

Chair's Report – May 2014

- 1. Safe Crossings of the Canal Parkways:** Information on the planned pedestrian crossing at Queen Elizabeth Drive and Fifth Avenue can be found at: <http://www.ncc-ccn.gc.ca/property-management/what-we-manage/news/2014-03-24/planned-improvements-queen-elizabeth>. Also, according to information provided at an open house May 6, this summer the National Capital Commission will be drafting plans for a signalized crossing at Colonel By Drive and Clegg Street. However, unlike the situation for the QED-Fifth crossing, no funding or scheduling has been set for improvements at CBD-Clegg. The OOECA has recommended to the NCC that the improvements should be made as soon as possible, given traffic volumes on Colonel By Drive that are twice those of Queen Elizabeth Drive. If you have an opinion on this please contact the NCC (info@ncc-ccn.ca).
- 2. Rideau River Footbridge:** The Council approved 2014 budget included an allocation of \$8.2 million for the construction of a pedestrian and cycling bridge over the Rideau River and related pathways links between Donald Street and Somerset Street East. This bridge and pathway connections will have lighting and will be winter maintained. Construction is anticipated to begin later this year and be substantially completed by the end of 2015 with landscaping and finishing work in 2016.
- 3. Canal Footbridge Issues:** The proposed new development charges bylaw would earmark considerable sums for active transportation infrastructure, including for the proposed Clegg-Fifth footbridge (DCs = about \$5.6M of the estimated \$16M cost if I am reading the material correctly). Meanwhile, a footbridge has been built to link south and north-side stands at the renovated Lansdowne stadium. I'm trying to get details on its cost in case there may be relevance to the proposed canal footbridge at Clegg-Fifth. I'm also trying to find out additional details on the parking garage at Lansdowne. I think the city paid about \$40 million towards it but there may be a revenue stream that offsets this cost. If not, it raises the question of how the city can so easily spend large sums on cars.
- 4. Sale of Oblate Lands:** The "due diligence" work of the Regional Group will end May 22 at which point Regional must determine whether they want to finalize their offer for the Oblates lands. A remarkable number of old bricks appear in the various holes they dug for their soil testing.
- 5. Sustainable Development of Oblate Lands:** The presentations used at the March forum will be provided at the June 10th OOECA Board meeting. The Church of the Ascension (on Echo, just north of Immaculata High School) has kindly agreed to allow the association/SLOE to have the monthly meeting there so as to provide a better venue for the presentation and related discussion.

6. **OOECA Column for Next Mainstreeter:** Any suggestions for the OOECA column due July 16th (for printing on August 12)? One option is discussion of Main Street Renewal; another would be the infill bylaw changes that Stephen Pope and Paul Goodkey continue to spend an inordinate amount of time on ...
7. **Expansion of Springhurst / Rideau Trail Parks:** Nothing further 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.
8. **Rideau River Western Pathway / Nature Trail – City Plans:** There is no news on the status of the City’s plans for completion of the pathway.
9. **Brantwood Dock:** Dan Chenier, general manager of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services has assured that, despite the construction at the foot of Clegg, “the dock installation can proceed when the river conditions are right.”
10. **Lansdowne Updates:** After two years of construction, Lansdowne Park will begin a phased opening this summer, with football and/or soccer games taking place most weekends starting July 18th. On June 17th at 7pm the Glebe Community Association will host an information meeting with representatives from the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group to explain transportation arrangements that will be in effect for the events at Lansdowne starting in July. In my monthly tour of the site with other community representatives I have been amazed at the progress but also dismayed with the scale of some of the commercial development, notably the cinema and the stores along the new street parallel to Holmwood. Also, a new portico on the north side of the stadium considerably obscures the view of the Aberdeen pavilion from bank Street. On the positive side, the urban park is really taking shape, complete with planted apple trees and the refrigerated outdoor rink moving along well. However, when you are in the urban park portion of the redeveloped Lansdowne it is as though OOE is just a stone’s throw away.
11. **Municipal Election:** Are there issues that the Board / Association wants raised during the course of the election?
12. **Undergrounding Case:** The Planning Committee / Main Street Renewal Working Group members prepared two op-ed submissions for the Ottawa Citizen, making that case that undergrounding the hydro wires on Main Street between Clegg and Immaculata (and possibly beyond) should be done and paid for by the city and or developers, but have since concluded that the better approach may be to see if the Ottawa Citizen or others would be interested in pursuing the story because of its “beyond-OOE” implications.
13. **Undergrounding of LRT Electrical Cables on Elliott-Marlow-Clegg:** Although some of us questioned the sense of undergrounding the new LRT cable along Elliott-Marlow-Clegg (rather than on Main), Ottawa Hydro says this is, to them, the best route. Ben Hazlett, Supervisor, LRT Project Management, explains: “Hydro Ottawa Limited (HOL) does have existing underground structures along Main Street from Riverdale to Clegg, however these existing structures are already operating beyond maximum capacity.

As a result, additional duct and manholes are required to permit the installation of the new LRT circuit, as well as, facilitate supply of future development north of Clegg. Installation of these new structures on Main Street was reviewed during the planning stage, it was however found to be both cost prohibitive, technically challenging, and carries additional risks related to other utility relocation requirements. Space is very tight through this section of Main Street, and is also densely populated by existing underground utilities.

As a result, routing on both the East and West side of Main Street were found to require both encroachment on private property, and utility relocations. Resulting in not only higher project costs, but a higher impact to the residents in the area. Routing in the middle of Main Street was also considered, this however was found not to be practical, as a result of the ongoing traffic impact, and traffic safety issues which would arise when HOL required access to its plant for routine maintenance, emergency repairs, and future planned work.

This location would also create future difficulties for the water & sewer infrastructures. Installation of HOL's new structures, along Marlowe from Elliot to Clegg, permits, HOL's plant to be located fully within the road right of way, without conflict to existing utilities. Eliminating the need to encroach on private property and the associated land right costs, as well as the requirement costs to relocate existing underground utilities. For these reasons it was determined that this routing was both technical and financially superior solution despite the increased routing distance involved." I'm not sure when this Marlowe work is to be done.

14. **Main Street Public Art:** According to info I received from the city: The City of Ottawa invites residents to have their say about the public art to be commissioned for Main Street in the neighbourhood of Old Ottawa East, as part of the Main Street Renewal Project. The public can meet the five shortlisted artists and view their proposals for permanent exterior works 4 – 7 p.m., Wednesday, June 25, at: St. Paul University, 223 Main Street, Laframboise Hall, Room 120 (enter off Main Street directly across from Caisse populaire Desjardins). There may also be the opportunity to see the work of the five finalists at the Main Event, June 14, 2014. The selection process is underway for public art that will be installed as part of the renewal of Main Street. A Peer Assessment Committee reviewed 44 proposals submitted by professional artists and artist teams for this opportunity. Five proposals were shortlisted for the next stage. The Committee considers public feedback when selecting the winning proposal.
15. **Main Street Renewal:** Ron Rose has asked that there soon be a Main Street Renewal Working Group meeting so that construction plans that we've heard about can be well discussed. See unofficial report of the city's proposals below.

The detailed design work for Main St. is complete and will be posted on the city website tonight or tomorrow. SC will send the board a link to the design once it's posted. [This is linked to from the OOECA site]

Construction on Main St. will start Apr or May of 2015; it has not gone out to tender yet. The project will be two years of major, heavy, disruptive construction. There will be some minor finishing work done in the third year (i.e. landscaping).

First big dig section will be Greenfield to Springhurst.

The expectation is that work will not happen on the weekends unless necessary. The contractor will be required to reduce dust, noise, disruption as much as possible.

There will be some construction this summer as Bell has to redo all their lines under the east side of Main. The sidewalk will be dug up one block at a time, and then covered with asphalt, with work to be completed on each section by end of day Friday. This should not affect our market this year.

The traffic plan for the reconstruction has not been finalized yet but is expected to be in a few weeks. The contractor will also have a say once the project gets going.

The expected traffic plan for the majority of the project is that Main St. will be reduced to one lane southbound. Northbound traffic will have to be rerouted. Main St. onramps from Riverside will likely be closed for most of the project. The bridge at Smyth is also being redone as part of this project.

They will be trying to keep Lees and Hawthorne open throughout for east-west traffic flow.

There will be an open house June 25 for the finalists of the public artwork to be installed on the new street, and then open houses in the fall and next spring to let people know what to expect during the reconstruction.

**Ottawa East
Community
Association**



Old Town Hall

March 26, 2014

Russell Mills
Chair
National Capital Commission
202-40 Elgin Street
Ottawa ON K1P 1C7
(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.



John Dance
President
Old Ottawa East Community Association
61 Main Street
Ottawa, ON K1S 1B3

c.c.: Paul Dewar, MP
Mayor Jim Watson
Councillor David Chernushenko
Linda Hancock, OSCA
Christine McAllister, GCA
John Verbaas, CCC
Bob Brocklebank, FCA

