

Chair's Report – April 2014

1. **Sale of Oblate Lands:** The “due diligence” work of the Regional Group is underway as they determine whether they want to finalize their offer for the Oblates lands. Soil testing is has begun (I saw lots of masonry rubble in one of the holes that had been dug.). Regional was one of the sponsors of SLOE’s forum.
2. **SLOE Forum on Sustainable Development of Oblate Lands:** This superbly organized and run event at Carleton on March 22 was well attended with 12 expert panelists offering their advice on options for the sustainable development of the Oblate lands. (Ian McRae will provide a full report.) The next step will be a public open house so all community members can see what ideas have been suggested.
3. **Brantwood Park Rink:** The rink closed March 19th after its longest and best season ever. Congratulations to coordinator Cindy Courtemanche and her 50 volunteers and thanks to the city for providing the valuable grant that allows Cindy to hire attendants and provide the ever-reliable and thorough Mike Galazka (and staff) with an honorarium for his plowing of the rink
4. **Safe Crossing of Parkways:** The NCC’s initial design for a safe pedestrian crossing of Queen Elizabeth Drive at Fifth will be fully-signalized, according to plans I saw last week. A public information session to discuss the design and location will be scheduled shortly. Work is expected to be completed by the fall, at the latest (possibly will be done before summer). The construction of “our” safe crossing of Colonel By at Clegg depends on NCC budget, and, according to one NCC officer I spoke with, this means a wait of at least another two years. We need to keep pushing for earlier construction because there is twice as much traffic on CBD as there is on QED. I think it’s great that the QED-Fifth crossing is being done expeditiously but it illustrates how the Lansdowne Park renovation distorts priorities.
5. **OOECA Column for Next Mainstreeter:** I’d suggest that the next column be on the development of the Oblate lands and what was discussed at the Deep Green Forum. Rebecca Aird is willing to prepare.
6. **Lansdowne Traffic:** When Ron was away I attended the newly constituted Lansdowne Transportation Monitoring Operations Committee (replaces the Lansdowne Transportation Advisory Committee). OOECA will be a member unlike what the city originally recommended. OSEG noted that for its large events (e.g., first home game of the RedBlacks, July 18; 24 – 30,000 person concert in August) OSEG will be heavily pushing the message ““don’t drive to Lansdowne, take the shuttle.” They say the shuttle trip will take just five-six minutes from the satellite parking lots but we’ll see how long people will have to wait to get a shuttle – both when they go to the park and when they return to the parking lot.

7. **All-Candidates (Municipal) Meeting** – Phyllis Odenbach Sutton has volunteered to take the lead for OOECA joining with the other Capital Ward community associations in organizing the all-candidates meeting. Heather Jarrett has volunteered to help the OOECA efforts.
8. **Main Event BBQ:** Ron Rose has volunteered to lead the OOECA BBQ at CAG's main Event. Wendy McRae, Catherine Pacella, and Jan D'arcy have also volunteered to assist with the organization.
9. **Lees Participation:** No progress has been made in the effort to get more engagement from residents in the lees Avenue apartment towers. Does anybody have friends who live there who might be interested in moving this effort along?
10. **Hospital Link – AVTC:** A number of OOE residents attended the public information session on the \$62M roadway between Riverside Drive and the back of the hospital. Interestingly, Councillor Peter Hume was under considerable criticism from residents of Riverview Park and Fairview (?). Work has already begun on the massive project which is, in essence, a two-lane version of the middle portion of the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor.
11. **Exploration of Joint Facilities with SPU / Developers:** CAG (Claire Farid) has met with Chantal Beauvais, the rector of Saint Paul University, to begin the exploration of a partnership that could involve the university, city, developer and community in an effort to create indoor recreation space that would serve SPU students and the community.
12. **Expansion of Springhurst / Rideau Trail Parks:** Nothing has been heard from the city about how the surplus AVTC lands (not specifically needed for transportation and multi-use centre) can be added to Springhurst and Rideau Trail Parks.
13. **Undergrounding Case:** The Planning Committee / Main Street Renewal Working Group members are preparing an op-ed piece for submission to the Ottawa Citizen, trying to make that case that undergrounding the hydro wires on Main Street between Clegg and Immaculata should be done and paid for by the city and or developers.
14. **Trees:** OOE will be losing 30 – 40 percent of its trees because of the emerald ash borer and the rebuilding of Main. Ian McRae and I are suggesting that the community may wish to consider a campaign trying to convince residents to plant trees. Indeed the city offers a "foster tree" program. I'm told that in the case of Main Street, residents can ask for a tree, plant it in their Main Street front yard, look after it for the first two years and then it would become a city tree (i.e., they'd look after its trimming etc.).
15. **OOECA's Perspectives on NCC Parkway Policy / Urban Master Plan:** The draft on the OOECA site was amended as per suggestions received and has been sent (see attached).
16. **Main Street Renewal:** Josée Vallée's response to our earlier "issues" letter is attached. OOECA reps have now met with Ms Vallée and Ron Clarke to discuss (item on April 8 agenda).

17. **Presentation to Carleton Class:** I provided a presentation to 50 or so students of a Carleton University third-fourth year program on sustainable development. Interestingly, no one had actually heard of Old Ottawa East although they knew where it was when I explained we were across the canal from the Glebe.

18. **Complete Streets Forum:** Ecology Ottawa hosted a well-attended forum march 29th to discuss how more complete streets could be built in Ottawa. Our Main Street complete street came up frequently and positively in the discussion. Councillors Chernushenko, Wilkinson, Egli, Fleury and Holmes comprised an excellent panel speaking in support of the proposition.

**Ottawa East
Community
Association**



Old Town Hall

March 26, 2014

Russell Mills
Chair
National Capital Commission
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(by email)

Dear Mr. Mills:

**NCC's Review of Parkway Policy and Capital Urban Lands Master Plan:
Perspectives of the Old Ottawa East Community Association**

We congratulate you for undertaking the review of the parkway policy and the Capital Urban Lands Master Plan.

Given the impact of the NCC's lands and parkways on the community of Old Ottawa East, one of the four communities constituting "Rideau Island," between the Rideau River and Rideau Canal in central Ottawa, the OOECA welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the National Capital Commission's review. OOE's western boundary is Colonel By Drive and the eastern boundary is the Rideau River, with NCC lands on the opposite side of the River. Colonel By Drive runs along OOE for about two kilometres between the "stone steps" (Riverdale-Echo – opposite Pig Island) and just north of Concord (where the canal makes its final turn to the iconic Parliament/Chateau Laurier view). The perspectives of the Old Ottawa East Community Association follow.

Parkway Policy Review:

These "wonderful anachronisms," as they are described in the review's summary, are very important to OOE residents, given Colonel By Drive is an essential route for residents' active and motorized transportation; many also use Queen Elizabeth Drive. The canal parkways are a vital part of the green and blue landscape of the community.

However, the community has seen the two parkways increasingly dominated by motorized traffic, particularly commuters, making it difficult, unsafe and unpleasant to use the linear parks alongside.

OOECA's recommendations for the parkway review are:

- 1. Safe Crossings:** For more than three decades, the Old Ottawa East community has lobbied for safe pedestrian crossings of the parkways and, although there are plans for safe crossings at Colonel By and Clegg and at Queen Elizabeth and Fifth, there are several other locations that also need improved crossings, including at the northern end of Main Street (at Colonel By) which is being reconstructed to be a primary north-south cycling route. The steady stream of traffic at peak periods makes it hard for a fully mobile person to cross and virtually impossible for those with disabilities. This serious impediment to accessibility and lack of "permeability" needs further consideration at a number of locations along Colonel By and Queen Elizabeth.
- 2. Safe Cycling and Walking:** Much of the pathway along Colonel By Drive is too narrow, particularly between Clegg and the "stone steps." The consequence is that cyclists are in serious conflict with pedestrians in this stretch. The fundamental reason for this is the constrained space between the canal wall and the retaining wall on the east side of CBD. The NCC should take two actions to resolve this: create dedicated bike lanes on the parkway itself so that fast road bikes use the roadway rather than the pathway, and cantilever a pathway widening off the canal walls when their inevitable reconstruction takes place. This cantilevered pathway extension / creation has worked well across from the convention centre, at Dow's Lake and also along the Ottawa River on the Quebec side near the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge.
- 3. Support for Fifth-Clegg Canal Footbridge:** OOE appreciates the NCC's support for the proposed footbridge over the Rideau Canal at Fifth and Clegg; however, we would recommend that the NCC seek means of providing financial assistance as well, given how the footbridge would enhance the use of the parkways and their pathways.
- 4. Landscaping Plan for Colonel By Drive:** Despite Colonel By Drive being a critical part of the key ceremonial route for those entering Ottawa from the airport, there has been little effort to improve the landscaping of the OOE section opposite Lansdowne Park and on to the northern side of the Queensway bridge. Following the 1998 ice storm there was some tree replacement and the addition of a number of other trees in the narrow boulevard between the pathway and the parkway, but the planting seems to have been random. Little has been done in terms of appropriate landscaping of the NCC's land between Echo Drive and Colonel By Drive. The study material speaks of "Residents [in this area] cutting vegetation for views to the canal," suggesting this has an adverse impact on the visual experience of others, but in many cases residents are simply trying to clean up unplanted thickets. Similarly, the NCC has allowed certain sections of OOE's portion of Colonel By to be dominated by invasives, particularly Norway maples. The OOECA recommends the creation and implementation – with community consultation – of a vegetation management plan for the lands adjacent to Colonel By Drive.
- 5. Enhanced Canal Usage and Visual Aspects:** One of the most significant initiatives of the Commission has been to make the Rideau Canal a skateway in the winter. All regard this as superb but for the other 10 or so months of the

year residents cannot readily use the canal. We urge the NCC to work with Parks Canada to provide easy accessibility to the water so that residents and visitors can better use and appreciate the canal. This involves providing numerous access points between the Hartwell and Chateau locks and creating docks or wall extensions so people can actually sit by the water. The superb redesign of the canal shore in front of the Ottawa Convention Centre gives a sense of how the canal can become accessible and tangible. For many years the OOECA has urged that some of the skateway gates be unlocked in the boating season so that canoes and kayaks can be easily launched but there has been no willingness of the Commission to determine a safe means to implement this idea.

One related idea is that the pathways on both sides of the canal should have discreet kilometer markers so users have a clear sense of distances travelled. The map plaques installed several years ago give a sense of location but are useless to the thousands of runners who love the canal pathways and would like to know exactly what constitutes, say, a five or 10-kilometer run. The discreet markers would be similar to the highly successful markers used around Stanley Park's seawall route and would involve a very modest expenditure relative to the distance signs erected every 0.2 kilometers on the skateway. The trick is to personalize the parkways – make them comfortable for users.

Another idea is that along the canal in the “urban” area there should be more places for people to eat, drink and relax. The new facility just west of the University of Ottawa is a good start but it's important that such amenities aren't just upscale like the Canal Ritz – they should be affordable for a larger demographic.

One longstanding desire of the community is to have the hydro wires over the canal at Fifth-Clegg hidden. These are the only wires over the canal in its entire urban route and they are hideous. We appreciate that “undergrounding” is costly but, as has been done elsewhere, perhaps the wires could be included within the design of the proposed Fifth-Clegg Canal footbridge.

The association commends the Commission for ensuring that there will not be “obtrusive billboards and off-premise advertising signage within sight of and from a parkway.” We ask that, in this regard, the NCC ensure that the Ottawa Convention Centre is not given permission to install a large video screen facing Colonel By Drive and the renewed Lansdowne Park does not have visual displays of any sort that intrude on views from the canal.

Urban Lands Master Plan:

The NCC's urban lands – with their “green-blue” flavour – make Ottawa so much more beautiful, sustainable and lovely, than if there were just a municipal

government. The primary NCC urban lands in OOE are those along the Rideau Canal; however, the community is also interested in the Commission's lands along the west side of the Rideau River, given their proximity and wild beauty. OOECA's specific recommendations are:

- 1. Trading to Acquire Western Shore of Rideau River:** The city and institutions own the western shorelands of the Rideau River in Old Ottawa East. We would recommend that the NCC investigate acquiring these lands in exchange for less "green-blue" lands such as those near Hurdman LRT station. The NCC's acquisition of the western shoreline of the Rideau would complement its ownership of the eastern side and would be supportive of the NCC's vision. Through Sustainable Living Ottawa East (SLOE), the community has worked hard to create the Rideau River Nature Trail, focusing on preserving the unique natural ecosystem. Adversely, the city is intent on creating a hard-surfaced multi-use pathway along this section. The community strongly supports active transportation but is concerned that the hard-surfaced pathway will be injurious to the riverine ecology. Furthermore, the NCC's interests align more closely with the community's perspectives on the river edge lands than do the city's.
- 2. Support of River Footbridge:** Although the Fifth-Clegg Canal footbridge is, according to the City of Ottawa's current plans, at least six years away from construction, there is also a sound case for creation of a simple footbridge across the Rideau River from the eastern foot of Clegg Street to the NCC pathway on the eastern side of the Rideau River. This footbridge would provide a key connection between the NCC's canal and river pathways.

We would be pleased to discuss these ideas with the staff working on the review.



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