

Municipal Elections 2018

All-Candidates' Survey

ECOLOGY OTTAWA



Ecology Ottawa is a grassroots environmental organization working to make Ottawa the green capital of Canada.

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Our Elections Survey

The October municipal election will shape the future of our city and help decide whether or not the people of Ottawa enjoy world-class public transportation, walkable and cycling-friendly communities, clean water, healthy streams, a strong urban tree canopy, a low-waste city and clean energy options that help us do our fair share to fight climate change.

Ecology Ottawa is a grassroots environmental organization with more than 85,000 supporters across the city. We have prepared this survey for all candidates in the municipal election to help our supporters and the general public better understand where the candidates stand. The survey covers each of Ecology Ottawa's program areas:

- **Living City**, focused on trees, greenspace and water;
- **Active City**, focused on sustainable transportation such as walking, cycling and transit; and

- **Renewable City**, focused on energy and climate change.

In partnership with local advocacy group **Waste Watch Ottawa**, we are also including questions on **waste management**.

We are asking all mayoral and council candidates to provide a "Yes" or "No" answer to each of the questions. We have also provided space for an answer to one qualitative question, and for additional information on the "Yes"/"No" questions, should a candidate wish to expand on his or her answers.

We would like to thank all candidates for offering to serve the people of Ottawa by running for elected office. We very much appreciate candidates taking the time to complete this survey. We are happy to answer any questions that candidates or the general public have about our platform or our questions.



Renewable City

Climate change is an international problem, but its causes, impacts, and solutions are often local. If we want Canada to do its fair share on climate change, cities like Ottawa can and must lead the way. At the same time, we know that the climate crisis presents an opportunity to transform our city for the better while creating thousands of great jobs. Ecology Ottawa's Renewable City program aims to transition our city in response to the challenge of a changing climate. We know that 100% renewable energy is 100% possible, we say "no" to new fossil fuel infrastructure, and we focus on creating clean energy jobs.

Background:

We have seen some notable progress on climate initiatives in the past four years. In 2014, the City of Ottawa adopted an Air Quality and Climate Change Management Plan – an analysis of our city's greenhouse gas emissions and a plan to tackle them. In 2017, the City of Ottawa released a key component of its climate plan: the first stage of Energy Evolution, a strategy to ramp up renewable energy, energy conservation and energy efficiency.

Plans are an important start in Ottawa's fight against climate change, but good intentions are not enough. We know that implementation is critical, and this is too often where city council falls short. For example, when Energy Evolution was brought forward in late 2017, it was only provided with minimal funding and staffing – far short of the investment required for Ottawa to meet its climate targets (80% reduction from 2012 levels by 2050), to say nothing of showing municipal leadership on the file.

The city's efforts are also badly hobbled by a lack of data. The Air Quality and Climate Change Management Plan only assesses the city's progress on emission reductions once every four years. With a four-year council cycle, this makes it very difficult to hold city council to account on its climate progress. Other cities are leading the way – Montreal has committed to annual reporting, while Edmonton has annual reporting and targets. The old expression goes, "What gets measured gets done". It is essential that Ottawa maintain and accelerate ambition on climate change. That means, we need to measure and report on community-wide greenhouse gas emissions more frequently.

The City of Ottawa has also promised a Climate Adaptation Plan that should be delivered over the next term of council. In 2016, council elected that Ottawa join "the Compact of Mayors", an international coalition of cities and local governments with a shared long-term vision for action on climate change. As a member of this coalition, Ottawa has agreed to release a climate adaptation plan – a plan that touches on climate change impacts like flooding, severe weather, and invasive species. While mitigation – reducing greenhouse gas emissions – must remain the overwhelming priority, adaptation is now also necessary because of the climate effects that are already baked in. Ottawa has an opportunity to foster resilience in the face of the many challenges stemming from climate change.

Finally, Ottawa has a huge planning opportunity in the next term of council that will deeply affect our climate performance. The Official Plan is up for renewal for the first time in over a decade. This is the city's flagship policy document, and affects everything from our urban form to our investment in renewable energy. The next city council has an opportunity to make a lasting mark on Ottawa's development patterns for years to come – but this is a risk as well as an opportunity. We need to seize the moment and ensure the Official Plan makes low-carbon development a top priority, in a way that delivers a healthier, safer, more liveable city.

Questions:

1. Over the last term of council, initiatives to address climate change have been delayed, understaffed and underfinanced. It's even unclear whether city-wide emissions have been rising or falling over the past six years. Meanwhile, some spending on city infrastructure (e.g., road expansions) is impeding or negating progress from climate investments made under the environment portfolio. At the federal level, the government has mandated a new climate lens assessment for its infrastructure funding program, Investing in Canada.

If elected, will you make climate action a Term of Council Priority, increase funding and staffing commitments commensurate with this prioritization, and mandate a climate lens for the City's assessment for all infrastructure investments?

2. The City of Ottawa reports on community-wide climate emissions once every through the Air Quality and Climate Change Management Plan. This infrequent reporting makes tracking progress toward our climate goals very difficult, and is far behind the standard set by leading cities such as Edmonton and Montreal.

If elected, will you commit to increasing the frequency of the City's community-wide emissions reporting to at least once per year?

3. Climate change is accelerating, and cities around the world are rushing to adapt to the impacts of severe weather, flooding and invasive species. The City of Ottawa has committed to developing a Climate Adaptation Plan but hasn't yet delivered.

If elected, will you commit to ensuring the release and initial implementation of a Climate Adaptation Plan within the next term of council?

4. Development of Ottawa's next Official Plan will begin in January 2019 and conclude during the next term of council. The Official Plan sets the ground rules that can make it easier or virtually impossible for cities to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions—from transportation patterns and sprawl, to housing densities and unit sizes, to options for local renewable energy production, to the services, amenities, and greenspaces residents can access within walking distance. Official Plans developed with climate change in mind deliver powerful benefits that make neighbourhoods healthier, safer, and more liveable.

If elected, will you support and work for a revised Official Plan that makes low-carbon development a top priority, in a way that delivers healthier, safer, more liveable neighbourhoods for your constituents?

Active City

Transportation decisions are critical to the health, vitality and viability of our communities and environment. For decades, North American streets – and by extension, our communities – were designed around the car. This over-emphasis can create isolated communities, dangerous streets, a loss of precious greenspace, congestion, air pollution, and severe funding challenges for public transportation. It has also contributed to the climate crisis by privileging cars as part of the day-to-day travel decisions of every resident of the city. Ecology Ottawa has a vision of Ottawa as an Active City as an alternative way forward – a place where bustling, livable neighbourhoods are connected by world-class public transit; where city streets are open to people of all ages, user needs and abilities; and where our transportation network accommodates the needs of people – and not just cars – to move about safely and efficiently.

Background:

Substantial progress has been made on the Active City file over the past five years. In 2013, the City of Ottawa passed a new Complete Streets Policy. Two years later, it passed the Complete Streets Implementation Plan. Now, all new streets and streets being rebuilt must be viewed through a “complete streets” lens – which means they should be considered for all users, ages and abilities. This marks a stark change in municipal transportation policy. Previously, a “good” street was simply one that moved cars as quickly and efficiently as possible. Now, pedestrians, cyclists and transit users get special consideration.

But strong policy is not enough. Ultimately, council reigns supreme. Some councillors have fought the presence of complete streets in their wards. Others agree with complete streets language, but still oppose priority pedestrian and cycling projects in their communities. We need a council that will step up to make Ottawa a leader on sustainable transportation. This means ensuring new streets are made as “complete” as possible every time there is an opportunity for improvement.

When it comes of cycling and pedestrian connectivity, light rail marks an incredible opportunity to improve how we get around our city. Stage 1 of light rail is coming online this November. By 2023, the system will expand to the western, southern and eastern ends of our city. Once the project is complete, 70% of Ottawans will live within five kilometres of a light rail station. So the next challenge is to ensure that each of these stations is accessible through sustainable transportation options – from well-connected bus routes, to bike paths and pedestrian access points. By widening the city’s planning radius to five kilometres around light rail stations, we can make the most of this important opportunity and move Ottawa toward a more sustainable future.

Questions:

1. Evidence from numerous studies of “induced demand” shows that widening highways and building new roads does nothing to alleviate traffic congestion. Instead, new roads and new lanes are quickly filled up with cars. Congestion is only relieved through investment in alternative forms of travel – by bike, by foot and by public transit.

If elected, will you commit to prioritizing pedestrian, cycling, and affordable public transit infrastructure over automobile infrastructure in meeting the future growth in travel demand in your ward (for council candidates) / city-wide (for mayoral candidates)?

2. Upon completion, the City of Ottawa’s light rail transit (LRT) network will bring 70% of the population to within five kilometres of a light rail station. It will be easier than ever for Ottawans to travel to and from their target destinations using sustainable transportation options, but only if the City prioritizes shared mobility services and pedestrian, cycling and transit connectivity near transit hubs.

Currently, the City of Ottawa only plans for connectivity within 600 metres of transit hubs. If elected, will you commit to widening this connectivity planning radius to five kilometres?

3. The City of Ottawa adopted a complete streets policy in 2013 and an implementation plan in 2015. Now, all new roads must be built to be accessible to all ages, users and abilities – including pedestrians, cyclists and transit users – rather than just car drivers. However, evidence shows that the policy alone is not sufficient to create complete streets. Councillor leadership is vital to ensure streets are as “complete” as possible and follow through on priority pedestrian and cycling projects identified in the Transportation Master Plan.

If elected, will you commit to ensuring that complete streets and priority pedestrian and cycling projects are built in your ward (for council candidates) / city-wide (for mayoral candidates)?

4. Between 2010 and 2014, 148 people died on Ottawa’s streets. These deaths were entirely avoidable – they were a by-product of the way we have designed our streets. Toronto and Edmonton have embraced a “Vision Zero” approach to road design, that considers all traffic deaths and serious injuries preventable. A Vision Zero policy involves design changes (i.e. reducing speeds and separating road users), funding for these changes and public reporting on progress.

If elected, will you commit to adopting a Vision Zero policy for Ottawa?

Living City

Ottawa is composed of much more than buildings, roads, and other built infrastructure. Our city is also made up of greenspace, animals, trees, and waterways. Ecology Ottawa's Living City program aims to breathe life into our built spaces and protect the greenspaces and waterways that define our city. We seek to integrate nature into the very fabric of urban planning, to defend the natural world, and to solve urban challenges by working with – not against – nature.

Background:

Trees are a vital part of Ottawa's living environment – they are the lungs of a city, and provide a wide range of benefits from water retention, to mitigating the heat island effect, to providing cleaner air and mental health benefits. Over the past several years, Ottawa has lost millions of trees to an infestation by the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive species that targets ash trees. This crisis sparked a campaign by Ecology Ottawa and other community groups for a new Urban Forest Management Plan – a detailed strategy to better understand and manage our urban forest for the next 20 years. The next city council will play a critical role in delivering on many of the commitments in the Urban Forest Management Plan, from reviews of key bylaws to improving enforcement and monitoring of existing urban forest policies.

Trees make up one component of “green infrastructure,” which has been gaining attention as a solution to managing water flows and ensuring high water quality in urban environments. Green infrastructure is made up of living and built systems used to slow down, soak up and filter rainwater. Besides trees, this often means rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements and rain barrels. With a changing climate, we know that Ottawa is increasingly subject to severe weather events like storms and flooding. Yet despite the urgent need for action, Ottawa is still piloting projects and collecting data. One way that the City can scale up its green infrastructure ambition is by working to ensure that all new streets resurfacing and projects integrate green infrastructure wherever possible. Many of the policy tools are already in place to make this happen; the challenge is for the city to set targets and monitor implementation in a way that is clear and consistent.

Adding greenery is no substitute for preventing the destruction of key elements of our living city. Ottawa is growing fast, and our living environment is too often sacrificed in the name of new developments. The city continues to widen roads through sensitive areas such as the Greenbelt. Meanwhile, our urban footprint continues to expand, sometimes on floodplains, and still in a way that prioritizes low-density development and communities built around the car. In the heart of the city, trees are regularly destroyed for infill projects that often do nothing to increase density. More can be done to safeguard Ottawa's greenspace as part of the planning process, and the next council has the opportunity to show leadership in this area.

All of this takes place in a broader context. All of the work we do to make Ottawa a green leader can be threatened by external risks. The Chalk River waste facility is one such risk. Canadian Nuclear Laboratories is proposing a permanent radioactive waste facility alongside the Ottawa

River, upstream from Ottawa. Stopping this waste facility requires federal leadership, but municipalities are voicing their concerns to draw attention and demand action. Already, mayors of 100 Quebec municipalities have banded together to oppose this proposal, citing a serious risk to drinking water from the Ottawa River. As a major city that shares its name with the river, Ottawa should step up and join the wall of opposition to this project.

Questions:

1. In 2017, the City of Ottawa adopted a strong Urban Forest Management Plan designed to safeguard and strengthen Ottawa's tree canopy. The plan contains a 20-year action plan that requires sustained attention and investment.

If elected, will you commit to fully implementing and fully funding the Urban Forest Management Plan?

2. Flooding and severe weather events are happening in Ottawa more frequently than in the past. It's more important than ever that the City adapt to climate change by systematically scaling up development of green infrastructure – living and built systems designed to slow down, soak up, and filter rainwater, such as trees, rain gardens and permeable pavements. The City has the policy tools to do this, but remains at the pilot phase and has not moved to wide-scale implementation.

If elected, will you work to ensure that all street resurfacing and new road construction integrate green infrastructure wherever possible?

3. Urban greenspace is a precious commodity. Yet sprawling development patterns, infill developments, and road widenings regularly threaten our trees, greenspace and biodiversity.

If elected, will you commit to prioritizing greenspace preservation as part of the planning process?

4. Canadian Nuclear Laboratories is proposing a permanent radioactive waste facility alongside the Ottawa River, upstream from Ottawa. Mayors of over 100 Quebec municipalities have banded together to oppose this proposal, citing a serious risk to drinking water from the Ottawa River.

If elected, will you join them in opposing this dangerous nuclear waste dump?

Waste Management

Every day, the residents of Ottawa make decisions that directly affect our city and environment. Waste is a by-product of everyday decisions, but its impacts can be global in scale and felt over long time horizons. Cities are at the front lines of dealing with the waste challenge – whether through collection, processing or consumer education. Over the next term of council, Ottawa has an opportunity to take bold action on this file, to the benefit of our water, land and climate.

Background:

Ecology Ottawa is working with Waste Watch Ottawa to address important waste management issues in this election. Waste Watch Ottawa is a citizen group recently formed by Ottawa residents. Its first report to Council showed that Ottawa's waste diversion performance falls well below the performance of almost all other large municipalities in Ontario and is well short of the potential that is demonstrated by other comparable municipalities with significantly higher waste diversion rates.

Ottawa is behind the leading Ontario municipalities, which are diverting over 50% of their waste, and is well behind the 63% waste diversion that is being achieved by York Region. Ottawa's waste diversion performance has been falling since 2013, which means increases in the quantity of waste that is being disposed of annually at the City's Trail Road landfill site.

The report noted that Ottawa is spending considerably less than all other large municipalities on promotion and education. While figures varied by municipality year-over-year, since 2004 Ottawa has never spent more than 50 cents per household on promotion and education. Most other municipalities are regularly spending twice as much, and sometimes as high as \$2.50 per household.

The poor and falling performance of the current recycling and green bin organics programs in Ottawa have a direct impact on the life expectancy of the City's Trail Road landfill site. If Ottawa improves its waste diversion performance and significantly increases the tonnages of materials collected from its recycling and green bin programs, the life expectancy of the Trail Road landfill would significantly lengthen.

Ottawa's arrangements with both Plasco and Orgaworld have been technically and financially problematic. The most recent secretively-negotiated deal with Orgaworld to accept all plastics into the green bin is regarded as a backward step by many residents. The secrecy stems from commercial confidentiality issues and the lengthy commercial arbitration process and subsequent appeal by Orgaworld. This means that many details of the arrangement may never be released to taxpayers.

A user pay (or pay-as-you-throw system) or a clear bag program could improve our performance. Such options represent a significant restructuring of current programs, and although successfully operating in other municipalities, they can be very controversial. Public consultation will be necessary with the options presented in the context of enhancing waste diversion. Timing of any changeover to such new systems will need to be coordinated with the retendering or extension of the current collection contracts and any province-wide policy changes. An effort should

however commence early in the new term of Council to explore and plan for such a new system-wide funding and waste diversion incentive approach.

Questions:

1. In March 2018, City Council changed its contract with Orgaworld to allow dog waste and other organics to be placed in green bins using non-compostable plastic bag liners. There's no evidence that allowing plastics will encourage more people to compost. But the new rules will produce a new stream of unnecessary plastic waste that will complicate the disposal process and deliver lower-quality compost.

If elected, will you support rescinding the decision to allow non-compostable plastic bag liners and dog waste in the green bin program?

2. Ottawa's 44% waste recycling rate is the lowest of all major cities in Ontario, well below leading municipalities like York Region at 65%, Halton Region at 56%, and Toronto at 51%. That's partly because Ottawa only spends 50¢ per household per year to promote the program and educate residents.

If elected, will you support tripling the level of funding for promotion and education for waste prevention, recycling, and green bin programs to at least \$1.50 per household per year, a level closer to the average for large municipalities in Ontario?

3. Ottawa's 2011 waste management plan is out of date and irrelevant. The City has made no effort to update the plan, though the poor performance of its recycling and green bin programs falls far short of the 65% waste diversion rate in York Region, the leading municipality in the province.

If elected, will you support the development of a new waste management strategy and waste diversion action plan that follow best practices and set a 65% waste diversion target for Ottawa?

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