

June 28, 2019

To: Charmaine Forgie
Manager of Business Support Services, Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development
City of Ottawa

Response from The Ottawa Hospital's Campus Engagement Group on the City of Ottawa's New Official Plan discussion papers

Dear Ms. Forgie,

The Ottawa Hospital's Campus Engagement Group (CEG) congratulates the City of Ottawa for its aspirational vision of growing Ottawa into "the most liveable mid-sized city in North America" and using the new Official Plan to help the city "seize future opportunities and be resilient in the face of unexpected challenges."

As noted in *Ottawa Next: Beyond 2036*, Ottawa builds upon a strong foundation with historically and culturally significant infrastructure; outstanding natural spaces; a stable and increasingly diverse economy; and world-class educational, health and research facilities.

The nine discussion papers produced by the City (Climate Adaptation and Resiliency, The Economy, Energy, The Greater Ottawa-Gatineau Area, Housing, Infrastructure and Water Management, Natural Ottawa, and The Building Blocks for a Health Ottawa, Rural Ottawa) provide a comprehensive overview of the challenges, disruptors and opportunities Ottawa will encounter in realizing its vision.

In reviewing these papers, the CEG's members agree that "The Building Blocks for a Healthy Ottawa" excels at integrating important themes from all nine papers and at articulating what is required to shape Ottawa into one of the healthiest, most livable cities.

Similar to the City of Ottawa, which is seeking input from residents in the development of the new Official Plan, The Ottawa Hospital is using a number of avenues to engage citizens and stakeholders in planning for a new campus. The CEG is a committee of 20 representatives from key community interest groups, as well as institutional partners from The Ottawa Hospital (TOH), the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa. The CEG plays a leadership role as a full partner in planning from the outset. In the past, hospitals tended to consult the community on select aspects of design while making decisions out of public view.

In TOH's innovative approach, community members are invited to play a critical role in helping to resolve community tensions related to campus design by making recommendations to the TOH Board of Governors. This process aims at building a robust sense of community ownership for the project using dialogue as the central tool.

The New Campus is a complex project with lots of partners and an ambitious vision. Increasingly, we have come to recognize that many of the levers necessary to fulfill that vision reside outside of TOH's sphere of decision-making. At the same time, we are also increasingly seeing this project for its city-building potential.

As residents of Ottawa, members of the CEG wish to contribute to the success of both The Ottawa Hospital's New Campus and the new Official Plan. Many intersections exist between the two. The City's aim of achieving a liveable city presents a tremendous opportunity to connect the two efforts and to forge a new path to work together, cooperatively: for a world-class hospital and a world-class city.

In light of the above, the CEG endorses "The Building Blocks of a Healthy Ottawa" as the best framing of the policy considerations for a liveable Ottawa. This is because the paper not only asks, "*How can we ensure the places we build enable all people to be healthy, thrive, and live to their fullest potential?*" but goes on to articulate links between livability, health and the built environment. These include the relationship with the natural environment, the economy, greenhouse gas emissions, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and climate resiliency. Policies that manage these relationships provide the building blocks to a healthy, livable city.

More specifically, we are in full support of the following statements in the "Healthy Ottawa" Discussion Paper, which we believe speak directly to what the CEG and TOH are trying to achieve with the new Campus:

"The Official Plan lays the foundation for how communities are planned through a set of policies. It can influence the creation of healthier environments that support people to thrive and be healthy."

"The Official Plan can be a policy prescription for health. It is an important piece of the puzzle in reducing chronic diseases and injuries, promoting mental health, and decreasing exposures to environmental hazards."

The Ottawa Hospital has a similar vision for the New Campus. As the members of the CEG, we are seeing first-hand why its realization requires a new and more integrated approach to planning and design – and the critical contribution that the community makes to this. We think that the City's efforts to develop the new Official Plan would benefit from deeper exposure to the work underway at TOH.

As captured in the following statements from "Healthy Ottawa", we fully endorse the City's new policy direction to encourage more collaboration between the fields of urban planning and public health:

- *"Solutions to improving health and well-being must be found outside of the healthcare system as well."*
- *"A liveable city is a healthy city. Health starts in our communities."*
- *"A healthy built environment is the physical layout and design of communities that improves people's health through behaviour, lifestyle, and protection from health hazards."*
- *"By considering the health impacts of Official Plan policies, we can leverage opportunities to plan for transportation networks, housing, food system, natural environments, and neighbourhood design that foster health and well-being. Healthier people make for a healthier and more resilient Ottawa."*

Most citizens have little difficulty seeing linkages between the environment, their daily experiences and the ability to make healthy choices in a livable community. Community groups express concerns about excessive noise and the risks associated with increased high-speed traffic. Groups that represent seniors and citizens with disabilities express concerns about the accessibility and walkability of neighbourhoods.

The CEG also agrees that the built environment features highlighted in “The Building Blocks of a Healthy Community” impact the health and livability of a city. We highlight a few examples below and show the connections to the New Campus vision:

Transportation Networks

Transportation networks need to:

- provide infrastructure that encourages active transportation in all its modes and is accessible to people with reduced mobility (i.e. accessible sidewalk design, benches or rest areas, and crosswalk lights that allow enough time for seniors and those with disabilities to cross),
- ensure easy access to alternate transit options to reduce reliance on cars, and
- support inclusive neighbourhoods where everything people need on a regular basis is within a walkable distance in urban/suburban centres.
- Ensure efficient and direct road networks are planned, designed and maintained to move vehicles efficiently in recognition of segments of the population who must rely on private vehicles in to the future including emergency services (fire, police and paramedics), patients accessing urgent care, and rural residents relying on urban health-care services.

Transportation networks impact TOH in two major ways: directly in moving patients and staff to and from the facility and indirectly by impacting the health of residents. Obviously, efficient, reliable transit options that reduce reliance on cars improve access to the facility and decrease the need for onsite parking.

Transportation options have less obvious impacts on population health. One impact is the prevalence of traffic injuries. Community design that promotes high traffic volume and speed, and has less pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, leads to more injuries and fatalities. People walking or biking are disproportionately injured or killed compared to people in cars. Furthermore, elderly walkers are much more likely to sustain fatal injuries compared to other age groups. In order to encourage a movement from cars to other modes of transportation, alternative options need to be convenient and efficient.

Another impact on population health is the prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease, which are increasing, in part because of a decrease in physical activity. In order to encourage an increase in cycling and walking and other modes of active transportation, available infrastructure must be easily accessible and safe. There is also an increased risk of heart disease, respiratory disease and allergies related to poor air quality.

Walking, cycling, and public transit infrastructure support health when designed in a way that is high quality, connected, and encourages people to use modes of travel other than the car. The new campus plans to provide space that invites the public in and encourages walking, cycling and other physical activities. We believe it could also be a scalable example of a healthy community for other development projects in Ottawa.

Housing

Housing needs to

- provide a diversity of options that meet the needs of all residents,
- be affordable, safe and accessible,

- provide for mixed-use design to ensure inclusive communities, and
- support people to age in place as the proportion of seniors increases.

Healthy housing is affordable, safe and accessible. Poor housing quality is associated with chronic illnesses, injuries, poor nutrition, social isolation and poor mental health. Communities that encourage quality housing and support social connectedness benefit everyone, mentally and physically, while decreasing demands on the health care system.

Hospitals cannot function smoothly without the services of employees, from the housekeeper to the research scientist; all are required to ensure the hospital operate smoothly and all need affordable housing that is within commutable distance of the new Campus. A livable city encourages mixed income housing developments and promotes age-friendly communities that provide for and support diverse needs.

Food Systems

Food systems need to support innovation and encourage the availability, production and distribution of healthy foods. Land-use planning and design that encourages the production and distribution of healthy local foods can ensure that everyone has equal access to affordable, culturally appropriate and healthy foods. Two examples of local innovation include the Community Harvest Program and the Ottawa Trees to Tables Project. The Community Harvest Program grows and collects nutritious, locally produced food for clients served by Ottawa Food Bank. The Ottawa Trees to Tables Project uses volunteers to harvest from Ottawa's food-bearing trees and provides the harvest to those whom will benefit.

The proximity of the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and the Experimental Farm in the new Campus provides an opportunity for partnership on innovation related to food systems and community-driven programs that encourage and facilitate healthy eating.

Natural Environment and Greenspaces

A healthy natural environment and greenspace accessible to the public provides many benefits. Living near urban greenspace promotes physical activity. Growing evidence supports the fact that exposure to greenspace reduces stress, anger, fatigue, sadness, anxiety and increases individual energy levels independent of other benefits such as physical activity. Using these spaces for recreation and leisure results in better health, increased social connectedness and reduced stress.

A healthy tree canopy affects the environmental conditions in which we live through quality of air, water and soil, and their impacts of climate change. It helps reduce exposure to high temperatures and humidity that can create health risks. Trees help capture and filter air pollution through their leaves; protect against ultraviolet radiation, wind, and noise; and provide shade during extreme heat events. People can be protected from harmful environment impacts through urban design that reduces heat island effects and absorbs water run-off from extreme rain. As the City of Ottawa as a whole, and TOH as an example, moves towards sustainable types of energy, architecture, and transportation, the potential for better health outcomes exists.

Patients also benefit from greenspace. Research shows that patients with access to a window that lets in natural daylight and provides a view of greenery spend less time in hospital. Twentieth-century hospital building and design tended to situate hospitals on land set apart from the surrounding community. The

Ottawa Hospital's vision for a 21st-century hospital is one that is integrated within and connected to the community, preserving greenspace and the natural habitat, and behaving as a good neighbour would.

Neighborhood Design

Neighbourhood design includes how land uses and transportation networks are arranged in relation to each other. Design impacts the look and feel of a community, and influences lifestyles and behaviours, such as whether people choose to travel on foot, by bike, or by car. Health is promoted when communities are complete, compact, and connected by compact street grids, and networks to pathways that help ensure active transportation routes are safe, direct and take less time; and provide places for socializing, both formally and informally. Age-friendly planning includes designing communities for older adults and children, to ensure needs can be met across the lifespan. All of these design features ultimately have an impact on population health.

When it comes to the design of a hospital building or its grounds, twentieth century hospitals tended to be less focused on the impact on neighbouring community than their counterparts today. The Ottawa Hospital's vision for the 21st century is a hospital that is connected and accessible to the surrounding neighbourhoods, with a campus that supports the mental and physical health of nearby residents and encourage social connectedness.

Economic Considerations

Income is a key determinant of health. A healthy economy is one that benefits the whole community and helps reduce inequities. The Ottawa Hospital is a major economic engine in the Region, providing jobs to a wide range of Ottawa's citizens and generating countless economic benefits. The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, for example, attracts innovative scientists that drive the economy, which in turn results in an increased investment in health.

One Final Word on the 21st-Century Hospital

TOH recognizes the value of having the voice of citizens at the table as a full partner from the outset. The community is attentive to design issues that may not be a priority for, or may go unnoticed by, institutional partners, but that can be critical to the success of a major project of the magnitude of building a new hospital campus. These same citizens also have a vested interest in the success of the new Official Plan.

The approach that TOH adopted relies on principles and deliberation to help participants work through difficult issues together and find mutually agreeable solutions, mitigation measures, and/or compromises. Basically, this strategy works to find solutions that are good for the community, hospital, and patients. Contributing to shaping the Ottawa of the future into one of the healthiest, most livable cities is another win for this group of citizens.

Hospitals of the past focused their efforts on receiving the public to provide quality health care services and supporting health research and training. The Ottawa Hospital's 21st-century aspirations include being a city builder, a community builder, a good neighbour and a world leader in hospital design. To achieve this aspiration requires a visionary engagement strategy, one that welcomes members of the community as equal partners from the onset.

The members of the CEG are residents of Ottawa who seek optimal outcomes for both the new Official Plan and the new Civic Campus. The fact that these two events align offers an unprecedented opportunity for building on the synergies of both that we must harvest. We see there could be great potential in supporting the City's new Official Plan vision so that the win-win solutions we envisage for TOH and the community actually become triple-win solutions for TOH, the community and the City of Ottawa writ large.

Thank you for engaging us in your process,

Sincerely,

The Members of the Campus Engagement Group

Membership list:

- Robert Brinker, Carlington Community Association
- Eric Jones, Central Experimental Farm Advisory Committee
- Peter Eady, Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association
- Kim Peterson, Council on Aging of Ottawa, paper author
- Michael Powell, Dalhousie Community Association
- Jerry Fiori, Ottawa Disability Coalition
- Bhagwant Sandhu, Dow's Lake Residents' Association
- Randy Taylor, Friends of the Farm
- Sue Stefko, Glebe Annex Community Association
- Paul Johanis, Greenspace Alliance, CEG co-chair
- Leslie Maitland, Heritage Ottawa
- Amy Johnson, Liveable Bayswater
- Shaun Hopkins, Ottawa-Carleton Standard Condominium Corporation 837
- Martin Petersons, TOH Patient and Family Advisory Council
- Michelle Currie, The Ottawa Hospital Planning
- Bernie Etzinger, TOH Chief Engagement Steward, CEG co-chair