

To: "budget@ottawa.ca"

Cc: Mayor and Council

Subject: Input to City budget 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to submit input directly to the City of Ottawa on its budget for 2018. The Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital has been presenting the City with sensible comments and ideas on green issues for more than a decade, but sometimes we wonder if there is a point in spending valuable time and energy participating in the City budget's public consultations. We have found that the online budget consultation tool is very limiting and does not lend itself to providing meaningful input. The difficulty in providing useful input is exacerbated by the lack of coherent budget data that is comparable over time, the provision of which would go a long way towards improving public engagement. Nevertheless, we wish to convey to you our views on a few budget items that we believe ought to be given considerable weight in the necessary trade-offs involved in City budget making.

The City has just approved its first Urban Forest Management Plan. We participated in a very well run public consultation process throughout its development and support the resulting plan. However, its goals will only be realized if proper funding is provided over time. We expect to see this highlighted in the budget.

We have noted the city led acquisition of Shea Woods recently but feel obliged to remind you that the 5 hectares gained pales in comparison to the 100 hectares lost to clear cutting earlier this year on the KNL lands in the South March Highlands. We call on you to continue this policy of public acquisition by including in the budget increased and sustained funding for the Environmental Resource Area Acquisition Reserve Fund.

Finally, in the absence of data, it is impossible to evaluate the extent to which Official Plan policies regarding overall greenspace targets for the City and access to greenspace within 400 meters of every home are in fact being met. Every decision regarding the addition or loss of greenspace needs to take the achievement of these targets into account. We hope to see funding included in the budget for the development of geographic data that would make this explicit.

Ottawa is the first municipality in Canada to issue green bonds to fund capital projects deemed green. We hope to see a green budget for operating expenses as well, with these and other greenspace related budget items given extra profile, and winning extra trade-offs.

Paul Johanis
Chair, Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital