



Apartment building to become parking lot? 3



The Turning Point is still spinning music, 10

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

Coalition fights for maximum space for new park



The flooded skating rink in Plouffe Park, south of the Plant Recreation Centre, is attracting many Centretown residents for safe outdoor exercise. The P4X coalition wants to ensure the expanded park now being planned by the City of Ottawa will have sufficient recreation space for both the current and the expected 21,000 new residents in this area. *CHARLES AKBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ*

Alayne McGregor
 “Every inch counts.” That’s the approach a community coalition is taking, as they push for maximum space for parks and recreation in new developments on the western edge of Centretown.

The five-group coalition is called “P4X - the Plouffe Park, Plant Pool Expansion Coalition”. It argues that West Centretown and Hintonburg are already seriously deficient in greenspace, outdoor and indoor recreation facilities, and public space for meetings and events, compared to city averages and standards.

That deficiency will only increase when another 14,000 residents are added in the new Gladstone Village development being built by Ottawa Community Housing (OCH), the coalition says. Another 7,000 residents are expected in other planned developments in the area.

Just to support the Gladstone Village residents according to city standards would require another four tennis courts, 10 play structures, five full-size sports fields, five outdoor rinks, two

continued on page 13 P4X



Citizens at MPP Joel Harden’s rally at Queen Juliana Park on Oct. 29 repeatedly expressed anger and disappointment at the loss of trees for a parking garage. *ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ*

Bruce Cockburn joins Civic campus opposition

Alayne McGregor
 The controversy over the new Civic campus of the Ottawa Hospital hasn’t stopped – and the latest to weigh in is Ottawa-born folk icon Bruce Cockburn.

This month, Cockburn released a short video in which he said that “replacing precious greenspace with a hospital and its parking lots, which would be better placed

elsewhere, makes no sense. Who profits from this?”

His is only one of the voices continuing to raise objections to the site design and ultimately the location of the new hospital campus – despite City Council’s approval of the hospital site plan last October.

With the plan of the campus’ highly controversial parking garage about to reach

continued on page 7 Civic

McKenney aims for mayor

Alayne McGregor
 After eight years as Somerset Ward councillor, Catherine McKenney has announced they plan to run for mayor in next October’s city elections.

They are so far facing Councillor Diane Deans and former Mayor Bob Chiarelli in the contest for mayor. Current Mayor Jim Watson said in December that he would not run again.

McKenney, 60, has two daughters, with their 14-year-old still at home. They and their wife have been married for almost 17 years. Their two dogs, Lily and Jellybean, are frequently seen with McKenney around the ward; they also have two cats.

The BUZZ interviewed McKenney on January 10. This is an edited and condensed version of our conversation.

Centretown BUZZ: Why have you announced your in-

tention to run for mayor?

McKenney: I have been considering it for some time, talking to a lot of people across the city who have reached out to me and whom I’ve had conversations with over the years about priorities in the city. And over time I came to the conclusion that I had the experience that it takes and that I would have a platform and ideas that would resonate across the city.

And I am anxious to have those conversations, have those ongoing conversations about how our city can change and what amazing possibilities there are for us.

BUZZ: Are you frustrated with the way the city is currently operated?

McKenney: The city changed – all cities changed significantly – in early 2020. If we want to look back, we can always point at issues that frustrated people, whether it’s light rail, cuts to transit, the lack of affordable

housing, the lack of any real action on climate.

But from 2020 on is when we’ve been forced to really look ahead and think about what is possible and what the potential of our cities are, because we’re not going to go back to where we were.

Things will change and they can change into something much, much better. So I was more compelled by what the future held, certainly.

BUZZ: But we’ve had serious problems before: the ice storm, tornadoes, floods. Why is the pandemic so much worse?

McKenney: The pandemic is global, and it has changed over a significant amount of time how we live, how we move about the city, how we work, whether we go into work. It forced us to adjust. But as we slowly

cont on page 6 McKenney

See also: Ariel Troster to run in Somerset Ward, p 3

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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

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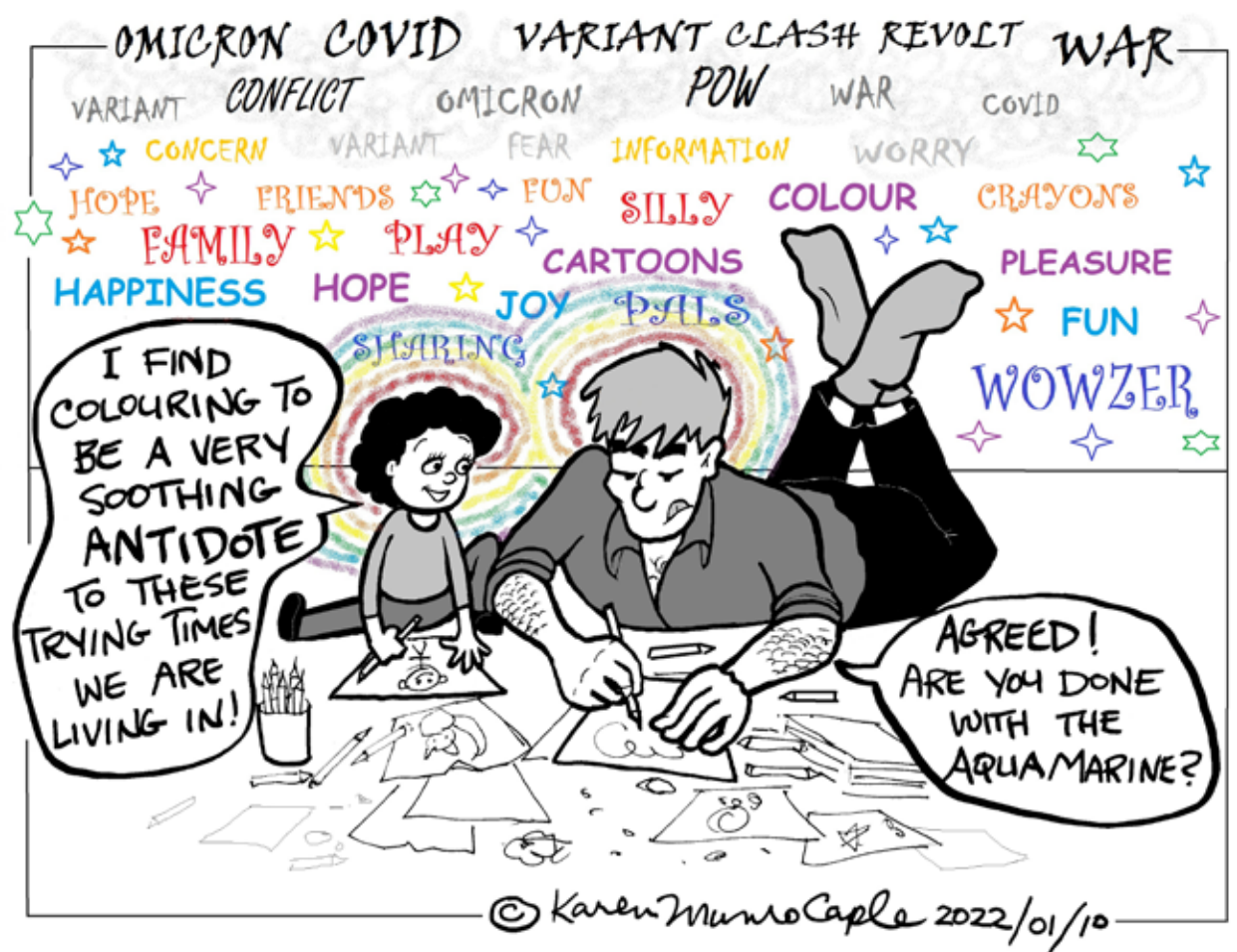
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The Lighter Side of the Pandemic, by Karen Munro-Caple



The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: Snow & salt make some PWDs feel shut in

Ryan Lythall

Now that winter's here this brings added issues for people with disabilities (PWD) in terms of getting around. While many of my friends and I are staying home due to COVID, there are still people venturing out, even if just for a change of scenery.

For years, I've heard many stories of people in wheelchairs, or using walkers, getting stuck in the snow and road salt. When that happens, we can't call CAA to help us out. In those instances, all we can do is try to get ourselves out or hope that a kind stranger happens to walk by and helps us out. Both scenarios present their risks. Getting stuck outside in the winter can quickly become very dangerous for PWDs.

If a person using a manual wheelchair, or a walker, tries to pull themselves out, there's a chance that they'll injure themselves or aggravate their medical condition. Those in a powered wheelchair also run the risk of draining the battery or causing further damage to their chair. Having a dead or low battery isn't going to help even if they do manage to free themselves. As for hoping that a kind stranger walks by, they

may be out of luck, depending on their location.

Although it can melt ice, road salt can also be a serious hazard for wheelchair users. In my experience, road salt can get into wheels and prevent the wheel from turning. Depending on where it lands on the chair or wheel, it can also disengage the clutch, which would prevent a PWD from being able to drive their chair. And, if we get hit by salt from a passing vehicle, there's also a risk that it will land on the wheels or inside the motor. Snow and salt also make pathways and sidewalks extremely bumpy.

And then there's the issue of snow removal, or the lack thereof.

For as long as I can remember, the city has always seemed unprepared for the arrival of snow. Each year, city snow removal staff announce that they are ready but despite this, their efforts always seem to fall short.

When it comes to snow clearing, the city seems to focus on the main streets, which makes sense for those using cars or trucks, and for emergency vehicles. With cycling and other forms of transportation being encouraged, it's time for the city to do a better job of clearing sidewalks, bike paths and parking lots.

And the same thing goes for the NCC and their winter trails.

I understand that many people like to snowshoe or cross-country ski. But every winter trail made is one less path that people with disabilities can use. And this is especially true during Winterlude.

Each year, when Winterlude rolls around, I get angry. To me, the NCC is highly ableist. While people are walking around enjoying the ice sculptures, a PWD is struggling to even get into Confederation Park or Jacques Cartier Park due to snow and ice.

I haven't been to Winterlude in many years. It's way too bumpy for me and for my body, and I know that I'm far from being the only one. Winterlude may be fun for the whole family but not if a family member uses a wheelchair.

So to the City of Ottawa and the NCC, please do a better job of including people with disabilities in your snow removal efforts. While this isn't the first time this issue has been raised, the question is: will this be the first time that something is done about it?

Happy 2022! I hope you all have a great year and that you all stay safe.

Follow Ryan on Twitter:
[@rolling_enigma](https://twitter.com/rolling_enigma)

From the editor: 2022 elections raise important issues

This month, *The BUZZ* won't be in print. We know that many of you prefer it on newsprint, but with the latest highly-infectious spike in the COVID-19 pandemic, we didn't want to risk the health of our volunteer delivery team going door to door. We hope to be back in print in February.

You can read the paper either as a PDF or as individual articles on centretownbuzz.com. The one advantage of going online is no limit on the number of pages we can print – except the number of articles our volunteers can write and edit!

These last two years have put an incredible strain on our community, both in Ottawa and in Ontario. It's been a constant adaptation and invention ex-

perience trying to find the best way of handling a completely new and constantly-morphing virus – and still keep ordinary life and the economy going. In the process too many have died, either from the virus or from not being able to access health care in time.

The crisis has also exposed existing, endemic problems: not enough nurses; lack of staff and the need for more patient-centred care in long-term care homes, as well as the health implications of the for-profit LTC model; and poor school ventilation. At the city level, we've had to deal with the underfunding of public health; the continuing opioid crisis; and serious questions about the usefulness of public-private partnerships.

This will be your opportunity to judge

how well our governments have handled this crisis and other priorities. This year will see two elections: provincial on June 2 and city on October 24. *The BUZZ* will be starting provincial coverage in February. Our city coverage has already started in this issue with interviews with two local candidates, one for mayor and one for city councillor, who have announced their intentions to run. We will cover other local candidates as they announce.

Give us your views on city and provincial issues, with a letter to the editor or an op-ed. Now's the time to start this debate.

- Alayne McGregor

See page 12 for letters and op-eds.

First hat in the ring in Somerset Ward



Centretown community activist Ariel Troster (left) has announced her intention to run for councillor in Somerset Ward, and has been endorsed by current Councillor Catherine McKenney (right). [photo provided by Troster]

Alayne McGregor

Ariel Troster has announced her intention to run for Somerset Ward city councillor in the city election in October.

She's the first entrant in what's likely to be a crowded and wide-open field, now that current Councillor Catherine McKenney has indicated they plan to run for mayor. McKenney told *The BUZZ* they have endorsed Troster.

Troster said she has lived in Centretown for 12 years, currently near Gladstone and Bronson. She's attended meetings of the Centretown Community Association.

Her roots as a community activist go back for more than 20 years, she said, and "I've always worked for social justice and labour organizations as a staff member." She is a senior communications strategist on the political and government relations team of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), where she's worked for the last five years.

At the FCM, she said she has had "a bird's eye view from a national perspective of city policy," including issues like transit, the National Housing Strategy, and the federal Rapid Housing Initiative. "I work with a lot of people who think about municipal politics a lot, and that's been the focus of my work."

Running for City Council gives her the opportunity to "look at those policies and see how they play out on the ground."

She said she had been inspired by "the way that cities are really pushing the envelope in terms of progressive politics, livable communities, making some really exciting concrete changes during the pandemic. We're seeing cities like Montreal, like Paris, like Calgary, really becoming

very people focused, and I think there's a lot of opportunity in Ottawa."

Troster said she had always thought of herself as a "behind the scenes communicator and strategist," with any advocacy she did "always off the side of my desk." As a volunteer, she is a member of Rainbow Haven, which sponsors and supports LGBTQ refugees.

Working from home and spending all her time in Centretown for the last two years "has really attuned me to a lot of the challenges and opportunities in the neighbourhood. I do a lot of work supporting refugees and newcomers to Ottawa, and, on a volunteer basis, I helped a lot of people get vaccine appointments, which involved talking to my neighbours and finding a way to support each other. All of those things made me want to serve the community more."

When McKenney announced their mayoral hopes, "people started asking me if I was interested in running, and I finally decided to say yes, mostly out of a desire to serve the community full-time and try to make some good change in the city."

She said she and McKenney share similar values, and she applauded their championing of Somerset Ward neighbourhoods, and their work for affordable housing, transit, and road safety.

"But I'm a different person with different experience, and I'm really interested in hearing from people about the improvements that they want to see in Centretown."

"I will be spending the next few months knocking on doors and building a platform based on what I hear on the doorsteps, talking to people. I think the job of the councillor is to do a lot of listening and problem-solving and then to take all of that information and bring it to the table."

She also plans to listen to community partners in the ward, "learn as much as I can about the community," and connect "with as many people as possible. I won't actually be hitting the streets and knocking on doors until late spring or early summer. We also have a provincial election happening in June, so there will be a lot of attention focused in that direction."

What did she want to achieve as councillor? "I really envision Somerset Ward in the city being a place where no one is left behind. We saw during the debate about the city budget and the police budget that we are severely underfunding health and social services and outreach services in the city, and affordable housing. We really feel the impact [of that] strongly in the downtown core because that's where a lot of the services are. I strongly believe that when we support the most vulnerable people in our community, we improve the community for everyone."

"So I would like to see a much deeper investment in health and social services which help everybody thrive in the community. They also largely prevent crime, they help prevent overdose deaths, and they make living downtown a more harmonious and neighbourly experience when people's real challenges are being addressed."

As a mother of a nine-year-old daughter whom she regularly walks to school, Troster said she was also concerned about the safety of pedestrians and vulnerable road users.

"Simple things like the way we clear snow have a huge impact on accessibility in the city. Looking at the way we run services in the city from the perspective, literally from the ground up, of the most vulnerable road user will really make it much easier to get around our city for everybody."

She also favours more investment in the arts and in ideas to make Ottawa more dynamic, more of a draw. Montreal has closed streets for arts interventions and patios, for example, she said.

"But the number one issue I hear about is that people want to stay in the neighbourhood and they can't afford to. And so really focusing on ways to increase access to affordable housing in the ward is really important to me."

City and school board elections will be held on October 24. Candidates cannot register until May 2. Until they register, they cannot raise money or spend any money on their campaigns.



Anna Meurot didn't know she might be kicked out of her apartment until she saw this sign in the empty lot beside her building.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Affordable apartment building may be torn down, turned into surface parking lot

Alayne McGregor

A three-story, six-unit apartment building on Nepean Street is facing demolition, in order to put up a parking lot.

This would force six tenants to move. Several of them joined with Ottawa ACORN to hold a protest on January 6 in front of the building at 142 Nepean.

About 25 people participated, waving signs and chanting against the loss of affordable housing. MPP Joel Harden and Councillor Catherine McKenney attended and spoke against the proposal. McKenney told the crowd they would oppose the demolition and the parking lot.

"There's absolutely no reason to tear down a rental building in this city. For every affordable unit that your tax dollars build, we lose seven as a result of renovations. It has to stop," McKenney said.

At the demonstration, tenant Anna Meurot said she only learned of the proposal when a sign was posted last summer in the vacant lot next door. It said that the city had received a request for a zoning bylaw amendment to create a surface parking lot with 30 spaces at 142, 144, and 148 Nepean.

144 and 148 Nepean Street formerly contained residential properties, but they have been demolished and the lots are now vacant.

According to [the application to the city by Fotenn Planning + Design](#), the surface parking lot would serve an existing office building at 190 O'Connor Street, around the corner from the apartment building.

Currently, the parking

for 190 O'Connor (44 spots) is located at 108 Nepean. That site is scheduled to be redeveloped for a 27-storey mixed-use building, and Fotenn partner Miguel Tremblay said the parking must be relocated to meet lease requirements. The application said 142 Nepean would be demolished once construction started at 108 Nepean.

Several surface parking lots currently exist on this street within view of 142 Nepean: two lots on the same side to the west which serve adjacent apartment blocks, and a smaller lot across the street. Nowhere in the application's planning rationale did it consider renting the parking spaces in an existing parking lot or garage, or only using the two currently-vacant lots.

The parking lot will require three approvals from the city, all of which have been applied for and are under technical review by city staff.

According to Stephen Willis, the city's General Manager, Planning, the city's demolition bylaw requires that someone wanting to demolish a current building in the urban area must ordinarily first get building permits for a replacement building. The city's by-law, however, does not require an owner to rebuild with a similar or greater number of units or to meet affordability requirements for rent of those units.

The application's planning rationale argues that the new parking lot at 142-148 Nepean will allow the building of high-density housing at 108 Nepean.

The rationale said the tenants would be given the option to rent at a neighbouring rental apartment "operated by an affiliate of the propo-

nent." Meurot, who has lived there since last May, said she and her partner Teke were offered two possible nearby apartments.

"We've seen the units they're offering. One of them is very small – way smaller than this one. The other is in a building which has bedbug reviews online, so we're not very happy about that. We'd much rather stay here."

They currently pay \$1300/month for a two-bedroom, 800 sq. ft. apartment, lower than average rent for Centretown. Under the relocation offer, they would pay the same rent for the next two years, but with no guarantees after that, which Meurot said was not long enough.

While their current apartment has some maintenance issues, "we've been pretty happy in there since we moved in."

She said she was "outraged" at the idea of the building being razed for a parking lot. "There are so many parking lots around us. Why our house? There's a parking lot right in front of me as I'm talking. There's a vacant lot that could be a parking lot if they wanted. They have to take our house on top of that?"

At the demonstration, tenant Lionel Njeukam called for more protections for tenants facing renovations, including space for displaced tenants in the new building at the same rent and same size apartment, temporary accommodation at the same rent, and help with moving costs to and from.

Ottawa ACORN is currently asking for signatures on [an online petition](#) to the mayor, city staff, and the city Planning Committee opposing the demolition.

Thumbs up or down on cycling & walking projects

Alayne McGregor

The City of Ottawa is asking residents to give thumbs up or down to possible pedestrian and cycling changes across Ottawa.

In Centretown, this could include bike lanes on Elgin Street north of Laurier, a pedestrian crossing of the Queen Elizabeth Driveway at Argyle, a segregated bike lane on O'Connor north of Laurier, and more.

These possible projects are proposed to be implemented from 2023 to 2046. The city says they will “address critical missing links in the City’s active transportation networks,” and are in addition to upgrades to be delivered through already-planned projects like road resurfacing, road construction, or rapid transit projects.

Surprisingly, though, Centretown has comparatively few proposed projects compared to areas like Ottawa West or Vanier.

You can vote on the projects via the city’s [Engage Ottawa web page for the Transportation Master Plan](#).

Voting opened December 9 and closes February 18. Staff urge early voting as they will check on the results partway through.

There are three maps – for pedestrian projects, for cycling projects, and for feasibility study projects.

On each map, you can vote whether a project is “important to you” and submit comments on it. You can only vote yes on five projects per map, but can comment or vote no on as many as you want.

You can also send longer comments to or get more information from tmpupdate@ottawa.ca.

Based on the results of this survey, city staff say they will present a list of projects to the city’s Transportation Committee this spring.

“The order of implementation of projects from 2023 to 2046 will be based on opportunities to coordinate with other projects, alignment with network criteria, equity considerations, and geographic coverage factors.”

The projects are approximate: their exact limits and design are to be determined through further planning, design, and public consultation.

Pedestrian Projects

Staff say these projects would be subject to a technical feasibility and a warrant review (the point evaluation system to determine if a traffic signal would be installed). The two proposed Centretown projects are:

- the crossing of the Queen Elizabeth Driveway

at Argyle Avenue

- a sidewalk along Metcalfe Street from Argyle Avenue to McLeod Street.

Cycling Projects

These could include bike lanes, separated cycling facilities, and multi-use pathways. The three proposed Centretown projects are:

- a westbound bike lane on Gilmour Street from Percy to Cartier

- separated cycling facilities on O’Connor Street from Laurier to Wellington.

- separated cycling facilities on Wellington Street from Sussex to the Portage Bridge. This would be a proposed shared project between the City of Ottawa and the National Capital Commission.

Nearby cycling projects

- westbound bike lanes on Lees Avenue and Hawthorne Avenue from the Lees LRT Station to Main Street, and an eastbound bike lane just east of Lees Station.

- a northbound bike lane on Sussex Drive from Rideau to George, including removing the left turn lane.

Feasibility Study Projects

These are locations where the city will explore “possible solutions to important but challenging missing links. These often require

significant trade-offs, property or partnerships not currently in place. If a project is determined to be feasible, then implementation may be pursued pending available funding.”

Centretown projects:

- cycling facilities on Gladstone Avenue from the O-Train Pathway to Percy Street. The project would include conversion of the southbound bike lane on Percy to a northbound contraflow bike lane from Flora to Gilmour.

- cycling facilities on Elgin from Laurier to Wellington

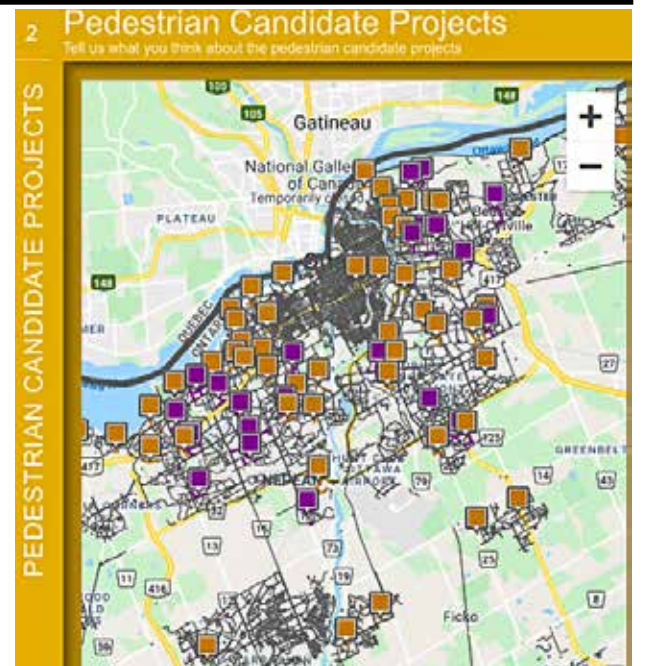
Nearby:

- southbound cycling facilities on Main Street from the Hwy 417 bridge to Lees.

- cycling facilities on Nicholas Street between Rideau and Laurier, and on Daly Avenue east of Nicholas.

Who chose the projects?

Project suggestions came from the public in a fall 2020 survey of active transportation missing links. A staff report said that the public dropped over 4,000 “pins” on a map of the city identifying their concerns. The public also identified three implementation priorities: enabling community trips;



The map of pedestrian projects shows fewer in Centretown.

addressing network connectivity; and improving connections to transit.

As well, many suggestions were submitted directly by email. City councillors were also asked for the highest priority projects in their wards.

Staff then conducted a city-wide review of the walking and cycling networks, looking at “network connectivity; origin-destination data; routes to community destinations and transit; and ‘missing link’ map markers from consultation. The review also considered geographic differences in existing walking and cycling

facilities (exposing different standards for active transportation facilities that were in place at the time that different areas of the city were developed).”

Each project was judged according to its importance to the network, its contribution to safety, and its overall cost-effectiveness. The entire portfolio of projects was reviewed for appropriate geographic coverage relative to an area’s existing pedestrian or cycling facilities and for adequate investment in “TMP priority neighbourhoods” with strong equity needs, staff said.

The Centretown CHC is here to help you with COVID-19 vaccines

CCHC

Need questions answered about COVID-19 vaccines? Want your shot right here in Centretown, and at a time where you won’t have to miss work? Prefer to get vaccinated in a more personal, intimate setting with people who understand you don’t like needles?

The [Centretown Community Health Centre](#) (CCHC) is here to help you.

Every time that COVID-19 springs a new variant, CCHC rallies its resources and pulls all the stops to support clients and meet them where they are. Some people have been eager to be vaccinated, others more reluctant.

With hesitancy in mind and our client-centered approach to care, we offer vaccination and information clinics. Their goal is to create a welcoming, non-judgmental space for folks who are hesitant and give them the opportunity to ask questions.

Sometimes people leave without getting the vaccine, but we hope we answered their questions and made a safe space where they would feel comfortable to return to.

Keeping it close to home is something that CCHC is very good at. We carefully consider the social factors that have an impact on health and engage the community

to ensure we remain responsive to local needs.

It was important to offer a vaccine site in Centretown with large-scale and some weekly smaller-scale clinics, within and outside of typical business hours to accommodate the various needs. Some people are not able to make it to the larger clinics in the city, or they do not feel comfortable taking transit during the pandemic. Therefore, we aim to reduce access barriers by providing help to navigate the online system, and offering registration by phone.

We offer walk-in opportunities/clinics for those who cannot make booked appointments, reaching out specifically to those who have not been vaccinated yet and offering support in getting vaccinated or providing vaccines on the spot when possible. We offer interpretation by phone for folks who don’t speak English or French, allowing us to see people from many cultures and who speak various languages.

In addition to our onsite clinics, we have vaccinated homebound clients in their home, in shelters like the Cornerstone Women’s shelter, and at the YMCA. We partnered with Tom Brown Respite and other community partners to offer several clinics.

We held a special kids’ COVID-19 vaccine clinic just before the holidays and are planning for more in the next few weeks. Our smaller-scale, more personal and intimate setting on-site clinics are very well received. They help folks who have needle fears, or who are afraid of going into larger crowds during the pandemic.

As well, the on-site location allows CCHC staff to offer, or to connect people with other community services, as needed. For example, our clients can take advantage of the SITE needle exchange program, receive COVID testing information, or be referred to a community support workers.

Since the start of the vaccine rollout, the staff and the primary care workers at Centretown Community Health Centre have given almost 2,500 doses of vaccines.

When the pandemic hit two years ago, people felt unsafe. When everyone hunkered down, the most vulnerable could not. Uncertain times redefined what it means to be part of a community. The Centretown Community Health Centre strives to continue to be there and answer the call.

To book an appointment: call 343-540-9125 or [book online](#).

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Skyline: The missing middle and gentle density: Goldilocks visits the planning department

Robert Smythe

The City of Ottawa's new Official Plan is replete with platitudes that celebrate walkable neighbourhoods and compact built form. At the same time, the plan annexes more hectares of wetlands, woodlots and farmland to add sprawl at the fringes, while jamming 30- to 60-storey towers into the urban centre.

The city would like to see more development choices to fill the gulf in between. But this is hard to do. Recent attempts to densify the mature inner suburbs and the newer growth areas just outside the Greenbelt foundered because of political opposition from these areas.

In addition, the high cost of the mandatory land-planning, urban design, heritage, transportation, environmental, geotechnical, wind, shadow, etc., studies required for a low-to-mid-rise project can be the same as for a skyscraper – a disincentive for any developer to build small.

The “missing middle” is a newish planning theory that describes multiple units of various housing types built within a single, humanly scaled building. It calls for a lot of them, compatibly sprinkled throughout a city's low-rise areas with a call to “Think Big and Act Small.” The term “gentle density” is interchangeable.

While the term is normally applied to existing suburbs where restrictive single-family zoning prohibits any other kind of development, in Centretown, plenty of examples of missing middle development abound, so we're ahead of the planning curve.

Two recent proposals typify this trend. They would see residential conversion of properties now being used for offices, and building new, mid-rise apartment buildings on land where apartments are currently not permitted and that would exceed the present height limits.

Both developments include the restoration of an extant on-site structure with some architectural merit. As they are located within the Centretown Heritage Conservation District, they will require more intensive design reviews.

Centretown's Community Design Plan (2013) has several key objectives for what it hopes will be well designed, compact and inclusive development. These principles include a directive to: maintain and respect the character

of Centretown's neighbourhoods, accommodate residential growth for a diverse population, and bring in new residents to support commerce on our main streets.

322 Waverley Street was once a pair of 1930s red brick houses. When one burned down decades ago, half of this property became a parking lot.

The City of Ottawa has received applications for zoning bylaw and Official Plan amendments for a six-storey apartment with 27 units. There will be amenity space in the rear yard and on a rooftop deck. There would also be 17 bike parking spaces. In keeping with Ottawa's New Age green mantra, no vehicular parking is proposed on-site.

The surviving house would be remodelled and twinned with a flanking mirrored replica on the old parking lot. Above this base three more brick storeys repeat its window patterns.

The project would be rental. Its proponents try to hit all the planning hot buttons by saying that their development “represents an important investment in a building typology commonly referred to as the ‘missing middle’ and is compatible in scale with the existing building inventory/planned function of this zone and will assist in meeting the growth demands for compact, efficient, and walkable urban living.”

Nearby at 283 to 285 McLeod Street, opposite the Canadian Museum of Nature, developers have applied for a more ambitious and high-end project. It was once an 1880s house and a 1930s one, with a wide yard between. In the 1970s, the Norwich Union Insurance Company bought them for a heritage demonstration project that clad them in pink stucco for a pseudo-Regency cottage style. The newer one will be replaced by a new three-storey “handsome podium” while the older house will be restored to its original appearance.

Behind all of this rises an eight-storey tower. Mindful of its very historic setting, in the proponent's view, “The scale and massing of the 8-storey building incorporates setbacks, step backs and architectural articulation designed to shape the building to fit on the street and limit the massing at the upper floors. The built form of the project as a whole preserves the lower scale massing of a street friendly fabric. The mid rise is expressed in



The red brick “missing middle” infill apartment building at 322 Waverley Street. From the City of Ottawa Development Application Information files.



The mid-rise proposal at 283-285 McLeod Street, as it would be seen from the Canadian Museum of Nature Park. From the City of Ottawa Development Application Information files.

a contemporary language.”

The project's other details are thus: 30 residential units, 11 underground car parking spaces, 21 bike parking spaces, and 181 square metres of common amenity

area at grade and on a second floor terrace.

To be built, all of this would require an Official Plan and zoning bylaw amendment, and an Ontario Heritage Act permit to construct

the building in this block.

Are these examples of the missing middle—albeit in

a downtown urban context?

Perhaps they are more of a “gentle density” nudge.

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Catherine McKenney co-organized and carted waste at a hazardous waste depot for central Ottawa this summer. The lack of depots is an issue that affects both urban and suburban Ottawa.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

cont from page 1
come out of it – and we will – will people all go back to work? Will people want to stay home and work from home even part time? Are people willing to work in very low paying jobs?

People have really re-evaluated their lifestyles, their relationship to each other, their relationship to their neighbourhoods.

BUZZ: Do you think this reevaluation gives you more of a chance to become mayor?

McKenney: I think there will be a lot of candidates running for mayor. There will be different ideas put forward by different candidates. People will be paying attention, mostly because it's an open race.

And this election, like no other, is one where people are looking for change. They're looking for what's going to happen in the future. How will my relationship with my community, with my existing neighbourhood – what will that look like?

This is a perfect opportunity for me to put forward ideas that will resonate with people, whether it's on climate, on transit, in terms of public space. Arts and culture. Those are the things that people are looking for. And I feel I have the experience to understand the needs and to react to them.

BUZZ: Can you give me some examples?

McKenney: Let's take transit. Right now, we continue to have buses running nearly empty into the downtown every day. If we're going to respond to the change that people are looking for

in their day-to-day lives, we need transit to respond to people's needs to get around their own neighbourhood. If you're working at home and you want to get to the library or you want to go visit friends, you should have transit that works for you in your community.

Whether you live downtown, in Kanata, in Orleans, we all share that same need. So I think it's critical we invest in transit so that transit meets us where we are, when we're there, and is affordable. Transit is going to be one of the most important changes in this city in the next few years.

BUZZ: Have you heard the result of the free transit month in December?

McKenney: I have not, but anecdotally, I've heard from many people who weren't a regular transit riders and did take advantage of it.

BUZZ: I found it interesting, actually, that #11 was one of the busier routes when I took the free transit. And the 6 and 7 as well.

McKenney: The #11, I certainly did note that. Again, it goes back to that notion of moving people around their own neighbourhoods.

I'll give you an example. This morning I had a dentist appointment at Holland Cross and my wife was leaving for work at the same time, and she said, "You want me to drop you?" And I said, "No, I'm going to wait another five minutes and go catch the train behind our house." It was it was easier for me because the train runs every five minutes. I don't worry about being late. I know it's coming and it's

McKenney: "We have many shared values" between Centretown and the suburbs

more convenient for me in the cold to take transit.

So it benefits everyone. It gets everybody out of traffic, less cars on the road, less congestion, easier access. And it just helps to build a healthier city.

BUZZ: Mayor Watson has promoted city-building projects like Lansdowne or LeBreton Flats. Do you have a city-building project?

McKenney: There will be some city building projects. The conversations that we're going to have over the next several weeks and couple of months will be about what will the commercial core of the city look like.

People often say the downtown is not very busy now. I tell them the downtown is doing just fine. Where we live, houses are not up for sale. A lot of small local businesses are doing well. You know they will continue as we come out of the pandemic. Our traditional main streets are busy with people who live here.

But it's the commercial sector of the downtown that needs attention, and I believe that's where we can make real change over the next few years. We can provide more housing, and in the commercial core, we can have more local businesses.

Once you have more people living there, we can open up more streets for people to get around and, bring in arts, animate that commercial sector. Calgary has great plans, and I think that this city can do the same thing.

BUZZ: I'd like to talk about shared values and goals between people who live in the central area of Ottawa, versus people who live outside the Greenbelt. What do you think they would be?

McKenney: Absolutely, I do. I often am surprised when it's suggested that a councillor like myself who represents a downtown ward cannot relate to a suburban community.

I remind people that 1) I actually lived in Kanata for years and I worked for the councillor there. So I have a very keen knowledge of the needs of suburban communities. 2) I think it's unfair to assume that people living in suburban communities don't want the same things that people living in more urban communities want.

Again, their kids getting to school safely, walking, cycling, being able to take transit where they need to go, not having congested roads, having lowered speed limits on their residential streets. We know that's the number one concern across this city.

So we have many, many shared values. And that ex-

tends also to rural villages. People living in rural villages also want the same things. They want to be able to move around their community, to walk to where they want to get to. That's why they live in the type of environment that they do.

So I believe that there are many more shared values than not between between residents of the city.

BUZZ: Even potholes? That's part of Bob Chiarelli's platform.

McKenney: (laughing) Well, nobody likes potholes. Whether you're driving, walking or cycling, they can be dangerous.

But, on that, it reminds us how expensive it is to maintain roadways. We have to start rethinking, where do we invest our infrastructure dollars? And how do we ensure that we have the plans necessary to actually take care of that infrastructure? And that's why potholes today is such a hot topic. Maintenance of all of our infrastructure, actually.

BUZZ: What do you think you can do better than the other two people who so far have indicated an interest in running?

McKenney: I go back to having a suite of ideas. I know that my experience as a former assistant to a suburban councillor, staff person at the city, a councillor for two terms has certainly given me the experience in and out of City Hall, in the bureaucracy, in the political realm to have a keen understanding of what changes can be made and how they can be made.

I know how the budget process happens on the inside. I know that there are priorities in our budgets. We can shift those priorities.

I will have a bold platform that will promise the kind of change that we need to move forward as a healthy, vibrant, and equitable city for everyone.

BUZZ: Do you have a role model from other cities? I'm thinking of people like Naheed Nenshi in Calgary or Glenn Murray in Winnipeg or Valérie Plante in Montreal or Anne Hidalgo in Paris.

McKenney: Absolutely. I'll throw in Lisa Helps from Victoria, and Michelle Wu from Boston. A lot of the recent and new mayors who have been successful have done so on very progressive agendas.

Ensuring that there are alternate modes of transportation, ensuring that we invest in our cycling infrastructure, our pedestrian infrastructure, our transit. Getting people out of congestion, getting people out of traffic has been a key success for many of the

current and [recent] mayors who I feel have been very successful.

BUZZ: Did anyone in particular encourage you to run?

McKenney: My wife certainly did. She's my biggest booster. It started probably seven, eight, nine months ago with one or two people approaching me. I always figured that there would be somebody who would have a very progressive platform running.

And in conversations with different people, some colleagues, people I know, residents from my neighbourhoods and from across the city, it became apparent to me that I would be able to build a coalition of supporters and people that I would be proud to work with through an election.

BUZZ: One of the things you can say about Mayor Watson, whether or not you agree with him, is that he's been very good at creating the coalition to get his platform through. Would you alter that approach in the next council?

McKenney: My approach would be very different. I don't believe that any one person has all of the answers for an entire city, whether you're the mayor, the city manager, or whomever.

You do need to work with others. Sometimes, you may not get what you're looking for. But to have open dialogue, open discussion to ensure that all voices are heard, and to make sure that different parts of the city are all represented in leadership roles, is very important.

It is something that I would be very aware of going into a role like mayor. I know I don't have all the answers. Even as a city councillor, when something is proposed to me, I turn to my community associations, my recreation associations, constituents to understand their concerns on any proposal.

So as mayor, you really do have to ensure that you're able to work with different people, different ideas, and bring that together. It doesn't mean that you don't want your agenda to be successful. But I don't believe that having your way all the time is healthy for a city.

BUZZ: So that should reassure rural or suburban residents that it's not just Centretown all the time if you got elected?

McKenney: Absolutely, I feel very strongly about that. It's a geographically large city, a very diverse city. To ensure that we are making the change that will benefit every part of the city, all voices need to be heard. If every recommendation just

goes through, then you don't need 24 councillors around the table. You have us there so that we are representing our communities.

We are bringing to the table the concerns, the issues, the ideas from our communities. And the best way to build the city is for all of that to be input to discussion, debate and decision.

BUZZ: In two Ottawa elections, in 1991 with Nancy Smith and then in 2006 with Alex Munter, there was a lot of hope for a more progressive candidate and it didn't come to pass. Is there anything you've learned from those campaigns that would make you more successful?

McKenney: I wasn't around for the first one, but certainly for the Munter campaign, I was very much involved. Every election is different and often success depends as much on timing as it does on anything else.

I think there will be many serious candidates running for mayor, and that's a good thing because we will have discussions. We will bring forward ideas, we will talk about changes that we want to make and people will be able to decide. I see this one as being different than we've had in a long time.

BUZZ: You've been described as having NDP leanings. Is that correct?

McKenney: I worked for Ed Broadbent for a little while, and I worked for Paul Dewar for a little while.

BUZZ: But is there any possibility this could be seen as an NDP versus Liberal election?

McKenney: Well, I'm in municipal politics because that's what I like. I like the fact that it's not partisan.

I work closely with people from really across the political spectrum, but certainly progressives, whether their kind of partisan leanings are Liberal or NDP.

When we think about municipal politics, about municipalities and how they're governed, it's not a simple matter of left versus right. It's often a matter of north versus south or east versus west.

It's how things grow and where they grow and why. So it's just a very different beast when it comes to politics. And that's what I like.

BUZZ: You've been strongly in favour of re-allocating some of the police budget to other forms of emergency response by social workers or other health crisis workers, rather than the police. Some people have interpreted that as weak on crime. What is your response to that?

cont on page 7 McKenney

McKenney: we need to respond to changes in the downtown

cont from page 6

McKenney: If it's somebody having a mental health crisis, if it's somebody who is unhoused and sleeping on a bench, or somebody who uses drugs and is having an episode, today the only recourse you have 24-7 is a call to the police. We are asking police to do a job that they're not trained to do and it's outside of their purview.

It is not a crime to be in a mental health crisis. It's not a crime to be unhoused. The way we prevent crime, the way we prevent issues in our community is by investing in recreation services for kids. It's investing in housing, it's investing in social programs. And so to reallocate some dollars to other forms of response is a smart way of thinking about how we respond in our community to people who who need it.

If somebody were having a gallbladder attack, you would not call the police. So if somebody is having a mental health crisis you need to have the resources there to call to help them. Where do those dollars come from? We cannot just continue to increase by very large amounts year over year the money to police. Some of that needs to be diverted and it needs to go to mental health and social responses so that two things are happening.

One is you're investing in services, in programs that will ultimately prevent future issues. But you are also providing everybody with an opportunity to call the right number if there's somebody who is having a difficult time and it's not a police response.

BUZZ: So you think that ultimately that will reduce violent crime in the city?

McKenney: Absolutely. We know that investing in social programs, investing in recreation programs are the way to ultimately reduce crime. We know that investing in housing, mental health support, health supports will ultimately reduce conflicts in the community. And it's the

fair way to ensure that there's some equity in our city.

BUZZ: When you come up to your first budget as mayor, is there one thing you'd like to reduce and one thing you'd like to increase?

McKenney: Probably early for that. But our budgets are made of priorities. So do we really need to give \$3 million to a Porsche dealership to animate Montreal Road? Absolutely not. Do we still need today to provide grants for brownfield development? I don't believe that we do. There are things that we pay for in the city that can be diverted. Those resources can go somewhere else.

For starters, it will be a reprioritization of where we're spending our money today. I'm not talking about necessarily going in and looking for little itty bitty savings here and there.

But what is important is if we're going to budget and that budget is going to result in a decrease in the hours that your recreation centre is open you should know about that, and today you don't.

BUZZ: What would you do for Centretown in particular?

McKenney: It is critical that we address climate change in this city. We have a climate plan, an energy evolution plan. It is not funded and it is critical that we do that. A big part of that is again investing in transit. It's also investing in other energy efficiencies, whether it's helping homeowners to retrofit their homes through long term loans.

For Centretown in particular, I think that is really considering how the downtown has changed and how we need to respond to that. Businesses are no longer for the most part appealing to people outside of their neighbourhood. People are not coming downtown to work.

So just having that entire conversation and building a really strong commercial sector that becomes part of Centretown, I think is an exciting conversation to have.

BUZZ: How are you going to work with the provincial government, including if it stays Conservative?

McKenney: I think I've had some success with the LRT inquiry, so I can work with anyone. Certainly whomever the provincial government is at the end of 2022.

I know most of the local MPPs and MPs. I know Lisa MacLeod well. I've worked with Lisa, and Jeremy Roberts. Whichever party forms government, whether it's federal or provincial and whoever is here in the mayor's chair, it's about working together to make the city better. And partisanship has to be put aside at that point.

BUZZ: During the pandemic, have you been able actually to go to places outside of Centretown?

McKenney: I'm a runner, so I run a lot. I go to different parts of the city. I go out to the Rideau-Goulbourn area, some trails there. I actually have my vet in Greeley. I've got a lot of friends in Kanata so I do get out of Centretown for sure. But more so before the pandemic.

BUZZ: When are you going to start your active campaign?

McKenney: It can't start until May. But I'm going to have conversations with people. I expect to hold town hall meetings, likely online.

But this is a perfect opportunity, between now and when it all formally kicks off, to really hear from people, to understand what people are looking for.

BUZZ: The shorter election period now for city campaigns – do you think it benefits or hurts you?

McKenney: Well, it certainly makes the fundraising effort a bit more difficult – and no, I don't take corporate or developer donations.

BUZZ: Does having a spouse and a child at home help keep you sane with the pressures of City Hall?

McKenney: I think it does. For me personally, it keeps me grounded.



Ottawa musician Chris White in Queen Juliana Park, from the YouTube video promoting *Tree Songs 3* concerts on Jan. 22-23, celebrating trees & protesting cutting of trees in the park.

Civic protesters lobby & sing pro-tree songs

continued from page 1 the city Planning Committee on February 10, this issue is not going away.

The development affects West Centretown residents in several ways: increased traffic on streets like Preston, Carling, and Bronson; the loss of nearby greenspace in the Central Experimental Farm; and the severing of the well-used Trillium multi-use path south of Carling by the proposed parking garage.

Capital Ward Councillor Shawn Menard said he recently held two meetings of community associations surrounding the new campus to discuss mobility issues, and trees and landscape design, because of the amount of correspondence his office had received about the parking garage.

After his first community meeting, [Menard tweeted](#)

“Hearing the proposed new civic hospital distance from when you step off the LRT to the main entrance of the hospital will be half a kilometre (5 football fields). Not sure how this is accessible or encouraging that mode of transportation for people.”

One of the most vociferous groups opposing the campus location is [Reimagine Ottawa](#). At the end of his video, Cockburn urges viewers to consider that group's arguments.

Reimagine Ottawa co-founder Val Swinton said the group is lobbying the Ontario and federal governments, as well as local MPs and MPPs. It's pushing for an environmental assessment of the project under the federal Impact Assessment Act, and for Ontario cabinet ministers to reconsider the hospital's funding. “We won't feel right if we don't fight it.”

Swinton said she had counted the new high rises going up near the hospital: 34 with almost 9000 residential units, and 500,000 sq. ft. of commercial/retail space.

“Can you imagine how much traffic there is going to be around for people to try to get through to get to the hospital?”

One protest against the hospital site is being organized by two Ottawa musicians. Chris White and Christophe Elie will present the third edition of their *Tree Songs* concerts at 2 p.m. on January 22 and 23, online at [treesongs.ca](#). The two shows will present music and art celebrating and protecting trees, and feature “songs, poetry, visual artists, movement, tree walks, tree talks, healing arts, culinary arts and calls to action, all related to trees.”

Building the new Civic campus will require chopping down at least 523 trees.

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New OCH building to provide housing for 55+ arts workers

Alayne McGregor

If you're a writer, an actor, a musician, or a painter, your income can be low and uncertain. Meeting your rent each month can be difficult, especially in Ottawa's expensive market.

[PAL Ottawa](#), a local arts worker group, has teamed up with Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) to help older arts workers by creating affordable housing for them in a new OCH development in West Centretown.

In the Rochester Heights Phase 2 complex, Building B (83 units) will be block-leased to PAL Ottawa.

The group's chair, Peter Haworth, said they had opened up a waiting list for the units; already about 100 people have signed up for the building's bachelor to four-bedroom apartments.

Haworth said these apartments would be open to arts workers – including creative artists, technicians, and administrators – who are 55+ and have at least 15 years' experience in their field. Some may be retired, but others would still be working. "It's a place for healthy people to live and be productive.

"Our aim is to provide more affordable housing for people whose income after the age of 55 drops [on average] to \$17,000 or \$18,000 a year in Canada."

Haworth said his income as an actor peaked in his early 30s, the age for which most lead roles are written. "As you get older, you have supporting roles. How many

grandfathers and grandmothers are there to play, or the senior lawyer at the firm, or the person on their deathbed? And so these parts start diminishing.

"Visual artists, of course, [exist] very much hand-to-mouth. Some are hugely successful, but others, you just don't know what the future holds. And suddenly you have no idea how you're going to pay rent for the next two months."

The AFC, which provides emergency funding to entertainment professionals, spends 50 percent of its grants on helping people with their rent, he said.

"Rent is always the monthly calamity around the corner. This is what we hope to relieve people of."

The best-known artists may be making millions, he said, "but the art that you encounter in the city that enlivens your life as you walk by it, or hear it, or see a performance, is not made by people who are that wealthy."

The first criteria for choosing residents will be "first come, first served," he said, but that will be complicated by the need for different types of apartments and different levels of affordability.

Renting the entire building gives the group more flexibility in supporting low-income tenants, he said. Within their cost structure, they hope to have 40 percent of the units affordable.

"The exact formula of this is yet to be worked out. We are going step by step with OCH to determine if

this fits all the prerequisites they have with the CMHC and the city. Our hope is that there will be different levels of affordability, and, in the future as we get established, there could be more offered.

"But the first thing is to create a healthy, workable formula that allows PAL to exist. And then we'll see what we can do about increasing that."

He pointed out that neither OCH nor PAL Ottawa is looking to make a profit. "So right away, these rents are in a different bracket than you'd find if you went to a new development. And we have that saving for people, people who may be trapped in increasingly rundown apartments that they don't care to leave because once they step out into the market, they'll discover that the prices have gone up so much that they can't [afford them]."

PAL Ottawa will also raise funds to provide more affordable units, he said.

The tenants will also be offered PAL Ottawa's "Supporting Cast" program, in which volunteers help with transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and applying to support programs like the AFC.

"Artists tend to be very, very independent minded, very, very self-sufficient, going through all kinds of crises on a monthly basis with finances etc.. They tend to think they can deal with anything. And so we're always trying to say you could use a hand. Many times the artist has been in the car and



The entire proposed Rochester Heights Phase 2 development. Building B (PAL Ottawa) is at the rear centre. The expanded Piazza Dante Park is at the front centre. [From City of Ottawa Development Applications. Prepared by Hobin Architecture / Fotenn Planning + Design.]

said, 'I'm so glad to be with another artist so I can talk to them.'"

The group, which has almost 100 members, had been working for years to find a suitable partner for this housing project, Haworth said. It signed a memorandum of understanding with OCH in 2018. The agreement has an expiry date, but he said the expectation is that it would just be renewed.

On the building's ground floor will be a multi-purpose room, a creative space controlled by the residents.

It could host public presentations and exhibitions of their work, and offer space for community workshops and summer programs for children, Haworth said. "But we keep it vague because we've learned from other [PAL] councils that creating too many decisions in the

early days may mean that that's not what the residents want."

This will benefit the entire Rochester Heights development because the arts will flow out into the area, he said.

"Developers are recognizing more and more how arts enliven the neighbourhood and make it a beautiful place for people to live. And so they see that value."



The last remaining 1960s townhouses on the south side of Gladstone Avenue, which will be replaced by Rochester Heights Phase 2. Ottawa Community Housing plans to retain some of the existing site's trees in the new development.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Transportation Master Plan: so far all policies, no numbers

Alayne McGregor

The City of Ottawa wants you to endorse 70 generally climate-friendly transportation policies now – and wait for two years to see how they translate into road budgets.

In early December, staff released [the first draft of the city's new Transportation Master Plan \(TMP\)](#). It's designed to support the city's recently-passed Official Plan, and its draft policies do indeed follow that plan's emphasis on climate resilience, active transportation, and 15-minute neighbourhoods.

For example, the Complete Streets section says that "Street space is a scarce resource, and it needs to be designed and managed for the greatest public benefit."

The TMP provides the direction – for the next ten years at least – on how the city's transportation network will evolve and grow, whether you walk, cycle, take the bus, or drive. The draft TMP is wide-ranging, covering everything from Autonomous Vehicles (AVs) to Winter Maintenance. Many of the chapters concentrate on changes to current city policies, and there's substantially more space devoted to cycling and walking than driving.

What there's not a lot of in this plan is numbers. Nor does the plan contain what

is usually its most contentious section: the multi-year list of road and other transportation projects and their costs, in priority order.

The plan says that section will come next in part 2: the Capital Infrastructure Plan. That plan, due in 2024, will review the effectiveness of current networks and propose changes to achieve the city's transportation vision and accommodate anticipated growth.

It will set different modal share targets for different areas of the city, aiming to have at least half of trips made by sustainable modes by 2046. This could mean that, in Centretown, non-car trips would get priority.

This fall, a new Origin-Destination telephone survey will measure weekday trips in the National Capital Region. It's designed to capture evolving travel trends and will be used to update the city's transportation network, determine future demand for new or widened facilities, and prioritize projects. The plan said the survey will capture uncertainty by developing scenarios to assess the potential impact of factors such as changing work patterns or the introduction of AVs.

Residents have until February 18 to comment on [the 142-page plan](#). You can send comments to tmpupdate@ottawa.ca, and fill out a series of surveys. You can also ask questions at [an online open house](#) on Feb. 15 at 6:30 p.m..

What's in Rochester Heights Phase 2?

Ottawa Community Housing is in the final approval stages for Phase 2 of its Rochester Heights development, which will replace the 1960s brick townhouses on the south side of Gladstone Avenue between Booth and Rochester.

The new one-hectare complex will provide 270 units in two nine-story buildings and a series of townhouses, and expand the city's Piazza Dante Park at the corner of Booth and Gladstone.

At a virtual open house on the project on December 13, OCH planners said that the overall project is designed to be moderately affordable (yearly household salaries of \$40K to \$110K).

Units will range from bachelors to four-bedroom units. Tenants will not have balconies or back yards, but will share the greenspace in the centre of the complex.

Parking for 146 cars (primarily underground) and 280 bicycles will be included, with more than 200 secure bike spaces in ground-floor and underground rooms. OCH will have a TDM program to encourage walking, cycling, transit, and car sharing, and will charge separately for car parking.

The ground floor along Gladstone will be commercial space, almost 5000 square feet in total.

Like Phase 1 of the project across the street, the

project is designed for sustainability. It will be built to high-efficiency Passive House standards with photovoltaic arrays on the roof, wastewater heat recovery, and four-stream garbage/recycling. The buildings have been placed in order to save some mature trees along Gladstone and in the centre of the property, OCH manager Rob MacNeil said.

Construction is scheduled to start this summer, with the summer and fall of 2024 the likely date when tenants can move in. A high-density Phase 3 of Rochester Heights will be built south of this project up to Raymond Street, after the MTO replacement of Queensway overpasses finishes.

DCA report: parks, new developments, woonerfs

Ed McKenna

“P4X”

Cool. But what does it mean? As one board member quipped at the January 5 regular meeting of the Dalhousie Community Association: “Sounds like a workout plan!”

Yes, and more. P4X signifies the Plouffe Park, Plant Pool eXpansion Coalition. P4X comprises representatives from the Plant Pool Recreation Association, Hintonburg Recreation Association, Dalhousie Community Association, Hintonburg Community Association and Somerset West Community Health Centre.

Following the acquisition by the city of the site at 1010 Somerset Street from

the federal government, the coalition came together in May 2021 with a singular mission:

To influence the design of the expanded Plouffe Park and adjacent buildings to maximize the park’s size, its value as greenspace and its function “as the living core and social and physical focus for the surrounding communities of Dalhousie, Hintonburg, Gladstone Village and 1010 Somerset.” (There’s more on P4X on page 1 of this issue of *The BUZZ*.)

448-460 Bronson (at Gladstone)

DCA has written to the city about a new proposal for development of this prominent site at the northwest corner of Bronson and Gladstone across the street from

McNabb Park. It has also suggested the city refer the proposal to the Urban Design Review Panel.

The owner of the property, Mike Kang, has applied to the city requesting rezoning to allow a nine-storey, mixed-use building to be constructed on what is currently zoned a Traditional Mainstreet.

DCA has pointed to some issues resulting from the proposed increase in building size from what is currently permitted, including building setback, bicycle parking and landscaping. The overarching concern is with the design of the building. “The design should stand out and mark the location. It doesn’t.”

More can be done “to anchor and enliven this im-

portant corner,” where Centretown and Dalhousie meet.

Rochester Heights Phase 2

Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) has submitted a site plan control application to the city for the construction of the next phase of Rochester Heights, which will include two nine-storey, mixed-use buildings at Gladstone and Rochester and three four-storey, stacked townhouse buildings on Booth.

OCH plans to begin work at the site in late summer.

On December 13, OCH provided DCA and other interested members of the public an online presentation and Q&A session detailing their plans for the development.

Most importantly, Phase 2 will return and provide an increased number of affordable housing units to this site. A significant number have been designed to accommodate families.

The site will be generously landscaped, include a central courtyard and plaza, and expand the existing Piazza Dante Park at Gladstone and Booth.

DCA has provided comments to the city on the OCH application, hoping to help make a good development better. DCA is still concerned about the preservation of the



Piazza Dante’s entrance on Gladstone. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

existing mature trees on the site. The planting of new trees may also be limited by the extent of the proposed underground parking garage.

DCA pointed out that more can be done to support active transportation at Rochester Heights, including wider sidewalks, prominent pedestrian crosswalks and many more spaces for bicy-

cle parking. A roadway planned through the site should favour pedestrians over cars in the style of the woonerf, the Dutch “living street.”

For more news about what’s happening in Dalhousie, join us! Contact: president@ottawadalhousie.ca.



Jack Hanna

Curious about new MP Yasir Naqvi?

The CCA’s 2022 annual general meeting (AGM) will feature Ottawa Centre’s new MP, Yasir Naqvi, in conversation with Vice-president Jack Hanna.

Naqvi will be asked about his reasons for being in politics and what he hopes to accomplish for Centretown over the coming year. It’s an opportunity to learn more about Naqvi as a person choosing a life in politics and as the MP representing Centretown.

The CCA’s AGM will be held at 7 p.m., on Wednesday, January 26. The Zoom link is on the CCA’s website or can be obtained by emailing cca@centretowncitizens.ca.

CCA’s big accomplishments with more to come

The AGM will also feature a brief description of the CCA’s many and diverse activities over the past year and preview the year ahead. This year we returned to live festivals in parks, stepped up efforts to protect Centretown’s urban tree canopy and launched the Elgin Street Market. We advocated for affordable housing, better skyscrapers, anti-racism measures, improved transit, bike lanes and more. In 2022, we will get serious about climate change.

The AGM will also elect a new president and board of directors.

Mary Huang runs for CCA President

Mary Huang, a consultant in planning and forecasting systems, is running for CCA president. She is an advocate for affordable and accessible housing, long-term care and other seniors’ issues. She is active in the Ottawa Community Benefits Network that explores innovative ways to ensure the community benefits from new developments.

The CCA thanks Mindy Sichel, outgoing president, for so energetically and capably leading us through a year of huge growth.

Combatting homelessness

The CCA is conducting a Zoom workshop on Monday, January 24, at 6:30 p.m., to discuss what’s needed to effectively tackle homelessness. Speaking at the workshop will be: Kaite Burkholder Harris, executive director at Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa; Sarah Davis, executive director of Cornerstone Housing for Women; and Jayne Stoyles and Ishbel Solvason with the Social Housing Registry of Ottawa.

“It is about how to get people who are homeless off the streets into some type of shelter and eventually into stable housing,” says Mary Huang, coordinator of the CCA’s Affordable Housing Working Group.

An effective homelessness strategy requires a range of types of housing, Huang says. It begins with shelters, which provide beds

and meals. Then there is supportive transitional housing—buildings with residential units and support workers and programs.

Finally, there is “deeply subsidized” rental apartments offering permanent housing for those who cannot afford market rents. To learn more, email affordable-housing-champions@centretowncitizens.ca.

Act on climate change

The CCA is getting serious about climate change in Ottawa. The community association just launched a new working group to address issues affecting the liveability and resiliency of Centretown in the face of climate change.

Join us if you are interested in learning what we can do as a community to influence City Hall decisions on climate initiatives, or in finding out how, as individuals, we can protect our health and homes. We want your input, ideas and energy. Contact ClimateChange@centretowncitizens.ca.

Volunteers decked park’s trees for the holidays

It was a big party in the park in December when some 40 CCA volunteers, including a dozen kids, strung popcorn garlands, seed balls for birds and various colourful decorations on the trees in Dundonald Park at Lyon and Somerset.

The wintry day of activity was fueled by lots of homemade treats and hot drinks, including donations from Tim Horton’s.

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The Turning Point is still spinning music, three decades on

Stephen Thirlwall

The Turning Point is the last store I shopped at before the COVID-19 lockdown and the first I went to as shops reopened. That's because music is integral to our lives, going to [The Turning Point](#) is a great experience, and shopping there supports a long-established, local independent business.

First and foremost, the Turning Point is "a music store" selling used CDs and records. It's located in an old converted two-storey house at 411 Cooper, just west of Bank.

The store specializes in rock in its many forms from the mid-1950s on: rock 'n' roll, mainstream pop & rock, classic rock, soul, R&B, psychedelia, indie & alt, Prog, Metal, electronica, and so on. Surprisingly, the store has always had a large selection of blues and international jazz from the 1940s to present, along with smaller sections for folk, Celtic, classical, world music, reggae & ska, country, male and female vocalists, and other categories. It also sells used DVDs and Blu-rays, and takes great care to provide clean and undamaged CDs and DVDs.

Its stock includes hard-to-find music. I have discovered superb albums I had not seen elsewhere in Ottawa and from bands whose music is barely known in Canada: for example, Prog bands Magenta and Big Big Train from Britain and leading jazz artists from Scandinavia (E.S.T. and Helge Lien Trio). There are also excellent CDs from various countries, in various languages (French, Swedish, Czech, Polish, Italian, to name a few). Did you know that Finland has exceptional rock and jazz musicians (e.g., Wigwam and the Trondheim Jazz Orchestra)?

Three decades of selling music

Over the years, the Turning Point has had several owners and has been a family affair. In 1983, a Franco-phon couple (Yvan and his wife) owned the store, originally at the corner of Somerset and Lyon. At that point,

it was just a record store, but an extremely good one. I remember it as being like a hobbit hole lined with bins of records.

The store moved to its current location by the mid 1990s. Near the end of the 1990s, brothers Dan and Tom Gamble became owners. They were avid concert-goers and huge fans of the Beatles and other 60s and early 70s rock groups, as shown by rock memorabilia covering some walls. The Gambles organized the store further, building up its CD collection and starting to sell DVDs. Tom retired around 2014. Dan, while gradually retiring, took on his son-in-law Nick Beaton as store manager. Nick gained full ownership in June 2018.

I have a memory of going to the Turning Point before Yvan owned it, but neither Dan nor Nick are aware of this. If anyone can confirm it, please let Nick or *The BUZZ* know.

The current owner: Nick Beaton

Nick says "I am a father, sound engineer, musician, record shop owner and passionate music lover." He juggles operating the store, family life with a daughter aged 7 and a son aged 4, and a musical career.

Nick used to try to control everything. Now, to balance things out, he has put family first. In the store, he relies on a strong team. In his musical writing, recording and performing, he is now pursuing a more solo route. He also trains in martial arts.

Starting in 2006, Nick worked in an Ottawa sound studio working with artists including Snoop Doggy Dogg. Since 2009, he has been lead guitarist and singer with local rock group Autumn Cannon, which has recorded one album and opened for Peter Frampton at Bluesfest, as well as Bon Jovi, The Goo Goo Dolls, and ZZ Top. He is currently recording a solo album.

Being a local musician himself, Nick has added his own new character to the store's operations.

He wants customers to feel "at home" when they are there – and uses their questions to determine store stock

and learn more about music and film. Nick closely follows customer requests and researches different musical styles, performers, and labels. He says he continues to learn of new groups and different types of music, for example, Sir Lord Baltimore.

Nick sees himself as a curator making careful choices in buying CDs and organizing the store, drawing on both his store experience and musical background. His four staff members also help evaluate items based on their own backgrounds. They assess a CD's condition, its musical era, the importance of its label, its genre, and how much it is on the fringes, and balance this against what will sell best, what is already in stock, and the store's main focus.

Half their stock comes from purchasing large collections, which are placed on the shelves a few at a time. The rest comes through smaller specialized collections and small scale in-store buying from regular customers.

Some collections are made available through music collectors who decide to shed parts of their stash; some others are offered when the parents of grown-up children die and the next generation clear out their parents' things.

Nick tested buying and selling new sealed vinyl, but this did not prove cost-effective. He hopes to add some live music in the store, but this may have to be after hours. The small shop size, its layout and interference with customers who just want to shop makes hosting performances difficult during regular hours. He is also considering having some independent film showings in the evenings.

Survival

The Turning Point survived the demise of the big music stores and, so far, the pandemic. There was a time when music shops were plentiful along every main street and in every shopping plaza, but most have disappeared. But a handful of small independent music stores continue, such as the Turning Point, Compact Music, Vertigo Records, and The Record Centre. Their smaller size may be an advantage: the bigger a company grows, Nick says, the more they lose sight of the smaller necessary details and their connection with customers.

He said the pandemic-required closure of the store for a long period was difficult but it survived, possibly due to a strong regular customer base. The Boxing Week sale



Turning Point owner Nick Beaton serves a customer. Behind the counter in the store are stored CD/DVD discs according to an arcane store system, to be reunited with their cases after purchase. The walls feature music memorabilia, with a 60s slant. *STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ*

last month brought in a significant amount of business, he said.

Wrap it up, take it home

Music is a deep part of our culture. It stimulates us, tells stories, gives us identity, feeds creativity, raises our spirits and can be very therapeutic in difficult times

(think of the blues). Plus, music shops contribute to our economy.

Having a wonderful music store like the Turning Point (for me just a few minutes' walk) is amazing. But I do have to pace my purchasing because there are hundreds of new items added to the shelves every week.

Nick concludes, "As the store enters its fourth decade in operation, I am grateful for all the personal inspiration it brings, as well as the connection to its well-rooted legacy within the city of Ottawa. It has been an honour to serve the Ottawa music and film community."

MPP report: Make schools safe and stop further closures

Joel Harden

On January 11, the Ford government announced that schools would not reopen until Monday, January 17.

Amidst the relief, there is also anxiety because the premier and his minister of education have consistently failed to take the necessary steps to keep schools safe and open for in-person learning.

Even before the most recent round of school closures was announced, Ontario led the country in terms of the number of cancelled in-person learning days. The negative impact of these closures on the mental health and well-being of children is enormous.

This is a significant failure on the part of the government, which time and again, has failed to follow the advice of medical experts, education staff and parents.

For well over a year, we've been urging this government to give schools the

resources they need to implement smaller class sizes, upgrade ventilation and equip staff with the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to stay safe.

Time and again, these appeals have fallen on deaf ears.

To keep children in class and avoid sending them home once again, the government needs to start listening. It's time for them to make the necessary investments including free rapid tests for all students, teachers and education workers, smaller class sizes, in-school vaccine clinics and N95 masks for staff.

It's also vital that this government reinstate testing and tracing so that parents are aware of what's happening in their child's school, and so that COVID hotspots can be identified and addressed proactively.

Why has this government failed to adequately invest in making schools safer? It stems from their obsession with saving money at

all costs, even in the middle of a global pandemic. Premier Ford once said that he would "spare no expense" in the fight against COVID-19. But his actions speak much louder than his words.

According to the financial accountability officer, the Ford government spent a staggering \$4.3 billion less than budgeted in the first half of the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Of this amount, \$600 million was underspent on public health and \$700 million was underspent on education.

This is money that could have been used to shore up our health care system, support workers and small businesses affected by closures and give our kids safer, smaller class sizes.

Safe, in-person learning can't be done on the cheap. If this government truly believes that schools should be the first to open and the last to close, they must heed our advice and make the investments that are required to keep our children in the classroom.

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Community soccer club turns 50 this year, returns to Centretown this summer

Lorne Abugov

Unquestionably, 2021 was the year Canada gained worldwide recognition as an emerging international soccer power. While prospects for the national men's and women's soccer teams remain bright, this year is also expected to be a memorable one for Canadian soccer at the grassroots level.

One local soccer club, the Ottawa Internationals, is poised to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2022.

Widely regarded as Ottawa's community soccer club, the Internationals have provided soccer skills training and team opportunities to youngsters and adults residing inside the city's Greenbelt since 1972.

Accessible and inclusive

"We've always been an openly accessible and inclusive soccer club—something we are very proud of and see continuing and growing in the years ahead," says Internationals' president, Fabio Onesi. "While ensuring that prevailing COVID-19 restrictions take precedence, we are very optimistic that 2022 will be a great year for getting people out of their homes and onto their com-

munity soccer pitch."

Over its first 50 years, the Internationals have trained many young players who have gone on to play high-level soccer with university and college teams in Canada and the U.S., as well as in pro soccer.

A recent example is Ottawa's emerging global soccer superstar, Jonathan David, who in the past two years has topped all scorers in the Belgian and French professional leagues and on the Canadian men's national team. Before he left Canada to sign professionally in Belgium, David trained with the Ottawa Internationals and was the top goal scorer on the Internationals men's premier soccer team during the 2016-2017 seasons.

The club's general manager, Graeme Bali, is proud to have had a generational talent like David wear the Ottawa Internationals colours. "For an amateur club like ours to have had Jonathan for a couple of seasons of men's soccer here in Ottawa shows our young players that with hard work and talent it's possible for Canadian kids to excel at the sport."

But the real strength of the Internationals, Bali acknowledges, is the club's enduring ability to offer soccer

skills training and opportunities to play the game to every person who wants to play regardless of age or ability.

Boys and girls, ages 4-12

The Internationals are especially proud of their popular city-wide Developmental Soccer Program (DSP) for boys and girls four years to 12 years of age, which has operated since 1997 and celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2022.

The DSP will return to its community roots this summer at neighbourhood parks and playgrounds. Since COVID-19 struck, the Internationals have been forced to operate DSP entirely at its two centralized turf fields in Alta Vista.

Returning to McNabb Park this summer

The club is pleased that parents can once again enroll their children in DSP soccer at their local community parks and playgrounds this summer. In Centretown, the DSP playing field is located at McNabb Park. Parents and guardians can select alternative fields if their preferred field is oversubscribed.

"We are really excited to bring this community feature back to DSP, and parents should register now if they

want to ensure a spot for their kids nearby to where they live for the 15-week summer season," says Dan Tello, the club's vice-president of youth recreational soccer, and himself a former DSP parent volunteer and coach.

The DSP spring 2022 season, which begins April 16 and runs to May 7, features one-hour sessions on four consecutive Saturday mornings at the club's centralized turf fields for youngsters in the under-seven, under-nine and under-12 age groups.

The DSP 2022 summer season, which also offers an under-five age group, will shift to multiple community soccer fields and runs from the week of May 17 to August 26.

Competitive soccer leagues kick off this spring

In addition to DSP for youngsters, the Internationals also offer competitive and recreational teams and skills training for youth 12 and over, as well as for adult men and women. Renso Vettoretti, the Internationals' vice president of men's soccer, looks forward to outdoor soccer kicking off in a few short months.

"We are planning to get our youth competitive try-



outs underway in March and our adult men and women members outdoors practising in April," says Vettoretti, who has coached and played men's soccer with the Internationals for several decades.

Parents can reserve spots for their child(ren) now in the 2022 DSP by registering for the spring and summer seasons. For further information about DSP, including costs, or to register your child(ren) now, visit the Internationals' website at: www.ottawasoccer.com/Default.asp?id=programs-dspprogram&l=1.

For information on soccer programs for boys and

girls aged 12 and older, and for adult men and women, see the Internationals' Website at: www.ottawasoccer.com or by emailing the appropriate club contacts: Men's: mens@ottawasoccer.com; Women's: womens@ottawasoccer.com; Youth Recreational: youthrec@ottawasoccer.com; Youth Competitive-Boys: boys-competitive@ottawasoccer.com; Youth Competitive-Girls: girls-competitive@ottawasoccer.com.

Lorne Abugov is VP, Women's Soccer for the Ottawa Internationals Soccer Club.

Catherine McKenney

City Councillor for Somerset Ward

Keep in touch!

For the latest news on Somerset Ward, sign up for my newsletter on my website and follow me on social media:

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Comment: Retain Queen Juliana Park in memory of our friendship with Holland

Clive Doucet

Embassies and ambassadors don't normally have much to do with city councillors, which is understandable.

As a representative of their country, they are interested in talking to people at the federal level. About the only contact I had as a city councillor with the embassy world was an occasional invitation to an art show or social function where the embassy wanted to fill a hall.

The Dutch were different. We collaborated on several projects. I met the young ambassador, his family and embassy staff, grew to know them a little and like them a lot. Maybe it was a hangover from the hungry times when their country was occupied during the war, but they didn't like to waste anything and they were incredibly sustainable-minded. They liked to think not just about today but far into the future. The ocean dykes in Holland are built for ocean rise and with climate change in mind with a thousand-year time horizon.

In Ottawa, the first project we collaborated on

wasn't so grand. It was some modest street signage along the Queen Elizabeth Drive-way designed for bicycles, which wasn't visually impressive. In a car, you could pass the signs a hundred times and scarcely notice them. But they were perfect for pedestrians or cyclists who move much slower and closer to the curb. We installed a number of them along the driveway where bike traffic is heavy.

Another project was the famous "man with two hats" statue at Dow's Lake. This statue is tree-sized and tall enough not to be missed. It's the statue of a man holding two hats toward the sky. The sculptor was inspired by a photograph taken of a man standing beside the road waving two hats to celebrate the Canadians as they drove by in a victory parade. The actual man waving with two hats was never identified but the photograph of him went around the world.

For a small country, the Netherlands has a big presence in Ottawa. There's the spring tulip festival, which was started with a gift of tulips from Holland. There's Queen Juliana Park named

after the Dutch princess who took refuge in Ottawa during the war and later became Queen. Most importantly, there's a genuine affection between the citizens of the two countries who remember the many Canadians who died in the muddy fields of Holland during WWII.

When I look back on my 13 years as a city councillor, I remember these small events that I attended with the Dutch ambassador vividly. I remember them with pleasure and gratitude. It's one of the many reasons why I am so opposed to the city's current plan to convert Queen Juliana Park into a parking lot for the new hospital development at the Central Experimental Farm.

It bothers me a great deal that our prime minister recently visited the Netherlands as part of his COP26 meetings organized to address climate change. Now back in Ottawa, his government is allowing Queen Juliana Park and more than 600 trees in the Maple Lane section of the Central Experimental Farm to be chopped down for a hospital and high-rise development that doesn't have to be there.

The prime minister was quoted in Europe saying he's worried about the gap between promises and action. Well, there's no better example of that problem than Queen Juliana Park. He could have followed the NCC's advice and chosen Tunney's Pasture, which has no trees or heritage value, for the hospital but he didn't.

In this time of COVID-19 and climate change, urban greenspace is more important than ever and so are friends such as the Dutch. We should retain Queen Juliana Park in memory of those dark war years and the sacrifice of Canadian soldiers.

Clive Doucet is a former Capital Ward city councillor, and a poet and writer. His last book was Grandfather's House, Returning to Cape Breton.



The development notice for the parking garage for the new hospital. A "Save Queen Juliana Park" flyer is attached.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Comment

Watson's departure opens new chapter in Ottawa politics

Robert Fox

There's an air of excitement in Ottawa these days. True, the worst of winter still lies ahead but there's a sense of spring and new possibilities.

Last month's announcement by Mayor Jim Watson that he would not run for re-election has sparked renewed hope that big changes could be on the horizon at City Hall. The announcement was long anticipated but earlier than expected. Already three candidates for the mayor's job have come forward and others are gathering in the wings.

It's shaping up to be an interesting race with the outcome uncertain – ironic given Mayor Watson has worked so hard to avoid surprises during his tenure.

Aware the mayor has only one vote at City Council, Jim Watson has worked diligently over the past 12 years to ensure nothing gets to council that doesn't already enjoy his support.

Committee memberships are carefully curated, meetings carefully scripted, critics corralled. Layers of bureaucracy vet every item for risk, sidelining or burying those that threaten to break through the fog.

Watson has nurtured a culture of control and constraint that stifles initiative and smothers innovation. Better ideas and fresh perspectives are relentlessly deferred, deflected, discounted and dismissed, as the city keeps doing what the city keeps doing.

Members of council know, if they want some-

thing to move forward, they first need to get the mayor on side. And city staff, after a decade of discouragement and micro-management, are clear nothing can move forward without first getting a green light from the mayor's office.

When citizens have risen to demand urgent action on pressing issues – the housing or climate emergencies are clear examples – Mayor Watson shifts from active to passive resistance, pretending to embrace the initiative while doing everything in his power to delay substantive action.

The budget process has been honed to ensure council has little impact. Allocations among departments are set early and centrally. Council can make minor adjustments within programs but is prevented from shifting resources across departmental lines – ensuring there's no risk to the status quo. And except for the Ottawa Police Service, all are discouraged from advocating for increased funding for fear of losing the little they get.

But it's in the planning sphere – and with the LRT – that Mayor Watson, aided and abetted by his loyal band of suburban and rural hangers-on, has benefited most from this combination of corporate cronyism, backroom deals, and going-along-to-get-along.

The influence wielded by developers and privateers at City Hall – and the disastrous consequences for local citizens – is manifest. You need only think of square wheels, Tewin, or the new Civic hospital campus debacle.

We've grown accustomed to developers funding 40 or 60 or 99(!) percent of municipal campaign expenses.

But the consequences of a decade and more of dismal drift are readily apparent. The absence of vision and ambition leaves us ill-served by our city and ill-prepared for the future.

In truth, it has been many years since Ottawa had a council that was open, dynamic, creative, and inclusive, where active citizenship was promoted and the interests of all its citizens were respected. That's ironic given we have such a wealth of bright engaged citizens with expertise and energy on the full range of challenges and opportunities that face us as a city.

I'm excited to begin anew an overdue conversation about the future of our city: where housing is suitable and affordable, transit serves riders, artists flourish, people feel safe and welcome, Indigenous rights are respected, and our planning decisions support our climate goals.

It's nine months to Election Day. Let's take full advantage of this opportunity to bring wholesale change to City Hall, electing a council committed to transformative change, rooted in respect for the diversity of our communities and a commitment to justice and sustainability.

2022 holds great promise for Ottawa. Let's get organizing!

Robert Fox is a long-time activist on social justice issues locally, nationally and internationally.

Letter: Abundant and varied food available in Centretown West's stores

Re: "Grocery store opens in Centretown West" [December, 2021]

Describing Centretown West as a "food desert" is inaccurate.

The Chinese grocery stores have lots of different types of meat, fresh fish and frozen seafood at excellent prices, as well as beautiful greens and other vegetables, and a greater variety than I have seen at Loblaws or the Independent stores.

Their supplies of canned and bottled sauces, teas and kitchen items, as well as dried and fresh exotic mushrooms, preserved pickles, and fruits you may not find in regular grocery stores are abundant.

I will admit that certain sanitary products such as cotton tips, sanitary napkins, diapers and toilet paper are

not widely available in the grocery stores. But there are a number of pharmacies in the neighbourhood that deliver for free (at least one I know of), which is more than you can say for the middle of Centretown itself.

People who shop at Loblaws or Loblaws may be used to buying some name brands that are not found in these stores but that's why the items on the shelves are so much cheaper and of greater variety. Where else can you find black-skinned chicken or chicken feet for making soup stock or stew? Where else can you find tiny pasta clams in the shell, neatly frozen in the freezer compartment, or that wonderful roast pork with crackling that is cut to the exact portion you desire? Or roast duck? No one makes roast duck like the duck you find in the Chi-

nese groceries. Or barbecued pork? Or live carp or other fish? (That's what I call fresh fish!) And those wonderful leafy greens at great prices. And shrimp chips!

I think it is fantastic that a new grocery store has opened up. There is room for more than one style of food and more than one type of cultural hub in the area. But to describe Centretown West as a food desert clearly demonstrates the authors of the report, to which the reporter refers, were wearing very large blinders. I am surprised that the reporter simply regurgitated that description.

Esther Cleman

Editor's note: We did cover the whole food desert controversy in the January 2021 BUZZ with comments from both sides.

[See the article.](#)

Letter: OC Transpo riders should pay

Re: *The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy column* [December 2021]: *Free LRT rides don't fill me with confidence*

I believe that riders should pay when they ride on OC Transpo.

If the revenue is zero, the service would seriously deteriorate. We have already seen the deterioration of service with the layoffs of operators and the sale of buses to other

cities. The unemployment rate is very low—at about six percent in Ottawa—thanks partially to the large number of public service jobs.

The author of this December 2021 article is disabled. I know many folks in this city who use Para Transpo regularly (almost daily) and they are satisfied with this service. Para Transpo does fill the gap for those seniors and disabled per-

sons (e.g., for some elderly persons fearful of going on the LRT as they do not have any experience using such a modern transit system).

OC Transpo already provides free service for seniors on Sundays and Wednesdays on regular routes [but not for Para Transpo]. These two days of free service are more than sufficient in my opinion.

F.J. Psutka

Community Calendar

SPAO Gallery, 77 Pamilla Street
January 14 to February 20
 Exhibition: *Innominate Nature*
 virtual and in person, free.
spao.ca/innominate-nature

St Mary's Parish, 100 Young Street
Tuesdays starting January 18
 Alpha Experience
 Virtual, free.
stmarysottawa.ca/alpha

Centretown Community Association
6:30 p.m., Monday, January 24
 Workshop: From homelessness to housing
 Virtual, free.
[Register at Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

Centretown Community Association
7 p.m., Wednesday, January 26
 AGM (virtual)
 Featuring MP Yasir Naqvi in conversation.
www.centretowncitizens.ca/events/centretown-community-association-agm

NCC Urbanism Lab
Monday, February 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
 Rolling Out the Red Carpet Around the World: The Role of Ceremonial Boulevards
 Virtual via YouTube, free.
ncc-ccn.gc.ca/the-urbanism-lab



This new EV charging station for electric cars is located in the parking lot at Somerset West and Cambridge Streets. The City of Ottawa is now looking for more locations for these stations, in areas with more rental housing, higher population density, lower income levels, and less frequent public transit. [You can suggest a location on the city's online map.](#) Beside the station is a community mural installed in 2020 by The Door Youth Centre, with the theme "Flowers of Asia." ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

P4X coalition: "We can't afford to give up one foot of a park, or one tree"

continued from page 1

splash pads, three outdoor basketball courts, and more, it says.

The five groups – the Dalhousie (DCA) and Hintonburg Community Associations, the Plant Pool (PPRA) and Hintonburg Recreation Associations, and the Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC) – formed the coalition last year, to push for the best use of the 1010 Somerset lands that the city recently bought from the federal government.

They envision the lands (2.55 hectares in total) as the "healthy heart" and community hub, building a sense of belonging to the community.

Last year, the city approved the Corso Italia Secondary Plan, which covers those lands, but also extends west to Breezhill and Loretta Streets and east to Preston and Booth Streets. Under that plan, the 1010 Somerset lands are to be used to double the size of Plouffe Park, expand the Plant Recreation Centre, and build a new French public school – as well as to develop Gladstone Village.

"We are so far behind any other ward in the city"

The coalition wants to ensure that not only all the proposed park space be green, "but meaningful portions of the remaining 1010 lands need also to be green" including areas within and around Gladstone Village.

"We are standing firm that every single inch of greenspace must be retained," said DCA President Catherine Boucher. "This will keep us behind, but not as much. We can't afford to give up one foot of a park, or one tree."

"The DCA has made it clear throughout all of the development applications around that area that, for us, the densification really depended on 1010 being made available for recreation and parks because we are so far behind any other ward in the city. We have the least amount of trees of any ward in the city. We desperately need greenspace and recreation facilities for the current community, and the new people coming in."

Boucher said they understood that the area is a prime location for intensification because it's near two LRT lines. "But, on the other hand, people need to sit under a tree or take their kids to play in a park or skate."

The area's indoor facilities are also inadequate, the coalition said. According to the city's recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the city's downtown core has only 44m² of indoor recreation space per 1,000 people, compared to the city average of 119.28 m² – 37 percent of the average. The Plant centre is West Centretown's only recreation complex now that the Dalhousie Community Centre has been sold to the SWCHC, and the coalition says it is seriously overcrowded.

"The exercise room at the Plant Pool is kind of a joke," Boucher said. "People are in there at 5:30 in the morning and fighting for machines. There's a need for more of that if we're

looking at providing something affordable for people who can't afford to buy an expensive gym membership."

The coalition also contends that recreation facilities on the site should be scaled to serve the neighbourhood, not serve city-wide priorities. "It's not that big. It should be serving the people who live there and who are coming to live there as a priority," Boucher said.

In order to maximize the types of recreation for the area, the coalition is asking that spaces be designed to be multi-use wherever possible, with courts and fields serving several sports.

Move the storm water pond into a sewer?

And it's particularly concerned about the use of the current Plouffe Park as a stormwater/flood retention pond. DCA Treasurer David Seaborn said that when the pond was installed in 2008, it was envisioned that a storm sewer would replace it in the future.

"The problem with a depressed park is that you can't plan it. You can only do certain things when you're five feet below grade. Plus we have no idea if you can put basketball courts or tennis courts on this surface."

Boucher said the park is now primarily used as a skating rink in the winter and a soccer pitch in the summer. The PPRA did run some programs for seniors last summer but had to squeeze them in because of competition for outdoor space with soccer and children's summer camps.

She admitted that replacing the pond with a sewer could be expensive, but argued the drainage would need to be looked at regardless. "We don't want to have what could be an amazing addition to a neighbourhood be a poor cousin of what it could be, because we're not willing to spend the money up front."

Underground pipes could interfere with sports, trees

Use of the expanded park for sports could also be hobbled by pipes running underneath it, because metal maintenance hole covers in the park would be trip hazards for playing games like soccer. The pipes would also interfere with planting large trees, which the coalition wants to maximize.

Initial plans for Gladstone Village show their water mains and sewers running through the expanded park, which the DCA has objected to. As well, there's a possibility that geothermal or district heating systems for the complex might also require underground pipes. The coalition asked that these pipes be routed under planned roads and walkways, to allow more options in planning the park.

"We're hoping that no decision is made to use the underground in a way that would curtail what we can do on top," Boucher said.

Putting their ideas forward to city staff

The coalition met with city staff in early January to dis-

cuss their concerns, Seaborn said. They wanted to let the city know that "the community has been thinking about what is to be done with this land and has some ideas what should and shouldn't be done."

They received "some partial answers" and an update on planning for the park from staff, Seaborn said. "They were pretty sympathetic to our overall goals but they didn't tell us what their goals were." Staff agreed to meet again with the coalition in late spring for an update.

Looking for existing facilities in the community

In the meantime, Boucher said the SWCHC, on behalf of the coalition, will do an inventory of all recreational facilities in the neighbourhood – e.g. school gyms, soccer pitches, and meeting rooms – and what populations they serve. They're investigating if the community could access those facilities rather than having to build new ones.

If neighbourhood facilities are "sitting empty, let's see if we can make arrangements for people to be able to use them. We don't want to overbuild if we can access things that already exist."

The coalition recognizes it can't ask for everything, she said, "but we do want the best and we do want everything we need. It's a very important piece of public infrastructure here. We don't get opportunities to have a new park very often, particularly not downtown. It's a huge gift and we have to make the best use of it, and really look at it as a jewel and try to get the best we can get out of it."

Boucher didn't expect anything to happen on the site this year. "My personal position is let's take the time to plan it and fund it and get what we really need, rather than rush into something. We want to be at the table and have the opportunity to really dig deep and (determine) what's going to be best for our community in the long term."

"We feel strongly attached to the Plant Recreation Centre and that park – but it's way overused. We want to make sure we build thinking of the future and the people who live here and what their needs are going to be 25 years from now."

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What's on this month, in Ottawa and beyond



Beirut: *Eye of the Storm* is a chronicle of the 2019 protests against the Lebanese government.

Tony Wohlfarth

The emergence of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus has led to the temporary closure of museums, cinemas and live performance venues.

This month, *The Centretown BUZZ* has pivoted to highlight entertainment options which readers can experience from the safety and comfort of home.

National Arts Centre (NAC)

The NAC is presenting several events as free livestreams. The NAC Orchestra will perform *A Journey Beyond* (January 18) showcasing music by composers who experienced life-changing events.

Two East Coast musicians, folk rocker Matt Boudreau from New Brunswick (January 21) and singer-songwriter Rachel Bobbitt from Nova Scotia (January 28), will play Fridays at the Fourth virtual concerts.

From February 8 to 13, the NAC is live streaming the *Northern Film Festival*, a celebration of Inuit artists, art and film. Check out www.nac-cna.ca for details.

International Film Festival of Ottawa (IFFO)

The IFFO continues its "Female Gaze" series with a showing of the Colombian film *Leading Ladies*, along with a talk about perspectives in film and storytelling.

The on-demand screening is available from Thursday, January 27 at 7 p.m., for 48 hours.

Filmmaker Rebecca Shoptaw will talk about the film, and her short film *Girl, Sweetvoiced* will open the showing. Tickets (\$13.56) are available at iffo.ca.

Virtual National Gallery of Canada

All of the national museums in the National Capital Region are currently closed to visitors. The National Gallery of Canada has an excellent virtual collection available online. Check out www.gallery.ca/virtual-ngc.

International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA)

Last November, documentary film buffs from around the world gathered in Amsterdam to see the best films from around the world.

Two Lebanese films stood out.

The Octopus

On August 4, 2020, a massive explosion levelled the central port of Beirut and destroyed an entire swath of the capital city, damaging countless homes and the livelihoods of its residents.

The film, *The Octopus*, captures the eerie silence which descended on Beirut following the explosion. Neighbours are determined to rebuild, and they come together to help one another in the face of this arduous task. Directed by Karim Kassem, the running time is 64 min.

This film won the Envision Competition Jury Award at IDFA, which provided 15,000 Euros (equivalent to \$22,000 CAD).

The jury said: "This film develops its own imagistic language: a language of mystery and loss in the aftermath of a tragedy. It was made with great respect toward the subject matter and it felt like a story told from the inside. There are no answers presented, just the questions of life in the face of a disaster."

Beirut: Eye of the Storm

On October 17, 2019, protests began in Beirut's Square in a widespread

Mai Masri, DIRECTOR/PRODUCER

campaign to bring down the government of Prime Minister Saad Hariri. Four young women from diverse backgrounds donned handheld cameras to record the historic events.

Beirut: Eye of the Storm (pictured here) is a mélange of images with voiceovers by the women. I found it particularly moving that the women had friends who had

moved out of Lebanon to pursue work in other countries, while the foursome were determined that their futures would be in Lebanon. I was impressed with their steely determination to persevere in the face of bleak economic and social prospects for their country.

Directed by Mai Masri. Running time: 75 minutes.

Lynn Miles Live

Ottawa's own Lynn Miles is performing live concerts from her apartment every Saturday this month, on January 15, 22 and 29. These intimate performances feature her latest songs along with her legendary stories and humour. Each concert begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and are available at: <https://sidedooraccess.com/>.

Side Door Access is an initiative of two Nova Scotia artists, Dan Mangan and Laura Simpson. It provides valuable support for performing artists.

Historical Society of Ottawa

The society has a free lecture on January 26 about sporting vignettes in old Ottawa, with local historian James Powell.

The event begins at 7 p.m. and you can register at: <https://www.historical-societyottawa.ca/activities/events/eventdetail/57/16.17/on-field-and-ice-sporting-vignettes-from-old-ottawa>.

Ottawa Horticultural Society (OHS)

On January 25 at 7:30 p.m., [the OHS is holding a webinar](https://www.historical-societyottawa.ca/activities/events/eventdetail/57/16.17/on-field-and-ice-sporting-vignettes-from-old-ottawa) about summer gardens in Nova Scotia. The event is free and no advance registration is required.

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. He covered IDFA 2021 and is currently covering the Sundance Film Festival in Utah virtually.





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