Comments by the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
New Campus Development Project, File No. D07-12-21-20-TOH

The Ottawa Hospital submitted a Site Plan Control application for its new campus to the City of Ottawa on May 7. It has also initiated the necessary approval process through the National Capital Commission. Included with the application were the site plan and several reports addressing site conditions and the holding provisions that were established when the City approved the zoning for the site in 2018. These conditions involved transportation, heritage and serviceability concerns. In addition, the application includes a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (dealing with site contamination and related environmental issues) and an Environmental Impact Statement and Tree Conservation report.

The Hospital is to be built on the former site of the Sir John Carling Building, including the frontage on Carling where Queen Julianna Park is located and frontage on Preston and Prince of Wales where an NCC parking lot is located. These three parcels constitute a 50 acre site overall.

While the area appears to be mostly open space, it contains a surprisingly large number of trees, about 1500 in all. A good number of these are located in the Carling Avenue woodlot, a band of mature mixed deciduous and coniferous trees that extends along the relatively steep slope that arches through the property from northwest to southeast. We are glad to see that both the slope and the woodlot will be conserved according the site plan. A large number of trees are also found around the perimeter of the site, providing a natural screen between the site and the surrounding Central Experimental Farm lands. In both these locations, every effort should be made to conserve all mature healthy trees.

It is understood that trees located within the building envelope of the planned structures will need to be removed, and that this will represent a large number of trees. According to the tree conservation report, about 600 trees would be removed, half of which would be considered distinctive trees, with trunks of 30cm in diameter at breast height. However, it is not acceptable that surface parking be the cause of the removal of any of these trees. There should be no surface parking on this site. All staff, visitor and patient parking should be located in an engineered parking facility below grade. The future site of the Heart Institute on the site plan, in the southeast corner of the property, should be retained as greenspace until the move of that facility to the new location, which is not expected until post 2037. It should not be made into a surface parking lot in the meantime. With the preservation of the woodlot and perimeter trees and those saved by the elimination of surface parking, the loss of trees would be minimized. Whatever the final number of trees removed, compensatory tree planning should be required, either on the site or on surrounding City or CEF properties, so that impact to the overall local tree canopy is neutral. In addition, the historic hedge collection, established in the late 19th century, should be relocated on the Farm, as the heritage, science and greenspace treasure that it is.

The restoration of Queen Julianna Park on the roof a multilevel, mostly underground parking structure might be an acceptable solution to preserving this greenspace that is widely used and appreciated by local residents, so long as it is of equivalent size, is truly accessible and is appropriately maintained throughout its service use. However, it would be best if the park were maintained at grade, with direct access from Carling and preserving the picturesque and green character of the site rather than the engineered angular aspect of the proposed design for the space below the escarpment. Raising most of this area to the level of the escarpment visually takes away the rise that adds a natural element to the site. What is striking in the design is that, other than the public access to the emergency department, this natural rise is not used as a ready-made entrance to excavated lower levels under the hospital. As it is, this 12 story structure is not expected to have more than two underground levels. This seems a waste

of underground space, at a very high cost for patient and visitor access, greenspace, heritage and local integration.

In this context, we would question the amount of parking provided, as per the requirements of Part 4 of the Zoning Bylaw. It needs to be reconsidered in the new context of climate change, and in relation to large floor space structures such as this one. Is it reasonable to require 1.2 parking spaces for 100 square meters of floor space for this low density design (1 patient per room)?

In a similar vein, does the site plan take full advantage of its location on the LRT and the Carling BRT? Does it encourage transit use or does encourage the use of private vehicles? The current disposition of the planned structures place the main entrance at the furthest possible distance of the current or future location of the transit stops. Both from a car dependence and an accessibility standpoint, this deficiency needs to be addressed.

Submitted on behalf of the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital

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