic constraint zones;
- Regulatory measures promoting green buildings related to GHG reduction objectives.

The plan is a 40-year vision that will lead to adjustments. There will be an implementation period in the form of legislation. Development of the concordance by-laws will begin soon. The City will come up with a monitoring plan and will follow up on the action plan.

² In Gatineau, a significant part of our GHG emissions come from our buildings, because we use less hydroelectricity and more gas that the rest of Quebec.