



Submission to the Official Plan Manotick Village and Community Association

February 2021

Following are comments from the Manotick Village and Community Association on the draft official Plan. While our primary focus is on those aspects of the Official Plan that directly impact the rural villages and rural areas of the City, there are also areas that are of concern to residents no matter where they live in the City.

A large portion of the Official Plan will be well-received by residents, particularly the development of a rural economic strategy, the protection of the rural way of life and the need to have policies specific to rural areas. As we have indicated in previous submissions, protection of farmland is a priority for rural villages as we are surrounded by prime agricultural land that is required to feed future generations. This land is also an important buffer between suburban neighbourhoods and rural villages.

However, we have identified a number of areas in the draft OP that require further clarity or that could be improved to address concerns that have been raised by rural residents. Our comments will initially focus on the Rural Designation section and then shift to cross-cutting areas that specifically impact rural residents.

Rural Designations (Section 9)

As the key component of the Official Plan relevant for rural villages, we offer the following comments on this section of the Plan.

Rural countryside

1. As noted, we fully support the goals of protecting the rural character, strengthening the role of rural villages and limiting the fragmentation of rural land. However, policies that encourage the establishment of warehouse and distribution facilities are contrary to that policy because of the impact they have on increased traffic and air pollution in rural villages. While facilities are to be located near provincial highways, trucks going to and from these facilities are using rural arterial roads, bringing them through the villages.
2. The reference to “permitted development within 1 km of a Village or Urban Boundary will be reviewed to ensure that it shall not impede the expansion of a Village or Urban Boundary” is confusing. It would seem to be impossible to maintain a 1 km perimeter around villages if the intention is to allow for the expansion of village boundaries in the future. This area needs to be clarified.

3. There needs to be a stronger indication that city staff understand the changing practices in agriculture, including protection of adjacent lands, wetlands and water supply from pollution, crop rotation practices and soil monitoring. It would be helpful to include some indication of what uses would be acceptable for lands currently designated aggregate when they are no longer considered active.
4. The draft OP notes that water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure is inhibiting development of business in rural as well as mentioning a gap in food production and packaging, over restrictive definitions of home businesses and challenges with internet access. Internet access is of greater concern for smaller businesses who want to locate in rural communities and should be addressed quickly.

Rural Industrial Freight and Storage

While we support economic development in rural areas, we have concerns about this area of growth. In particular, we are concerned about the following statement:

“Rural Industrial, Freight and Storage Areas are served by arterial roads, most of which are located in close proximity to 400 series Highway Interchanges to facilitate the efficient movement of goods while limiting disruption to local rural traffic.”

The MVCA understands that it makes sense to establish these facilities near major highways and arterial roads. However, the reality is that trucks will find the shortest route, which usually takes them through rural villages rather than via congested highways or very busy east-west routes such as Hunt Club Road. The city has already approved Amazon, other warehouses and a hazardous waste site adjacent to Highways 416 and 417 without consideration of the effect of increased traffic through the rural villages.

In addition, our experience has shown that Traffic Impact Assessments and Environment Assessments are limited to the immediate areas where such enterprises are located. Failure to consider the downstream and upstream effects of traffic through rural villages from these distribution centres is a major omission of the OP and the TMP and is an indictment of urban centric policies.

Therefore, the City needs to develop mechanisms to ensure that tractor-trailers use the Series 400 highways and do not cut across rural areas to avoid traffic congestion.

Village

Manotick is already a 15-minute neighbourhood and can be used as a model for other smaller villages that are going through economic development and growth. In addition to supporting the concept of walkable neighbourhoods, the MVCA fully supports the objective of ensuring all development maintains the rural and village character. But there is room for improvement.

1. While the plan speaks of the villages and their identities, culture and heritage, it does not say enough about taking steps to help preserve those elements with rural or village input on designs of new buildings and development or specific design guidelines that will be applied to new development.

2. Design should also facilitate the creation of an integrated village feel when new development occurs. The OP presentation documents do note that Rural Design Guidelines will be developed in the future. These would be welcomed as an alternative to having rural commercial projects reviewed by the Urban Design Review Panel, which uses a different lens to consider these projects.
3. The Plan also notes that Secondary plans will establish more detailed categories for land but lacks a commitment to support the Secondary Plans when challenged by developers.
4. The integration of pedestrian-friendly streets and pathways is a laudable goal. However, in older neighbourhoods or villages, it is difficult to achieve that with narrow sidewalks and streets. In addition, rural villages have to deal with truck traffic going down Main Streets, making it hazardous for pedestrians. In Manotick, we have been unsuccessful in gaining necessary funds and approvals to create the infrastructure required to enable residents to walk or cycle safely.

Cross Cutting Issues that impact rural villages:

2.2.3 Climate Change

We support all efforts to enhance natural resilience to climate change through the protection of green spaces and intelligent design of the built environment that has the greatest negative impact on climate change.

The stewardship of our environment goes beyond our geographical location and well beyond the boundaries of the Official Plan. The City has a responsibility to lead in developing sustainable growth with minimal impact to climate change. Ottawa, as the nation's capital, will be under the scrutiny of others both at home and abroad.

Nowhere is climate change more noticeable than in the rural spaces where we live, work and spend our leisure time. Changes in weather patterns are acutely noticed in agricultural and green spaces. Due to the macro effect that climate change has on our natural environment, bio diversity, human food production, the health and wellbeing of our citizens, the development of the built environment must be done sensitively and successfully, so that, our succeeding generations thank us for taking the lead in securing their future.

2.2.4 Healthy and Inclusive Communities

1) Encourage development of healthy, walkable, 15-minute neighbourhoods

- a. As noted earlier, Manotick can provide an example of walkable neighbourhoods for urban or suburban neighbourhoods as we have a strong core of local retail and commercial services close to residential. However, we lack affordable housing and rental accommodation.
- b. The overarching objective for increased use of sustainable transportation is difficult to achieve in rural villages where there is little public transit and a lack of connecting pathways that would facilitate year-round pedestrian and cycling traffic. The Plan should be revised to reflect the caveat of encouraging use of sustainable transportation where public transit, walking and

cycling are practical and possible.

- c. Within the context of 15-minute neighbourhoods, the Plan should indicate that any new walkways, cycling paths and non-vehicle bridges should be designed to allow snow removal by the City.
- d. The commitment to provide safe environments for children and youth to walk, cycle or take transit to school is not always feasible in rural villages. In Manotick, a public school is located on a busy truck route and as there is no transit in Manotick, taking a school bus is the option.
- e. Given the current pandemic, one lesson learned is the importance of community infrastructure and the need for more common public spaces, particularly parks. We are supportive of the City's plan to develop a park master plan.

2) Build accessible, inclusive communities, and design for all ages, including children and older adults.

- a. Manotick also represents an inclusive community with the building of two seniors' residences along with mature adult living development in the village. As noted earlier, where the Village could do better is in the area of building more affordable housing and rental accommodation. There is provision in the Secondary Plan for this type of housing so this aspect should be maintained in any future revision of the Plan. We could also provide for more inclusive public spaces, for example in Centennial Park in Manotick.
- b. Lack of transit in the village makes it a challenge for seniors and youth to move around the village – likely an issue for most rural villages that have grown over time. The City needs to consider how to address this in an economical fashion.

3) Promote health through sustainability

- a. For years, the MVCA has supported connecting the rural community with pathways and trails and provide cycling infrastructure where feasible. However, our experience has been that it is difficult to achieve without a commitment to fund some of these connecting networks and the seeming disconnect between active transportation objectives and parks and recreation policy. For example, we have submitted several recommendations to Parks and Recreation with respect to monies allocated to Beryl Gaffney Park recommending that there be a pedestrian and bicycle link between Manotick and the Park and with nearby neighbourhoods.
- b. Village residents certainly recognize the value of trees and the access to greenspace and parks and trail systems. While we do have access to several larger parks, we could use additional trees along our Main Street as well as additional walking trails through the village. While some of this will be accommodated by the future plans for Drumlin Forest in the Mahogany development, more opportunities exist in the Village.

4.1 Mobility

None of seven goals of this section are focused on the rural areas but are “city centred”. In addition, there is insufficient focus on retrofitting existing areas.

- a. For example, the first goal “Provide mobility options to safely and equitably navigate the city” is far from given that rural villages don’t have transit stations, full-time bus service etc. to be able to have the equitable navigation found in the city centre or communities like Riverside South. The guidelines for potential changes to transportation, walking & cycling in areas specifically near proposed or current transit stations, new development areas fail to address potential augmentation for the existing rural areas of the City that weren’t on, or didn’t have public transportation.
- b. The section on the City’s street hierarchy/street function states “The City will identify which streets or segments of streets in the hierarchy are intended to function as...”. This allows the city to designate the type of street which in some cases will dictate the type of traffic on the street. In looking at the considerations for such designation, nowhere does it take into consideration existing development on these existing roads e.g. schools, senior homes etc.
- c. The Plan should recognize that the addition of public garages in areas where on-site parking is required is not applicable to villages, unless the garage is underground.
- d. The section on facilitating inter-urban and inter-regional movement of goods and moving truck traffic away from the City Core needs to factor in the impact on rural villages. The Downtown core isn’t the only area in Ottawa facing unwanted truck traffic and congestion. The lack of dedicated ring roads has resulted in both inter-provincial and local trucks travelling through Manotick and other villages in the rural areas. Current ‘ring’ roads such as Hunt Club and Strandherd have numerous traffic lights rendering them useless as ring roads. Any discussion about providing new bridges or access points between Quebec and Ontario should take into consideration potential impact on rural villages. A new bridge would likely be outside of the downtown core either west or east of the urban core and would therefore move traffic from either Highway 416 travelling to 417 or vice versa and will increase traffic through rural Ottawa and villages.

4.6 Urban Design

We appreciate the commitment to design excellence in Village cores – something that we have been trying to achieve. However, as earlier stated, it is difficult to achieve that within the current approval process which includes design review by an Urban Design Review Panel. Therefore, we are pleased that the panel will be given new rural design guidelines for those reviews in the future and hope that rural representation will be involved in the development of those guidelines.

Table 10 Terms of References

The MVCA also is requesting amendments to Table 10 which outlines requirements for future development.

- a. Under Health and Safety Requirements, there should be an additional requirement for environmental impact assessment of traffic on air quality as well as noise vibration for projects not only in the immediate vicinity but on arterial roads that lead into rural villages. This would help to address the environmental impact of an increasing volume of truck traffic through rural villages and areas where trucks drive by residences, schools and seniors housing.

- b. Similarly, the requirement for a Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) should include a reference that includes the need to assess impact on rural roads leading to and from the proposed development. For example, the following definition could be added:

Surrounding area in the Rural Transect to be included is defined as villages and rural communities affected by transportation through their areas created by the development.

We cannot emphasize this point enough: TIAs must take into account the effect of increased traffic upstream and downstream from the proposed development.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the draft Official Plan and we hope that you will consider our recommendations. We also hope to work with City staff on implementation of the OP once it is approved.