

Planning and Development Committee
Budget Review
March 8, 2002

Submission of Greenspace of Canada's Capital
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I (Barbara Barr) am appearing on behalf of the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital. The Greenspace Alliance has a number of comments about the 2002 Budget, too many for me to cover all of them verbally in five minutes. You have been provided copies of our submission. For some items, I will simply refer to a page number in the Capital Budget document and trust that you will in some way flag that page and read our comments about the item on that page before you consider the item.

Page 33. Development Charges Act Reserve Funds.

The anticipated revenue from residential development charges increases from \$45 million in 2002 and 2003 to \$90 million in 2005 and 2006. Presumably that comes about as a consequence of the employment/population growth expected on the basis of projection B. When this projection was adopted, the Greenspace Alliance argued that it was unrealistically high and that it was based on a "bubble" of growth in the high-tech sector.

The fact that the Closing Balance, after expenditures have been subtracted, increases from \$48 million in 2002 to \$184 million in 2006 suggests that all the expenditures that would have to be made to support this explosion in population growth have not yet been taken into account in the current projections.

Page 38. Cash-in-lieu-of-Parkland?

We don't know where the cash-in-lieu-of-parkland revenue is in the budget and wonder if it may be the Recreation Facilities and Park Development Component of the Development Charges Act Reserve Fund. During the last ten years of its existence, the former City of Ottawa received almost \$10 million from developers "in lieu of" parkland, but did not use one penny of that to preserve or create greenspace. The policy of not using those funds to acquire land needs to be changed.

Page 217. Local Collector Roads Program

Leitrim Collector A and Leitrim Minor Collectors should not be approved if they are infrastructure for the proposed development at Leitrim.

Page 233. Environmental Management.

The proposed expenditure of just \$250,000 in each of 2003 and 2004 for the Climate Protection and the Green Team programs does not seem adequate. There appears to be no increase factored in to take into account the fact that the city is growing, which means more producers of greenhouse gases every year. The stated commitment is to reduce corporate and region-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 20% relative to 1990 levels by the year 2007-2010.

Page 235. Environmental Resources Areas Acquisition.

We are concerned that the important commitment to purchase Natural Environment Area A and B lands seems to have decreased since last year's budget. In last year's budget, \$1,150,000 was allocated in each of 2001, 2002, and 2003 for the environmental land acquisition program. In this budget nothing is allocated in 2002 and 2003, and only \$700,00 per year for 2004 through 2006. We recommend that the financial commitment to this program be increased, and we would like to see the program expanded to include natural areas within the more developed areas of the City.

It is alarming that Minto apparently has submitted development proposals for lands it owns in the Natural Environment Areas. Apparently, these are lands purchased after they were designated as Natural Environment Area land use. Minto is now on its way to the Ontario Municipal Board with these development applications, perhaps having appealed to the Board on the basis of failure of the City to act within 90 days (?).

The City, if it is to grow smartly, cannot spend huge sums of money to support development while providing meagre amounts to acquire natural areas. There must be a better balance of priorities and activities.

Pages 239 and 241. Park Development.

We approve of the expenditure of money for the planning, design, and development of parks and pathways.

Page 241. Due to the uncertainties of the Leitrim situation, we suggest that no money be spent in 2002 on a master plan for the design of parks for Leitrim. It could be money wasted.

Page 245. Environmental Planning Studies

The expenditure of \$3.2 million over five years is a very small amount compared to the amounts of money the City will be spending on economic growth and development. Staff make this comment on page 45: "The protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is critical to sustaining quality of life within the City of Ottawa." The City can't accomplish that without committing money to do it.

Page 313. Stormwater Mgmt. Facilities - Leitrim.

The Greenspace Alliance has already e-mailed members of this Committee of many of our concerns about this matter. Last year at budget time, we raised the issue of the uncompleted Federal environmental assessment, an assessment which began in February 2000. We wanted to make certain you knew that the environmental assessment was not a perfunctory matter involving just fish habitat of Findlay Creek, and that the results of the assessment could have implications for the proposed development project at Leitrim. Despite our requests for prudence about spending on infrastructure for Leitrim, decisions were made to continue spending. A sewer line and pumping station are under construction. A real estate sales office has been built on the premises and a signs about "Findlay Creek Village" have been erected. We have not seen construction of a water main to the site. Our failure to see one is puzzling because on page 313, a statement is made about the extension of trunk sanitary and water servicing to Leitrim in 2001. We are unable to find the water main in the Capital Budget, possibly because we do not know where to look. In general, we have been unable to track Leitrim items and money from last year's budget to this year's.

The environmental assessment still has not been completed. Additionally, Transport Canada has undertaken to have an Area-Wide Risk Assessment done of the former municipal landfill which is leaching. The proposed development site is so close to where contaminant organic solvents have already been detected, the western part of the site is part of the area included in the Risk Assessment. It is not yet known whether or not the environmental assessment will require the results of the Risk Assessment. We have copies of correspondence which show that the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has sought the advice of the Ministers of Health and Environment about the matter.

The Greenspace Alliance proposes that inaction would be the prudent action to take; by that we mean no more approvals for construction of any kind at Leitrim until the results of both the Federal environmental assessment and the Area-Wide Risk Assessment are known and whatever mitigation measures they might require or suggest have been taken into account and appropriate plans made to comply with them.

We request that you direct staff to re-examine the placement and design of the stormwater management works. The challenge is to build a drainage system and overflow pond which will not cause the water

table in the adjacent Provincially Significant Class I Wetland to be lowered. Three highly qualified scientists have peer-reviewed the currently accepted proposal for stormwater management and have criticized the assumptions made and the lack of appropriate studies. Basically, all three scientists have written that because of one reason or another, they are not convinced that the proposed stormwater system will work as claimed. These peer reviews were done after the technical agencies granted approvals, so the issue of the effectiveness of the stormwater management plan with respect to protection of the wetland needs to be revisited. These peer reviews are important and should not be ignored.

Page 325. Local Collector Sanitary Sewer Program.

Leitrim 4 to 10 should not be approved if it is infrastructure for the proposed development at Leitrim.

Various pages. Projects in Support of Kanata West Business Park.

We are not certain exactly which projects these are. They may include the Terry Fox Road projects on pages 207 and 211 and the Terry Fox stormwater pond on page 339. Expenditure of money in the 2002 budget for infrastructure to support the Kanata West Business Park seems premature. A Plan for the Kanata West project has not been approved. We believe the most recent proposal is to accommodate 25,000 jobs, 1.4 million square feet of retail space, and 5,000 residential units. This is not "Smart Growth." Unless new growth is compact and diverse, we will not be able to live within the current urban boundary for the next 20 years, will end up expanding that boundary into rural areas, and will be building more roads for commuters.

Environmental Advisory Committee.

We urge you to fund the Work Plan of the Environmental Advisory Committee. You members of the Planning and Development Committee unanimously approved that Work Plan just three months ago. We believe that providing adequate funding for the Work Plan of this important advisory committee will be a cost-effective way to raise the profile of environmental issues in the City and to provide Council with sound environmental information. The Greenspace Alliance has expressed concern previously about the fact that the environment area is understaffed and occupies a relatively low-profile position in the City's administrative structure.

Public Consultation.

The time period for public consultation on the budget was very short.

Budget on Web Site.

Making the budget document available on the web site is a good practice on the part of the City as it is a good way to inform the public and increases the likelihood of public participation. The document would be more useful to the public if it were posted on the web site as an ASCII file that is searchable as was done last year, rather than as IMAGES as was done this year.

Correcting an Error.

The Greenspace Alliance wishes to correct an error we made in an e-mail about the Budget for Leitrim which we sent to members of the Committee on March 2nd. In that e-mail the Greenspace Alliance states, "at least until recently, there have been no test wells on the Tartan property." That statement, which refers to monitoring wells to detect contaminants leaching from the landfill, is incorrect. Last year, there were four monitoring wells on the property, none of which go to bedrock. Their position, approximately 450 metres east of Albion Rd., is likely too far from the edge of the property for them to have yet picked up the 1,4-dioxane that has been detected on the west side of Albion Rd. On the west side, the plume of 1,4-dioxane is estimated to be at least 200 m wide.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, the Greenspace Alliance hopes that you will give our comments about the 2002 Budget serious consideration.