

Chair's Report – June 2015

(* Indicates agenda item at OOECA Board meeting of June 9, 2015)

1. *Main Street Renewal: So it's begun with a bang. I've seen no other OOE issue generate so many emails and media reports. The city's hope is that the traffic disruptions and cut-through traffic will subside after a couple of weeks. Meanwhile, there are lots of annoyed (and sometimes threatened) residents and motorists. Telling, for me, was the comment of one motorist on CBC radio who both complained about the "closed highway" [meaning Main Street – OK, maybe not] and the new lights at Clegg and CBD, which "delayed him."

Some residents have made signs asking motorists to slow down or they've modified the city signs, making clear that access to Echo – as well as to CBD - isn't possible by using side streets.



And I've heard of a city employee being threatened when he / she tried to enforce the restriction against cars proceeding north on Echo at Church of the Ascension. And on McNaughton, after a resident gave the finger to a speeding vehicle, the driver came after her but she was rescued by construction workers from Clegg.

Comments I've heard include:

No. 5 Bus:

"I have been working with participants of our programs that we host here at 88 Main St. to inform them of the traffic routes, detours, etc. For the most part, participants are doing OK with the changes. The one exception is the Northbound #5 bus. We have several clients who have strollers with young children or seniors, who use the # 5 bus.

As you likely know, at this point there is a choice of either getting off at Clegg and CBD or the next stop at Elgin and the 417. Either stop is very far from 88 Main St. for these clients. I recognize the difficulty of adding a stop at Hawthorne and CDB (in front of the Pretoria dental office) due to the need for the bus to be in the left turn lane. Is there another location a little south of where Echo meets CBD that could become a temporary stop for the bus?"

The councillor's office's response to this was: "The councillor met with transit planning staff this morning and unfortunately, there is no opportunity to place a bus stop near Colonel By and Hawthorne. We look at possible locations, but inevitably, none of the spaces near the intersection meet OC Transpo's safety and accessibility requirements. The only alternative that was offered, that may be of use to you and your clients, is to transfer buses from the 5 to 16. The 5 and 16 meet at Clegg, and the 16 turns right onto Hawthorne, up Main to Lees. I know that this is not ideal, but I offer this up as a suggestion."

"I wonder if it possible to get OC Transpo add another bus stop at Clegg & Glenora. This is due to my observations the drivers of bus #5 heading north bound are letting people off on Main St at Clegg just before making the turn onto Clegg. As well they are letting off people at Clegg & Glenora so they don't have back track to Main St from the stop at Clegg & Main. Majority of people getting off at these locations were seniors.

Clegg:

"Clegg is full (cars backed up past Glenora trying to get out onto Col By Drive). The morning rush hour runs until 9:30 or almost 10:00AM. Evening rush hour goes to 6:30PM. Clegg is slow but steady. One hears the odd horn, but no indications of overwhelming frustration, and no behaviour that looks dangerous."

"Surprisingly, Clegg flows smoothly in the morning until about 8:10 when it fills up, occasionally spilling into the Main/Clegg intersection. Afternoon rush hours are longer, and I've noticed it can take up to 5 minutes for buses to get from Main to Col By Drive on Clegg. We certainly don't see much speeding now on Clegg!"

"The left turn signal at Main and Clegg seems to be working very well, but each day sees at least one or two vehicles go north on Main through the Clegg intersection only to realize that they have to reverse, which does cause some consternation. Hopefully, commuters will either accept the delays or seek alternate routes."

Echo:

"Walking the dog last night, I was pretty stunned by the amount of traffic on Echo.

"Echo at Hazel has a big sign noting that access north on Echo is only to Immaculata and there is no exit. There are cones on Echo just north of the Immaculata driveway -

that's the "no exit". Of course, people have just moved those cones so they can get through and get onto Colonel By at Graham. “

“The only issue of significance I've encountered this week is the large number of cars that continue to cut through the community along Echo drive northbound in front of Immaculata High School.

“I ride my bike to pick up my daughter every afternoon on Herridge and return along Echo. Each day this week I've had cars following me northbound on Echo and passing through against the posted signage. Yesterday there was a line of 5 cars that went through that area, led by a construction truck from Taggart.

“Do you know if the City is planning any enforcement? I have to think the revenue from the tickets they would receive would more than offset the cost of enforcement.

“Enforcing this would also help reduce the cut through traffic from Clegg along McGillivray, Drummond and Glenora.”

“I saw at least five cars in a row, including a taxi either shortcutting through Immaculata driveway (as I guess they are supposed to) or going straight through the gap in the cones just as we were walking along that stretch.

“Then there's the section between Hazel and Clegg. Clearly cars trawling around looking for a way out and at either end, it's blocked - by the concrete tree pots or by the new sidewalk at Clegg.

“There wasn't an overly high volume (not much more than usual) along Clegg when we were there. Echo was the big "winner" for extra traffic last night.”

Hawthorne and Colonel By:

“Allowing a left turn from Hawthorne (headed west) on to Colonel By Drive would help with the congestion on Clegg. From our part of the neighbourhood, if you want to go south on Colonel By drive, you have to somehow get down Main to Clegg first -- it took us 35 minutes last evening, most of that time being on Clegg, where we did not move at all for the first 10 minutes! If we could have turned left from Hawthorne (with and advanced green?), it would have helped a lot!”

“The vehicular problems [at Clegg and Colonel By] are indeed due to the Main Street construction. The problem isn't the Clegg / CB light, it's the Hawthorne / CB light signaling. They really should do something at CB & Hawthorne/Pretoria bridge. I suggest getting rid of the island on CB just south of the bridge (temporarily for 2 years), such that two lanes can cue further back from the north bound light. And the light signaling should be modified to optimize traffic thru and left at that intersection.”

Marlowe:

“[W]ith the exception of a few large construction trucks, things have been relatively quiet on Marlowe so far. “

Clegg- Colonel By Intersection

“ ... just before the new signals went live at the renovated intersection of Clegg and Colonel By, I witnessed a near-collision between a young cyclist and a motorist.

“The motorist was westbound on Clegg, the cyclist southbound on Old Echo, presumably from Immaculata School. The cyclist emerged (suddenly and without looking) on the new eastern accessibility ramp to the Old Echo sidewalk, having switched to the east side of Old Echo because work crews were in the crosswalk on the west side (with the new signals).

“The motorist did not see the cyclist because one of the Hydro trucks was parked immediately east of the accessibility ramp, blocking any possible view of the cyclist.

“While the intersection will, from now on, be less likely to be crowded with trucks, Old Echo will continue to be crowded with Immaculata students when school gets out.

“Suggestion: on westbound Clegg, you may wish to restrict parking within one car length of the eastern accessibility ramp at Old Echo, so that westbound motorists can see the sidewalk.

“During the ten or so minutes that I watched the crews connecting the new signals, two separate vehicles attempted to drive northbound on Old Echo to Clegg. The Hydro crews advised the drivers that the road was closed, and they retreated. Removing the old planters seems to have delivered a false message, and the drivers apparently did not notice the small "No Exit" sign still posted at Old Echo & Mutchmor Road. While the new landscaping is a cleaner improvement, you may wish to re-install a stronger visual clue that the road is closed

Sunday Mornings

“Not sure if you heard, but on Sunday Morning between 9am-1pm another snag on this Main St (Clegg St/Colonel By) detour for OC Transpo and traffic. I could not believe that nobody with the city planning, OC Transpo or the NCC did not think about the Sunday Bike Days that close off the Colonel By every Sunday from May long weekend to Labour Day long weekend when developing this detour? Traffic was a mess this morning, also traffic going through out Old Ottawa East trying to find a way out. Eventually some traffic & bus had to go down on McGillivray, turn left onto Hazel, right on Echo Dr, which exit out near Graham Ave to access Pretoria bridge & Colonel By. Makes me wonder what you people actually do there on Laurier ave??”

McNaughton-McGillivray & "Local traffic Only"

"[E]rect a "local traffic only" sign at McGillivray and Clegg to deter those who want to turn right onto the neighbourhood. I noticed that at Echo and Hazel a sign indicating access only to Immaculata along Echo. I know they are difficult to enforce, but not impossible if the police want.

"I was also thinking of asking the police to enforce the "local traffic only" restriction at Riverdale and Main. If we cut off the problem at the source it will save the whole neighbourhood a lot of grief. I tried to get into town this afternoon and traffic at Colonel By and Clegg was bumper to bumper, just like rush hour. This is ridiculous!" [The City has responded that "local traffic only" is not "enforceable."]

McIlraith / Smyth Bridge

A number of people have reported the difficulty of walking and cycling over the bridge with the experience on at least one day of both sidewalks being blocked by construction activity and the signs being ill-placed (as in getting to the middle of the bridge and finding you can't proceed).

The Stats

Britney McGrath, the city traffic operational studies officer assigned to the Main Street project has been very responsive to questions and issues. After the first week of construction she provided the following stats:

Marlowe:

Preconstruction:

Northbound Volume: 265

85%ile speed: 35 km/hr

Construction:

Cars between 7am and 7pm: 165

85%ile speed: 37 km/hr

Number above speed limit: 2 between 51-55 km/hr

McNaughton:

Preconstruction:

Westbound Volume between 7am and 7pm: 277

85%ile speed: 44 km/hr

Construction:

Cars between 7am and 7pm: 419

85%ile speed: 48 km/hr

Number above speed limit: 36 within 10km/hr and 2 between 61-65km/hr

Glenora

Preconstruction:

Northbound Volume: 127

85%ile speed: 45 km/hr

Construction:

Northbound Daily Volume: 473

85%ile speed: 32 km/hr

Number above speed limit: 13 within 5km/hr and 5 within 10km/hr

Riverdale

Preconstruction:

Westbound Volume between 7am and 8pm: 2077

85%ile speed: 43 km/hr

Construction:

Westbound Daily Volume: 3984

85%ile speed: 44 km/hr

2. Col By – Clegg Safe Crossing: The NCC and the City implemented with notable efficiency the safe crossing at Clegg and Colonel By Drive. Although its key purpose is to allow cyclists and pedestrians to safely cross Colonel By in fact it has given relative ease and safety for motorists turning from Clegg onto Colonel By. Previously it was almost impossible to turn left (southbound) onto CBD from Clegg when there was heavy traffic.

As for cycling and walking, it is just so much better getting across CBD at rush hour. An amazing improvement. I've heard complaints about the sharp turn from northbound CBD onto Clegg but this may have a traffic calming effect. Also, some people (including the Mayor) have noted the lanes on Clegg are narrow. I think this is true but this too serves as a calming measure. And some cyclists continue to proceed along Echo across Clegg without using the cyclist "jog" – hopefully they'll learn to make the safe and slight jog. There's always been a problem with cyclists blasting through Clegg with no respect for Clegg traffic so I think the new configuration will encourage them not to violate the law.

News reports had motorists blaming the "new" intersection for "10-15 minute delays" in commuting but my view is that the delays are simply because of Main Street lane reductions and closures. And as Councillor Chernushenko has said, "Without the light, virtually no vehicles would be able to turn right off Clegg, as congestion due to volume would be constant during the two rush hours."

Also, one person expressed disappointment that there isn't a left-turn lane for southbound CBD drivers. He also suggested – as has been suggested before – that for the duration of Main construction the rush-hour turning restrictions at CBD and Clegg be removed so that southbound residents can get into the community without having to use the remaining southbound lane on main.

I'm hoping the NCC will organize an official opening of the safe intersection – I think they and the city should be thanked for their efforts.

3. Main Street "Open for Business:" The June 1st event was well-covered by media and the Mayor stayed for considerably longer than originally scheduled. Both he and Councillor Chernushenko spoke of the need for the work etc. ...CAG (Carol, Melanie, Don), OOECA (Stephen and me), and all of the Green Door plus businesses were there.



4. Main Street Trees – History: Greg King, a postdoctoral fellow at Queen's University in the Department of Geography, is pursuing the memory of the trees that will be lost through Main Street construction. He is a tree ring scientist by training and has been interested in urban forest issues for a while.

5. “The Corners on Main” Update: David Renfroe reports that Domicile is ready to launch the sales of The Corners on Main. He says, “In the coming weeks, we will be launching our website and starting a marketing campaign. The renderings are just being fine-tuned but they look fantastic. We will be meeting privately with potential purchasers who have pre-registered and we will be willing and able to answer any question anyone has. We as a whole are very proud of this project.”

6. Lees Avenue Cycling Improvements:

The City of Ottawa is implementing modifications to the design and operation of Lees Avenue in a 325m long section between Chestnut Street and 170 Lees Avenue. “This work is being conducted to improve cycling along Lees Avenue. In this section, the modifications will result in the provision of:

- An eastbound single vehicle lane for general purpose traffic;
- An eastbound painted bike lane, located along the south curb line;
- A westbound wide lane to be shared by general purpose traffic and cyclist, with sharrow markings; and
- A westbound parking bay, located along the north curb line.

“Also planned is a relocation of the eastbound bus stop that is currently located just to the west of 170 Lees Avenue. The bus stop will be repositioned to a location approximately 50m further to the west. In the eastbound direction, alongside the bike lane and bus stop, the roadway will be signed as a no stopping zone. In this section, an approximately 55m section currently permits nine on-street parking spaces that were available evenings and weekends. This also will be modified to a no stopping zone. These changes will be accommodated through changes to the pavement markings and regulatory signage within the Lees Avenue right-of-way.

“The changes will assist in the implementation of the City of Ottawa Official Plan and the Ottawa Cycling Plan designations for Lees Avenue. The changes are also consistent with the modifications to Lees Avenue between Main Street and Chestnut Street that were implemented in 2014. Accessibility is an important consideration for the City of Ottawa. If you require special accommodation, please contact the undersigned.”

Nobody attended the May 27th information session on the proposed changes. Notice of the session had been delivered to the five apartment buildings and residents of Lees Avenue. The city will implement the pavement markings as planned around the middle to the end of June.

7. Sesquicentennial Infrastructure Program: I've heard Councillor Chernushenko has suggested that the unfinished portion of the Rideau River Western pathway (i.e., through OOS and OOE) would be a good project to be funded under the federal government's Sesquicentennial Infrastructure program. And he's also suggested the program could be used for the proposed OOE community centre / hub, but I understand there is less likelihood of this being approved because projects are supposed to be "shovel-ready."

Unfortunately, none of the \$4M that Ottawa may receive from the Sesquicentennial infrastructure program can be used for the Clegg-Fifth footbridge because the funding must pertain to existing infrastructure improvements.

8. Greystone Public Park

On June 2 at Lady Evelyn School the city hosted a public workshop to review draft options for the public park on the Grande Allée / forecourt property. As described by city parks planner Louise Cervney, "Two of the plans are more in line with the greener park vision I recall community members were interested in seeing in this space and one more urban plaza style park. They emphasize potential structure/"bones" of the park space and Grand Allée rather than the amenities planned for it. The intention of the workshop is to determine what works best in keeping with the community and the City in terms of needs, planning and sustainability." The proposed options will be posted on community websites.

Eddie Gillis, OOECA's lead for park development, is working with the city to determine the schedule for the park approval process and how the community will be involved in the refinement of the proposal. Also, of note, CAG's Ian Grabina has joined the community parks committee, joining Ian McRae of SLOE, Chris Osler of SHCHC, and Eddie.

Many community members provided input for the park proposal (the area including the Grande Allée, the Forecourt and the heritage Deschatelets building). Eddie provided the city with the following summary:

"Over a period of many months, the City of Ottawa has welcomed input from the community on the design and use of the Oblate Lands as the area transitions to Greystone Village. Considerable consultation has already occurred involving community residents, the Community Association, the Regional Group developing the project including building and landscape architects, and planners from the City of Ottawa. Councillor Chernushenko has also been actively involved in the project since its inception.

“Over the course of open houses and community association meetings, residents have commented on plans for the development, and numerous residents have communicated directly with the City planners to make their views known. There is a wonderful diversity of opinion in the community and while there is no overwhelming consensus regarding the preferred design concept for the Grande Allée/Forecourt area, a few themes and recurring suggestions have emerged over recent months.

- Many community members feel that the Deschatelets building, together with the Grande Allée and Forecourt represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a truly special urban space unlike any other in the city of Ottawa.
- Many residents have expressed a desire to see a contemporary civic square with a European feel exemplified by the heritage Deschatelets building, and complemented by amenities that will encourage people of all ages to gather for the sense of community that such spaces engender.
- Residents are pleased to see the efforts by all involved to preserve the historical significance of the site, and to incorporate elements of the past into the future development.
- Many in the community have talked about a space for performances, whether it be musical, theatrical or other cultural exhibits and celebrations.
- Integration of the Deschatelets building as a home for a community centre, and possibly as a staging area for events in the Forecourt and Grande Allée has also been of keen interest.
- There have been a range of opinions expressed regarding furniture and similar amenities. Some advocate for the use of traditional materials for substantial, permanent benches along the Grande Allée. Others suggest flexible, modular furniture that encourages users to create their own space. Still others suggest that tiered semi-circular seating in the Forecourt would serve the community’s needs well, especially for performances and other entertainment.
- Tasteful public lighting of the heritage building and the pathways has been suggested to give the space added life at night time. High quality fixtures and signage are recommended to compliment the heritage site.
- Residents have expressed a desire to see natural elements integrated with man-made elements so that there can be a variety of experiences within the same area (i.e. a picnic on the grass or a coffee on a patio).
- Safeguarding the beautiful trees lining the area is a high priority, as is providing natural habitat, interest and beauty.
- There is significant support for Low Impact Development in the area, especially as it relates to water absorption and permeable surfaces.
- There is broad support for the Farmers Market staying in the area, with most opinion favouring a placement along the Grande Allée.

- Community members have suggested that there should be a seamless transition between retail spaces and the Grande Allée walkway.
- Residents have suggested that a water feature would be an attractive amenity, as would a gazebo.
- Elements such as path connections, visual cues or wayfinding signage to foster a connection between the Deschatelets area and the linear park at the Rideau River have been suggested.
- Overall, residents have expressed a desire to see a well-thought out connection between the residential, commercial, natural and urban areas of the development.
- Provision for water, electricity and public washrooms has been raised frequently and could be considered essential to a vision of the area as a gathering place for neighbours and citizens from across the city.
- There was considerable consensus that the community is already well-served in terms of suitable play areas for children in nearby Springhurst Park and none would be required in the area under consideration.
- In discussing the possible design concepts for the Forecourt and Grande Allée with City planners, it was recognized that the Greystone project is entirely unlike suburban developments both in size and purpose.
- While many of the planning principles articulated by the City planning staff are relevant to Greystone, care should be taken to distinguish this project from standard suburban park planning exercises, especially in the area of amenities. Chosen amenities should contribute to an overall theme, taking into account the urban setting, the importance of natural habitat, and the goal of creating an inviting focal point for the community.

9. Capital Ward Seniors Lunch: Seniors living in Capital Ward (the Glebe, the Glebe Annex, Old Ottawa South, Old Ottawa East, Dow's Lake, Heron Park and Riverside) are invited to a FREE lunch hosted by Councillor David Chernushenko. Special guests include Mayor Jim Watson and MP Paul Dewar.

Listen to a presentation on how to stay active and engaged from Sherry Nigro, RN, from Ottawa Public Health, and learn about the many services provided by the City of Ottawa. Details: Wednesday, June 17, 2015, Revera Living – Colonel By, 43 Aylmer Ave.; Doors open at 11:00 a.m., Lunch served at 11:30 a.m., Presentation at 1:00 p.m.

