

Mr. Moore,

Thank-you for providing us with an opportunity to comment on this project, which will have a great impact on our community, as well as on the provision of health care in Ottawa and beyond for decades to come. There are several positive aspects that we see in the master site plan. This includes some stacked parking, ground-floor retail along Carling Avenue, cycling and walking connections to the Trillium Pathway, the commitment to abide by Bird-Safe Design Guidelines, as well as the re-creation of park space on top of the parking garage. (While potential uses of that space are shown in the site plan renderings, we request community consultation take place to consider the needs and preferences of the surrounding community.)

Despite some positive aspects of the plan, we believe there is room for improvement in several key areas.

### **Accessibility/Modes of Transportation**

One of those is accessibility - particularly the distance between public transit stops/stations and the hospital entrance. Ideally, the Carling O-Train station should be moved south of Carling to the hospital site itself to make it as easy and convenient as possible in order to encourage use of public transit. Understanding that there are significant engineering challenges to this, at the minimum, buses should have access to the site, and transit riders should have a weather-protected transit stop close to the main entrance. Likewise, there should be drop-off and pick-up locations for taxis or ride-sharing services such as Uber close to the main entrance of the hospital. At the very least, if there is no designated drop-off/pick-up area, especially for those with health and/or mobility issues, a free shuttle service should be implemented between the Carling O-Train station and the hospital.

In a similar vein, making it easier to cycle to the site will encourage this mode of transit and reduce the amount of vehicle traffic. Ample bicycle visitor parking should be located close to the hospital entrance – not Carling Village, the Carling Research building, or the parkade, other locations that are currently being considered for bicycle parking. However, for staff or those who bike in inclement weather, providing additional bicycle parking in the parking garage would be helpful.

We believe that staff should not be incentivized to travel to the site via their own vehicles as part of their daily commutes. While Transportation Demand Management measures indicate that daily, weekly and monthly parking rates are under consideration for staff, providing only hourly or daily rates disincentivizes daily reliance on private vehicles, again encouraging other modes of travel at least some of the time.

### **Parking**

Perhaps the most concerning issue regarding parking is the 600 to 700 spaces planned for surface parking on lots spread throughout the site – which is particularly troubling given that the 2018 initial concept indicated, and hospital leadership committed that there would be no surface parking. Nearly one third of the entire site is dedicated to parking, which is not appropriate for this urban location. While the expectation of separate staff parking is understandable, and the overall amount of parking in accordance with bylaw, this does not mean that large swaths of surface parking should be acceptable. If separate staff parking is desired, this should also be a stacked garage, not sprawling surface lots for hundreds of vehicles. Disturbingly, to accommodate this surface parking, nearly 100 trees of 10 cm diameter or greater will be removed. While this area is planned to eventually be used for the Ottawa Heart Institute, that move will not happen until after 2037 – this should not be used as justification to remove all the trees and pave the area over now.

### **Trees and wildlife habitat**

In fact, the loss of trees overall on the site is of significant concern and is not in line with some of the City's recent actions, such as the declaration of a climate emergency, the adoption of the Climate Change Master Plan, and the spirit of the Tree Protection By-law.

More than half the trees on this 50-acre site that fall within the City of Ottawa Tree Protection By-law (those 10 cm or more in diameter at breast height) are slated for removal – nearly 700. Many of these trees are on the perimeter of the site, particularly a large number of mature trees on Carling and Preston. We urge that as many of trees be salvaged as possible, especially where they are not located immediately in a building envelope. In addition, efforts should be made to retain dead/decaying or dying trees throughout the site. As they provide habitat for many animals, including birds, mammals and insects (who in turn become food for many other species), they provide great ecological benefits. Regarding wildlife, broader considerations should be included, particularly given the fact that more than 20 species at risk (those in danger of extinction or extirpation), may reside on the site. These considerations should include ensuring wildlife corridors remain intact and should include continuous trees/greenspace throughout the site, or wildlife underpasses under roads.

Regarding birds, while it is laudable that The Ottawa Hospital plans to follow Ottawa's Bird-Safe Design Guidelines, having less glass in the plan would be helpful in alleviating both light pollution and bird strike risks.

We urge both The Ottawa Hospital and the federal government, whether through Public Services and Procurement Canada as custodian of the site, or the National Capital Commission, to plant additional trees to try to make up for the trees that will be lost. In so doing, care should be given as to the type of trees that will be planted. Tract planting of a single species needs to be avoided so trees won't all be susceptible to the same pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer, Gypsy moths or Dutch Elm Disease. There should be a range of native tree species, and biodiversity, survivability, and usefulness to wildlife should all be key considerations when considering the planting scheme. Likewise, the overall landscaping plan should include native shrubs and wildflowers to also provide food and shelter for wildlife, including pollinators.

While the replanting of some trees on top of the parkade and perhaps in other parts of the site are helpful, it is impossible to truly replace the trees that are lost – it takes 20 to 30 years to grow a canopy tree, and the myriad benefits that such trees provide. These benefits range from decreasing the urban heat island effect, to absorbing noise and air pollution, enhancing air quality, reducing run-off, providing mental health benefits, and supporting wildlife such as birds, whose habitat is ever shrinking. For these reasons, efforts to preserve existing trees should be paramount.

Thank-you again for providing the opportunity for feedback on this development.

*Sue Stefko*

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