

To: Councillor Jan Harder, Planning Committee Chair and Committee Members
c.c. Councillor Michael Qaqish, Ward 22
c.c. Nick Stowe, Planner, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department
From: Bruce Lindsay, Community Development Coordinator, Riverside South Community Association
Date: December 12, 2016
Subject: Planning Committee Agenda Item for December 13, 2016, Official Plan Amendment – Significant Woodlands Policies

Riverside South is a relatively young suburban community which will experience considerable growth over the next 20 to 30 years. A recent review of the Community Design Plan in Riverside South approved a sizeable reduction of the existing urban natural features. These features currently provide desirable health, environmental, economic and social benefits and lie in close proximity to new homes that are or will be built in this community. Unfortunately, this review cannot undo or reverse the foreseeable loss of these woodlots once development applications are approved and construction commences.

For the multitude of reasons outlined in this report and that of a recent forestry draft report titled 'Putting Down Roots for the Future, City of Ottawa Urban Forest Management Plan 2018 -2037' the benefits of these particular urban natural areas will largely be lost over time.

However, this community is blessed with other greenspace spread out through other locations in Riverside South: such as, the Mosquito Creek Valleylands and several wooded areas of varying sizes dotted throughout parts of the community north of Earl Armstrong. I do believe there is a strong case to be made on behalf of forest edge and meadow lands, and hope these areas are given consideration when assessing the values of urban natural areas to save and protect within an urban context.

On a personal level, I know how important these natural landscapes are to vulnerable populations: children, seniors, and low income households.

I grew up in a poor working class family in the 1950s in Ottawa's lowertown. Back then King Edward Street was beautifully appointed with a large majestic tree canopy which adorned the center median from roughly Rideau Street to the municipal offices at Green Island where the Rideau River Falls empties into the Ottawa River. My best friend and I would from time to time traverse the King Edward median 'trail' to the Rideau Falls and hike along the shores of the Ottawa River to the base of the cliffs at Parliament Hill. We would scale these cliffs ever so cautiously to what seemed great heights. Loose stones were abundant and danger lurked with every step. We would have the best view imaginable looking out over the Ottawa River; surveying the logs bobbing up and down in the river below waiting to be pulled into the E. B. Eddy plant for processing; and enjoying the distant beauty of the Gatineau Hills. These experiences were the ones that I remember most with fondness. Many of the children in my neighbourhood like me didn't have the opportunity to join organized sports leagues or escape to resorts or cottage country. It was these close to home excursions with nature that provided me with a lifelong

appreciation and reverence of the beauty and importance of our natural landscapes. As a senior, I once again find myself searching for these local natural havens to refresh one's body, mind and to revere and capture the beauty and wonder this earth provides on a daily basis. One shouldn't have to escape the city to enjoy these pleasures/experiences.

In addition to all of the benefits these Significant Woodlands/Urban Natural Areas provide to local residents, the most directly felt ones are those experienced firsthand through safe, accessible and usable facilities that encourage us to immerse ourselves in these local natural landscapes on a daily basis.

The Riverside South Community Association supports the recommendations as outlined in the staff report.

We would also recommend that the community stakeholder component of the consultation include knowledgeable individuals/organizations who work with vulnerable populations, such as children, seniors, and low income households. e.g. YMCA National Capital Region Outdoor Education and Leadership Centre, Ottawa Carleton (and Catholic) Boards of Education Macskimmings Outdoor Education Centre, National Capital Commission, Ottawa Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa, etc.