



**Submission on draft Growth Management Strategy
to Joint Planning and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committees
January 2021**

The Manotick Village and Community Association would like to submit the following comments on the draft Growth Management Strategy to be considered on Monday, January 25, 2021.

There are many excellent components of the Strategy that we fully support and they include:

- 1) The concept of a “Gold belt” to protect agricultural land is a positive step in protecting the acres of farmland within the City limits. It is far too easy to expand urban growth into agricultural areas and we need to refocus our efforts on protecting agricultural land. This is essential in order for us to feed future generations and ensure that we continue to have a sustainable living environment. Ontario is losing good farmland at the rate of 175 acres per day and it needs to stop.
- 2) The establishment of a 1 kilometre buffer around rural villages is vital in protecting the lifestyle of these existing “15-minute neighbourhoods”. A vibrant City is one that includes a variety of neighbourhoods and rural villages provide that sense of community, with services and amenities close to homes. Continued urban sprawl will simply make Ottawa another spread-out metropolis without character and force the City to dedicate more and more resources to maintaining an ever-expanding infrastructure.
- 3) The limited expansion of the urban boundary is important to meet the housing needs of future residents. We support the identification of new lands close to transit hubs and existing infrastructure as this approach is critical in helping to keep down the maintenance costs for future roads, schools, and wastewater.

At the same time as we support these recommendations, we have some concerns about other components of the Growth Management Strategy.

- I. The development of a new community within a rural area outside of the Gold Belt is an interesting concept although the Strategy does identify some challenges with finding a suitable location. While it does provide an opportunity to create those “15 minute neighbourhoods” in a planned way, it also flies against the commitment to limit expansion of infrastructure. Therefore, we fully support the need for further investigation of this option, with public consultation, before moving ahead with this concept.

- II. We are also concerned that the Strategy does not sufficiently factor in how the pandemic will impact on how we live and work in the future. While it is too early to tell if things will return to the way they were a year ago, many corporations have indicated that they will not be returning to offices in the same number. In addition, KPMG reports that 2 in 5 Canadians are spending less on non-essential items and 2/3 of Canadians have moved to more shopping online. It remains unknown how much of this will prevail post-pandemic. This will have an impact on transit use, office space in the urban core and the need to address internet infrastructure in rural neighbourhoods. It will also impact on how much land will be required for future development.
- III. The development of rural warehousing and industrial lands to date has shown us the impact of these facilities on increased truck traffic through rural villages. While the intention is to plan these close to provincial highways in order to encourage vehicles accessing these facilities to use those routes, our experience is that it does generate increased truck traffic downstream in rural villages. Studies have shown that trucks travelling past residences, schools and seniors buildings have a detrimental impact on the health of residents who live and work adjacent to those routes. This needs to be considered carefully in the context of locations for warehouse and distribution facilities, with measures in place to mitigate truck travel on rural roads and through residential areas, particularly villages.
- IV. Given the evolving state of society as a result of the pandemic, we also question whether the existing assumptions on population growth continue to be relevant. The Growth Management Strategy, and draft Official Plan, are based on an increase of over 400,000 residents in the next 25 years with 75% of that generated through immigration. However, even Statistic Canada cautions anyone who wants to use their projections as an accurate prediction of what will come. In fact, Statistic Canada's Population Projections for Canada: Provinces and Territories (2018 to 2043) indicates that "no theory of migration provides a satisfactory means of projecting future flows, rather, different theories attempt to explain different aspects of the process (Massey et al. 1994). These theories are not easily applied in practice; this is in part due to the absence of suitable data about the contributing factors as well as the fact that those factors would also need to be projected, rendering the procedure undesirably complex."

Given that Statistics Canada warns that future projection of immigration levels is fraught with uncertainty and dependent upon a number of variable factors, we are concerned that the projections for increased immigration could shift. Therefore, we highly recommend that a detailed review be undertaken five years from now to ensure that those projections are still on track and make decisions on what lands to include in the urban boundary at that time.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Growth Management Strategy and would be happy to clarify any of our points if necessary.

