



New projects could transform Dalhousie, 7



Almost-hidden art galleries, 7

Your community newspaper

# THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ



Signs of spring have come early to Centretown in 2024 – but they’re beautiful nonetheless. Left: A tree blooms delicate white flowers in the garden at Knox Presbyterian Church on Elgin Street. Above: a house on Waverley Street near Elgin had a front-yard embroidered with white and purple crocuses when *The BUZZ* walked by last week.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/*THE BUZZ*

## After 17 years and one collapse, Somerset House rises from the (almost)-dead

Robert Smythe



A scene of chaotic destruction: Somerset House’s interior immediately after its partial collapse in 2007.

CITY OF OTTAWA BUILDINGS BRANCH

It looks like there’s finally some good news about Centretown’s longest running eyesore.

Construction has commenced at the ill-fated Somerset House, which has stood (barely) as a teetering ruin at Bank and Somerset Streets for some 17 years.

Surveyors were observed on site in the first week of April, and last week a big pile-driver moved in behind the construction fencing.

After a never ending and sometimes fractious dispute with the City of Ottawa, the owner is restoring the two remaining historic walls with an addition at the rear. The development will be a mixed-use building with two commercial stores on the ground floor with residential units above.

Last September, Ottawa City Council accepted the owner’s repair plan, with conditions including the implementation of heritage conservation measures, regular condition reports, city approval of exterior materials, and a city-authorized construction schedule.

The 125-year old structure is built in a somewhat Queen Anne Revival style. In its chequered history, it has been a hotel, an apartment building, a rooming house, a dry goods store, and a beer parlour.

*The BUZZ* will monitor the progress of the (re)construction.



April 19, 2024 — Vol. 29, No. 4

# THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

101-210 Gloucester St.  
Ottawa, ON  
K2P 2K4  
Phone: 613-565-6012

[centretownbuzz.com](http://centretownbuzz.com)  
[twitter.com/centretownbuzz](https://twitter.com/centretownbuzz)  
[facebook.com/centretownbuzz](https://facebook.com/centretownbuzz)

## BUZZ Staff

Managing editor: Alayne McGregor  
[editor@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:editor@centretownbuzz.com)

Associate editor: Eleanor Sawyer

City Editor: Robert Smythe  
[cityskyline@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:cityskyline@centretownbuzz.com)

Distribution manager: Archie Campbell  
[circulation@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:circulation@centretownbuzz.com)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Centretown BUZZ is created and distributed in Centretown, Ottawa, located on traditional and unceded Algonquin land.

## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *The BUZZ* will be published May 17, 2024. Deadline for ads and submissions: May 6.  
ISSN 1204-1604

## ADVERTISING

The BUZZ is proud to offer an effective advertising medium that reaches 10,000 Centretown homes and businesses each month. Our competitive advertising rates are as low as \$40 per issue.

View our rate card and publishing dates at [centretownbuzz.com/advertising](http://centretownbuzz.com/advertising).

For more information, email [ads@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:ads@centretownbuzz.com) or call 613-565-6012 x1.

## Thank you to our volunteer carriers

Ahmed Shalabi, Amanda Asquith, Anne O'Connor, Archie Campbell, Arwyn Holmes, Bayne Pearen, Betty Gregory, Brendan Hennigan, Brett Delmage, Carol Sissons, Catherine Boucher, Cathy Woodgold, Charles Akben-Marchand, Chinthaka Fernando, Chris Edwards, Craig Layng, Colleen McGuire, David Seaborn, Debbie Barton, Diane Holmes, Don Smith, Drina Wethey, Eleanor Sawyer, Erwin Dreessen, Glynda Newton, Hunter McGill, Jack Hanna, Judy Forest, Julien Proulx, Kaitlin Audet, Kim Malcolm, Maria Bedoya, Marnee Manson, Martha Scott, Michael Hatfield, Michael Powell, Michelle Kirkman, Mike Gregory, Mindy Sichel, Noah Henman, Pam Gahan, Patricia Marsden-Dole, Pat Shaulis, Paul Bennett, Robert Smythe, Shelley Pearen, Sophie McCarrell, Thomas Proulx, Stéphane Laviolette, Sue Domina, Suzanne Nash, Venita Warren, Wendy Bennett, Wendy Sewell, Zoe McKnight, Zsafia Orosz

To join our distribution team, please call 613-565-6012 x3 or email [circulation@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:circulation@centretownbuzz.com)

The Centretown BUZZ is published by The Centretown BUZZ Board of Directors, a group consisting of community members representing all residents of Centretown.

The Centretown BUZZ operates under the guidelines of the Canadian Copyright Act.  
© 2024 The Centretown BUZZ

## Adventures from Karen's Clinic, by Karen Munro-Caple



### Comment

## 267 O'Connor Street: "Never demolish, never remove"

Erwin Dreessen

Taggart Realty Development has applied for a demolition permit for the medical services building it owns at 267 O'Connor Street.

The application may come before the city's Built Heritage Committee on May 14.

Some worry about where all these medical service providers will go, but there is little rationale for this concern. There are plenty of empty spaces in Centretown to choose from! Besides, finding alternative locations is not really Taggart's responsibility.

Of more concern is the initial shrug at the prospect of the building being demolished. No new ideas have come forward since the initial proposal of two 30-storey towers was thoroughly debunked by a Special Design Review panel back in 2021.

In my opinion, demolition should always be an absolutely last option for any development. The champions of reuse are Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal, two French architects who won the Pritzker Prize in Architecture (architecture's top prize) in 2021.

According to [an article in The Guardian](#), their rallying cry is "Never demolish, never remove – always add, transform and reuse."

As cited on the Prize's website, Lacaton explains, "the pre-existing has value if you take the time and effort to look at it carefully. In fact, it's a question of observation, of approaching a place with fresh eyes, attention and precision...to understand the values and the lacks, and to see how we can change the situation while keeping all the values of what is already there."

I found their transformation of Tour Bois-le-Prêtre in Paris and Grand Parc

in Bordeaux particularly impressive.

Their work suggests a way in which redevelopment of 267 O'Connor could achieve "iconic" status, namely by transforming the existing building into an example of how the old can be made new again. It would set an example in Ottawa of what can be achieved without sending many tons of material to a landfill while meeting high standards of energy efficiency, saving millions of dollars in construction cost and making badly needed affordable housing feasible.

The parking lot could be transformed into a park – another amenity that is in very short supply in Centretown.

I have made these suggestions to Taggart in an effort to persuade them to consider an alternative to demolishing and building anew.

Erwin writes on [erwindreessen.substack.com/](http://erwindreessen.substack.com/)

## Letter: Move this dangerous inter-city bus terminus

This letter was sent to Councillor Ariel Troster and the Dalhousie Community Association:

I am a resident at an apartment (100 Bronson) on the cliff facing the LeBreton flats, and more specifically the Ádisöke construction site. Recently buses have appeared on Commissioner Street with the "installation" of a so-called bus "terminus" just below my apartment.

Needless to say, we cannot open the window anymore with those buses idling starting at 5:15 a.m. until midnight. The noise of idling buses is not a pleasant one, let alone the diesel fumes. But of course nobody at the city really cares about the nuisance aspect, so let me expand on the problems associated with this terminus.

I have no idea who at the city made such a stupid decision to allow buses to interfere with the heavy traffic on Commissioner Street due to the delivery of materials for the Ádisöke site, the reconstruction of the bridge adjacent to the pumping station, and still further down the construction of the regional heating plant.

But I can assure you, from watching the traffic on a daily basis, it is totally unsafe for riders to board or disembark from those buses on weekdays during daytime. I am surprised there has not been an accident yet. Sometimes the bus has to stay in the middle of the road because delivery trucks interfere with passengers having to extract their baggage in the middle of the traffic.

This so-called terminus is literally in between two O-Train stations. Therefore it is impractical for people wanting to use public transit if they have luggage, so they have to use cars or

taxis to get to and from the terminal. Not very ecological is it? In addition to the bus traffic, now we have all of those cars delivering or picking up riders. What a mess!

People waiting for the bus have nowhere to sit, and there is one garbage bin that is overflowing by midday. Completely moronic.

Please get this decision re-examined and find an alternative terminus that meets minimum safety requirements, facilitates access to public transit, and offers decent facilities for riders, including toilets, seating, covered canopy against the elements, etc.

This is the City of Ottawa, the capital of the country. Yet this so-called terminus has the feel of being a bus stop to a small village. And please don't wait until someone is seriously hurt because of the traffic congestion on Commissioner Street.

This situation needs to be fixed!  
Claude A Lachance

LOOKING FOR A GOOD HOME?

cchohousing.org | 613.234.4065



# The famous Nature Girl statues have left Centretown

Alayne McGregor

The Nature Girls have left Centretown. The three famous bronze sculptures, which sat in front of the British High Commission on Elgin Street for the last 25 years, were recently packed up and moved to the high commission's new location on Sussex Drive.

The sculptures – one of which was the subject of a police investigation – peeked out from among shrubs in front of 80 Elgin. Named Stump Girl, Conifer Girl, and Bush Girl, each has little girl's legs topped with a tree.

The high commission sold its Elgin Street headquarters to the National Cap-

ital Commission (NCC), and has moved to a new building at 140 Sussex Drive adjacent to Earnscliffe, the commissioner's official residence. High commission spokesperson Tom Walsh said the Nature Girls would soon be placed outside the new building, and would be visible from Sussex Drive.

The small bronze sculptures were created by Welsh sculptor Laura Ford and installed in 1998. Only two weeks later, Stump Girl – a tree trunk with knobby stumped arms and bright red shoes – was stolen – and stayed missing. After a few months, Ford was commissioned to create a replacement.

Finally, six months later,



The three Nature Girls bronze statues in front of 80 Elgin last fall: (l-r) Stump Girl, Conifer Girl, and Bush Girl.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

the original Stumpy showed up in Vanier.

The high commission ran a contest to find a location for the Stumpy replace-

ment, which had also had a rough initial introduction to Canada. According to a story in the *Ottawa XPress*, the replacement was lost for three

weeks in Toronto and (temporarily) lost a leg before getting repaired.

The NCC said it plans to use 80 Elgin for its new head-

quarters, moving in by 2025. It will be modernizing the building to meet high sustainability standards and to develop public gathering spaces.

# Troster proposes Ottawa investigate an anti-renoviction bylaw similar to Hamilton's

Alayne McGregor

Councillor Ariel Troster is proposing city staff investigate an anti-renoviction bylaw similar to the one recently introduced in Hamilton.

Her office has seen “a huge uptick” in renovictions, she said – particularly renovictions of senior women, long-term tenants who have lived for decades in their apartments in Centretown, and “who, we believe, are being evicted for spurious reasons for very minor renovations.”

Troster said she has seen those apartments soon go back on the market “maybe with the new countertop or a fresh colour of paint” at a much higher rent. “I just hear one heartbreaking story after the other and there's very little I can do.”

In many cases, “tenants don't want to fight. They're intimidated out of going to the Ontario Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). And we know what a mess the LTB is right now – it can take a year to get a hearing.”

She blamed “a complete lack of vacancy control at the provincial level” for this situation.

“Landlords know that, if the tenant is there for a long time and the building was built before 2018, they have to follow provincial rent control. But if they get a new tenant, they can raise the rent as much as they want. So what I found when I was door knocking in Centretown, I would go into an apartment building that would have two identical apartments beside each other, and there could be \$1000 rent differential between the two of them.”

On April 24, the city Planning and Housing Committee will debate Troster's motion asking city staff to review the Hamilton bylaw and report back by the end of 2024 “with a preliminary assessment of the feasibility of developing a similar ‘anti-renovictions’ bylaw in the City of Ottawa.” The assessment would include timelines, costs, and resource implications, as well as the effect on other departmental work.

## What's in the Hamilton bylaw?

Hamilton's Renovation License and Relocation bylaw, passed January 24, is designed to deter landlords from using renovations for bad faith evictions and to assist in preserving existing housing stock. It requires a landlord to obtain a renovation license, costing \$715, prior to commencing any renovation that requires that an N13 eviction notice be issued to a tenant under the Residential Tenancies Act, and to provide proof of a building permit and an engineering report confirming that va-

cant possession of the unit is required to carry out the renovation work.

An N13 notice allows a tenant to be evicted when the landlord wants to do massive renovations that require vacant possession of the rental unit, demolish the rental unit, or convert it for non-residential use. A recent ACORN review of eviction data, which it obtained from the LTB through freedom of information requests, showed that the number of N13s filed in Ottawa tripled in 2022 compared to 2021, from 23 to 71.

The bylaw also strengthens the right to return for a tenant who has to move for major renovations, by stipulating that the onus to exercise the right to return to their former unit is now shared between the landlord and the tenant. A tenant who received an N13 would get a Tenant Rights and Entitlement Package from the city, and legal assistance to file a “right of first refusal.” A landlord may not advertise a unit for rent if the former tenant had exercised this right.

The City of Hamilton is currently working to publicize and implement the bylaw, and won't accept renovation licence applications until next January. The estimated annual cost to administer the bylaw will be \$942,850, and revenues \$94,285.

Troster said she had talked to Hamilton Councillor Nrinder Nann, who introduced the bylaw after years working with ACORN. She said it was too early to determine its impact, but it was “very interesting to hear from her how they were able to get very strong political support” for it (it passed 14-0).

The 2021 census showed that 36 percent of all Ottawans are tenants. In Somerset Ward specifically, the 2016 census (the best available ward numbers) showed that 77 percent were tenants.

City Council unanimously declared a housing and homeless emergency in Ottawa in 2020. Troster noted that one way to stop homelessness is to keep people in their homes instead of being evicted.

Ultimately, “what would really make a difference is vacancy decontrol at the provincial level, and restoring rent control for anything built after 2018. But, in the meantime, we have to take this into our hands at the city and figure out how to help people because people who lose their homes fall into homelessness and then only makes the crisis worse.”

## City proposing other affordable housing action programs

The city is also looking at other ways of

increasing affordable housing. A proposal from Councillor Stéphanie Plante to have city staff investigate setting up a fund to acquire affordable housing – similar to those in Toronto and Hamilton – will be debated at City Council on April 17.

Council will also consider an Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan, which would provide grants to for-profit developers who provide new affordable units (at or below Average Market Rent (AMR) as defined by the CMHC, for a minimum of 20

years) in developments. At least 15 percent of the units must qualify as affordable. The grants will range from \$6,000 and \$8,000 per affordable unit per year for a period of 20 years.

Troster said she had advocated to ensure that any developer who gets these grants must follow provincial rent control guidelines for those units, even if the building was built after 2018.

She expected the plan would provide some moderately affordable housing at 80 to 90 percent of AMR.



SNOW REMOVAL - EXCAVATION - EQUIPMENT SERVICE

## LANDSCAPING & MATERIALS

Order Online or Pick Up\*



GRAVEL & STONE DUST

Granular & Stone Dust



TOPSOIL

Same Day Delivery



RIVERWASH & STONE

All Sizes & Varieties



MULCH

Black, Brown, Natural



DECORATIVE BOULDERS

Delivered and Placed



CONTACT US NOW!

NOELSOTTAWA.COM/SITE/MATERIALS

info@noelsottawa.com | 613-263-2363





The greens and vegetables are harvested to feed the clients of the the Centre 507 drop-in and resource centre. *LINDA POLLOCK/THE BUZZ*

## Gardening for the community at Centretown United

Linda Pollock

**O**n Bank Street, alongside the busy lanes of traffic and scurrying pedestrians, you might not expect to see a lush, abundant vegetable garden.

But a garden has been thriving for the past eight summers at the corner of Bank and Argyle. The Centretown United Donation Garden produces healthy vegetables for the meal program of the Centre 507 drop-in and resource centre for those in need.

Volunteers cultivate a wide variety of greens and vegetables including lettuce, arugula, bok choy, carrots, kale, chard, cabbage, zucchini, tomatoes, beans, leeks, and onions, as well as fresh herbs. A beautiful planter of flowers attracts insects and pollinators.

All this good food is harvested throughout the season and carried upstairs to the centre on the second floor of the church. Staff use it in tasty salads, soups and casseroles served to the centre participants. The pollinator planter is a recent addition

sponsored by the Ottawa Horticultural Society.

The garden was created by members of Centretown United Church in 2016 when the ash trees, growing for decades in four large city planters beside the church, had to be cut down after succumbing to an Emerald Ash Borer infestation. With a grant from Just Food Ottawa and financial support from the congregation, volunteers repaired the existing planters, built seven new ones, and began planting. The garden coordinator consults annually with the cooks in the centre's kitchen to identify the vegetables and herbs most useful to the meal program.

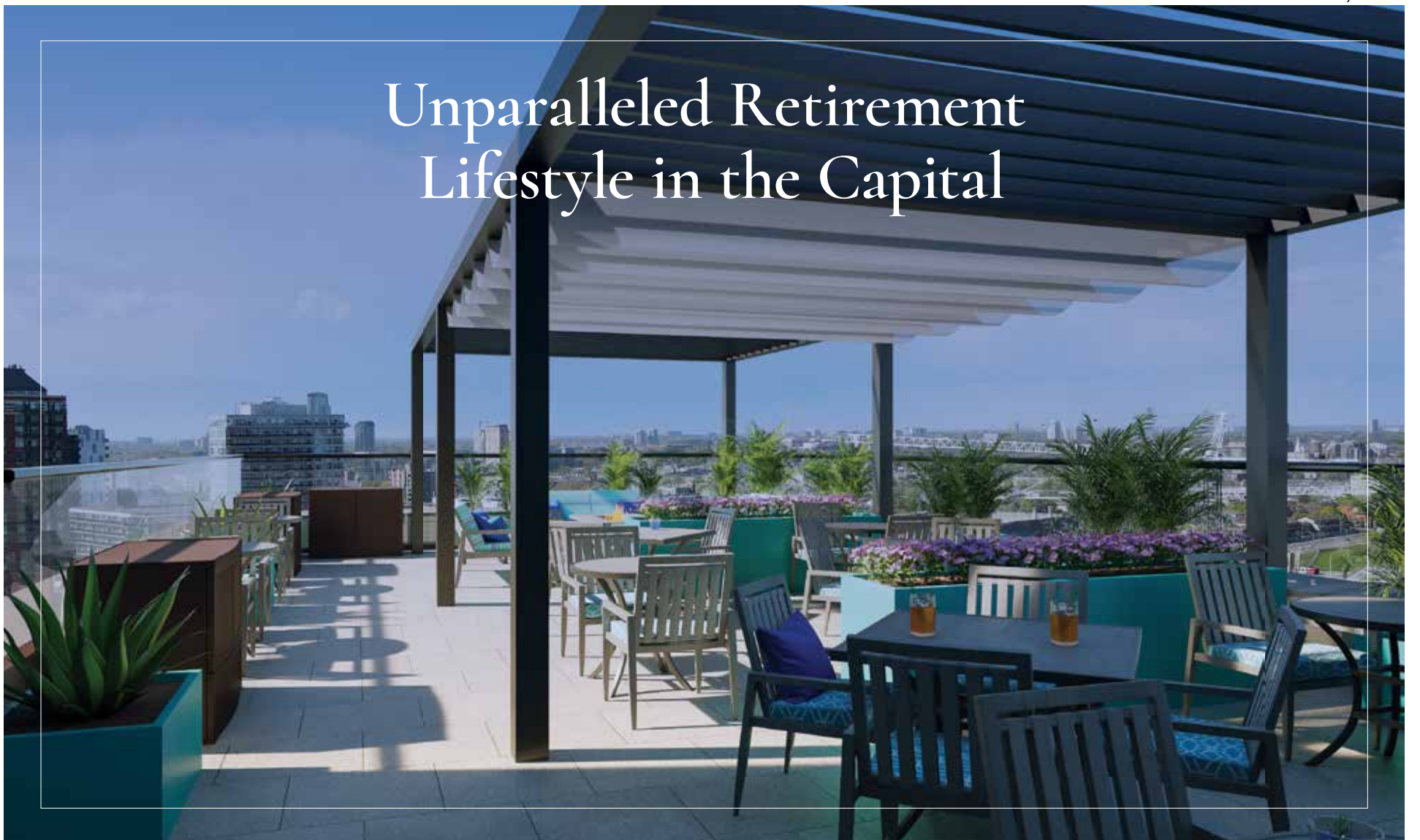
Volunteers include members of the congregation as well as residents from Centretown and adjacent neighbourhoods who enjoy gardening and wish to contribute to solutions to food insecurity in our city.

If you would like to be a volunteer either on a regular basis to water and weed, or for occasional larger tasks such as spring planting or fall clean-up, please contact [centretowngarden@yahoo.com](mailto:centretowngarden@yahoo.com).



A volunteer at work in the garden beside Bank Street's busy traffic. *LINDA POLLOCK/THE BUZZ*

# Unparalleled Retirement Lifestyle in the Capital



*THE VISTA ON SPARKS*  
Retirement *by Signature*

Coming Summer 2024 at 414 Sparks Street

Contact us for more information or to book a tour.

[info@thevistaonsparks.com](mailto:info@thevistaonsparks.com) | 613-809-2212 | To learn more, visit [thevistaonsparks.com](http://thevistaonsparks.com)



# Skyline: Office-to-residential conversions? Slow but steady progress

Robert Smythe

Ottawa's office building to residential conversions continue to bubble away, albeit at a low simmer.

It's time to update with a look at the most recent example: District Realty's proposal to convert an 11-storey grey brick office tower at Elgin and Lisgar Streets, formerly known as the "EL-GAR" (get it?) Building but now simply called 200 Elgin.

The BUZZ has visited this trend frequently, with a summary of the Canadian Urban Institute's CMHC-sponsored study on the conversion potential across Canada; the City of Ottawa's tepid fee-and-red-tape reduction strategy for inducing this type of development; and reports on conversion projects at 473 Albert Street (now complete), 360 Laurier Avenue West (just now underway), and 130 Slater Street and 230 Queen Street (both still in the planning phase).

District Realty is a local company with a portfolio of residential and commercial properties. This is not their first office-to-res conversion at the same location. Some years ago, they undertook a 42-unit, 30,000-square-foot project at 169 Lisgar Street, an adjoining wing of the older building, creating bachelor, one-, and two-bedroom suites. This 1990s addition had also included a parking garage and a small condo tower around the corner at 18 Nepean Street.

According to real estate

consultants quoted in an Ottawa Business Journal article of April 3, conversion of 200 Elgin will take 140,000 square feet of class C office space out of the central area's stock. It's an undistinguished but longstanding block that was designed by architect Joseph Liff and first occupied in 1966.

The building fulfills the small footprint, narrow punched windows in solid walls condition that is apparently the Goldilocks recipe for proceeding with these transformations.

## 170 Metcalfe: small but perfectly formed apartments

Their 169 Lisgar Street job was followed up by District Realty's second office-to-residential conversion, an eight-storey building nearby at 170 Metcalfe Street dating from 1964-65, and last occupied by the Canadian Red Cross Society. Of more than passing interest is the fact that it was one of fabled William Teron's earliest commercial essays into downtown Ottawa development.

I toured the model suites in this newly minted Metcalfe Street apartment house a few years ago on one of its open house days. The 61 apartments could only be described as small but perfectly formed: a compact, immaculately finished 400 square feet. It then tipped the rental scales at \$2K per month. Parking was not included and just a handful of parking spaces were available.

This confirms the generally held perception that



The current law firms and professional services tenants of 200 Elgin will be displaced for a conversion into apartments. BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

this approach can be complicated and spendy, and that it will never solve the need for more affordable housing, nor deliver new units in the numbers required. But it has its supporters and occupies a niche that has many collateral benefits.

District Realty's project manager said that they had learned a lot about how to perform these conversions and what tenants want since 169 Lisgar Street. Practice makes perfect, and while each office-to-res conversion has unique challenges, developers should be able to refine the process and find some efficiencies with each successive project.

## Heritage Designation of the Bible House

The Bible House is a quaint, two-storey building on Lisgar just east of Bank, faintly "Collegiate Gothic" in style. It was built in 1922 for The Bible Society, an organization whose mission was to spread the word through the worldwide dissemination of that book.

On January 26, the City of Ottawa published its "Notice of Intention to Designate" 315 Lisgar Street as a significant building of historic, architectural, and community importance. Up until now, this noteworthy little structure had no heritage protection whatsoever because it fell just outside

the boundaries of the Centretown and Bank Street Heritage Conservation Districts. Nor was it listed on Ottawa's Heritage Register.

The property owner was served with a written notice the same day. Under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, the building's owner, the Anglican Church of the Messiah, had 30 days to file its objection. They did

so, citing the impact of the designation on the building's property value and the financial implications of any such categorization.

City Council must now decide whether to withdraw its intention to designate, or to proceed with the whole legal process. It has until May 25 to decide. At its meeting of April 9, the city's Built Heritage Committee consid-

ered the matter.

It determined that the rationale for a heritage designation was sufficiently strong, and that any financial hardship could be countered by the city's heritage grants program which provides up to \$25,000 in matched funds every two years. The committee therefore recommended that council follow through with its intention.



The city's Built Heritage Committee has reiterated its support for a heritage designation for The Bible House. ROBERT SMYTHE/THE BUZZ



**Treat**  
Hearing. Health. Care.

## Exceptional Hearing Care

Hearing Tests  
Earwax Removal  
Tinnitus Treatment  
Hearing Instruments



**Treat Hearing**  
Gladstone Sports & Health Centre  
18 Louisa St  
K1R 6Y6

**613-567-3644**

**Clayton Fisher**  
Audiologist




**Treatyourhearing.ca**

**Delivering The BUZZ for an hour or two each month is a great way to get fresh air and get acquainted with your neighbourhood!**

Email [circulation@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:circulation@centretownbuzz.com)



# 140 buildings and one bridge lose heritage register protection - for now

Alayne McGregor

The Chief William Commanda Bridge heads the list of 141 Somerset Ward properties that are expected to be removed from the protection of the city's Heritage Register this month.

The properties are in the Dalhousie (western) section of the ward and include 16 houses on Arthur, nine on Booth, 18 on Cambridge North, 13 on Elm, 16 on Primrose, nine on Rochester, 16 on Spruce, plus many more.

The Commanda Bridge is referenced under its former name of the Prince of Wales Bridge, and given that it is owned by the city, is unlikely to be at much risk.

The city's Built Heritage Committee approved the list on April 9, and it went to City Council April 17.

Being on the Heritage Register provides interim protection from demolition for properties of cultural heritage value or interest which have not been designated (a

higher level of protection).

However, the city is now being forced to remove hundreds of properties in all wards because of the provincial Bill 23, which changed the rules so that properties can only stay on the register two years instead of indefinitely.

If those properties are still on the register after 2024, they will be removed and the city will not be able to add them back on for five years. If the city removes them now, it can return selected properties to the list for another two years. Staff are also moving to designate their highest-priority properties on the register under the Ontario Heritage Act.

David Seaborn, the chair of the Planning and Development Committee of the Dalhousie Community Association (DCA), said the association was given a list of properties that the city hopes to have designated this year, and none of those has been removed.

This list "concentrated on properties at greatest risk of loss due to develop-

ment pressures," he said. The DCA also recommended adding another eight properties to that list and dropping three.

"We are pleased that the list that Heritage hopes to get designated has not been whittled down, yet, but are concerned that city resources may not be adequate to get that job done by the end of 2024. If they expect not to be able to get them all designated by December, we assume, and expect, that those from the 'hoped to be designated list' that don't get designated will also be removed from the registry and then re-added in a new Heritage Registry in January."

But even if those properties are designated, they are "a mere drop in the bucket of the hundreds of Dalhousie properties which will be lost from the Heritage Registry in December," he said.

"We fear those de-registered properties will be unprotected and lost to public awareness for years to come, the blame for which lies with the provincial government."



The site where the new monument will be placed, replacing the boulders.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

## New memorial to honor Chinese railway workers

Alayne McGregor

A new monument to honour Chinese Canadian workers who helped complete the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in the 19th century will be erected in Chinatown this year.

Yukang Li, the executive director of the Chinatown BIA, told *The BUZZ* that his BIA's board approved the final design of the memorial on April 11, after a consultation on Instagram attracted 449 likes and 17 comments.

The three-metre-tall bronze metal sculpture will take about three months to produce, he said, and will be installed by the end of October and possibly earlier. Its planned location is by the Chinatown Royal Gateway, replacing several boulders.

It will pay tribute to the "contribution and sacrifice of the 17,000 Chinese Canadian railway workers from 1881 to 1884." Another monument to these workers was erected in Toronto in 1989.

In the 1880s, Chinese workers were brought in to build the B.C. section of the railway. According to a [BC government website](#), they worked through the most challenging and dangerous terrain. "As well as being paid less, Chinese workers were given the most dangerous tasks, such as handling the ex-

plosive nitroglycerin used to break up solid rock. Due to the harsh conditions they faced, hundreds of Chinese Canadians working on the railway died from accidents, winter cold, illness and malnutrition."

While the building of the CPR has been considered a major nation-building event for Canada, Chinese were cleared out of the way for the taking of the iconic historic photograph of CPR Director Donald Alexander Smith driving the ceremonial "last spike."

Li said he did not yet have permission to disclose the funding source for the monument or the artist's design.

The design shown on Instagram showed two workers laying railway ties. The railway tracks were configured to resemble the Chinese character for "human."

He said he hoped "this beautiful piece of art" would add to the appeal of the street, bringing more visitors, and memorialize "a group of Chinese who contributed their time, their lives in building Canada over 100 years ago. This is a good way to remember those who have worked to build Canada to the great country as it is now."

Comments on Instagram were primarily concerned that the sculpture not become vandalized like the previous fibreglass sculptures.

**Let your neighbours know what's happening here. Deliver The BUZZ to them!**

To sign up: [circulation@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:circulation@centretownbuzz.com)

**Margofresh**

**Need a bite?**  
Margofresh has

- Coffee counter
- Pastry counter with a baker on-site
- Deli sandwiches
- Fresh Lebanese spinach/meat pies
- Salads & hot meals to go

and

- Groceries: deli, produce & more

We also cater events

**Explore the world... next door**  
566 Gladstone (between Bay and Percy)  
613-722-0061 [margofresh.com](http://margofresh.com)



The rescued butterfly drinking from snow earlier this month.

DINAH ROBINSON/THE BUZZ

## Pollinator protection, one butterfly at a time

Dinah Robinson

I found a little butterfly trapped inside the window of the shed at my cottage-farm on a warm day in early April.

She found her way into the shed after waking up from hibernation but couldn't find her way back out. The sunny south-facing

window was so warm and tempting and the crack under the door was in the dark.

I managed to pick her up with a piece of paper and walked her to the open door. She flew right to the last of the snow for a drink.

She stayed for a while and I was able to take a few shots of her straw-like proboscis sticking into the melting snow.



# Ottawa Community Housing developments to transform Dalhousie



BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

Alayne McGregor

Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) has started construction on two major developments which will add thousands of residents to the western end of Somerset Ward.

Cranes, dump trucks, and pile drivers are now changing the landscape at two places: the second Mosaïq complex at 820 Gladstone at Rochester, and Gladstone Village at 933 Gladstone/75 Oak, beside the yet-to-open Corso Italia LRT station. Both are expected to be finished in 2026.

And depending on government funding, many more units could be built in the next few years, according to OCH Chief Development Officer Cliff Youdale. This has become more likely with recent funding announcements from the city, the province, and the federal government.

Mosaïq Phase 2, with 273 new homes in two nine-storey high rises and three townhouse blocks, broke ground last fall. OCH will partner with PAL Ottawa to provide 86 homes for older members of the artistic community in one high rise. It will have space for families,



Left: Mosaïq phase 2 on the south side of Gladstone at Rochester. Above: Gladstone Village near LRT Line 2. CHARLES AXBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

with three and four-bedroom units as well as smaller units.

Phases three and four of Mosaïq, continuing south towards the Queensway, are also being planned.

“In a perfect world, we’d be starting those within the next four to five years,” Youdale said. He said the replacement of the Rochester bridge on the Queensway required some change of plans in scheduling, but “given the availability of funding, it didn’t really hold us up an awful lot.”

The eight-acre site of Gladstone Village will be built in stages depending on funding, he said. It will eventually accommodate 1,100 new residential homes.

Phase 1 will be at the Oak Street (north) end of the site, adjacent to Plouffe Park. It will be mixed-use (residential/ retail/ office), mixed-income (affordable and market rent), mixed-density (low, mid, and high-rise) and mixed tenure (rental/ ownership). It will include a nine-storey and an 18-storey building, sharing a four-storey podium, and will pro-

vide 336 homes (56-studio, 182 one-bedroom, 57 two-bedroom, 35 three-bedroom, three four-bedroom) and 2,000 square feet of commercial space.

Youdale expected work on Phases 2 and 3 of Gladstone Village to start in 2026.

All of these developments are being built to Passive House standards (as was Mosaïq Phase 1) to minimize energy use. Gladstone Village will be district energy-ready and will include high-efficiency heating and cooling and wastewater heat recovery. There will also be a solar photovoltaic array on the building rooftops.

He said OCH is also working closely with local utilities to ensure the new units do not overload pipe or electricity capacity in the area.

The fences around 820 Gladstone advertise “Affordable Rental Housing.” By the time both developments are fully built out, Youdale said, OCH should have that a full spectrum of affordability in that area, from market rents to deeply affordable, but the number of affordable units “will be very much dependent on the funding that we can acquire.”

Youdale said the ground-floor commercial space in

Mosaïq Phase 1 hadn’t been rented out yet because OCH needed the space for its own use. OCH will be going to market soon for tenants, looking for those which are both economically viable but also add value to the community. “So we’re shopping for the right type of tenants, aligned with OCH values.”

He said that some of the spaces in the new developments, like meeting rooms, would be accessible to the community.

“We’re trying to leverage the space in ways that would really benefit our tenants and the community.”

## Almost-hidden art galleries downtown

Alayne McGregor

Ever had an extra hour downtown and were looking for something to see?

If you’re near Elgin and Laurier, there is a wide range of galleries with free admission only minutes away.

On the main floor of 150 Elgin is the Ajagemô art space at the Canada Council for the Arts. Until May 20, it’s showing *Coming into Sight: 50th Anniversary Art Bank Acquisitions*. The 24 artworks, ranging from photographs to paintings to sculptures, were made by artists across Canada and “reflect on our shared histories and futures.”

They were among 72 acquired for the Art Bank’s

50th anniversary and this may be your only chance to see them before they go to decorate offices. I felt that some of them had quite an emotional effect. The gallery is open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. (The front-page photo is from this exhibit.)

At Ottawa City Hall (110 Laurier West), you can see three painters’ works in “A Glimmering Feel Towards the Now” at the City Hall Art Gallery. It continues until May 12, and there will be an artists’ tour on Sunday, May 12 at 2 p.m.

The second art gallery on the main floor of City Hall is the Karsh-Masson Gallery. From May 9 until July 21, it will honour the 2023 Karsh Award winner, Christine Fitzgerald, by showing

her photographs of scientific specimens. The formal opening is on May 9 at 5:30 p.m.

And for music lovers, the Barbara Ann Scott Gallery at City Hall is presenting *Ottawa Rocks! - Reunion Tour* until September 3, showing memorabilia from the city archives of the many rock musicians who have played in this city from 1950 to 2012.

City Hall galleries are normally only open weekdays from 9 to 5.

And finally, the Ottawa Public Library main branch at 120 Metcalfe often has free exhibits by local artists on its second floor near the stairs. The art pieces are hung by the interior glass walls.

## Community Calendar

### Earth Day Free Market

April 20, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Room B125, Ottawa Public Library Main Branch (120 Metcalfe St.)

Free. [bibliottawalibrary.ca](http://bibliottawalibrary.ca)

### The Karsh Brothers - Canadian Legends of Photography

The Ottawa Historical Society

April 27, 1 to 3 p.m.

Speaker: photographer Paul Couvrette  
Auditorium, Ottawa Public Library Main Branch (120 Metcalfe St.)

Free, drop-in [bibliottawalibrary.ca](http://bibliottawalibrary.ca)

### Down East Celtic Music with Occasional Pudding

April 27, 2-6 p.m.

Montgomery Centretown Legion, 330 Kent

Show and Fish & Chips \$25.00

Advance Tickets Only: [rc1351@rogers.com](mailto:rc1351@rogers.com)

or purchase at the Legion

### Show Tune Showdown (a fundraiser for Tone Cluster)

April 27, 7:30 p.m.

Meridian Theatres at Centrepointe

Tickets: \$35

[meridiancentrepointe.com](http://meridiancentrepointe.com)

### Bytown Voices Community Choir

Home: Songs of Belonging, Land and Connection

April 28, 3 p.m.

Knox Presbyterian Church, 120 Lisgar St.

Tickets: \$20, children 12 and under free

[www.bytownvoices.com](http://www.bytownvoices.com)

### Boutique Cornerstone

a sale for Cornerstone Housing for Women

May 3, 12-4 p.m., May 4, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thyme & Again,

1255 Wellington St. West, second floor

free admission

[cornerstonewomen.ca/event/boutique-cornerstone-fashion-fundraiser/](http://cornerstonewomen.ca/event/boutique-cornerstone-fashion-fundraiser/)

### Musica Viva Singers

Spring concert: Lovers & Friends

May 6, 7:30 p.m.

Centretown United Church, 507 Bank St.

Tickets: \$25

[www.musica-viva.ca](http://www.musica-viva.ca)

### Canadian Centennial Choir

Red and White / Rouge et blanc

May 11, 7:30 p.m.

St. Thomas the Apostle Anglican Church,

2345 Alta Vista Dr.

Adult: \$25; Senior/Student: \$20

[ccc-ccc.ca](http://ccc-ccc.ca)



# Sustainable gardening: planting native species and keeping the rain where it will water your plants

Darlene Pearson

Those who attended the third Coffee House on Sustainability at the Glebe Centre on March 24 came away with many helpful suggestions on gardening with native plants and trees, and ways to divert stormwater into practical use.

Tara Beauchamp, founder of Garden Releaf, talked about “ecological design”, an approach to gardening in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way. It promotes using native plants that have co-evolved in our region alongside insects, birds and mammals.

Some native plants nourish specific insects that have a limited diet and survive in a narrow range of environmental conditions. For example, milkweed is essential to the survival of the

monarch butterfly. Planting native species has other benefits: they provide habitat corridors for birds and insects, are drought-tolerant and adaptable, and require little maintenance.

Beauchamp’s photos of colourful and aesthetically pleasing plants in her slide presentation went a long way to dispel the myth that native plants are messy and unkempt.

She encouraged the use of naturally occurring plants rather than plant “cultivars” which are a product of controlled breeding. To learn which are native to the Ottawa region, she recommended using the Database of Vascular Plants of Canada which can be found at: <http://data.canadensys.net/vascan/search>

And for those of us wedded to our cultivars, she advised setting a reasonable

goal of 70 percent native plants, and enjoying non-aggressive favourite cultivars until they can be replaced at the end of their life cycle.

### Handling intense rainfall

Connor Renouf from Rain Ready Ottawa spoke about stormwater issues, and his organization’s practical solutions, ranging from downspout redirection to rain gardens to permeable pavements.

Ottawa residents have certainly experienced the results of intense rainfall causing flooding when it overwhelms our stormwater systems. In addition to direct property impacts, Renouf also pointed out that stormwater in older Ottawa areas can disperse untreated water into the watershed, polluting our waterways.

Rain gardens – ideally planted with hardy native perennials – have loose, well-draining soils designed to promote the infiltration of rainwater into the ground. Handouts on rain garden design and suggested plants were available.

Driveways are often the largest impermeable surface on properties in Centretown. Options for their replacement include gravel stabilized with structural plastic (see the Red Apron parking lot on Gladstone Avenue), permeable interlocking concrete pavers, and pervious asphalts. The Rain Ready site has a link to certified professionals to help choose the best option for individual situations. Go to [ottawa.ca/rain](http://ottawa.ca/rain) for more information.

### Where to get native trees

Owen Clarkin, who introduced himself as a tree educator, activist and troubadour, encouraged the audience to learn more about trees native to the Ottawa-Gatineau region and to plant native trees and shrubs.

He pointed out that a majority of our native tree species are threatened and that



Rain gardens have well-draining soils which allow rainwater to infiltrate into the ground. RAIN READY OTTAWA  
we are rapidly losing natural forest, all before we fully understand the interconnectedness of forest plants and trees so important to biodiversity. Ottawa has recently witnessed the massive clear cutting for the Tewin development and the loss of trees at Hunt Club on airport lands.

Clarkin is a big fan of little-known native species and showcased many of them in his presentation, including Red Spruce, Swamp White Oak, Rock Elm, Slippery Elm, and Black Maple. He also mentioned the overlooked Pin Cherry, a small tree with flowers, red bark, and fruit, that can be suitable for planting in small urban places.

These native trees can be hard to find in local nurseries, which often stock cultivars and non-native species. Public demand may change this situation, but if residents can’t wait, Clarkin suggested growing trees from seed (see *Growing Trees from Seed* by Henry Kock).

He advised avoiding problematic invasive species such as Japanese Tree Lilac, Burning Bush, Japanese Yew, and Japanese Barberry.

The many people who attended had lots of opportunity to ask questions of the presenters and of the many knowledgeable neighbours who had actually put into

practice many of the ideas introduced by the speakers – just in time for planning garden and yard makeovers for the spring season.



A permeable pavement driveway. RAIN READY OTTAWA



Old tree Mooney’s Bay  
A Slippery Elm tree at Mooney’s Bay. Many native trees like this are never planted, says Owen Clarkin. OWEN CLARKIN



This downspout drains into a rock bed and waters nearby plants, rather than going into the city’s stormwater system. This reduces the need for expensive city water and decreases the risk of flooding. RAIN READY OTTAWA

**JURISTES**  
**POWER**  
**LAW**

Ottawa — Vancouver — Montréal

**Councillor | Conseillère**  
**Ariel Troster**  
Quartier Somerset Ward

@Somerset\_Ward  
 @ariel4somersetward  
 arieltroster.com  
 @ariel4somersetward  
 613-580-2484  
 ariel.troster@ottawa.ca

**Sign up for our weekly MPP email updates at [joelhardenmpp.ca](http://joelhardenmpp.ca)!**

**Joel Harden**

MPP, Ottawa Centre  
[joelhardenmpp.ca](http://joelhardenmpp.ca)  
109 Catherine St.  
Ottawa, ON. K2P 2M8  
 JHarden-CO@ndp.on.ca  
 613-722-6414



# An Orthodox Church in Chinatown reaffirms its deep Centretown roots

Roger Butt

The white-stuccoed, white-domed Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church is nestled incongruously at 721 Somerset Street West in the heart of Ottawa's Chinatown.

Anyone passing by over the past year will have noticed the scaffolding and hard hats as the church undergoes a major renovation set to conclude in the next few weeks. This at a time when many religious institutions in Centretown are downsizing or closing their doors.

Father Maxym Lysack, the church's priest, showed me around the construction site on the day when workers were pouring concrete for a baptismal font and others were readying to break through the brick wall of the adjacent church hall to link the two buildings.

Father Lysack explained that the current church, built in 1968, had reached full capacity about five years ago. Moreover, it had only one fire exit and was woefully inadequate in meeting the needs of those with mobility barriers.

The congregation considered options. They debated selling and building from scratch which would necessitate moving to the outer reaches of the city where land could be secured. Ultimately, they opted to remain and expand.

"We wanted to stay within the city," he explains. "We liked the idea of people be-

ing able to come to church by public transit, which is not the case if you move to the periphery. So, we made this decision, and it was a fateful decision because it is very expensive to retrofit what is essentially a heritage building."

## An architectural jewel

The 1968 structure, celebrated as a now-rare example in Ottawa of 1960s modern architecture, and a favourite among Carleton University architecture students, was something of a happy accident. Acclaimed Ukrainian church architect George Kodak provided the original conceptual design. He was not licensed as an architect in Ontario, however, and so another Ukrainian, Basil Miska, famous for avant-garde architectural experiments, completed the work.

"(Miska) streamlined that design to make it cheaper to build and left his 1960s stamp on it," explains Lysack. Emblematic of that style are the pre-cast concrete panels that extend out on both sides of the church. The Adult High School on Rochester has a similar style.

Underneath the modernist exterior, however, can be found the three traditional elements of Orthodox church design: the dome, the cube interior with its impressive height, and excellent acoustics, minimizing the need for amplification.

Renovating such a creation was an architectural and engineering challenge



The congregation of Christ the Saviour Orthodox Church chose to stay in Centretown and renovate their building.

ROGER BUTT/THE BUZZ

assumed by Gatineau architect Paul Cooper and engineering firm, Capacity Engineering. "Our architect analyzed the original building and the addition is a very successful attempt to respect the original architecture and not do something that would diminish it."

The engineering challenge was to add space without the need of exterior supports and to bring it up to current seismic standards.

"They used structural engineering models that

would keep the exterior of the church the same... It's so well done architecturally that it looks like that's the way the church was built," Lysack notes.

The expansion on the east and west sides will add 500 square feet to the church. A new interior link to the church hall on 50 Arthur will convert the formerly separate buildings into one continuous space. Two accessible entrances and washrooms will dramatically improve accessibility of the space for people with disabilities. Finally, multiple new fire exits mean that the capacity of the building will increase to 290 from its current 160.

## Deep roots in Centretown

This extensive renovation and expansion of the church is only the latest renewal in the long history of what is the oldest Orthodox congregation in Ottawa. It traces its origins to the Holy Trinity Bukovinian Orthodox Cathedral, founded at the beginning of World War I by Ukrainian immigrants from the Bukovyna region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (now divided between Ukraine and Romania).

The Cathedral, completed in 1918, was located on the south side of Gladstone Avenue, between Booth and Rochester, land now being redeveloped as new affordable housing. Together with its neighbour, the Ukrainian Catholic Church, located where the Adult High School now sits, it ministered to the spiritual needs of the sizeable Ukrainian population that lived in this part of Centretown.

Of course, Rochester-ville, as the area was known, was home to many immigrants at the time from Po-

land, Italy and elsewhere, settling in alongside Anglo-Celtic and French Canadian neighbours.

In 1965, the City of Ottawa expropriated both Ukrainian churches in the Gladstone area as Queensway construction began and "urban renewal" started in earnest. In the negotiation that ensued, the congregation received two properties: the decommissioned No. 7 Fire Hall at 58 Arthur and a vacant lot at 721 Somerset. The congregation set up a temporary space in the fire hall and began the work to build a new church on the Somerset lot. It opened its doors in 1968, 50 years after the consecration of its predecessor.

By 2003, the congregation was dwindling in numbers and exploring options for its future. It entered into discussions with a new Orthodox congregation worshipping in English that had begun in the early-1980s, using the chapel at All Saints Anglican Church in Westboro. Leading that congregation was Father Maxym Lysack. The two congregations merged, and started worshipping together on July 21, 2003.

"It was a very good fit," Lysack reflects. "It was basically a Ukrainian English parish joining a Ukrainian parish wanting to become more English."

Several years into the union, Father Lysack would learn that his own maternal grandparents had been among the original Bukovinian immigrants who had raised money to buy land on Gladstone to build the church and that his grandfather served on the first Parish Council.

The renovation has proceeded at a time when those

who trace their origins to Ukraine are reeling as a result of the invasion by Russia and the protracted war.

## Supporting a new wave of Ukrainian newcomers

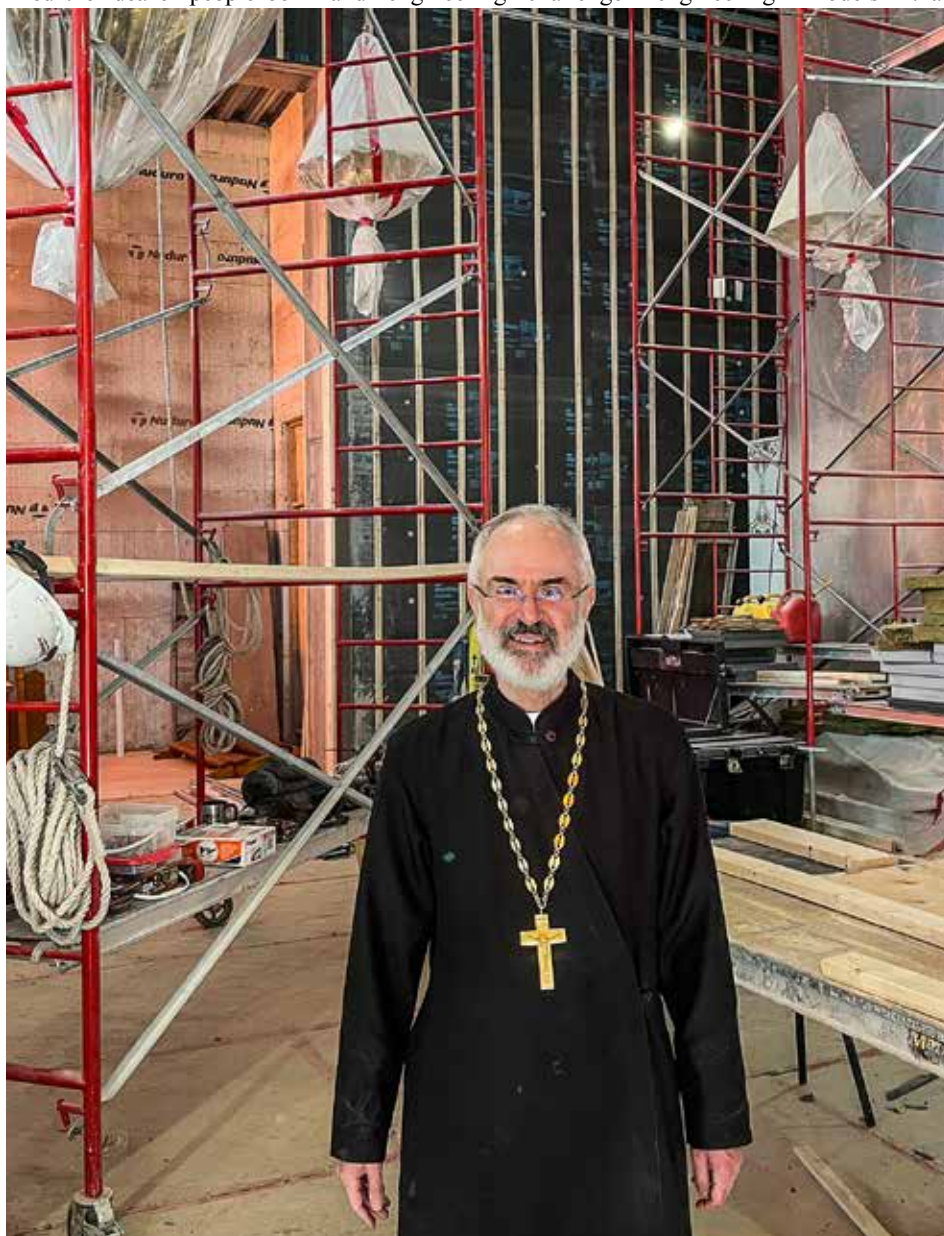
While the church is now very multicultural and multilingual, with no dominant group, its Ukrainian history has attracted new families amongst those who have come to Ottawa seeking refuge.

As a result, a church founded by Ukrainian immigrants fleeing Europe over 100 years ago now finds itself on the front lines helping a new wave of Ukrainian newcomers, together with the two other Ukrainian churches in the city.

"This is emotional for me," Lysack observes. "A lot of them have been deeply traumatized. A number of them can't go back to their cities – not now and who knows if ever... We do everything we can to help them settle in. We have people in our parish who help them with everything: opening bank accounts, getting OHIP, finding work, finding housing and furniture, getting into English courses."

"And we provide a home for them pastorally to meet their spiritual needs... It has meant that I am now typically reading the Gospel in English, French, and Ukrainian and using some Ukrainian in sermons and using more Ukrainian in my pastoral work than I have ever done before."

It was not a mission the church sought. It is clearly one that it embraces. In its newly and beautifully refurbished space, it will be better equipped to face this and other challenges as it looks resolutely to the future.



Father Maxym Lysack in the mostly renovated church.

ROGER BUTT/THE BUZZ





One of the classic signs of spring is the pothole, but this one on Cooper was a doozy! BUZZ reader Nancy Walking captured this scene on March 26 in front of her building. The front left wheel of a garbage truck was captured by a large hole in the street, completely blocking all traffic. *NANCY WALKING/THE BUZZ*

## Lich, Barber won't testify when trial resumes in August

Alayne McGregor

Tamara Lich and Chris Barber will not testify in their own defense when their trial resumes in mid-August.

The two organizers of the 2022 Freedom Convoy occupation of downtown Ottawa are both charged with mischief, obstructing police, and counselling others to commit mischief and intimidation for their roles in the protest. Barber is also charged with counselling others to disobey a court order.

Lich's lawyer, Lawrence Greenspon, told *The BUZZ* that the defense will not be calling any witnesses when the trial resumes. The Crown will make its final submissions August 13 to 15, and the two defense teams theirs from August 19 to 23. Judge Heather Perkins-McVey will then have further time to issue a verdict.

Lich and Barber were

in court March 13 to 15. Their defense teams asked the judge to consider several TikTok videos produced by Barber and posted to the Freedom Convoy Facebook page in the same context as other Barber TikTok videos which the Crown had introduced as evidence. The judge allowed two: one in which Barber denounced the self-proclaimed "Queen of Canada" Romana Didulo, calling her toxic, saying "this is our movement, not yours," and telling her to go home; and one from February 7 in which he talked about riot police being about to appear.

The defense also requested that the judge first make a ruling on the Crown's "Carter" application that Lich and Barber acted together in a "conspiracy or common design" and then go to final submissions. Earlier this month, the judge rejected a defense motion to dismiss that application out of hand.

The judge ruled on March 15 that she would hear any submissions on Carter at the same time as the final submissions. She noted that the defense could not find any examples in the last 40 years of a Carter ruling being issued first. She said there were many intersecting and interwoven parts between the Carter application and the verdict and she needed to consider them as a whole.

The trial began last September and was supposed to wrap up in October, but has

been delayed by many factors, including debates over evidence admissibility, audio-visual problems and lack of rooms at the courthouse, unprepared witnesses, and scheduling issues.

Next up at the Ottawa Courthouse is convoy organizer Pat King. His trial for his role in the occupation is scheduled to start May 13. He faces similar charges: mischief, counselling others to commit mischief, disobeying a court order, and obstructing police.

## News shorts

### Ottawa Urbanism Book Club

The Ottawa Urbanism Book Club, along with Councilor Laine Johnson, will discuss *Confessions of a Recovering Engineer* by Charles Marohn on Monday, April 29, at the Nepean Centrepointe Library (near Woodroffe and Baseline and a short walk/cycle from Baseline transit station). Learn where the term "stroad" comes from! It will also host a virtual author Q&A session with Marohn on May 6 at 5 p.m.

Pre-registration required for the April 29 meeting: email [derricksimpson15@gmail.com](mailto:derricksimpson15@gmail.com).

### City tree-planting consultation

The city wants to get to a 40 percent urban tree canopy cover in Ottawa by "shifting the approach to tree planting from reactive to proactive."

Learn how they plan to get more trees planted and add your ideas at [engage.ottawa.ca/tree-planting-strategy](https://engage.ottawa.ca/tree-planting-strategy)

### Repair Café at City Hall

[The Ottawa Tool Library](https://www.ottawalibrary.ca) will run a free repair café in Jean Pigott Place on the main floor of City Hall (110 Laurier West) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 20. Repair Cafés aim to reduce landfill waste by fixing items, teaching new skills, and building community. Fixers and menders will share their knowledge and skills around fixing everything from torn clothing to the wiring in your favourite lamp.

### Commanda Bridge reopened

The Chief William Commanda Bridge officially reopened for walking and cycling to Gatineau on March 25, after being closed all winter (even though the snow barely materialized).

### City looking for input on climate resiliency

The city will hold four open houses later this month, including in person at City Hall and online, to get your comments on its strategy to get Ottawa ready for a changing climate and determine which actions it should take first.

Actions include the use of urban heat maps, growing the urban forest, public education, building infrastructure to be resilient, and building energy and climate resiliency into future growth and development decisions. More info and a survey: [engage.ottawa.ca/climate-resiliency](https://engage.ottawa.ca/climate-resiliency)



This sign recently appeared in the long-vacant lot at 816 Somerset Street West, indicating that OakWood Design & Build was planning a four-unit commercial building there, to be started this spring. *ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ*

## Site of tragic Chinatown fire to be redeveloped?

Alayne McGregor

A Chinatown lot, which has sat empty for more than 17 years after a tragic fire that cost five lives, may finally see occupants again.

A large sign was recently erected at 816 Somerset West, near Booth, saying that a commercial building with four units would be built there starting this spring. The sign is apparently from OakWood, an Ottawa builder of homes and commercial buildings.

*The BUZZ* contacted OakWood to find out more about the development, but had not received any response by press time.

Last October, a for sale sign in that lot from realtor Raymond Chin of Coldwell advertised the 50x90-foot lot as mixed use with traditional main street zoning.

On April 5, 2005, an early-morning fire gutted the apartment on the second floor above the Mekong Grocery at 816 Somerset. Five members of the Thach family died in the fire, in-

cluding three teenagers. Three survived with smoke inhalation and bad burns: Makara Thach was able to save his infant grandson, and firefighters later rescued Thach's son-in-law. According to a story in *The Ottawa Citizen*, the family had fled the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1987, and had bought the grocery business in 2001.

In 2006, two Ottawa landlords were convicted of failing to provide a smoke alarm in the upstairs apartment at 816 Somerset and were fined \$12,000, according to a CBC report.

The presiding judge pointed out that the provincial fire code required the owners to install smoke alarms and said the owners had to face the consequences of their inaction. She also said this message needs to be heard by all landlords.

The building was left in a burnt-out state for years and was finally demolished in 2009. It had been built in 1901, after the previous building had burnt to the ground in the Great Fire of 1900.



## DBT Skills Group

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based treatment that helps people who struggle with emotion dysregulation related to mood and anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and addictions as well as difficulties with anger, grief, shame and other painful emotions

### PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN SKILLS IN:

- Emotional regulation
- Mindfulness
- Distress tolerance
- Interpersonal effectiveness
- 11- Week commitment required

Group Starts May 1st 2024  
Wednesdays | 6 pm - 7:30 pm

IF INTERESTED PLEASE CALL

613-402-2499 OR 343 571-0097



The BUZZ is funded by ads...  
...and YOU?

Contribute to your local paper at:  
[www.centretownbuzz.com/donate](https://www.centretownbuzz.com/donate)

Thank you to all of our readers who have donated a little or a lot, once or monthly!



**First person**

# Adding up all the quirky numbers in Centretown

Marit Quist-Corbett

My phone rings and when I pick up, I hear my friend, sounding harassed.

“You told me you live at number 176. There is no 176.”

“Where are you?” I ask. “You should be between Bay and Lyon.”

She sighs, exasperated. “Yeah, well, that’s not right either.”

I take a deep breath. I know where I live. And I know I gave her the correct address. “OK, are you on the right street? When you get to the corner, look at the name please!”

A couple of minutes later, I get the answer. “I’m on Flora. That’s your street, right?”

Aha! Mystery solved. “No, actually,” I say. “I’m on Florence. Number 176.”

**Quirky numbering**

It’s one of the quirky things about Centretown. We have a Flora and Florence Street three blocks apart. What genius thought that one up?

Later that day, I walk down to Flora. She’s right. There is no 176 Flora. At Kent Street, the numbers stop at 138. Across from that busy artery, the first number you encounter is 198. Thirty numbers missing on that side. Go figure.

I’m curious now. I walk up to the next crossroad and start comparing numbers on McLeod. Weirdly, the first number on the Kent-Lyon block is 428. How did this happen? How did one street end up with such a wildly different numbering pattern? A city historian might be able to tell me.

Maybe McLeod used to be longer? Maybe Flora was added as an after-thought? Or used to be a laneway? However it happened, the result is a baffling number schema, a challenge to anyone not directed by GPS. Someone biking or walking might have to call their friend and ask for clarification.

**Numbers can confuse, or lie**

Sometimes, numbers don’t make sense, in spite of what we assume. Lying with statistics is a long and well-practiced craft.

With the same statistics, a study can scare or reassure people. If a percentage doubles, we have to ask what the base percentage was in the first place. Was it 50 percent? Wow! In that case we’re now at 100. Now I’m really listening. However, if I’m told I have an infinitesimal chance of shortening my life if I drink two cups of



There is a 176 Florence Street in Centretown, but that number is completely missing on the nearby Flora St. *MARIT QUIST-CORBETT/THE BUZZ*

coffee and double that infinitesimal chance if I make it three, I can live with the consequences and I’ll probably continue to consume whatever risky product they’re trying to warn me against.

Yes, numbers are exact, but we have to ask questions to establish the story around those numbers. Then we understand better what we’re talking about – and we can draw conclusions.

**Baffling global numbers**

At the beginning of January each year, we are exposed to baffling statistics on global wealth. Studies tell us about the one percent of people who own basically everything – and the other 99 percent working their heads off to stay alive and cater to that one percent who rule them.

Elon Musk scraping billions of dollars together and managing to pay the minimum in taxes, while the CRA goes after my friend whose income lies just above the poverty line. How is this possible? How is this fair? How can we continue like this?

Canada may not have a lot of billionaires, but we have our own hard-to-swallow numbers. On the morning of January 3, Canada’s top CEOs had already earned the average worker’s salary for an entire year.

I hear this kind of news and I am dismayed, to say the least. I think of my kids, each one of them bright and hard-working, who can barely make enough money to pay the rent or – if they managed to buy a property – a mortgage.

I see the young people preparing my latte at the Art House, or Oat Couture, or Arlington Five. They bring so much more joy into the world than any of those billionaires. We don’t pay them enough for that joy.

Those of our neighbours who can’t afford any proper accommodation, who have to make due with a shelter or rooming house. Those who have to work two or three jobs to be able to make ends meet.

This situation is a national shame. Yet, one feels pretty powerless faced with the enormity of the problem. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer and the gaping abyss in between continues to grow to grotesque proportions as we look on.

**Positive numbers**

So, is there anything positive in our number-filled world? Of course there is.

How about age? My grandkids proudly hold up three or four fingers to show how big they are. My own age? I’m in my seventies now. It seems old and yet I don’t feel it. In fact, I am proud of what I can still do. Last month, I signed up for one month of personal training for a bit of fun.

At the gym, everything is about numbers. Good numbers. Numbers that are improving.

Lift a weight. Five pounds? Not bad. Next time, we’ll do 10.

Punch this bag. Give it your all. 20 seconds. 30 next time.

Hold the plank. 30 seconds. Can you do 40?

Okay, let’s do the biceps curls again: 12 this time. Three repetitions.

This feels good. I count, and nothing else matters. And I feel good and in control. The numbers sit right in my mind. As does solving the Sudoku puzzle every day at breakfast. Those numbers make sense.

The next time a friend comes to visit, I’ll warn them about the confusion of Flora and Florence. I’ll tell them about the quirky numbers in Centretown. And they’ll know where to find me.

# The bat that overwintered in my house

Dinah Robinson

My home is so pollinator-friendly, a bat had decided to overwinter in the cold unfinished basement.

There’s a cave-like crawlspace section that used to be a coal chute, where he was likely roosting. Old brick and mortar foundations always have holes and the unfinished basement is normally below 10 degrees in the winter. Perfect habitat for a bat.

One evening at dusk, I didn’t have the lights on yet. The atmosphere was perfect for nighttime pollinators. It had been unseasonably warm for a few days in a row and the bat probably thought it was spring.

Suddenly, my cat was going wild as a big brown bat swooped around the living room while making chirping sounds. After locking the cat in a bedroom, I attempted to catch the bat. It was very agile and not interested in being captured. It found a hiding place and stayed put for the rest of the evening.

I reached out to Erin Stukenholtz, my bat research contact at Carleton University, who was able to provide guidance. A bat in the house during winter can be a tricky situation. It will die if you let it outside.



A Big Brown Bat wrapped in a fleece blanket, after being tagged by Carleton University researchers investigating bat habitat.

*ERIN STUKENHOLTZ/CARLETON UNIVERSITY*

She suggested that we try to catch the bat and put it in a box with a towel secured on the side so it can hang. She also suggested taking it to a rehabilitation centre. They would be better equipped for this situation and are vaccinated to handle them. While rabies is rare, it does happen.

I did not manage to catch our bat. He was hiding on the back of a tall bookcase and I couldn’t reach the far corner, where he was hanging. He

was gone by the next morning. I suspect he went back to the basement.

I left the basement door open overnight and I created a bigger entrance to the crawlspace. It’s very much like a cave and I hope he went back to roost there for the rest of the winter. Unfortunately, 50 percent of young bats do not make it through their first winter.

## Coffee Houses on Sustainability

Join your neighbours from across Ottawa for a coffee and cookie to learn from their experiences when transitioning to a more sustainable lifestyle!

Do solar panels work for a multiplex?

Why not try an e-bike?

Keeping stormwater out of your basement?

Rebates for sustainable upgrades, like heat pumps?

A zero-waste pantry?

Glebe Community Centre, 175 Third Ave, Ottawa  
9:30 – 11:30 am

Saturday January 27	Homes and Energy
Saturday February 24	Reducing Your Carbon Footprint
Sunday March 24	Greenspace and Water
Saturday April 27	Transportation
Sunday May 5	Zero-Waste Living

Jim Durrell Rec Centre, 1265 Walkley Rd, Ottawa  
9:30 – 11:30 am

Saturday June 8 Climate Risk – Basement Flooding

Sign up on Eventbrite:  
[www.bit.ly/GreenCoffeeHouses](http://www.bit.ly/GreenCoffeeHouses)

Invites all Ottawa residents to these FREE events.

Community Association for Environmental Sustainability



# We learn about ourselves from watching films from other countries

Stephen Thirlwall

This March, the International Film Festival of Ottawa (IFFO) made a big splash with over 30 foreign films accompanied by exciting Canadian short films, all readily accessible to Centretowners.

The IFFO is the newest of the festivals organized by the Canadian Film Institute, an 89-year-old organization whose mandate is to encourage the production, distribution, study, appreciation of use of film in Canada and abroad.

Over the years, the CFI has developed the Ottawa International Animation Festival, several Canadian series, and more specialized series like the European Union and Latin American Film Festivals.

The IFFO presents top-level films from around the world, many of which might never otherwise have come to Ottawa or Canada. For 2024, it neatly wove together not only a series of films, but a cooperative network of venues. Ottawa's indepen-

dent theatres (the ByTowne, the Mayfair, the Ontario Art Gallery Salon, and the Arts Court Theatre) each played a share of the films.

The festival is supported by a wide range of sponsors, including all levels of governments, Carleton University, Algonquin College, some local radio stations, foreign embassies, and large and small corporations.

## Why such a surge of interest in foreign films?

The Canadian population has become far more international: foreign films can contribute to understanding the effects of immigration on our national identity, what cultural changes are needed, how to integrate diversity, and how to provide newcomers a contact with their past homelands. Without exposure to foreign films, we would miss out on new perspectives and experiencing imaginative and cinematic genius, as well as many cultural lessons.

Each culture and language group expresses itself differently, and all these expressions are based on valid human experiences. While we all share certain experiences, traits, and practices, there are also many differences.

Film allows us to share these together and gain a much wider and deeper understanding of humanity. Being able ourselves to see

with these other eyes gives us a more 3-D view of everything and opens us up to new possibilities in arts, science, technology and culture.

The North American film industry works within many limitations. How many remakes of films can we watch before plots become stagnant? How much CGI can we stand? While some is wonderful, it also removes a lot of humanity.

Beauty and heroism are presented in such narrow terms. Actors and actresses have to undergo so much facial and body surgery or muscle building to fit the accepted model. This is clearly visible to audiences.

In almost all the foreign films I have seen, there is much more acceptance of body types and identities of people. Within British, French, and some other European films, there is a far greater integration of different races, cultures, identities in the stories and some of the major roles, than in American films. Even pieces from past generations are inclusive. All of this hits closer to reality and brings forward the cultural challenges we face in a constructive way. Separating into all-white or all-black films doesn't achieve this.

The exchange of films between Canada and other countries also allows Canada to promote its cinematic successes and vice versa.

## A review of one foreign film

You can also see foreign films year-round at Ottawa's independent theatres. For example, the film *Perfect Days*, directed by Wim Wenders, was at the Mayfair in March.

This film follows the life of a middle aged Japanese man, Hirayama (Koji



Yakusho), who is very isolated in his life. He has very little and lives simply, working hard and very conscientiously every weekday as a toilet cleaner of public washrooms. The film follows him through his workdays and weekends.

Every morning he arises and folds up his sleeping mat and bedding. He collects his work supplies, loading them in his van. From a drink dispenser, he gets a can of coffee, then drives to each toilet site and cleans. At lunch he sits in the same seat in a park to eat store-made sandwiches.

His break is to look up at the tree canopies and watch the sunlight filter through the leaves. Taking out his camera, he photographs this view. Once a week, he takes his film to get printed and collects his last set of pictures, mostly of the tree canopy.

After work he goes out to a restaurant (always the same one. Everyone knows him) for a modest dinner. All of this time, he barely speaks a word. You think he is mute, until finally he speaks a few short sentences.

Evenings and weekends, he goes for bike rides around the city. Once a week, he goes to the same small club (where everyone knows him). A black woman there sings the blues.

The one thing in his life that he does own a lot of is



music cassettes. In Japanese second hand trade, one cassette can be worth \$200 or more (e.g., Lou Reed). Hirayama seems to have hundreds but would not part with any for money. He plays them in his van and at home: *The Animals (The House of the Rising Sun)*, Van Morrison, and other British, American, or Japanese pop.

The film ends with the black woman singing "Feelin' Good", a song made famous by Nina Simone: "It's a new dawn, and a new day, and a new life for me, and I'm feeling good" – followed by him driving to work next morning with a bright smile bursting onto his face, then cutting to the sun coming through the leaves.

Hirayama's philosophy of life becomes fully exposed at the end. Every instant is different from the one before, each perfect. Life

and the world are always changing. Even though each of his days appears the same, it is new and different and brings joy. He is spurned by his sister, who thinks he has to aspire to become wealthy, but that is not for him.

The film avoids boredom and repetition because every scene is taken from a new angle and involves different elements of the full scene. You come to appreciate Hirayama's life and see his joy. If we actually admit it, our own lives are full of repetitive routines. How we view them determines how we feel. This is a film about finding peace, meaning and beauty in life.

Seeing Japan's rather fancy and beautifully designed public toilets, and the care which he gave them, immediately made me think of the absence of these in Centretown.

## MPP report: Beware of false prophets promoting "New Deals"

Joel Harden

On March 28, Premier Ford announced a "New Deal" for Ottawa, which Mayor Sutcliffe described as a "big win for Ottawa."

Hmm. While provincial investment in our city is welcome, I don't see this as a "big win" for Ottawa, and certainly not for our struggling transit system.

Toronto's "New Deal" included an additional \$600 million for the TTC, but the only mention of transit in our agreement concerns public safety (which is important), and building a transitway corridor in Kanata (which is contingent on federal funding).

When asked about this, the premier said transit ridership must increase before Ottawa could expect more funding to operate OC Transpo; he then pointed to the province's support for our struggling LRT (and don't get me started on that).

OC Transpo is short 74,000 service hours in 2024 because of provincial

cuts; if the bus is often late, one is less likely to take transit. This then feeds a downward spiral which Premier Ford helped cause. This pushes folks into cars, which then leads to more congestion (and more emissions).

Of course, there are positive aspects to our "New Deal". Downtown businesses and residents are struggling, and public safety is a concern. Many neighbours are suffering with our housing and homelessness emergency. It is good to note that Ottawa's alternative 911 response system will benefit from our "New Deal."

But the terms of Ottawa's "New Deal" requires the city to come up with a public safety plan within 120 days of yesterday's announcement, and I must admit my concern at how this will be handled at Queen's Park.

This is, after all, the same premier who abandoned us during the convoy occupation of February 2022. This absence was noted by the Rouleau Commission, for which Premier Ford refused to testify, and he has never expressed

any remorse for doing so. He has rarely been in Ottawa over the last six years.

In fact, at the "New Deal" presser, the premier rebuffed a question on this very topic. Blair Crawford from *The Ottawa Citizen* noted the premier had only been in Ottawa three times for announcements since being elected.

The premier denied the claim and his press secretary cut off Crawford's microphone when a follow-up question was attempted. It was not a good look.

The Easter season has just passed, and as someone raised with Christian values, I'm inspired to recall Matthew 7:15: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves."

As I explained in a eulogy at Queen's Park this week for MPP Daryl Kramp, I was raised to judge others by their actions and not just their words. On that score, I am worried Ottawa's "New Deal" fell well short, notably on transit.

But we won't stop pushing for better, you can be sure of that.

### Don't miss an issue!

Subscribe to *The BUZZ* notification list, and we'll let you know as soon as the next issue is published.  
Email [subscribe@centretownbuzz.com](mailto:subscribe@centretownbuzz.com)

**SUNDAY**  
**PRIME ROAST BEEF DINNER**

"AAA" Prime Rib served with Yorkshire pudding, mashed potato and vegetable of the day.

Regular 8oz Cut \$21.95  
King 12oz Cut \$29.95  
Reservations Recommended

361 Elgin St. • 613-238-2949  
[www.lieutenantspump.ca](http://www.lieutenantspump.ca) **LIEUTENANT'S PUMP**  
BRITISH PUB

**CENTRETOWN**  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

**Support your community**  
**Sign up or donate today**

[www.centretowncitizens.ca](http://www.centretowncitizens.ca)



# What's on this month, in Ottawa and beyond

Tony Wohlfarth

This month, a new exhibition of jewellery and artifacts from prehistoric rulers opened at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, and the Ottawa Grassroots Festival takes centre stage. I also preview other live music performing at the National Arts Centre and review two recent films.

## First Royals of Europe (100 Laurier St., Gatineau)

A special exhibition is underway at the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) in Gatineau. *First Royals of Europe* is a collection of artifacts from 26 national museums in southeastern Europe-- from Bulgaria to Montenegro to Hungary. The collection spans 6,500 years and is organized into four chapters. The exhibition is on display until January 19, 2025. Admission is included with the permanent collections. For more information, check out: [www.historymuseum.ca](http://www.historymuseum.ca)



## Ottawa Grassroots Festival (OGF)

OGF kicks off the music festival season in Ottawa from April 25 to April 28. Headliners at this year's edition include the incomparable Connie Kaldor, Jessica Pearson and the East Wind, Ottawa's own Lynn Miles and Charlie A'Court. Aboriginal elder Albert Dumont is the MC for the festival.

Performances are at two locations— Irene's Pub (885 Bank St.) and the First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa (30 Cleary St. off Richmond Rd.). Admission is free for daytime shows. For tickets for the evening shows, or more info: [ottawagrassrootsfestival.com/festival-info/](http://ottawagrassrootsfestival.com/festival-info/)

## Folk Alliance International (FAI)

FAI in Kansas City included a special screening of a new film, *Lead Belly*, the musician who invented rock & roll. Huddie Ledbetter is considered the most important folk and blues performer ever, and his mastery of the 12-string guitar is celebrated in this docu-

mentary film. His story is told in remarkable interviews with Harry Belafonte, Janis Joplin, and Odetta. *Lead Belly's* brushes with the law figure prominently in this no-holds-barred film directed by Curt Hahn. (Online distribution pending).

## CBC GEM

CBC Gem's documentary film, *Magic Hours*, is about movie theatres in Alberta.

Directed by Levi Howell, the film takes its audience to 10 theatres throughout Alberta—many of them either closing or up for sale. Filmed on location in towns as diverse as Stettler, High River, and Drumheller, the local cinema is the hub for entertainment and the loss of the theatre is a major loss to the community. I was taken by its portrayal of the owners and their staff, for whom a love of cinema is their passion. Running time: 44m.

## National Arts Centre (1 Elgin Street)

A number of outstanding artists perform at the NAC this month:

- Apr. 20: the Ottawa Jazz Orchestra: *Big Band Bash*;
- Apr. 27: Amanda Martinez;
- May 4: Walk off the Earth;
- May 9: the Huu Bac Quintet;
- May 10: the Mary Ancheta Quartet;
- May 11: Maia Davies with Ottawa's own Mikhail Laxton;
- May 31: Bruce Cockburn.

For tickets and show-times, check out: [www.nac-cna.ca](http://www.nac-cna.ca)

And, on April 27, stay tuned for the Empowering Women in the Music Industry (EWIMI) Conference that takes centre stage at the NAC: [www.axeworldfest.com/](http://www.axeworldfest.com/)

## Redbird Live (1165 Bank Street)

RBL is the place to be for these live performances:

- Apr. 27: Steph La Rochelle;
- May 3: Rob Lutes with Rob MacDonald;
- May 11: Melissa Payne with Nicholas Campbell.

This venue is intimate (80 seats) and shows often sell out. Tickets: [redbirdlive.ca](http://redbirdlive.ca). Check the site for changes and last minute additions.

## The Gladstone Theatre (910 Gladstone Ave.)

From April 19 to April 27, the Phoenix Players are building on the current interest in women's professional hockey with their new production, *Shorthanded: A Ladies Game*.

The play, by Canadian playwright Michael Grant, is about eight women who find themselves a player short for their championship hockey game. Grant will be at the April 20 matinee for a talk with the audience.

The championship cup that appears in the play is brought to every production and every theatre company that produces the play is engraved on the trophy. Tickets and show-times: [www.thegladstone.ca](http://www.thegladstone.ca)



From the First Royals exhibit: a Gold Wreath, Iron Age, 375–325 BCE. The figure on this wreath represents Nike, the Greek goddess of victory. Much Thracian wealth came from tributes paid by Greek colonies on the western coast of the Black Sea. Courtesy of the National Museum of History, Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria Photo © Field Museum, Adam Vágó

## Live On Elgin (220 Elgin St.)

Check out this venue on April 19-20 for tribute concert to Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band. Tickets and more information at: [www.liveonelgin.com](http://www.liveonelgin.com)

celebration of documentary films from around the world kicks off at multiple venues in downtown Toronto. See: [www.hotdocs.ca](http://www.hotdocs.ca)

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. He is covering the Hot Docs Film Festival in Toronto this month.

## Out of Town

From April 25 to May 5, the 10-day cel-

Phoenix Players presents

# Shorthanded: A Ladies Game

By Michael Grant  
Directed by Rachel Worton

April 19th to 27th, 2024

At The Gladstone Theatre, 910 Gladstone Avenue  
613-233-4523  
[www.thegladstone.ca](http://www.thegladstone.ca)

IN SUPPORT OF

Canadian Cancer Society

Phoenix Players Ottawa  
[www.phoenixplayers.ca](http://www.phoenixplayers.ca)

## Justine Bell

School Trustee  
Zone 10 Somerset

✉ [justine.bell@ocdsb.ca](mailto:justine.bell@ocdsb.ca)  
☎ 613-858-2275  
📱 @TrusteeBell  
📱 @justinegbell

**Questions? REACH OUT!**

OTTAWA-CARLETON DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



## CCA report: Earth Day festival, gardening, safer roads, NeighbourWoods, heritage



Jack Hanna

### Earth Day Festival — this weekend

The Earth Day Festival is this Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Dundonald Park, at Somerset and Lyon.

For kids, there will be hands-on arts and crafts, games, read-alouds (10:15 and 10:45 a.m.), a sing-along (11 a.m.), and a magician (12:30 p.m.). As always at CCA festivals, there will be fresh, free popcorn.

You can enjoy live music, street theatre, and participatory dance.

Two dozen booths will have information about biking, affordable housing, climate change, plant-based eating, protecting birds and trees, good gardening practices, and much more.

The festival is sponsored by the CCA and the Centretown Community Health Centre.

The rain day is Sunday, April 21.

### Calling all gardeners

The Dundonald Park Gardening Group is looking for folks who like to work in the dirt.

This group of volunteers has in the past handful of years revitalized the gardens in Centretown's foremost park and wants to sustain the momentum.

Email: [dinahrob@sympatico.ca](mailto:dinahrob@sympatico.ca) to get your hands in the soil.

### Start a few extra seedlings

If you grow plants from seed, consider starting a few extra for the CCA's plant sale on Saturday, June 8.

The plant sale, part of the big Minto Park Sale, is a fund-raiser for the CCA.

Plant donations are greatly appreciated. Annuals, tomatoes, peppers, and herbs are good sellers. Please label the plants.

For information about how to drop off donations, contact Stephen at (613) 730-6513 or email [stephen.thirlwall@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.thirlwall@gmail.com). As well, plants can be dropped off at Minto Park the morning of the sale.

### CCA looks to improve communications

Want to help engage with your Centretown neighbours?

The CCA is launching a new communications committee. The committee will promote CCA events, communicate CCA programs, and explore new ways to attract and retain members.

Interested? Email: [stuartmackay@live.ca](mailto:stuartmackay@live.ca)

### Making Centretown roadways safer

The CCA's Transportation Committee conducted a Safer Streets Walking Tour in mid-April. Participants considered crosswalks and whether they ensure safety, as well as the connectivity of the cycling network in Centretown.

They also considered how to make Kent Street more appealing and safer for active transportation. City staff are considering conducting a study of the potential for cycling and other forms of active transportation on Kent, and the CCA is pushing them to do so.

### Tree training for new NeighbourWoods volunteers

The CCA's NeighbourWoods program kicks off its fourth season with training for new volunteers on Saturday, May 11.

The NeighbourWoods team is compiling a detailed survey of all the individual trees in Centretown. At the training session, Andy



Magician Mark Montreuil enchanted crowds at the 2023 Earth Day celebration in Dundonald Park.

RAYMOND BERTRAND/THE BUZZ

Kenney, a University of Toronto emeritus professor, will teach volunteers how to collect data on a tree and use apps to put it into the database. Another expert will teach tree identification.

NeighbourWoods is a fun way to learn about trees and meet neighbours. The data gathered is used to influence the City of Ottawa's approach to planting and maintaining trees and enhance the urban canopy.

To get more info: [NeighbourWoods@centretowncitizens.ca](mailto:NeighbourWoods@centretowncitizens.ca)

### Picking priorities for heritage protection

The city asked the CCA to identify its priority buildings for heritage protection.

## Somerset Ward: Progress on community safety and downtown revitalization

Ariel Troster

“You can't rely on bringing people downtown, you have to put them there.” That quote is from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the seminal work by the great Jane Jacobs.

I have been reflecting on that statement a lot lately, as we work to revitalize Ottawa's downtown core in the face of post-COVID workforce changes.

There is no denying: Centretown has changed a lot in the last few years. The shift in the federal workforce has meant we are missing roughly 80,000 to 100,000 people who would have commuted in and out of the core prior to the year 2020. This has forced some businesses to close and significantly reduced the number of public transit riders. It has led to more empty storefronts and fewer eyes on the street.

Many of you attended our large community forum on neighbourhood security in August. We heard from residents, business owners, social service providers, the Ottawa Police, and people with lived experience of addiction and homelessness. That meeting propelled my office to demand more resources to tackle these very real challenges in Centretown.

We have made some significant progress. Thanks to our community's advocacy, we were able to secure \$200,000 in funding to allow the continuation and expansion of the Homeless Crisis Outreach Program run by the Somerset West Community Health Centre. And, as you may have heard, Centretown was selected as the location of a new, non-police, 24/7 crisis response service, which will launch this summer.

Many of you have expressed a desire to see more community police officers “walking the beat” in Centretown. The new funding for Ottawa announced by the provincial

The CCA surveyed its members and then provided a Top 10 list.

Topping that list was 123 Metcalfe, the elegant five-storey building at Metcalfe and Laurier, across the street from the library. Not only is 123 Metcalfe beautiful, it has a distinguished history. It was the home of Ottawa's YMCA for 61 years, starting in 1906. During the Y's tenancy, it had a swimming pool, gym, billiards room, shooting range, and rental rooms. Today it is the well-appointed hotel The Metcalfe.

Because of a provincially imposed deadline, the city is currently hurrying to designate many heritage properties for protection before the end of this year.

government earlier this week includes more resources for public safety downtown. In order to qualify for the funding, our city has to submit a new security plan for the core within 120 days.

My office will be reaching out to key community stakeholders to help ensure that residents and business owners have input into what this plan may look like.

I am inspired by the work that Inner City Health is doing in Sandy Hill and the ByWard Market, training people with lived experience as neighbourhood block leaders. This has the potential to provide useful training and employment opportunities for street-involved folks, while also beautifying the neighbourhood and establishing “good neighbour” agreements in troubled parts of downtown.

We are also working hard on the “putting people downtown” part of the equation by encouraging more conversions of empty office buildings into apartments. Just this week, District Realty announced that they will be converting an 11-storey office building on Elgin into residential units. And the CLV Group is in the process of converting their second building, this one on Laurier.

I have been working with city staff, fellow councillors and the development industry on policy levers to encourage more adaptive re-use of vacant office space.

I am also thrilled that, as part of Budget 2024, we were also able to secure \$200,000 in funding for public realm and pedestrian projects. Our office is currently working with the Centretown and Somerset Village BIAs to plan some fun pilot projects and outdoor activities for the summer. Stay tuned for more information on that.

As always, the Ward 14 team is here for you. Don't hesitate to email us at [ariel.troster@ottawa.ca](mailto:ariel.troster@ottawa.ca) if we can be of help.

Ariel Troster is the councillor for Somerset Ward, which includes Centretown.

**YASIR  
NAQVI**

MP | DÉPUTÉ  
OTTAWA CENTRE

Here to help.

Ici pour aider.

**YasirNaqviMP.ca**

613 946 8682 | [Yasir.Naqvi@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Yasir.Naqvi@parl.gc.ca)  
404-1066 rue Somerset Street West/Ouest  
Ottawa, ON K1Y 4T3

[f](https://www.facebook.com/YasirNaqviCDN) [i](https://www.instagram.com/YasirNaqviCDN) @YasirNaqviCDN [X](https://www.x.com/Yasir_Naqvi) @Yasir\_Naqvi



# DCA report: Parking, trucks on Booth, Canada Day, 989 Somerset, AGM



Large trucks rumbling through the residential area on Booth Street over to LeBreton Flats have been a problem for years.

MARtha MUSGROVE/THE BUZZ

Ed McKenna

## Committee of Adjustment says No! to front-yard parking on Queen

Let's begin with some good news! The application to permit front-yard parking at the historic properties on 407, 409 and 411 Queen Street West has been refused.

In its decision, the city's Committee of Adjustment stated, in part, that "because of the effect front yard parking would have on the character of streetscape and the neighborhood, the requested variances are, from a planning and public interest point of view, not desirable..."

City planners, for their part, had said they had "no concerns" with the application; the committee, on the other hand, decided the application did not meet the four requirements for approval of a minor variance specified in the Planning Act.

The committee noted the written and oral submissions that opposed the applications:

"D. Barton, Dalhousie Community Association [that would be Debbie, DCA Public Realm Committee chair!], raised concerns that, despite the revisions to the applications, front yard parking was not permitted, and that the area was well served by public transit. She further expressed concerns with the removal of soft landscaping and greenspace."

## OC Transpo #6 bus top for cancelled trips

Alayne McGregor

If you're sick and tired of your route 6 buses never showing up, the stats back you up.

According to figures presented at the April 11 Transit Commission meeting, route 6 had the highest number of undelivered trips in March: 131. It was followed by the LRT Line 2 replacement bus (129 non-existent trips) and Route 12 (110).

Reasons for the lost trips included not enough operators (43 percent), mechanical breakdowns (22 percent), no bus available (4 percent), and on-street issues such as congestion, protests, detours, road-closures, or on-board incidents (32 percent).

On an average weekday in March, 104 out of 8,061 scheduled trips were not delivered. Overall bus reliability in March was 98.8 percent, the highest in 13 months.

LRT reliability continued to improve, with 99.4 percent

uptime in March in a continuing upwards trend.

No on-time performance numbers were available for frequent bus routes (15 minute or more frequent operation), which includes almost all routes running in Centretown. The reason given at the meeting was that Transpo is working to provide a better indicator of the reliability of those routes and feels that it is more important for customers that buses arrive regularly and evenly spaced. It will be working to ensure that the time between each bus remains consistent rather sticking exactly to the schedule, and will present a new indicator of service regularity in the future.

On the other hand, Councillor Wilson Lo argued that sticking to the schedule was important, especially when it meant missing a transfer to a less-frequent route and risking a half-hour wait. On a five-minute schedule, this may not

## Truck traffic on Booth Street

Despite the best efforts of city staff, heavy trucks continue to roll down Booth toward Albert and through the established residential area.

The DCA board heard that the city has plans for additional measures, to be put in place this spring, to redirect truck traffic away from Booth. In the meantime, it was suggested at the meeting, why not reinstate the restrictions at the intersection of Booth and Albert that the city lifted last fall?

At the same time, the city did reinstate restrictions to the intersection of Booth and Wellington, and Lett Street residents aren't too happy about it. At least 750 people live on Lett, and more than a third have signed an on-line petition asking the mayor to permit west-bound cars on Wellington to make a left turn on to Booth.

The DCA's Mobility Committee has been asked to again take the matter up with Councillor Ariel Troster.

## Will we be ready for Canada Day?

It may not be summer, but many Dalhousie residents have July 1 on their minds. Will Canada Day celebrations again take place at LeBreton Flats Park? If so, do Canadian Heritage and the city have a plan to ensure the security and well-being of the neighbouring residential community?

matter, he said, but it does on a 15-minute schedule.

For less frequent routes, the on-time performance was 79 percent, the highest in the last 13 months.

Ridership was up 13 percent in February 2024 from the year before, but five percent under forecast, meaning \$1 million under budget. Transpo attributed this to fewer full-fare adult passes being bought – in other words, fewer full-time commuters. Councillor Sean Devine asked Transpo to investigate a "viable alternative" for employees who only come into the office two to three days a week.

OC Transpo has revealed proposed changes and service reductions to its routes in a "New Ways to Bus" page on [octranspo.com](http://octranspo.com). The implementation date for those has not been announced. But route 6 riders will be glad to know it's one of the few routes with no changes.

Meeting participants raised these questions, and others, at the March 28 board meeting. Public commitments have been made to assess the impact of the 2023 celebrations and provide a plan for review by local residents, but "we've heard nothing," the meeting was told.

The DCA will seek out the relevant government officials at Canadian Heritage, the National Capital Commission, the city, the Ottawa Police Service, and OC Transpo to learn when the plan for Canada Day will be discussed with the community.

## 989 Somerset Meeting

As reported here last month, Taggart Realty Management agreed to meet the DCA's Planning Our Neighbourhood Committee on March 20 to discuss the development proposed for 989 Somerset Street West.

This, in spite of city staff having already approved the development, with no requirement for community consultation. Kudos to Taggart for meeting the community anyway.

However, what became evident during the meeting was that Taggart and its architects have fallen short of the vision expressed

in the West Downtown Core Secondary Plan, and for the Bayview Station District, where the development is proposed.

The secondary plan, which was prepared with significant contributions from the community, envisions a mixed-use development with active frontages, especially along the Somerset Street West bridge.

"Retail, commercial and/or other non-residential active frontages are required for all development along the entire frontage of any buildings located along Somerset Street West," states the secondary plan. "Development fronting onto the Somerset Street bridge shall extend the Somerset Street Main Street Corridor west and use the bridge deck as a publicly-accessible active frontage."

Instead, Taggart proposes a single-use residential building with limited access to Somerset. Notably, the development will meet the secondary plan's requirement for "a visible, well lit, high-quality staircase and accessible path from Somerset Street West to City Centre Drive."

But in response to the DCA's suggestion that the ground floor on City Centre also would benefit from retail uses, Taggart said they would not support commercial development at this location.

Demolition and excavation work will begin late this year, or early in 2025. The 15-storey development, with 248 residential units, could be completed by 2029.

## Cleaning the Capital spring campaign

Join your neighbours on Earth Day (April 22) from 10 to 11 a.m. and help us clean our parks. The Bronson, Chaudière, McCann, Piazza Dante, and Primrose parks could use a little TLC!

## DCA AGM on May 25!

The DCA's annual general meeting will take place on May 25, from 3 to 5 p.m., in the Preston Room at the Plant Recreation Centre.

In the meantime, join us at our next regular meeting, on Thursday, April 25, at 7:30 p.m.

Contact: [president@ottawadalhousie.ca](mailto:president@ottawadalhousie.ca), and visit our website: [ottawadalhousie.ca](http://ottawadalhousie.ca)

# MP report: delivering on pharmacare, protecting kids online

Yasir Naqvi

It has been a busy but productive winter session in the House of Commons. The following is a brief update on some key legislation and programs that are important to our community.

Many Ottawa Centre residents have been engaged in the discussion relating to online harms. Kids deserve safe environments to learn and play, whether they are at school, on the playground, or online. In addition, we cannot tolerate distribution of hateful material online.

After much consultation, the federal government has tabled the Online Harms Act to make online spaces safer, and hold web giants more accountable for the harmful content they host. This bill will create stronger online protections for children and better safeguard everyone in Canada from the proliferation of online hate and other types of harmful content, including intimate images shared without consent.

## Historic pharmacare framework

Additionally, we announced historic pharmacare legislation that creates a framework to establish national universal pharmacare for Canadians. It is a giant step forward in delivering better healthcare to Canadians. This plan starts with free coverage for contraception and diabetes medications. It will

support nine million Canadian women, and it will include diabetes coverage for 3.7 million Canadians. We believe that everyone deserves quality care, no matter how much they make. We are investing in a healthier Canada, because things get better when you do more for Canadians, not less.

## Dental Care also transformative

The Canadian Dental Care Plan is also a transformative investment that will help Canadians who are unable to access quality dental care because of their income or insurance. To find out if you are eligible to apply, visit [Canada.ca/dental](http://Canada.ca/dental). Already, over one million seniors have been approved for the Canadian Dental Care Plan! Additionally, dental care providers can now confirm their participation in the program as well.

And lastly, the federal government tabled Budget 2024 on April 16. I am grateful to hundreds of constituents who have sent their thoughts and ideas as part of our community's pre-budget consultation. I am confident that the upcoming budget will reflect our community's priorities on fighting climate change, building more homes, making life affordable, delivering quality healthcare, and creating good paying jobs.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or my team if you have any questions on government programs or need assistance. We are here to help.



# You're Invited

## ByWard Public Market Outdoor Season Launch

DATE: MAY 11, 2024 • 10AM  
LOCATION: 55 BYWARD MARKET SQ.



# Vous êtes invités

## au lancement de la saison en plein air du marché public By

DATE : 11 MAI 2024 • 10H  
LIEU : 55, BYWARD MARKET SQUARE



FOR HOURS, VENDORS, AND EVENTS: POUR NOS HEURES D'OUVERTURE, VENDEURS ET ÉVÉNEMENTS :

**BYWARD-MARKET.COM**

FOLLOW US ON: SUIVEZ-NOUS SUR :



@BYWARDMARKET