

RE: Proposal to remove 680 trees at the new campus of The Ottawa Hospital

July 7, 2021

Mayor Jim Watson
jim.watson@ottawa.ca

Dear Mayor Watson,

RE: Proposal to remove 680 trees at the new campus of The Ottawa Hospital

The Champlain Park Community Association (CPCA) urges rejection of the proposal to remove 680 trees from the proposed site of the new campus of The Ottawa Hospital (TOH), largely for the purpose of creating 600 to 700 mostly above-ground surface parking spaces.

This proposal, if accepted can only exacerbate the impacts of climate change. And, since poor health is one of the significant negative impacts of climate change, it is beyond ironic that above-ground parking for cars is being proposed for the site of a state-of-the-art, new, health care facility.

The City of Ottawa has achieved much in recent years with regard to creating policies and rules, which, if appropriately implemented, will help all of us mitigate to the extent possible, and adapt to, the impacts of the climate crisis:

1. Declaration of a Climate Emergency for the purposes of protecting our economy, our ecosystems, and our community from climate change (April 2019).
2. Adoption of an ambitious Climate Change Master Plan that prioritizes use of a climate lens for capital projects; and, the exploration of carbon sequestration (January 2020).
3. Building on the Urban Forest Management Plan (June 2017): enactment of the Tree Protection By-Law which aims to protect privately- and City-owned trees, requiring that tree retention be considered as a priority in any design project including renovations and new developments (January 2021).

Ottawa's Climate Change Master Plan recognizes the value of green infrastructure in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Mature, canopy trees are singularly valuable assets, and established younger trees are invaluable as their future replacements. While compensatory tree planting is being encouraged for the TOH site, and a green roof is proposed for the parking garage, trees only become canopy trees over the course of 20 to 30 years. In addition, it is questionable that appropriate spaces for planting many replacement trees will be found anywhere near the site. Therefore, preserving as many trees as possible in this central urban area - a heritage site -, at a future facility dedicated to the health and well-being of residents, is critical.

Please require the submission of a new proposal that respects Ottawa's Climate Change Master Plan, integrates well into its heritage surroundings and responds to the needs and wishes of citizens.

This is an opportunity to apply a climate lens to the new hospital campus proposal that will protect trees and promote the health and welfare of all residents. We urge our elected representatives to take it.

RE: Proposal to remove 680 trees at the new campus of The Ottawa Hospital

Considerations:

The Tree Protection By-Law protects trees with stems of 10 cm or more in diameter at breast height (DBH) on urban area properties over 1 hectare in size:

- The Tree Conservation Report, conducted as part of TOH site assessment, shows 1315 living trees with stems over 10 cm DBH;
- Of these 1315 living trees, 680 would be cut down under the current proposal, of which:
 - 368 are 10-29 cm DBH; and,
 - 312 are over 30 cm DBH, defined as “distinctive” trees under the Tree Protection By-Law.

Providing increased surface parking is the reason for many of the proposed removals:

- This includes providing parking for a future new Ottawa Heart Institute facility that is not even expected to be constructed until 2037.
- The 12 story parking garage structure is not expected to have more than two underground levels. This is a waste of underground space, at a very high cost for patient and visitor access, greenspace, heritage and local integration.
- Trading off trees for parking runs counter to the goals of the Climate Change Master Plan.
- Better design would make this unnecessary.

The TOH proposal lacks an integrated public transit plan:

- The Light Rail Transit (LRT) station on Carling Avenue is a significant walk from any hospital entrance.
- Far from encouraging the use of public transit, the plan’s added surface parking and lack of convenient connectivity to the LRT station undermines the City of Ottawa’s Climate Change Master Plan goals and its investment in the LRT.

Sincerely,

Heather Pearl,
Co chair,
On behalf of the Board, Champlain Park Community Association (CPCA)
251 Keyworth Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 0G2
hpearl2012@gmail.com

Copies:

Shawn Menard, Councillor, Capital Ward shawn.menard@ottawa.ca
Catherine McKenney, Councillor, Somerset Ward Catherine.Mckenney@ottawa.ca
Riley Brockington, Councillor, River Ward Riley.Brockington@ottawa.ca
Jeff Leiper, Kitchissippi Ward Jeff.Leiper@ottawa.ca
Sean Moore, Planner, City of Ottawa TOH@ottawa.ca
Catherine McKenna, MP, Ottawa Centre Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca
Joel Harden, MPP, Ottawa jharden-co@ndp.on.ca