

**Ottawa East
Community
Association**



Old Town Hall

Josée Vallée
Project Manager
Main Street Renewal
City of Ottawa

Main Street Renewal: OOECA Support of "Preferred Design" - Alternative 5

Dear Ms Vallée:

The Board of the Old Ottawa East Community Association (OOECA) wishes to confirm its support for the preferred design ("Alternative 5") for the renewal of Main Street, the heart of the Old Ottawa East (OOE) community. This support is expressed in the context of ongoing participation of OOECA Board members on the Main Street Renewal working group, the related discussions that occurred at Board meetings, the comments made by OOE residents at the public open houses and the city's previously approved plans pertaining to Main Street.

Four members of the OOECA Board have been part of the Main Street Renewal working group over the last eight months and they, along with a number of other participating community members, have appreciated the opportunity to help shape the design of Main Street for the next half century. For decades, the condition of Main Street has greatly detracted from our central community. Although the preferred design for renewal still means that there will be heavy use of Main Street, the new attributes of a "complete street" design will mean that Main can begin to function as a "traditional main street," as council approved two years ago in the Old Ottawa East community design and secondary plans.

We recognize that had Main Street been renewed several years ago the option of having a "complete street" would not have existed. It is now on the table because of City Council's endorsement of the "complete street" concept, as per the proposed revisions to the Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan and Council's increased emphasis on active transportation, that we are now in a position whereby Main Street can be made "liveable."

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We fully realize that there are opponents to the preferred design because of their concerns about the impacts of the proposed reduction of traffic lanes for a significant portion - but not the busiest section - of Main Street. However, we are of the view that their fears are exaggerated and based on the sole focus of Main Street's function as an arterial road. Anyone who has had to shop, walk or cycle on Main Street during peak periods would clearly support the need for a solution that addresses a wider selection of performance criteria.

It's interesting to note that at peak period 300-400 vehicles (most of them single occupancy) may be adversely affected by proposed lane reductions on Main Street. Meanwhile the new \$2.1 billion LRT line will be providing capacity for 48,000 riders per hour. The challenge is how to get residents of the south to readily connect with the new LRT system.

It's notable that the existing four-lane Main Street design is essentially a two-lane route 88 percent of the time, given that parking is allowed on the street for all but the 20 hours per week of peak commuting time. The current form of Main Street focuses on abetting peak flows thus making a mockery of Main being a traditional main street as Council previously endorsed. Traditional main streets allow a variety of uses - they should not, as Main Street does at present, focus on serving single occupancy vehicles to the detriment of pedestrians, cyclists, residents and businesses.

The preferred design will promote the development envisaged in the approved OOE community design and secondary plans. The proposed complete street will allow safe and comfortable walking and cycling and will provide 24-hour parking at many locations where there is or will be commercial development. With the preferred design Main Street will be where people will want to be rather the current reality of being a place to avoid. Who wants to move to a community where the principal street is unpleasant and is built primarily to service rush-hour traffic?

The necessary rebuilding of deteriorated infrastructure offers the opportunity of completing additional improvements in a manner that eliminates most of their incremental cost, a fact that works well for community residents and for all taxpayers. After the Transportation Committee and Council's decision on the Main Street environmental assessment there will remain a variety of issues that will require further community discussion. The issues are as follows: burial of hydro services along the west side of Main from Hawthorne to Clegg; the treatment of the intersection of Riverdale and Main; the potential of left turn lanes into existing neighbourhoods encouraging cut-through traffic, and; the continuity of cycling on Main with the cycling facilities on the McIlraith Bridge.

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The OOECA Board and community members continue to advocate for burial of the hydro wires on the west side of Main Street between Clegg and at least as far

as Immaculata High School. We note that City Council's approval of the OOE secondary plan that calls for prioritization of such undergrounding was approved after - not before - the "user-pay-with-some-exceptions" policy for undergrounding was approved, and therefore must supersede the "user pay" policy. Burial of the wires is warranted: the road is being torn up anyway and undergrounding has to be done along the same stretch to supply the Oblate development as well as the light rail transit system.

The proposed configuration of the Main and Riverdale intersection is also a concern. Comments received through the open houses suggest comparable support for both the "T" and the roundabout options although it seems that most of those supporting the roundabout are doing so to facilitate motorized traffic while those in favour of the "T" intersection are reflecting pedestrian and cyclist perspectives.

Community members have expressed concerns regarding left-turn northbound lanes at Mason and Bower. Currently these intersections have turning restrictions at peak hours and the community will seek continuation of these restrictions and may request that the proposed left turn lanes be eliminated from the design.

A significant number of open house attendees also had concerns about the adequacy and design of the bike lanes on McIlraith Bridge. While on the one hand, the proposed lanes will be an improvement, many feel there should be some sort of separation of the bike lanes from the motorized traffic. Also, something that isn't recognized in the plan is the need to deal with the dangerous merging of traffic from and to Riverside Drive onto and off of McIlraith Bridge / Smyth. The community is also concerned that cycling on Lees Avenue be improved and well-linked to the Main Street improvements.

We have been impressed with how City Councillor David Chernushenko, city staff and consultants have listened carefully to residents' and developers' concerns and have revised the recommended plan to satisfy their requirements. Congratulations to the City for the fine work - let's proceed with the Main Street preferred design and build a more liveable Ottawa.

John Dance
President
Old Ottawa East Community Association

c.c.: Mayor Jim Watson
David Chernushenko, Councillor Capital Ward
Keith Egli, Chair, Transportation Committee
Chris Osler, Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
Lynda Hancock, President, OSCA
Christine McAllister, President, GCA
Ron Clarke, Delcan