



New Official Plan

Natural Ottawa

The Outstanding character of Ottawa’s natural environment provides its residents with an historic opportunity and resource for building North America’s most livable mid-sized City.

Beyond 2036 highlighted the interconnectedness of the natural environment with economic development, quality of life, and urban form and mobility. It spoke to the importance of the natural environment for: enhancing the City’s resilience to climate change; reducing illnesses and deaths due to air pollution and extreme heat; reducing and capturing stormwater; improving the quality of urban life; raising Ottawa’s profile as a green, beautiful, and dynamic destination for talent and investment; protecting our water; and providing habitat for wildlife.

Within a global context, Ottawa’s outstanding natural environment offers long-term stability for investment and growth: not just political and economic stability, but the underlying environmental stability and sustainability that reduces risk and provides resilience to future disruptions.

Overall, the City’s natural environment appears healthier and more diverse than at any other time in the last 100 years. Nonetheless, the creeping loss of rural woodlands, wetlands, and natural stream cover threatens to reverse these gains. In particular, Ottawa’s urban forest has suffered recent, sharp declines due to natural aging, emerald ash borer, and intensification.

Ottawa has already begun work to reverse these trends. As Ottawa develops its 2022 Official Plan, it will take a more sophisticated approach to the character and form of its natural areas and greenspace across gradients of land use. It will update its Urban Greenspace Master Plan. It will continue implement its Urban Forest Management Plan. It will continue to protect its water. It will work with residents, community organizations, the business community, and environmental partners to ensure that everyone has continued and improved access to a high quality, natural environment that supports future security, prosperity, and individual and community well-being.

