Municipality of Pontiac

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INTRODUCTION: A PLAN AND SOME BY-LAWS

Planning for the Municipality of Pontiac’s territory must be well suited to maintaining the quality of life of its residents and to the new realities they face. This planning program aims to achieve this objective by contributing to the preservation of the environment and of the quietness of the area, while enhancing the municipality’s recreational and tourism potential and its rural character.

Before introducing the elements of the planning program, let us recall the obligations of municipalities with regard to land use planning.

The Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development calls on all municipalities to conduct a five-year review of their planning program and related by-laws. This review must bring municipal urban planning up to date to better reflect the recent evolution of the territory and correspond perfectly to the new development priorities and objectives of the community.

In the area of land use planning, municipalities have two related but distinct authorities: 1) the authority to plan and 2) the authority to regulate. Each of these authorities must be expressed in a specific urban planning document assigned by the Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development.

The authority to plan must be exercised by developing and adopting a planning program in which the Municipality explains its strategies for the development of its territory and provides an overview of how it plans to organize and manage the use of that territory from now on. In other words, a planning program is a “land use plan”, a “vision for the future”.

Therefore, this planning program replaces the former Municipality of Pontiac planning program that has been in place, since 2001. The purpose of this replacement is to reaffirm the Municipality of Pontiac’s uniqueness in terms of land use planning, protection of the environment and improvement of its residents’ living environment. The program is an important management and territory enhancement tool for the municipality and its residents.

To begin with, the document defines the future face of the Municipality of Pontiac by focusing on the harmonious combination of an original habitat and a natural environment. The planning program also sets out the preferred land use designations (residential, commercial, institutional, agricultural, etc.) in each of the municipality’s sectors, as well as the desired housing densities. It lists the sites to be protected for ecological, historical or aesthetic reasons. Unlike the MRC des Collines de l’Outaouais’ Development Plan, which, in principle, is limited to matters of regional interest, the planning program addresses local issues.

If the planning program’s role is to explain the goals to be reached, several by-laws must define the means to be used and the standards to be met in order to achieve these goals.

Consequently, the authority to regulate is exercised by developing and adopting a set of rules that make up the urban planning by-laws. Their role is to ensure that on private lands the planning program’s objectives are met, and its proposals are implemented when they relate to the right to property of residents.
The urban planning by-laws are a true “social contract” that balances the individual freedoms of citizens when it comes to land use thereby improving the quality of the built environment and the benefits for each resident. The by-laws are the technical and legal tool needed to carry out the “land use plan” described in the planning program.

The Municipality of Pontiac’s former urban planning by-laws in effect since 2001 are being replaced by new urban planning by-laws, which are presented in separate documents. These new urban planning documents comply with the provisions of the *MRC des Collines de l’Outaouais* Development Plan, which has been in place since 1997.

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The content of this planning program is divided into three parts:

**Part A, entitled “Municipal Profile”**, reviews the main characteristics of the municipality’s territory and of the community.

**Part B, entitled “Development Diagnosis and Directions”**, briefly describes the diagnosis of the possibilities and constraints, sets out the development objectives to achieve and the directions to pursue.

**Part C, entitled “Development Proposals”**, outlines the land use designation and housing densities proposals, as well as the regulatory thematic.

A map entitled “Planning program” accompanies this text.
Part A – Municipal Profile
A.1 Location

The Municipality of Pontiac is located in the extreme southwest of the province of Quebec, marking out the border between Quebec and Ontario. It is part, together with six other municipalities, of the MRC des Collines-de-l’Outaouais (regional county municipality).

The area of the municipal territory is 444.84 square kilometres, and it is bordered on all of its south side by the Ottawa River, while the municipalities of Chelsea and La Pêche can be found respectively to the north and northeast of the territory. To the west, the municipality of Bristol, located in the MRC Pontiac (not to be confused with the Municipality of Pontiac), borders the municipal territory and the MRC des Collines-de-l’Outaouais. The southeast tip of the municipality touches the Aylmer sector of the City of Gatineau. Quyon, the most important village core of the municipality, is located approximately 50 kilometres to the west of Gatineau.

The Municipality of Pontiac is next to the greater Gatineau-Ottawa Region, an urban area with a population over one million, the fourth largest in Canada. This geographical situation is most certainly an economic and demographic asset, but it also generates a lot of pressure on the built and natural environment of the neighbouring rural communities.

FIGURE 1
Location of the municipality
A.2 Historical overview

Pontiac’s history as a full municipality is very recent. In fact, it was only established in 1975, when Eardley Township amalgamated with three other municipalities of the region: the Village of Quyon, the South Onslow Township and the North Onslow Township. At the time it was created, the new municipality was part of the Outaouais Regional Community (ORC), which later became the Communauté urbaine de l’Outaouais (CUO). In 1991, the Municipality of Pontiac and six other rural municipalities left the CUO and formed the MRC des Collines de l’Outaouais.

Even though the Municipality of Pontiac is very young, its territory has been inhabited for a very long time. Actually, the name Pontiac is of Algonquin origin and refers to the name of a grand chief of this tribe who lived in the Outaouais Region. Today, the name recalls the remains of several Amerindian sites that can be still be observed throughout the region.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the first settlers attracted by the forestry potential of this vast territory started establishing themselves in the region. The only area not covered by dense forests was the Black Bay sector, in Eardley Township, a large swamp that was dried up and transformed into very fertile agricultural land.

Eardley Township

Eardley was the first township to be developed; it included the hamlets of Eardley, Heyworth, Breckenridge and Luskville. It was established on August 22, 1806. It gets its name from the Eardley family who came from the Audley Village, in Staffordshire, England. The first European settlers, Nathan Merrifield and Martha Stafford, arrived in 1806 and used the riparian plains for agriculture.

Joseph Lusk (1783-1879), one of the first residents of Eardley Township, had the privilege of having the Village of Luskville named after him. It is also in this village that the region’s first post office opened in 1884. This post office is unique in Canadian history because it is the only one to have been operated by the members of the same family, the Desbiens, from its inauguration until today.

Luskville’s first chapel was built in 1862. The first stone church, St-Augustine’s Anglican church, was erected in 1881. Three years later, in 1884, Sainte-Dominique church, the first Catholic church built of stone was erected in Luskville. Several other religious buildings still exist in Eardley: the Zion (1866), Lower Eardley (1874) and Centre Eardley (1977) Methodist churches, as well as St-Luke Anglican church (1874).

In 1877, the first town hall was built. True to its roots, the small building still houses the Municipality of Pontiac offices.
Onslow Township

Pontiac Village

Between 1821 and 1837, a fur trading post was located at Indian Point, a strategic site for steamboats. This first settlement took the name of Pontiac, like the bay close by.

In 1840, politician Philemon Wright established a sawmill in Onslow, where he and his family owned 12,000 hectares of land. In the following years, the O’Connor brothers did the same.

In 1845, Pontiac Village grew rapidly thanks to the construction of a railroad 4.8 kilometres long used to transport steamboat passengers from Pontiac Bay to Lac des Chats. The rail cars were pulled by horses.

The first St-Mary’s church and the old cemetery were established in Pontiac Village.

In 1866, the construction of the Pontiac Pacific Junction Railway (PPJ) caused the steamboat to decline and with it the prosperity of the village.

Quyon

A second village, Quyon, was founded in 1846 by John Egan close to his sawmill of Quio River, where the best white pines grew. Just like the name Pontiac, Quyon is also of Amerindian origin and means “river with a sandy bottom”.

In 1860, Quyon was honoured with the visit of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales. He stayed overnight at Mrs. Bean’s inn, located across the village’s Catholic church, Saint-Nom-de-Marie, which can still be found in Quyon.

Many churches were erected in Quyon. St-Mary’s church was built in 1906 to replace the one built in 1877, who itself had replaced the Pontiac Village church. In 1882, St-John Anglican church replaced a church built in 1855, while the Methodist (now United) church was built in 1873. In 1925, Westley United was built. All in all, more that eight active churches still offer religious and social services on the Municipality of Pontiac’s territory.

In 1875, the Village of Quyon separated from Onslow Township, which had been established as a municipality 20 years earlier. Walton Smith was the first mayor of Quyon and served as postmaster for 26 years. His house, built in 1862, is one of the village’s landmarks.

Quyon has its own ferry, which has provided a link to the Ontario shores for over 120 years. In 1885, when it first started operating, the ferry was powered by horses.

Finally, since 1920, Quyon has its own agricultural exhibition and western festival: the Quyon Fair.
South Onslow Township

In 1876, the South Onslow Township separated from Onslow and Hugh Mulligan became its first mayor. It is mainly because of logging, especially of white pine, in great demand at that time, that the township was developed. The opening of numerous sawmills led to the construction of several small hamlets. Today, most of the wooded areas have disappeared, and agriculture has replaced forestry.

North Onslow Township

Around 1900, mining quickly joined logging to accelerate the development of the region, particularly in North Onslow Township. As early as 1914, the Canadian Wood Molybdenite Company established a mine in the township. During the First World War, it was the world’s largest producer of molybdenite. It closed in 1919, reopened in 1924 and closed down during the Second World War. However, it is still possible to see the ruins of the mine that marked the history of the township.

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This historical overview gives us a better understanding of the importance of the Municipality of Pontiac’s heritage, which is particularly rich in religious buildings, industrial relics, vintage buildings, country settings and memorial sites.
A.3 Natural environment

A.3.1 Geomorphology

The territory of the Municipality of Pontiac runs along the southern end of the Canadian Shield. As a result, it is characterized by a rather rugged landscape made up of a gently rolling plain, depressions and hills with slight or moderate slopes. However, summits are not very high and are generally flat. Several rocky cliffs are found on the south sides of the hills while the north slopes are not as steep.

In the south of the municipality, soil is characterized by large rock zones. The bedrock is composed of metamorphic crystalline rock (paragneiss, marble, amphibolite) and sedimentary rocks (limestone, dolomite), while the slight or moderate hillsides are covered with a thin layer of till.

Located between the hills of the south side of the Canadian Shield and the Ottawa River, the plain is composed of large quantities of marine sediments, clay and sand, which explains the fertility of the lowlands. Fluvial deposits composed of various granular materials are found in the larger valleys.

A.3.2 Hydrography

Located in the Ottawa River watershed, the Municipality of Pontiac’s hydrographical network is formed by multiple watercourses: close to 50 lakes (mainly located within the boundaries of Gatineau Park), 2 bays (Pontiac Bay and Black Bay), 2 rivers (the Quyon River and, of course, the Ottawa River) and a vast number of streams of different sizes.

Shores of watercourses must obviously be protected to prevent the destruction of natural and aesthetic environments.

A.3.3 Forest

More than two-thirds of the Gatineau Park is located in the municipality of Pontiac, representing just over 200 square kilometres or 46 percent of the municipality’s territory. Consequently, the forest occupies a prominent place. However, Gatineau Park is under the jurisdiction of the National Capital Commission and, as a result, the municipality has no control over it.

This protected forest has a subpolar, subhumid continental type climate, which encourages the growth of vegetation composed essentially of sugar maple-basswood, sugar maple-ironwood, sugar maple-yellow birch and sugar maple-red oak stands, as well as hemlock forest and yellow birch-fir, and fir-red maple stands.
As for the huge forest canopy that once covered the rest of the territory, massive logging has left only scattered patches of forest now used for agroforestry. Nevertheless, the MRC considers some of those forests as noteworthy. The plant species that can be found in them are almost the same as those found in the Gatineau Park. On the other hand, the milder Ottawa Valley climate, of the moderate subhumid continental type, allows white and red pine forests to take root. The same goes for the black walnut tree, which does not normally grow in these northern latitudes.

The remarkable forest canopy of the Municipality of Pontiac must be protected not only for its ecological qualities but also for its tourism and recreational qualities.

### A.3.4 Wildlife habitats

Seven areas of aquatic fauna are found on the shores of the Ottawa River.

In addition, two important bird colonies have settled on the small islands in the middle of the Ottawa River, at the southwestern limit of the municipality. More than nine heronries can also be found on the Municipality of Pontiac’s territory, within the limits of Gatineau Park.

Northwest of Black Bay, the muskrat inhabits an area of close to one square kilometre.

Breckenridge Creek provides a habitat for several endangered species, namely the Western chorus frog and Blandings’s turtle.

Finally, an ungulate wildlife habitat can be found between the southeastern limit of Gatineau Park and Highway 148.

A considerable number of wildlife habitats can be found in the municipality. Even though Gatineau Park already protects most of them, more than ten of these sites are located outside the park and fall under municipal responsibility. Obviously, they will have to be carefully protected.

### A.3.5 Zones at risk of mass movement

Several zones at risk of mass movement can be found on the Municipality of Pontiac's territory. Most of them take the form of a corridor a few kilometres long and are mainly located in unpopulated areas.

However, two zones of mass movement are more important.

The first is located to the very west of the territory, at the limit of the Municipality of Bristol, and has a forest that is considered noteworthy by the MRC.

The second is located at the southeastern limit of the municipality, in the Breckenridge sector, close to the municipal boundary separating the Aylmer sector (City of Gatineau) from the Municipality of Chelsea.

Of course, municipal by-laws will adequately regulate building in these dangerous zones.

### A.3.6 Flood zones
The size of the hydrographical network implies that a good section of the territory is likely to be periodically flooded.

In the Village of Quyon, all the shores of the Ottawa and Quyon rivers have a 20-year recurring flood risk. As for the 100-year recurring flood zones, they cover a larger area of the territory, and sometimes go very far into the land affecting even small size streams.

By-laws, for both the Quyon sector and other sectors at risk in the municipality, will have to ensure security of person and property by carefully regulating building in floodplains.
A.4 Socio-economic environment

A.4.1 Population

In 2006, Statistics Canada estimated the permanent population of the Municipality of Pontiac to be 5,238 residents. As this population was 3,955 residents in 1986, this represents a 25 percent increase in population over 20 years. The recent growth is occurring mainly in the Breckenridge sector, at the limit of the Aylmer sector of the City of Gatineau. Year after year, population growth in the Municipality of Pontiac is lower than in the MRC des Collines-de-l’Outaouais, but remains within the average growth rate for the Outaouais.

The Municipality of Pontiac has a large population of vacationers estimated to be almost double that of the permanent population. Seasonal residents live along the shores of the Ottawa River, in the sectors of Tremblay, Allen, Bélisle, Carcajou, Black Bay and Pontiac Bay beaches. This population contributes to the success of several local businesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pontiac</th>
<th>MRC des Collines-de-l’Outaouais</th>
<th>Outaouais</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>3,955</td>
<td>22,100</td>
<td>256,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4,501</td>
<td>23,905</td>
<td>283,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4,722</td>
<td>33,680</td>
<td>307,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4,643</td>
<td>35,188</td>
<td>315,546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,238</td>
<td>42,005</td>
<td>341,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation 1986-2006</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census
While the population of the Municipality of Pontiac only represents 12 percent of the MRC’s total population, its territory accounts for close to 22 percent. As a result, the municipality’s density of occupation is 12 people per square kilometre, like in the Outaouais Region. This is rather low when compared to the MRC’s density of occupation, which is 20 people per square kilometre. On the other hand, we must remember that Quyon, Luskville, Heyworth and Breckenridge are the most densely populated cores and that a large number of local businesses and services can be found in those areas. Settlements located outside these cores are essentially agricultural.

### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pontiac</th>
<th>MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais</th>
<th>Outaouais</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Density of population per square kilometre – 2006</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census

### A.4.2 Age groups

The age pyramid shows that the population over 65 is the least represented in the municipality. On the other hand, the 35-49 generation is the most represented. Their children, who are now between 5 and 19 years of age, are in greater numbers that those before and after them. Besides, as the generation of young adults (20-29) is small, it indicates that the generations of children to come will be less important. Consequently, the Municipality of Pontiac is fairly young, but will tend to age somewhat rapidly in the years to come, unless the municipality continues to absorb the population coming from Gatineau.

### FIGURE 2

Age pyramid – 2006

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census
A.4.3 Household structure

Figure 3 illustrates that 35 percent of households consist of a couple with at least one child, while 33 percent of households consist of a couple without children and 21 percent of households consist of one person. Compared to the rest of the province of Quebec, more households are made up of couples in the Municipality of Pontiac, thus increasing the need for services available to young families.

![Figure 3: Household composition – 2006](source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census)

A.4.4 Languages and ethnicities

While 56 percent of the population of the Municipality of Pontiac declared that its mother tongue is French, Figure 4 shows that 63 percent of the population is proficient in both French and English.

Bilingualism is more prevalent in the municipality than in the rest of the province of Quebec (41 percent), even though 24 percent of the municipality’s population is unilingual English and 13 percent unilingual French. It should also be noted that in the rest of the province, only 4 percent of the population is unilingual English, and 54 percent is unilingual French, which is a great difference.

As for the language spoken at home, French and English share equal ground in the Municipality of Pontiac. The rest of the province of Quebec, where close to 80 percent of the population only speaks French at home, shows quite a different picture.
FIGURE 4
Knowledge of official languages – 2006

Pontiac

- Neither English or French: 0%
- English only: 24%
- French only: 13%
- English and French: 63%

Quebec

- Neither English or French: 54%
- English only: 1%
- French only: 41%
- English and French: 4%

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census

Immigrants represent only 4 percent of the Municipality of Pontiac’s local population. They come mostly from the United States or Western Europe. Eight percent of the municipality’s population has aboriginal origins.

The Municipality of Pontiac is a great example of harmonious linguistic cohabitation, which does not prevent each of the two communities from defending its linguistic identity. However, community spirit would certainly benefit from the development of joint projects and cohesive institutions.
A.4.5 Education

As indicated in Figure 5, 70 percent of the Municipality of Pontiac’s population has obtained a high school diploma, while 30 percent of the population holds a college or university degree. This compares to 40 percent in the MRC and 37 percent in the province of Quebec. Vocational training should possibly be included in community or cooperative projects that focus on local resources, such as agriculture and agri-food.

FIGURE 5
Highest level of education attained – 2006
(Population age 15 and over)

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census
A.4.6 Employment

The unemployment rate in the Municipality of Pontiac has dropped significantly over 5 years, from 5.9 percent in 2001 to 3.9 percent in 2006. This rate is close to that of the MRC, which is 4.8 percent, while it is notably lower than the province’s rate, which is 7.0 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pontiac</th>
<th>MRC des Collines-de-l’Outaouais</th>
<th>Quebec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 Participation rate</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Participation rate</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Unemployment rate</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 Unemployment rate</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census

With regard to the type of occupation of the population of the Municipality of Pontiac, it is much the same as that of the MRC in the main sectors of trades, transportation, machinery, sales, services, business, finance and administration.

The sales and services sector, which ranks first in the MRC and in the province of Quebec, ranks second in the municipality together with business, finance and administration.
FIGURE 6
Type of occupation – 2006
(Population age 15 and over)

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census
A.4.7 Household incomes

Even though the unemployment rate in the Municipality of Pontiac is relatively the same as the one in the MRC, the median household and personal incomes are lower. Although the municipality’s population is employed and its income is above the provincial average, it has less access than its neighbours do to the better paying jobs in Gatineau and Ottawa, not only because of distance but also because of education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pontiac</th>
<th>MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais</th>
<th>Québec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median personal income ($)</td>
<td>26,929</td>
<td>31,809</td>
<td>24,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income ($)</td>
<td>59,151</td>
<td>66,109</td>
<td>46,419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census

The 2001 data in Figure 7 indicates that 36 percent of households in the municipality make do with an income of less than $30,000, compared to 22 percent of households in the MRC. In contrast, the MRC has 7 percent more households than in the Municipality of Pontiac with an annual income of more than $100,000.

Source: Statistics Canada – 2001 Census
A.5 Built environment

A.5.1 Housing

The Municipality of Pontiac’s housing inventory is approximately 2,800 dwelling units, 62 percent of which are permanent residences and 38 percent are seasonal residences; 93 percent of permanent residences are single-family dwellings. The most frequent types of residences are the bungalow or the two-storey house covered with wood or brick. These permanent residences are mostly located in the Village of Quyon and the Luskville, Heyworth and Breckenridge sectors. In Quyon, the history of the village had an influence on the “Western Quebec” architecture of the buildings, which combined to density lends a charming character and atmosphere to the environment, which should certainly be developed.

Dwellings outside these four sectors are mainly farming houses and waterfront vacation homes, the latter being located mostly near specific beaches along the Ottawa River, such as Tremblay, Allen, Bélisle, Carcajou, Black Bay and Pontiac Bay beaches. More and more seasonal cottages are being converted into permanent residences.

Eighty-four percent of the Municipality of Pontiac’s households own their dwelling, but close to half of these were built before 1970 and 70 percent before 1986. As a result, nearly half of the dwellings are in need of repair and close to 12 percent are in need of major renovations. Even though owners have great “do-it-yourself” skills, they could require financial support. The average value of dwelling units in the municipality is approximately 5 percent lower than in the MRC. The Breckenridge sector, which extends Aylmer’s growth to the west, is the only sector where a significant number of new homes are being built.
Each year, the municipality issues an average of fifty or so building permits for new dwelling units, which means a housing inventory growth rate of close to 3 percent that is largely attributable to development in the Breckenridge sector.

However, the density of the new buildings in Breckenridge and their urban architectural style contrast with the rural character of the rest of the municipality. Concerned with preserving the country charm of the territory and the quality of groundwater, the municipality now favours a lower occupancy rate outside the village cores. The subdivision standards will ensure that the integrity of the natural environment is preserved.
A.5.2 Economic activities

A.5.2.1 Businesses and services

Commercial activities and community-based services are mostly found in the Village of Quyon and in hamlets, as well as along Highway 148. These businesses are locally oriented and there are thirty or so of them: groceries, convenience stores, restaurants, mechanical garages, boutiques (marine, snow mobile and antique furniture), motel bar, apiculture centre, natural products, hairdressers, car dealers, marina, camping, grape grower, sugar maple growing, slaughterhouse, butcher’s shop, riding centre and service station.

In addition to those previously mentioned more than 20 small businesses active in the arts and culture sector and over 10 agri-food businesses can be found in the municipality. In total, there are more than 70 diversified places of business in the Municipality of Pontiac.

A.5.2.2 Agriculture and agroforestry

The Municipality of Pontiac shows great vitality in the areas of agriculture and agroforestry, which have approximately 1,960 hectares at their disposal; more than 44 percent of the surface area of the municipal territory. That is almost the surface area of Gatineau Park within the limits of the municipality and more than one third of all agricultural land in the MRC.

In the Municipality of Pontiac, more than half of the protected agricultural land is “active”; the rest is equally split between traditional agriculture and agroforestry. Ten farms are registered as “places of business accessible to the public”. They specialize in sugar maple growing, apiculture, horticulture, market gardening, grape growing, herbs, essential oils and the raising of veal and lamb.

The Municipality strongly supports the efforts made by farm operators to make their operations profitable and stimulate agri-food production. However, the proper conditions are not always there, especially in the so-called “sectors to be developed”, while the market conditions do not favour intensive and costly farming of large areas. It would be easier for several farm operators to make their operation profitable by cultivating specialized or organic products on smaller areas and by integrating various complementary agricultural activities such as the sale and on-site consumption of farm products, bed and breakfasts, country-style dining, etc. In short, all activities allowing the development of an agri-tourism market would be welcomed, including the implementation of hobby farms combining small-scale farming and recreation.

In this context, it might be worth relaxing the enforcement of the Act Respecting the Preservation of Agricultural Land and Agricultural Activities based on the important distinction that must be made between the land suited to large-scale farming and intensive breeding and the less productive land more suited to small-scale specialized farming or to a conversion to non-agricultural uses. In the Municipality of Pontiac, the sectors earmarked for agriculture that should be reviewed are those of Hickey Road (range 10), Ruthledge Lake (range 13), and the sectors located to the north of the Village of Quyon and Luskville. Consequently, the Municipality will support any initiative taken in this regard by the MRC, including an application of collective scope initiated in accordance with section 59 of the law.
A.5.2.3 Recreational tourism

Gatineau Park attracts a considerable number of visitors and plays a major role in the development of regional recreational tourism. On the other hand, it is unfortunate that this influx of people has no significant impact on the Municipality of Pontiac’s economy. This situation is quite strange given that two thirds of the park are located within the municipality’s boundaries.

Still, the Municipality of Pontiac has several natural attractions on its territory, even on the portions located outside Gatineau Park. This is the case for the Ottawa River and its shores, Pontiac Bay, Luskville Falls, Lusk Caverns, and the wooded areas and agricultural landscapes that dot and characterize the territory.

A few recreational activities are also available, such as riding lessons, horseback riding, a hang-gliding and paragliding school, snowmobile and all-terrain vehicle trails, and a boat launching ramp with a dock. In addition, two youth camps: one for the Ottawa Jewish Community and the other for underprivileged children are located in the municipality. Finally, the biggest elm in the world can be found at the Alary farm, in the Luskville sector.

The site of the Chats Falls Park, located on the Ottawa River, also has a great potential for attracting visitors. It has a definite heritage value, beautiful scenery and a particular wildlife. In fact, the MRC is protecting the site’s integrity and, in partnership with the Centre local de développement (local development centre), is working on its development so that residents and visitors can discover the park. For the Municipality of Pontiac, it is a major structuring project, aligned with a bicycle path project and the river crossing at Quyon.

However, in spite of the great recreational and tourism potential of the Municipality of Pontiac, accommodation and food services are in short supply, which greatly reduces the number of tourists.

A.5.2.4 Community and socio-cultural facilities

There are two libraries in the municipality, which are located in Quyon and in Luskville.

Different sport activities are also offered to the population. Luskville and Quyon are the two sectors with facilities were residents can enjoy physical fitness training, badminton, martial arts, archery, various ball activities, soccer, and in-line skating.
A.5.2.5 Sites of historical interest

Except for Sainte-Dominique church (1884) in Luskville, there is no other "classified" historic building in the Municipality of Pontiac. Nevertheless, certain old-fashioned buildings are of definite interest to the community and appeal to visitors' curiosity.

In addition to the eight active churches and the two old ones found on the territory, which recall the small hamlets that marked the beginning of the municipality's development; other 19th century buildings speak of the region's flourishing past. They include many stone houses (Mohr, MacLean, Herdman, Hurdman, Foran and Lusk), log houses (Herdman), square red brick houses with truncated pyramidal roof (Kennedy Road), the McCaffrey blacksmith's shop, the old Lusk and Vieux Parker railroad stations, and the Dowd mill, which became Balharrie and then M & R Feeds. Six old mining sites also bear witness to the community's heritage.

Finally, it should be noted that history has handed down a particularly scenic charm to the Village of Quyon. Its built environment deserves to be protected by harmoniously integrating renovations to existing buildings and the construction of new buildings. In that regard, the Municipality will enforce a new By-law on Site Planning and Architectural Integration in Quyon.

A.6 Facilities and infrastructures

A.6.1 Health, social services and educational institutions

Residents of the Municipality of Pontiac do not have access to a health and social services centre (CSSS) on their territory. There is a local community service centre (CLSC) in Quyon, but the nearest hospitals are located in Shawville and Gatineau.

As for educational institutions, 2 Francophone elementary schools of the Commission scolaire des Portages-de-l'Outaouais are located in the Municipality of Pontiac: Immeuble Notre-Dame-de-la-Joie in Luskville (162 students) and Immeuble Sainte-Marie in Quyon (99 students). The two schools have been paired under the name École de la Vallées-des-Voyageurs. Francophone high school students attend the école secondaire Grande-Rivière in Gatineau. Anglophone elementary students attend Onslow Elementary School (close to 85 students) if they are from Quyon, while those from Luskville and Breckenridge attend Eardley Elementary School in Gatineau. Anglophone high school students attend D'Arcy McGee High School in Gatineau or Pontiac High School in Shawville.

A.6.2 Water and sewers

Only part of the Village of Quyon is served by a water and sewer system. The Municipality is in the process of redesigning its sewer system in order to reduce its impact on the hydrographical network.

Outside of Quyon, residences each have their own septic systems.
A.6.3 Road network

Highway 148 runs across the Municipality of Pontiac from east to west and constitutes its backbone. It connects the service cores, is used for most motorized travel and links with five collector roads: Lac-des-Loups Road, des Pères-Dominicains Road, Mountain Road, Eardley-Masham Road and Clarendon Road. This regional road plays a major role in the municipality’s development. Among other things, it is travelled by freight trucks and forest products trucks coming from the MRC Pontiac.

The rest of the road network is made up of a multitude of small local thoroughfares serving the greater part of the territory; many are private and unpaved. Others are dead end streets near the Ottawa River and serve the cottages located close to the beaches.

Highway 366 runs approximately 3.5 kilometres to the northeast of the Municipality of Pontiac, in the Gatineau Park. Located out of the community’s daily living environment, it has little impact on local road travel, and is mostly used by heavy vehicles and vacationers.

A.6.4 Waste management

Two dump sites, which have been closed, can be found on the municipality’s territory. All of the Municipality of Pontiac’s household waste is collected by Waste Management and sent to the Régie intermunicipale Argenteuil Deux-Montagnes’ landfill site.

Private contractors take care of the disposal of septic sludge, which they transport to appropriate facilities.
Part B – Development Diagnosis and Directions
B.1 Diagnosis – Summary

The municipal profile of the previous chapter provided the main characteristics of the Municipality of Pontiac’s population, territory and activities. The short summary that follows identifies strong and weak points, as well as the potential and constraints of the municipality, in order to determine the development directions to be pursued.

The municipality’s population is made up mostly of people aged between 35 and 60, with a strong presence on the labour market. However, even if the Municipality of Pontiac is part of one of the most dynamic economic regions in Canada, residents do not benefit from this situation and the average household income in the municipality is one of the lowest in the MRC des Collines-de-l’Outaouais. While the unemployment rate in the Municipality of Pontiac is lower than in the rest of the province, it is still higher than in most of the neighbouring municipalities. The limited range of educational, medical and recreational services makes the population of the municipality very dependent on the neighbouring urban areas. Furthermore, the municipality’s population growth rate is less than that of the MRC. As a result, even though the Municipality of Pontiac is well positioned when compared to the rest of the province of Quebec; it should capitalize on the region’s exceptional development by drawing on its own assets.

The Municipality of Pontiac’s primary vocation is agriculture, with more than one third of the MRC’s agricultural land. Its rural identity is important, and it is essential to give agriculture, as well as to all those who work in that sector, particular consideration in order to maximize this activity, which is vital to the municipality. In fact, the MRC has recently taken a turn in support of organic agriculture. Agri-tourism and local marketing of farm products should complement agricultural activity.

The Municipality of Pontiac’s second vocation is ecotourism. Since the Gatineau Park occupies close to half of the total surface area of the municipality and attracts thousands of visitors, it should be possible for the population to take better advantage of this situation. Attracted by the peacefulness and nature, these visitors are the preferred clientele for ecotouristic activities.

In this regard, the potential of the Municipality of Pontiac mostly builds on its beautiful rural scenery, surrounded by the Canadian Shield massif and the Ottawa River, its lush vegetation cover and its hilly landscape. As for the village settlement, located in Quyon, Luskville and Breckenridge, it combines harmoniously with the agricultural scenery and contributes to the country atmosphere of the municipality. In this respect, the presence of the Gatineau Park and of an important agricultural zone helps to control development.

The shores of the Ottawa River, Pontiac Bay, Luskville Falls, Lusk Caverns, the wooded areas and the agricultural scenery that make up the territory, are all attractions to be showcased. The Ottawa River alone offers an enormous potential for recreational tourism development. The networking of all these attractions is essential, and can be achieved by creating tourism circuits, bicycle paths and hiking trails that will allow visitors to admire the beauty of the region’s scenery. However, the success of any tourism development is mainly dependent upon adequate accommodation and food services, which is obviously not the case now.
The natural and built environments of the Municipality of Pontiac must be preserved and enhanced, with a view to sustainable development, whether it is to ensure the quality of life of residents or to support recreational tourism development. Consequently, building near wildlife habitats, watercourses, wooded areas and fragile ecosystems must be carefully restricted. Any development will have to respect the natural environment and the quality of the landscape that surround it.

The pressure for development is felt mainly in the eastern part of the municipality, which is next to the City of Gatineau. In order to reduce the squandering of agricultural territory and natural environments, as well as to reduce spending related to roads and other infrastructures, it would be desirable to encourage building in the village core of Quyon, already advantaged by its diversity, as well as in the sectors of Luskville, Heyworth and Breckenridge. In these last three sectors, the absence of water and sewer infrastructures requires, however, to maintain a low building density, especially to protect the quality of groundwater. It would also be advisable to consolidate and improve the four service hubs: Quyon, Breckenridge, Luskville and Heyworth.

Considering the importance of the Municipality of Pontiac as a cottage area, more and more seasonal cottages are converted to permanent residences, mainly in the beach areas. These conversions contribute to improving buildings, reconsolidating certain parcels of land, renovating septic installations and increasing the permanent population. On the other hand, several parcels of land do not always have the best surface area to minimize the environmental impact of wastewater. In this regard, it may be worth considering putting in shared disposal and treatment systems. In addition, the disorganized subdivision of the beach sectors has left a legacy of narrow, very winding, sometimes dangerous streets whose maintenance is tricky. Finally, the very basic architecture of several cottages could be improved with a better control over the aesthetic aspect of the renovations that accompany the conversion of cottages into permanent residences.
B.2 Development directions

Considering the foregoing, the Municipality of Pontiac will pursue the following development directions. These directions will also influence the planning of the Municipality’s budget allocations and some direct interventions within its jurisdiction. Finally, these directions will constitute the general framework that the Municipality will use to set the priorities it will put forward in discussions with its local, municipal and governmental partners.

These directions do not necessarily complement projects that can be undertaken immediately; that would be the role of an “action plan” rather than a planning program. For the time being, they are more a set of long-term objectives that articulate into a “vision for the future”, a “project for the territory” whose details and implementation mechanisms will gradually become clearer as discussions and agreements with the Municipality and its partners evolve.

1. **Enhance the natural environment**

   Protecting the natural environment is a major concern of residents of the Municipality of Pontiac. Natural attractions and striking scenery are plentiful on the territory and their preservation is essential to the quality of life of residents and to the development of ecotourism. Managing the territory in an environmentally responsible way will ensure the sustainability of resources that are vital to the development of the community. To achieve this, the following objectives will be pursued:

   - Rigorously protect the shores of lakes and watercourses, wetlands, aquatic and shore ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and other fragile ecosystems.
   - Respect natural constraints when developing.
   - Protect the visual quality along watercourses and bodies of water.
   - Ensure forest sustainability and the attractiveness of forest landscapes.
   - Encourage residential development within the urbanization perimeters.
   - Maintain a low occupancy rate in development sectors without water and sewer services.
   - Prohibit the establishment of all new waste disposal sites.
   - Set up a composting awareness program.

2. **Enhance the rural character of the built and natural landscape**

   The Municipality of Pontiac’s territory was developed by the primary exploitation of natural resources like the forest, the mines and agriculture. The built-up area is generally composed of wooden single-family houses with modest, but picturesque, architecture. Their integration to the scenery gives the area a truly rural character, in harmony with the surrounding natural environment.
However, there is important pressure for development from the City of Gatineau, whose Aylmer sector is next to the south-eastern part of the Municipality of Pontiac. Even though this residential development is welcomed, it is important to ensure its integration with the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the following objectives are to be pursued:

- **Harmonize the built environment and the natural environment with building erection standards and criteria that maximize their integration into the landscape, while showing some flexibility, when it comes to main and complementary buildings’ volumetry, architecture, exterior siding and location, as well as when it comes to setbacks, landscaping of open spaces and wooded buffers, and commercial signs.**

- **Maintain and showcase the picturesque architectural character of the Village of Quyon.**

- **Encourage the erection of new constructions on larger parcels of land, outside the urbanization perimeters.**

- **Restrict the installation of mobile homes.**

- **Protect landscapes with great aesthetic value, architectural landmarks and symbols, natural lookout areas and their views, as well as buildings typical of the municipality’s built heritage, representative of rural settings.**

- **Favour architectural styles that are typical of rural settings.**

- **Enhance the green surroundings of the landscape by promoting the conservation or improvement of the vegetation cover, particularly along Highway 148.**

3. **Protect agricultural land and promote the development of organic agriculture**

The Municipality of Pontiac’s community feels very strongly about the protection of its agricultural land, which is crucial to its community life, its identity and its economic welfare. In this regard, the introduction of organic agriculture goes hand in hand with the aspirations of the community because this type of agriculture ensures the preservation of the natural environment in addition to being an emerging sustainable farming method. On that point, the following objectives are to be pursued:

- **Protect agricultural land by consolidating urban development.**

- **Promote the “MRC-Bio” concept while supporting the agricultural and forestry strategy developed by the MRC and the CLD (local development centre) des Collines-de-l’Outaouais.**

- **Facilitate farm operators’ access to information on organic agriculture.**
4. **Support agri-tourism development**

The introduction of agri-tourism activities related to agriculture would contribute to its progress and to the local economy. The following objectives point in this direction:

- **Encourage the development of country-style dining, bed and breakfasts, sugar bushes, hobby farms and other activities related to agri-tourism.**

- **Establish agri-food tours for each season with the possibility of using different modes of transport (car, bicycle, cross-country skis, horse-drawn carts, all-terrain vehicle, snowmobile, etc.).**

- **Support the marketing of home-grown products by allowing more points of sale.**

5. **Encourage the development of the recreational and tourism capability**

In the Municipality of Pontiac, there is an abundance of beautiful natural landscapes with significant tourism potential. However, uncontrolled tourism development often means the degradation of the natural environment that initially attracted visitors. That is why the future development of “sustainable” tourism must be done in keeping with the environment, in an ecotourism perspective. The following objectives are, therefore, very relevant:

- **Support the tightly controlled development of recreational trails intended for cycle touring, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, as well as the development of public facilities and adequate services, in the Village of Quyon and along watercourses, among other places.**

- **Encourage the development of new environmentally responsible recreational activities (such as riding centres), for each season, without compromising the existing ones.**

- **Encourage the development of nature interpretation activities in order to take advantage of the exceptional nature of the forest environment, watercourses and bodies of water.**

- **Support the creation of public access points to the Ottawa River, Pontiac Bay, Black Bay and Breckenridge, while protecting the peace and quiet of waterfront residents.**

- **Encourage the development of wilderness campgrounds along the shores.**

- **Strengthen the link between the two shores of the Ottawa River thanks to the Quyon ferry, by allowing visitors, particularly cyclists, to cross the river easily.**

- **Encourage the expansion of farm tourism.**
6. Improve and diversify services, businesses and tourist accommodation capacity

The Municipality of Pontiac currently has very few businesses and services essential to the development of tourism, especially when it comes to accommodations. In order to deal with this situation, the following objectives will be pursued:

- Improve and diversify businesses and services in the Village of Quyon, in the 3 secondary service hubs and along Highway 148.

- Encourage the setting-up of an accommodations network, made up of lodges and bed and breakfasts, among others.
Part C – Development Proposals
C.1 Land use designations and occupancy rate

The planning program map shows the division of the municipal territory according to a set of “zones of use” indicating the “general designations” of each its parts. The map indicates the best designation for each zone. These land use designations or general designations will be used in the Zoning By-law, which will establish precisely all the uses authorized in these zones.

These designations reflect the previously mentioned directions, as well as the main designations determined in the MRC des Collines de l’Outaouais’ Development Plan.

The planning program includes the following main designations:

1. Residential – Very low density
2. Residential – Low density
3. Residential – Medium density
4. Mixed (residential and commercial)
5. Public
6. Recreational tourism
7. Agricultural
8. Conservation and recreation
9. Industrial

C.1.1 “Residential” designations (very low, low and medium density)

The division and distribution of residential zones consolidate building in sectors that are already built. In fact, most of the development projects are concentrated in those sectors.

In order to accommodate simultaneously the developing sectors and the maintenance of the character of the more rural settings, density will vary from “very low” to “medium” according to the rural or village nature of the various areas and their particular environmental sensitivity.

Generally, very low density residential zones refer to rather scattered housing on lots with a very large surface area, while low density zones refer to “semi village” housing on lots of approximately one acre. As for the medium density, it refers to the Village of Quyon, which is served by a water and sewer system.

Other uses and local services could be authorised by the Zoning By-law, as complementary uses to a dwelling.
C.1.2 “Mixed” designation (residential and commercial)

The “mixed” designation refers to all built sectors where it is relevant to combine residential uses and commercial uses with local servicing, as well as local services. The mixed designation zones are part of the “secondary service” and “multipurpose” designation of the MRC des Collines de l’Outaouais’ Development Plan.

The Municipality of Pontiac has selected four mixed designation zones. In Quyon, these are certain areas along Highway 148 and Egan Street, as well as the Luskville, Eardley and Heyworth service centres, also located along Highway 148. Building density will range from low to medium, depending on the locations.

C.1.3 “Public” designation

This designation refers to public sites and locations intended mainly for equipment or community services, in the centre of the Village of Quyon. Public parks, schools, churches, cemeteries, public and parapublic buildings and equipments, as well as the Quyon ferry are part of this designation.

C.1.4 “Recreational tourism” designation

The “recreational tourism” designation refers to the area next to the eastern part of the Village of Quyon, where the Municipality will authorize certain community and recreation uses.

C.1.5 “Agricultural” designation

This designation corresponds to the agricultural zone protected by the Act Respecting the Preservation of Agricultural Land and Agricultural Activities. In that zone, activities other than agriculture or breeding must first be authorized by the Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec (agricultural land protection board).

C.1.6 “Conservation and recreation” designation

In this designation, the Municipality will only privilege activities related to nature conservation and extensive recreation in order to protect the habitat of waterfowl on certain shores of the Ottawa River, the habitat of ungulate wildlife and bird colonies. The Chats Falls Park and Gatineau Park are part of this designation.

C.1.7 “Industrial” designation

The “industrial” designation refers to the parcels of land located east of Quyon, on both sides of Highway 148.

The two in-trench disposal sites that are no longer in use are not part of this designation.
C.2 Regulatory themes

The fundamental role of a planning program is to set out the principles behind the various urban planning by-laws. As a result, the by-laws related to this planning program will comply with these principles and those of the *MRC des Collines de l’Outaouais* Development Plan. According to the act, the Municipality of Pontiac’s by-laws will also have to set standards at least as stringent as those suggested in the complementary document to the *MRC des Collines de l’Outaouais* Development Plan.

Seven by-laws will make up the regulation of the Municipality of Pontiac. A brief description of each of these by-laws follows.

**By-law Respecting Permits and Certificates**

This by-law contains all the provisions relating to the powers and responsibilities of the officer in charge of urban planning by-laws’ enforcement. It also contains the administrative rules relating to the issuance of permits and certificates, as well the fees.

**Zoning By-law**

The Zoning By-law is the most important and the most complex of all by-laws. Its purpose is to set the land uses that will be authorized in each sector of the municipality and the site planning standards to be met.

Furthermore, it is with the Zoning By-law that the Municipality can regulate a great number of its particular urban planning characteristics: distribution of the occupancy rates, setbacks, layout of buildings, as well as their volumetry, architecture and ornamentation, commercial signs, installation of equipment and accessory buildings in yards, off-street parking areas, conservation of trees and of natural environment, etc.

**Subdivision By-law**

Most of a municipality’s character comes from the shape and size of the parcels of land that make it up. While the Zoning By-law regulates the uses residents make of the land, the Subdivision By-law determines the shape that the territory will take. This by-law ensures that all division, subdivision or alteration of a parcel of land to create or modify a lot, will comply with the objectives of the planning program.

To this end, the Subdivision By-law sets the minimum standards for cadastral operations, as well as the standards relating to the dimensions and layout of thoroughfares and blocks.

**Building By-law**

The Building By-law sets the standards for the resistance, sanitation, safety and insulation of constructions, as well as the standards for rebuilding and restoring buildings that have been destroyed or have become dangerous.
By-law Establishing the Planning Advisory Committee

This by-law sets the functioning of the Planning Advisory Committee, which is tasked with examining all questions related to urban planning, e.g., applications for minor exemptions, and making recommendations to Council on the action to be taken. This Committee is compulsory if Council wants to adopt a by-law on minor exemptions, or a by-law concerning the overall development plans, or a by-law on site planning and architectural integration.

By-law Concerning Minor Exemptions to Urban Planning By-laws

As its name indicates, this by-law allows Council, on the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee, to exceptionally authorize a resident to override slightly certain provisions of the urban planning by-laws that do not have much impact on municipal development. The exemption can only be granted if the application of the by-law seriously undermines the exercise of the right to property of a resident. This by-law offers a flexibility that is a great advantage to residents and avoids having to resort constantly to the amendment procedure.

By-law on Site Planning and Architectural Integration

This by-law is especially important for the preservation of the picturesque character of the Village of Quyon because it sets architectural integration and aesthetic objectives and criteria.
CONCLUSION

The Municipality of Pontiac’s territory has always provided an outstanding living environment where nature and quietness can be enjoyed every day. Even today, residents want to continue down that path by showcasing the natural environment and the beauty of rural landscapes, while diversifying the economic structure, consolidating the built environment and promoting recreational tourism activities.

The ultimate aim of urban planning is to improve the built environment and the satisfaction of residents living in it. Developed in terms of continuity and preservation of the fine development assets of the Municipality of Pontiac, this planning program is not an end in itself. Rather, it pursues the process by which the community has taken charge of its development. As such, it constitutes a guide for those wishing to continue shaping a living environment corresponding to their aspirations.

In fact, when it comes to their living environment, residents and their representatives are always the best experts.
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