



People-friendly speed zones near you, 4



Almost sourdough bread, 5

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

Centretowners flock to a changed skateway

Alayne McGregor

Centretowners unexpectedly found themselves the envy of suburban Ottawa when the National Capital Commission (NCC) opened the Rideau Canal skateway in late January.

In light of the pandemic, the NCC asked skaters to “access those NCC assets closest to their home” and follow public health stay-at-home orders, including to avoid non-essential trips.

On CBC Radio, NCC CEO Tobi Nussbaum said “the skateway really should be used for those who live locally, for those who can walk there.” It’s not clear how many Ottawans actually followed this advice.

For those who did lace up their skates, the experience was noticeably different. “This season will be like no other,” the commission said, emphasizing that the purpose of the skateway was for exercise only.

There were no change huts, BeaverTail kiosks, or skate rentals. Masks were strongly recommended while skating and required in the limited washroom facilities. One hundred more benches were added. And skaters were asked to wash or sanitize their hands and keep two



In the middle of a tough winter, the Rideau Canal skateway became a magnet for locals of all ages needing exercise.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

metres away from anyone not in their household.

Those who prefer non-icy surfaces also got a boon from the NCC last month. Until May 1, the Queen Elizabeth Driveway between Somerset Street and Fifth Avenue will be restricted to active transportation during the day. From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven

days a week, pedestrians and cyclists can fill the driveway, and motor vehicles will not be allowed.

This follows the highly successful closure of the driveway last spring and summer. The Centretown Community Association has requested that the NCC consider making the closure permanent.

Analysis

Sidewalks: flat or rollercoaster?

Alayne McGregor

How much slope do you want in your sidewalk for a comfortable and safe walk? That’s the question the City of Ottawa is asking residents as it revisits its sidewalk design standards.

Comments are due at the city by Tuesday, February 16. Send them to StandardsSection@ottawa.ca.

The debate is over how sidewalks should cross driveway entrances. Should they dip down at every driveway (the “rollercoaster” design), or should they remain at the same level except for a short ramp by the street (the “flat” design)? The city currently supports both standards.

The ideal situation is for each sidewalk to be separated from the road by a boulevard or furniture area, and for the ramp to be included there outside the sidewalk. But in areas like Centretown with narrower road rights-of-way, most sidewalks are immediately beside the road, and there are many driveways per block.

The rollercoaster design (called “traditional” by the city) creates a low section in the sidewalk at every driveway, which can accumulate water, ice, or snow from sidewalk plows. At their worse during freeze-thaw cycles, these sidewalks can become a series of slippery mini-ice rinks. Because those sections are also lower to the road, they provide less protection from ponded water on the road, increasing the likelihood of wet feet. When driveways are wider, this can mean a long section with little protection.

The driveway sections slope both towards the street and downwards and upwards, creating a less stable surface for pedestrians, especially in icy conditions, and increasing the amount of work required to navigate a wheelchair.

The flat design (called “ramp style” by the city) is used on sidewalks at least 1.8m wide. (The normal residential sidewalk width is 1.8 to 2m.) The 0.75m section nearest the road is sloped to meet the road, while the grade is consistent on the remaining 1.05 to 1.25m.

cont in “Sidewalk” on p. 4

New Rochester Street public housing incorporates “passive house” efficiency

Alayne McGregor

For almost 60 years, brick townhouses lined Gladstone Avenue between Booth and Rochester. Now Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) is replacing those buildings with a new development called Mosaïq, which will be eight times as dense and at least four times as energy-efficient.

A new midrise building on the north side of Gladstone has been under construction since last fall, and is scheduled to be ready at the end of this summer. It’s the first of a series of new buildings in that area: the area south of Gladstone up to the Queensway is also being completely redeveloped by OCH for a new mixed-income neighbourhood.

Cliff Youdale, OCH’s chief development officer,



811 Gladstone under construction.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

said the new building at 811 Gladstone will have one thing in common with the former townhouses: it will accommodate families. The building will include three- and four-bedroom units, a rarity in Centretown.

The old townhouses were built in the early 60s, after the former private affordable housing was expropriated. They were some of the first affordable housing built and owned by the city.

cont in “Rochesterville” on p. 3

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



The Good, the Bad, and the Bumpy: Just a little respect

Ryan Lythall

I was recently informed about a person with disabilities who was robbed just outside the former Metro store on Rideau Street last year. This type of mistreatment of the disabled has been happening for years.

There seems to be a general feeling that people with disabilities don't deserve to be given the same respect as those without a disability. I believe that there are a few reasons why people with disabilities are often disrespected and mistreated.

First, there's fear of the unknown and not seeing the person. The first thing that people notice about me in public is my wheelchair. I can dress up or wear casual clothes but I can't hide my wheelchair or any of the technology that it takes to power my chair. So many people see a machine on wheels and, often, it's the only thing they choose to see.

The second reason may be due to ignorance. Your first experience being around a person with a disability may have occurred when you were a child. You may not fully understand why a disabled person is being treated differently. All you see is one person with a specific disability. As you get older and encounter others with disabilities, you rely on what you learned as a child and this is how you continue to deal with someone with a disability. All disabled people are the same.

As for the third reason, it's been my experience that people with disabilities are often viewed as weak or vulnerable. The media seems to enjoy using the V-word, especially during the pandemic. While it may be true, in some cases, we're not all the same. By putting that message out there that we're all vulnerable, you're telling others that all people with disabilities can be taken advantage of, aren't capable of fighting back, along with many other negative

thoughts associated with the word vulnerable.

Personally speaking, I've had several people steal money from me and items from my home, as well as damage my belongings. In some cases, they got away with it. But in other cases they didn't. One reason is because I fought back. Thankfully, it wasn't a physical fight. But it was still a fight. It seems like I've been fighting for my whole life, and the same goes for many people with disabilities.

The truth is, people with disabilities are, in fact, just like everyone else. We have different personalities and different lives, and our disabilities affect us in many different ways. So please do not assume that we're all the same because we're not.

As the classic song goes, all we're asking for is a little respect.

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

From the managing editor's desk

Alayne McGregor

The Centretown BUZZ is back in print this month! If you see one of our delivery volunteers in your neighbourhood this weekend, please thank them for delivering in the cold and snow.

Missed us last month? Our January issue was online-only because of the health emergency. But you can still check it out at centretownbuzz.com. Learn more about city snow clearing, monster skyscrapers, ghost hotels, Cycle Salvation, and the people who have been brightening this area and our lives.

As I was putting this issue to bed, I learned that the City of Ottawa was reviewing its sidewalk design standards. This is an issue dear to my heart: I was one of a group who pushed for better sidewalk designs after amalgamation.

I had become really tired of wet feet caused by the ponds of water that seemed to accumulate on sidewalks every time they dipped for a driveway. And when that water froze, it was even worse: a series of treacherously icy patches that were difficult to navigate, especially since the sidewalk was sloped in three different directions.

It also seemed ridiculous to me that driveways should have priority over pedestrians on sidewalks. Most residential driveways are only used a few times a day, while people are walking on sidewalks all the time.

So when my street was scheduled for a complete reconstruction, we started pushing for a "flat" design as is used in Toronto. It's worked out well on my street and made my walks much more pleasant. I also heard from a friend who regularly uses a wheelchair that the flat sidewalks were much easier to navigate in a chair than those which frequently dip up and down.

Now Councillor Mathieu Fleury is pushing against the flat design, saying it reduces the amount of space in which to walk. Surely that concern would be better addressed by expanding the total sidewalk width and maybe adding a boulevard?

If you have opinions on this, you have until the 16th to notify the city (see p. 1). It should be an interesting debate.

Centretown Ottawa Counselling Practice Dr. Andrew C. Watson, BA (psych), M.D., CCFP

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Skyline: The tortuous path of a development site

Was it worth the wait?

Robert Smythe

Last month, *The BUZZ* exposed the vagaries of the city's Landmark Buildings Policy which permits new developments of seemingly unlimited heights to be shoehorned into low-rise areas, in our story about 267 O'Connor.

This month, we explore a project that actually respects the overall intentions of the Official Plan.

The Richcraft Group of Companies proposes to build two residential towers atop a podium on back-to-back Lisgar and Nepean lots east of Bank Street. These adjoining properties have been surface parking lots for almost 60 years (see accompanying historic photos). The Centretown Heritage Conservation District is situated to the south and the downtown office district sits to the north.

Complicated history

This site's zoning history is quite complex. In the early 1960s, when the area was still covered by wood-framed houses, the city's first zoning bylaw (AZ-64) contemplated replacing these blocks of Lisgar and Nepean with office towers and high-rise apartments.

With the adoption of the original Centretown Plan in 1976, commercial or office uses were prohibited.

Any new apartment building would be limited to a maximum height of 12 storeys and a total floor area of no more than three times site coverage.

What was known as a technical anomaly—that is, a mistake—crept into the zoning bylaw in 1998 when the Centretown Plan was updated. The Lisgar Street half of the property permitted a maximum density (three times lot size) but no specified height limit. The rest of the land—the Nepean Street lot—was zoned for a maximum height (i.e., 12 storeys) but with no density limit. This confusion was to have serious consequences in the following years.

Catalyst for overhauling Centretown plan

Seizing on the discrepancy, developers successfully argued that they should be subject to neither height nor density limits. The glitch became the catalyst for the Centretown Community Design Plan (CDP 2007-12), which started out as a correction to this problem and metastasized into a complete overhaul of the entire neighbourhood plan.

The new Centretown CDP reclassified the two-block-wide swath, including this site south of the Central Area, as an apartment neighbourhood where towers of

up to 27 storeys are allowed. This is the document that dictates what can be built on the land assemblies in this district.

The plan has ruled that “the CDP encourages larger scale developments within the apartment neighbourhood designation, specifically on underutilized sites (large surface parking lots)” by stating that “[c]ompatible intensification is encouraged and where appropriate buildings can be as tall as 27 storeys.”

However, this is only a broad policy direction. The old underlying zoning of 12 storeys remains in place so that a public benefits agreement, negotiated under Section 37 of the Planning Act, can be implemented in exchange for the upzoning.

Jenga-style towers

It's the height increase proposed for the Lisgar portion of the property, along with a request for various set-back reductions from the lot lines and between the towers, that is the subject of the current application for a zoning bylaw amendment. Both are likely to be approved because they fall within the general intent of the Official Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement encouraging greater density, both of which form the senior governing legislation.

If the two towers' height



Views of the proposed development at 176 Nepean and 307 Lisgar Streets. Will these be the city's first Jenga towers? (City of Ottawa Development Application files)

and mass are more or less in conformity with the rules, what of their urban design? To begin with, because this site doesn't have three street frontages, they are not eligible for consideration under the Landmark Buildings Policy.

From the applicant's planning consultant's report, we read that “architecturally they are striking expressions that will be seen as positive additions to the Ottawa skyline.” And that the heights “place them as part of the high-rise district of downtown Ottawa” with the three-storey podium “re-

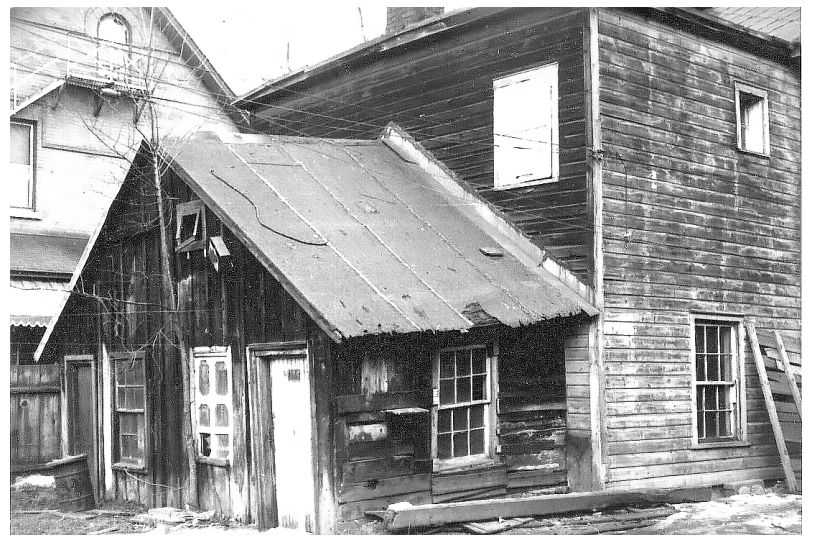
ducing massing impacts for neighbouring residents.” The study also describes the project as both “stark” and “creative.” Finally, it is held to be non-interfering with any important “view planes,” such as the distant views of the Parliament Buildings.

Of course, it must be remembered that, as is the case in all development applications to the city, these design analyses are opinions bought and paid for by the owner. Whether the veneering of the lower three floors with a layer of brick “shows respect and [is] sensitive to

neighbouring older buildings and the streetscape” may be debatable to some. It is the standard ploy for architects trying to fit tall buildings into historic communities.

The rest of the project is certainly distinctive—a watered-down version of the Jenga-style towers now seen in other North American cities such as Toronto. It's by Graziani + Corazza Architects Inc. of Mississauga. This may be a refreshing departure for Ottawa.

More information: devapps.ottawa.ca/en/applications/_BA9D17/details



Some of the old houses that once sat on the Lisgar/Nepean site. They were documented by the City of Ottawa's Urban Renewal Department in 1962-63, just prior to their demolition for interim use as parking lots while awaiting redevelopment. It has taken almost 60 years for this to happen. (City of Ottawa Archives)

Rochesterville redux

cont from p. 1

The new building will include units from bachelors to four-bedrooms. “Unless you protect against it, when you go to elevated buildings and higher density, the general default is to go to more singles and two-bedroom units. We wanted to make sure that we brought as many family units back to that community as we had, and ideally more. And our plans will have more family units when we're done, and more kids in the neighbourhood than we had before.”

There will also be barrier-free units for the disabled and 36 units reserved for seniors.

Youdale said the ultimate development of both sides of Gladstone Avenue will be mixed-income and mixed-use. However, 811 Gladstone will be all affordable, ranging from rent geared to income to mid-range affordable. The tenants who had been living in the former townhouses will have pri-

ority for places in the new buildings, he said.

OCH's approach was to acknowledge that it will be owning these buildings for a very long time, he said. “So from that perspective, it's a priority for us to make sure these buildings are sustainable long into the future.”

811 Gladstone was designed to meet the high building efficiency standards set by the Passive House Institute of the United States. What that means is that each apartment will only cost \$100 to \$150 a year to heat [with natural gas], versus what could be four or five times that. “We know that utilities really affect the affordability for the tenant. So our ability to control those really helps in creating long-term sustainability.

“What you end up with is a super-insulated building with state-of-the-art heat recovery on fresh air, and high-efficiency boiler systems. So you're really minimizing the total amount of heating required and ensuring that whatever heat you do provide is as efficient as possible.”

The Passive House design avoids problems with mold or

condensation by providing proper ventilation, he said. It ensures “there's more than adequate ventilation—but you do heat recovery on that. It's a very well-engineered system.”

OCH recently received an award for 1290 Coldrey Avenue, which was its first mixed-use Passive House. From that project, Youdale said, they learned that one of the bigger challenges of Passive House is making sure “that it's able to deal with the hottest days in the summer and maintaining tenant comfort at those times.”

The development will carry on “the heritage of that neighbourhood. It used to be called Rochesterville, and it was always an area that had housing for the working poor. With the expropriation, that disappeared obviously, but we're now able to put it back in. Here we are half a century later and there's an opportunity to breathe new life into it and get another 50 or 60 years, hopefully, of affordable housing in that same neighbourhood.”

Learn lots more about this project in a longer story at centretownbuzz.com

After Pressed closure, Oat Couture plans to bring the music back

Victoria Welland

November BUZZ.)

Oat Couture has opened a second location in the former Pressed Cafe. The new owner, Brian Montgomery, hopes to continue that venue's live music culture and community spirit.

Pressed provided a warm and welcoming environment for Ottawa's artistic community, according to Noah Pacheco, a 24-year-old local musician who launched his second studio album there last February. "One thing I really liked about Pressed was the inclusivity of it all," said Pacheco. "There was always a safe space where you feel like family."

Like many local cafes and live music venues, COVID-19 created financial strain for Pressed. After trying to adapt with different offerings, the Gladstone Avenue cafe closed in October 2020 (see the article in the

Oat Couture opened its first cafe in Old Ottawa South in 2018. Its menu offers sweet and savoury dishes primarily based on oatmeal and oats, plus coffee and tea.

Cafe owner Montgomery was looking to expand to a second location before the pandemic began. When Pressed went up for sale, he saw the advantages it could offer, including a thriving neighbourhood, a larger space and a performance area.

"We loved the stage and the room and saw the possibilities," said Montgomery. He plans to make live music a central part of the space, with a focus on local musicians. There will be opportunities for casual daytime acts as well as shows in the evening, when Oat Couture turns into Montgomery Scotch Lounge.

He said he hoped to create a fun and laid-back envi-

ronment, featuring folk, jazz, Canadiana, gospel and country acts. "There's so much talent. Local music is what we're looking for. I think there's a real demand for that." The venue will continue with open mic nights and will also allow musicians to use their stage for rehearsal space.

Under the current pandemic restrictions, Oat Couture is offering delivery or pickup on Uber Eats and SkipTheDishes. In the coming weeks, they will set up an on-site payment system and hope to have indoor dining and live entertainment as soon as possible, Montgomery said.

"We're in it for the food, we're in it for the music. We don't just want 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock shows. This should be a place where you can come . . . to at 4 p.m. on a weekday in the summer or spring and have a drink and listen to some live music."



Oat Couture is remodelling the former Pressed Cafe at 750 Gladstone.

VICTORIA WELLAND/THE BUZZ

Somerset Ward: reclaiming our public spaces

Catherine McKenney

If you live or travel in many parts of Somerset Ward, you may have noticed some changes over the past few months.

The speed limit in many neighbourhoods has been reduced from 50km/hr to

30km/hr. In fact, almost all of Somerset Ward residential streets west of Lyon have had the speed limit reduced under the gateway speed zones program introduced in 2018. Next year, most of the ward east of Elgin Street will also have their speed limits reduced.

The program gives councillors the opportunity to pick one neighbourhood each year for local speed reductions. Councillors can also pay for additional zones through their annual temporary traffic calming budget.

Why is this reduction important?

Studies—many from all over the world—have shown that reduced speeds are essential to saving lives. One study, released just a year ago by BMC Public Health, looked at the number of pedestrian-vehicle collisions in Toronto and the effect of speed on survival. They found that simply changing speed limits from 40 km/h to 30 km/h reduced the number of pedestrians hit by cars by 28 percent. More importantly, this change also reduced the number of major injuries and fatalities by a whopping 67 percent. At 50km/h, a car needs nearly 28m to stop. But at 30km/h it needs less than half that—only 13.3m.

Residents across Somerset Ward have told me that we must make our streets safer for everyone and I agree. In too many places, it's dangerous to cross the street with or without a traffic light. I believe it's essential to reclaim these public spaces for everyone.

This commitment to public safety also saw street closures last year for neighbour-



New 30km/h speed zones on Centretown streets.

CHARLES AKBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

hood safety. This included some residential streets, a block on Somerset Street West east of Bank and others on Frank and Flora Streets, which also supported the small businesses on these streets. Bank Street was opened up to pedestrians on Saturdays and Queen Elizabeth Drive was closed to motor vehicles, which was coordinated with the National Capital Commission.

I will continue to work with you to see more of our neighbourhoods made safer in the future through reduced speed limits and the imple-

mentation of traffic calming measures.

When it comes to our roads, safety and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists must come first. There is much more to do. But starting with reduced speeds and opening up our streets to people are good beginnings.

Of course, ensuring that our streets are built with the highest level of service for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable users in the first place is the ultimate solution to providing safe transit for all users in our city.

Sidewalk standards review

cont from p 1

This creates a consistent surface for walking, which can also be cleared of snow and ice more uniformly.

The ramps also visually separate space for foot traffic from space for vehicles on the road.

On the other hand, motorists need to enter ramped driveways more slowly because of the steeper slope. Wheelchair users may have more difficulty entering a sidewalk at a driveway because of the gradient (entering at an intersection is not affected).

It's awkward to walk or push a stroller or other wheeled device over the ramped section beside the street, especially when slippery. When the overall sidewalk is narrow, this may not leave enough space to easily walk two abreast on the remaining flat section.

For more information, see the series of blog posts by Charles Akben-Marchand in 2014 about these standards, starting with centretown.blogspot.com/2014/01/peds-on-weds-toronto-style-sidewalks.html

The city review page is at <https://ottawa.ca/en/city-hall/public-engagement/projects/sidewalk-standards>



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The City of Ottawa is reviewing its Winter Maintenance Quality Standards, with a focus on:

- Residential roads
- Multi-use pathways
- Cycling pathways
- Sidewalks

Virtual consultations
January 25, 26, 27 and 28

Survey available
January 18 to February 19

Join the discussion
at engage.ottawa.ca/wmq

Accessible formats
and communication supports
are available, upon request.

2020-094_03

Planet of the Scapes: healthy balances



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

Pearl Pirie

Are we all over making sourdough yet? Have all your yeast pets died?

How about making loaves of dough and then baking when you're ready? After two to three days in the fridge, they take on a sourdough texture.

Honestly, I am more a baker than a cook. I would rather make bread and desserts than anything. Unfortunately, for health we have to eat more broadly than bread and cheese. Bah! According to guides on lowering blood pressure, we should cut sugar and carbs and up the protein. As well as, you know, getting cardio exercise for at least three hours a week. Not enough to walk about. Double-bah!

Side Dish: Almost Sourdough Bread

- Dry:
- 400g (3 cups) unbleached white flour
 - 400g (3 cups) whole wheat flour
 - 2 1/2 tsp salt
 - 1 tsp yeast

- Wet:
- 2 2/3 to 3 cups tap water (depending on the ambient humidity)

Mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl and make a hollow in the centre. Add water and mix until all flour is combined. It will be a fairly wet, but not soupy dough.

Cover with a metal lid and let rise 12-18 hours at room temperature. When doubled, remove from the bowl and shape into two or three balls in separate bowls, adding flour to prevent sticking. Let rise for one to two hours, until poking the ball keeps the indent. Put the dough you won't cook now tightly sealed in the fridge.

At 475°F (250°C), preheat an eight to 10-

inch diameter cast iron pan for 10 minutes or a ceramic casserole for 30 minutes. Put in one dough ball and cover with foil. Let bake 30 minutes, then remove the cover and bake until chestnut brown, about 15 minutes more. Invert from the pan and let sit for 15-30 minutes until the crackling stops.

Main Dish: Egg Bombe (serves 2)

Picture the structure of a chocolate bombe cake. Now, substitute protein.

No, no, wait! It's better than it sounds. It is a fast snack or main dish with a fancy look.

- 2 eggs
- 1-inch square of cheese

Reheat:

- 4-5 Tbsp refried beans
- 1 small sweet potato, baked

Mix:

- 1 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 1/2 tsp Keene's hot mustard
- 1/2 Tbsp nutritional yeast

Garnish:

- salsa or pickled hot peppers



PEARL PIRIE/THE BUZZ

Place a slice of sweet potato as your base. Add a dollop of mayo mix.

Beat each egg in its own small bowl. The bowl should be at least as wide as the sweet potato piece. Top the egg with grated cheese. Microwave for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes.

Top each sweet potato with a mound of refried beans. Invert each egg on top of a pile to cover it. Depending on the size of your bowl it may top it, or cover it. Top it with a button of garnish for colour.

Pearl Pirie's fourth poetry collection, footlights is getting good reviews! Get your copy: www.radiantpress.ca/shop/footlights Keep staying home, washing your hands, phones and masks. Get the vaccine when you can. Coming in April: online classes on editing at www.pearlpirie.com/classes

ACORN calls for affordable LeBreton

Alayne McGregor

The rebuilding of LeBreton Flats must include housing, childcare, and jobs for those living in the surrounding neighbourhoods, according to ACORN Ottawa.

The organization of low-to moderate-income families released a report in January demanding specific benefits for local residents, based on a survey it conducted in the area around the Flats starting in late 2019.

Residents were asked what should be included in the development of the Flats. Of the 302 responses, some were from in-person interviews in a door-to-door campaign in Centretown, Little Italy, Chinatown, Mechanicsville, and Hintonburg, while others were filled on the web or over the phone. Almost 80 percent of respondents were renters and 17 percent homeowners.

LeBreton Flats was once a working-class neighbourhood of more than 2,800 people, before it was expropriated by the federal government in the early 1960s. ACORN argues that the National Capital Commission (NCC), which is now overseeing the redevelopment of the Flats, has a responsibility to these communities, not developers.

The NCC is about to finalize its master concept

plan to develop the remainder of the 29-hectare area. The process will be in four stages, starting with the area nearest the future Ottawa Central Library.

Blaine Cameron, the chair of ACORN Ottawa, said they wanted to ensure that the needs and priorities of their members and all low-income people were represented in that process.

"Given that we're in the middle of a housing crisis in this city, we regard this development with great interest as something that could help alleviate that crisis through more affordable housing, and act as a model of what a vibrant and inclusive neighbourhood can look like."

The top needs identified by residents were affordable housing, childcare spaces, and local hiring, with 92 to 93 percent support. Other concerns included a community centre/library (26 percent); food security/creation of a grocery store (19 percent); greenspace (19 percent); social enterprises and small, local businesses (11 percent); and accessible, pedestrian-friendly transit (7 percent).

ACORN Ottawa is asking that the benefits be enshrined in a community benefit agreement (CBA). A CBA is a legally enforceable contract signed by community groups and by a private

developer or government agency that results from negotiations to garner community support for the project.

Based on the survey, the group is asking that 35 percent of the housing on the Flats be affordable, defined as 30 percent of one's income, in perpetuity. Affordable housing should be provided in each phase of the development, with a mix of income levels in each block and with options for families and the disabled as well as singles.

It's also asking for affordable retail, a grocery store, a community hub, childcare, health services, and public wi-fi in the redeveloped Flats.

The jobs created in rebuilding the Flats should offer opportunities to historically disadvantaged communities, and a percentage of the jobs should go to those living in the surrounding neighbourhoods, it says.

The report quoted 63-year-old Michel Bigras, whose family had to leave Duke Street because of the expropriation.

"LeBreton Flats was promised to the people who lived there in the past ... now I would like to see mixed communities, working class people living alongside people living every walk of life. To do that, we need to see the NCC commit to more affordable housing."



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\$2.5M of photo radar fines will subsidize road safety programs

Alayne McGregor

Ottawa speeders contributed more than \$2.5 million to city road safety programs in under six months in 2020.

The city's new Automated Speed Enforcement (photo radar) cameras began operating in eight locations—none in central Ottawa—starting July 13. Two cameras were fixed and two rotated among the other six locations.

The city placed the cam-

eras in designated community safety zones and posted signs warning motorists they were in operation. Motorists photographed breaking the speed limit received tickets in the mail.

The total raised in 2020 was \$2,559,921.50; the two fixed cameras raised more than \$500,000 each.

Mayor Jim Watson said that the cameras have also caused motorists to slow down. "Staff have also observed a reduction in operating speeds and greater

compliance with the posted speed limits—which is the kind of behavioural changes we want to see from drivers as part of this program."

All of the pilot program locations were in the suburbs. In October 2019, Councillor Catherine McKenney and the Dalhousie Community Association advocated for a camera at Booth Street and Gladstone Avenue because of speeding and high truck traffic in that area. The location is by St. Anthony's School and near day cares, churches, and housing.

The money raised by this pilot program is designated for the city's [Strategic Road Safety Action Plan](#).

In 2020, that plan added no-right-turn-on-red restrictions, fully protected left turn arrows, roundabouts, and mid-block pedestrian signals; expanded the Walking School Bus program and cycling safety courses; and eliminated Red Reverts where pathways crossed roads, among many other initiatives.

In 2021, all eight locations will have fixed cameras.

City staff will report to council on a permanent speed camera program in mid-2021.

Expect more e-scooters downtown in 2021

Alayne McGregor

Expect to see even more e-scooters back in Centretown this summer. A second year of the contentious pilot program was unanimously approved by the city's Transportation Committee on February 3, with double the number of scooters.

This was despite safety concerns raised by local residents and councillors.

The city's e-scooter program manager, Kathleen Wilker, told the committee that 600 e-scooters were deployed in Ottawa in 2020 by three companies. More than 72,720 unique riders made more than 238,000 rides. However, those stats also show that most people were riding the scooters for recreation, not transportation. Only two percent of e-scooter trips connected with transit stations. Weekends (3200 trips on average) were more popular than weekdays (2700).

One of the reasons for the pilot was to replace car trips. Wilker noted that, of the 1856 riders who responded to a city rider-only survey, 46 percent reported driving less, and 33 percent reported travelling less as a car passenger.

However, only 2.5 percent of riders filled out that survey. In a later public survey, the most popular (76 percent) reason for renting an e-scooter was "fun or leisure."

The primary complaints about the scooters were sidewalk riding and scooters not parked correctly, with 237 complaints received. Elgin,

Bank, and Preston Streets were identified as high-complaint areas.

The city's Accessibility Advisory Committee said the city must create a single-step enforcement mechanism for the removal of improperly parked e-scooters.

"Encountering a barrier like an improperly parked e-scooter is demoralizing, frustrating, and sends a signal that disability is not welcomed or valued in Ottawa."

In the general survey, a clear majority of both riders and non-riders were dissatisfied with the process for reporting misparked scooters. "Although some residents were impressed with the providers' fast response time, many were disappointed that the burden of reporting misparked e-scooters was placed on residents who were not responsible for this behaviour," the staff report said.

In response, Wilker said the city would be adding more parking zones for scooters besides the furniture zone of sidewalks; require e-scooter apps to be capable of reporting misparked scooters directly to providers; increase its own education of riders and require providers to increase theirs; and require providers to issue warnings and then remove riders for parking violations. Many of these had been implemented by providers in 2020.

Councillor Catherine McKenney said they were not yet sure if they supported the continuation of the pilot,

because of concerns raised by the visually impaired about scooters being ridden on or blocking sidewalks. They said it was incumbent on the providers to find ways to prevent riding on sidewalks.

The e-scooter program was supported by OCOBIA, the umbrella association of Ottawa business improvement areas, because scooters allowed customers to access mainstreet businesses without needing parking.

For 2021, scooters could be deployed as early as April 1, contingent on weather, the completion of spring street sweeping operations, and the procurement process, and ending as late as November 30. The city will allow up to three operators. Since more than the original three have expressed interest, it will require all operators to compete for a spot.

Providers will be evaluated on criteria including their safety record, outreach/education plans, their pricing structure, innovation, and effective issues management experience.

The fleet size would be at least doubled, to between 1200 and 1500 scooters. To increase their fleet, scooter providers will have to deploy them over an increased central area "to mitigate against the risk of over supply, which could lead to sidewalk clutter."

City Council was to consider the program on Feb. 10. *Find out more in a longer version of this story on centretownbuzz.com.*



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Centretown Community Association report



Mindy Sichel is the new CCA president.

Jack Hanna

New president

Mindy Sichel was elected as the new president of the association at the January AGM.

Sichel has served on the CCA's board for two years and been active on its planning committee. She has worked to protect heritage buildings and big trees, and to secure family-sized housing units in new developments. At the start of the pandemic, when most toilets were closed to the public, she advocated to get portapotties set up in Centretown.

She is a technology product manager for tech companies and the federal government. She has helped to develop the CCA's new website, and she and her 10-year-

old son deliver *The Centretown BUZZ* each month.

Sichel describes herself as a feminist and a progressive. Her priorities include people-and-family-friendly development, affordable housing, and safer walking and cycling, as well as diversity and inclusion.

The other candidate for president was Charlie Brenchley, a union communications officer and member of the board of the Centretown Community Health Centre.

The AGM thanked outgoing President Shawn Barber for all his hard work leading the CCA over the last two years.

New and returning directors

Three new members were elected to the CCA's Board of Directors. Beth Ayres, a federal public servant, helped launch the

CCA's Centretown Support Network and is lead gardener for the volunteers gardening in St. Luke's Park. Rose Clancey helped create Foundations and Pathways Ottawa. Ward Verschaeve is a Carleton University business student.

Three CCA directors were also re-elected at the AGM: Natale Dankotuwage, Stuart MacKay, and Alice Nakanishi. Four directors will continue their two-year terms on the board: Jack Hanna, Mary Huang, Jerry Kovaes and Larissa Schieven.

The CCA's AGM Zoom meeting was attended by 140 people. The online election saw 196 ballots cast.

City consults on community safety

The province has told cities to develop a community safety plan and the city is conducting public consultations.

In late February, public meetings will be held on gender-based violence and violence against women; housing (including affordable, accessible and supportive housing, wait lists and homelessness); and integrated and simpler systems (to make city government more streamlined and collaborative).

For the schedule of public meetings and to sign up, search for "CSWB Eventbrite."

MPP report: building a mass movement for disability rights

Joel Harden

I recently received heartfelt pleas from people with disabilities on social media. They were upset that the province of Ontario had announced emergency help for equine (i.e., horse, mule, donkey, etc.) businesses, while people with disabilities are languishing on poverty incomes during COVID-19 as their costs increase.

I was furious and pledged to raise hell. But something seemed wrong. Having been raised in a rural home, I had heard of stables with therapeutic riding programs for people with disabilities. What equine businesses were getting this help? Were we lashing out against allies? So, I inquired further and got this reply from a family friend:

"... these subsidies aren't for people's pets. [T]hese subsidies are for horses that are used in lesson programs ... riding programs have been shut down for a long time, so people are having to feed and care for animals that are essential to their business but who aren't, at the moment, bringing in any income through their work in the school ... So, while we should be paying out more to people on ODSP, I also think supporting small businesses

in COVID is important."

The doubt I had now took shape. Many folks applying to the equine hardship program were supporters of disability rights and are in need of help. They either ran therapeutic riding programs or supported people who did. We needed an alliance here.

I called Amanda Holt, another horse owner. I explained the plight of disabled Ontarians and asked her to write something we could share. She wrote:

"I take strength from my horses when I connect with them. And I hope that you, the strong equestrians of Ontario, will use that strength to raise your voices for those who need our support now. If you own a horse, love a horse, ride/drive a horse, or just like looking at these gorgeous animals, raise your voices in gratitude for what we have and in concern for those who need immediate assistance."

I then called Jennifer Semach, co-owner of Walkabout Farms Therapeutic Riding Association in Minden Hills, Ontario. I shared Amanda's statement with her and asked if she would consider one as well. Within the hour, Jennifer offered this:

"Many wonderful people have been tagging me in reference to the equine hard-

ship program being offered by our provincial government. I am grateful to have the opportunity and option to apply; however, we won't be and this is why: social isolation, poverty and essential programming cancellation due to COVID-19 have impacted those living on ODSP and children with disabilities in the worst way.

"These families need our government to immediately provide meaningful financial aid to those who are hardest hit in this crisis. The isolation, financial constraints, limited support [are] magnified, especially for those with permanent disabilities and the families that have lost respite care for ... loved ones during the COVID-19 crisis."

As we work for a more enabling province, it's worth remembering our allies are everywhere. We need a broad alliance for action and the Ford government must feel that pressure.

That's why I'm asking all horse lovers to jump on social media and follow Amanda and Jennifer's lead. Use #ODSPoverty so your words and pictures are seen. We need a mass movement for disability rights and you can be part of that movement.

Tell Premier Ford to raise ODSP rates now.

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What's on(line) this month in Ottawa and beyond



A fraught scene from the new National Film Board short documentary, *Martha*.

Tony Wohlfarth

This month, the National Capital Commission (NCC) opened the Rideau Canal Skateway, while Winterlude and events marking Black History Month have become virtual.

Black History Month

Events marking Black History Month are available online. *BUZZ* readers can check out the website for details at: www.blackhistoryottawa.com/

On February 18, a webcast will highlight celebrated Canadian author Desmond Cole. Cole is an award-winning author (*The Skin We're*

In) and journalist. Registration is free but booking in advance is required at: <https://www.historymuseum.ca/event/an-evening-with-desmond-cole/>. The webcast begins at 7 p.m.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Events marking the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau (January 27) were marked online. They are available for viewing at: <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/holocaust-remembranceday>

Watch new NFB short documentary

The National Film Board of Canada has released a

new 21-minute documentary film, *Martha*. *Martha* is a 90-year-old survivor of Auschwitz and the matriarch of three generations of family.

In this film, she visits a holocaust museum with her nephew and is heartbroken to learn how her own mother died. Directed by Daniel Schubert, *Martha* can be streamed at: <https://www.nfb.ca/film/martha/>

National Arts Centre (NAC)

Many performances at the NAC are being live streamed this month including a Valentine's Day performance by Jill Barber on February 14, Dominique Fils-Aimé on February 19, and the Indigenious Book Club on Febru-

ary 24.

Tickets and more details are available at: <https://nac-cna.ca/en/calendar/list/2021/02>

Canadian Museum of History

The Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau reopened on February 10.

Reservations are required to visit the site at: <https://www.historymuseum.ca/>. Open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

Family Day

Family Day, February 15, coincides with the last weekend of Winterlude.

For a list of activities, check out: www.savvymom.ca/article/things-to-do-over-the-family-day-long-week-end-in-ottawa/

Sundance 2021

The Sundance Film Festival is the first major festival of the year. Held in Park City, Utah, it has pivoted this year to an online format due to the pandemic. I have been holed up this month watching movies from Sundance.

CODA

CODA had its world premiere at the 2021 Sundance Festival, where it won four of the top awards: the Audience

Award, Directing Award (for Sian Heder, pictured here), the Grand Jury Prize and the Best Ensemble Cast.



Sian Heder won the Directing Award for *CODA* at Sundance.

It's a coming-of-age story about a deaf fishing family in rural Massachusetts and is a remake of a 2014 French film, *La Famille Belier*.

What makes *CODA* special is that most of the cast is deaf. The British-born actress Emilia Jones, who

performs the lead role of Ruby Rossi, learned American Sign Language (ASL) to play the role. Heder accepted her awards from home speaking in ASL.

Film buffs can watch an interview with the cast and crew of *CODA* at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyjuNFTiPiU> (18 min. long)

Valentine's Day 2021

Sunday, February 14 marks a historic first anniversary of the pandemic.

Chocolate lovers should get their orders in early at: stubbychocolatesottawa.com/

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film, arts and entertainment writer. He participated in the online Sundance Film Festival month and the NAC virtual performance by Saskatchewan's own Connie Kaldor on January 30, courtesy of the NAC.

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