



KITCHISSIPPI WARD
JEFF LEIPER

Majority of Ottawa residents opposed to urban boundary expansion: EKOS poll

(Ottawa-5/25/2020) Residents of Ottawa have expressed clearly their concern that expanding the land available to developers for housing will put new pressure on the delivery of City services, and increase greenhouse gasses, taxes and traffic congestion.

In a poll conducted by EKOS Research Associates, 52% of residents say they oppose an expansion of the urban boundary compared to 31% who support it. The poll was commissioned by Councillors Catherine McKenney, Shawn Menard and Jeff Leiper.

In the poll of 525 Ottawa residents conducted between May 20-May 23:

- 70% of respondents said expanding the urban boundary would increase pressure on the delivery of City services (8%: less pressure; 9% same; 13% don't know);
- 69% said it would increase greenhouse gasses in the region (7% less; 15% same; 10% don't know);
- 55% said it would increase traffic congestion in the urban core of the city (13% less; 21% same; 11% don't know); and,
- 55% said it would increase taxes for City residents (13% less; 20% same; 13% don't know).

On Wednesday, May 27, Ottawa City Council will vote on a recommendation to add as many as 1,650 hectares of land to be available to developers to build new suburbs. The recommendation is opposed by community, environmental and transportation groups from across Ottawa. They share the concern that expansion into undeveloped areas will increase the overall cost of living for Ottawa residents through higher taxes and transportation costs and is environmentally unsustainable.

In the face of majority opposition to the expansion plan and the legitimate concerns of community groups and councillors, the clear imperative is to foster a much greater level of transparency about the plan's pros and cons. More time would permit a more thorough understanding by decision-makers and residents of the costs and benefits of expansion versus holding the line.

The expansion is one of three scenarios explored by Ottawa City Staff, which included the potential to accommodate new population growth expected through 2046 within the geography already approved for development. This option, in the view of Councillors Jeff Leiper, Catherine McKenney, and Shawn Menard who commissioned the survey, is a realistic path to a more fiscally and environmentally sustainable City.

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