



Hundreds showed up for Earth Day, 8



How do we preserve Centretown's trees? 12

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ



Bright new residents showed up on Somerset Street West last month. The Chinatown BIA brought in these Chinese-style yellow deer and other sculptures and selfie stations as part of a placemaking and revitalization project to enhance Chinatown as a destination for tourism, dining, shopping, and culture appreciation. The project was funded by the federal Tourism Relief Fund Program. BIA Executive Director Yukang Li said they have been well received by the public.

CHARLES AKBEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ

Centretowners more at risk for bus cancellations

Alayne McGregor

A recent “State of the Transit 2022” report showed that the majority of OC Transpo bus routes with high numbers of cancelled trips served Centretown.

The report, by Justin Kelly of the website [Occasional Transport](#), was based on trip cancellation tweets by OC Transpo and user reports. It showed that, of the 12 routes which had the most cancelled trips in 2022, seven were local routes in Centretown.

These included major routes like the 6 (890 cancelled trips), 7 (837 trips), 11 (740 trips), 14 (732 trips), 85 (848 trips), and Line 2 replacement buses (1200 trips).

If you ever stood on Bank Street wondering where your scheduled bus went, you now know you were not alone.

Although 2022 was a “record year” for trip cancellations, the report said, the data for the last four years was similar. Routes 2, 6, 7, 85, 11, and

14 were in the top 10 for cancellations from 2019-22, with routes 2 and 6 the first and second highest respectively.

“Downtown actually gets pretty hosed because those are all local routes and those are the first to get cancelled. The commuter buses that drop people downtown are the last to get cancelled,” Kelly said.

The report emphasizes that the effect of trip cancellations can be worse than just waiting an extra 15 minutes. It can cascade into much longer as buses following cancelled trips become too full to accept passengers. And what makes the situation worse is lack of communication from OC Transpo, leading to “ghost buses.”

“At least tell people, ‘Don’t go standing out there. That bus isn’t coming.’ Give them the information to make decisions. Reliability is the number one problem,” Kelly said.

Kelly also ran a [Transit Satisfaction Survey](#) on his website from February to April, similar to one run by

OC Transpo. It received 517 responses, with respondents particularly upset at bus reliability and unreasonably long trips by transit compared to cars. More than three-quarters said that transit service was not usually reliable.

The results were a complete thumbs-down for OC Transpo. Almost two-thirds said it was not easy to get information about bus services; 87 percent said it was not easy to find out how well the buses were running.

The Ontario Health Coalition is running a citizen-led, province-wide referendum on hospital privatization this month.

You can vote online and in person in Ottawa on the question: “Do you want our public hospital services to be privatized to for-profit hospitals and clinics?” Voting ends Saturday, May 27.

In-person voting locations will include the Happy Goat coffee shop on Elgin Street and Centretown United Church at 507 Bank Street, as well a table in the Great Glebe

More than half found bus routes inconvenient; almost 80 percent could not easily find an alternative route if there were problems. More than two-thirds said the bus did not get them to their destination in good time. More than half said it was difficult to sort out problems or complaints.

While security, comfort, cleanliness, and pollution reduction got better marks, the overall satisfaction rating for bus service in Ottawa was

continued on page 6 “Transit”

Cars return to Wellington
So did the
“Freedom convoy”

Alayne McGregor

After a war of letters between a federal cabinet minister and Ottawa’s mayor, the city allowed motor vehicles back on Wellington Street in front of Parliament Hill in time for the evening rush hour on April 28.

Pro-“freedom convoy” and anti-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau protesters almost immediately showed up, and continued squatting on area sidewalks over the next weekend. Traffic continued unobstructed.

Wellington now has one traffic lane in each direction, plus turn lanes. A bike lane on each side is delimited by flex posts, except where the bike lane completely vanishes into a right-turn lane. Ottawa City Council voted for this design in February.

On April 4, Helena Jaczek, the federal Minister of Public Services and Procurement, wrote Mayor Sutcliffe asking to work with him on “the transfer of Wellington Street and Sparks Street into federal jurisdiction with the view to maintaining the closure of Wellington Street to private vehicles.” She assured him the city would be fairly compensated, and “efficient city operations” supported.

The transfer would allow reimagining “this space as Canada’s pre-eminent civic forum for celebration, mourning, and peaceful protest. ... As we have seen in other major capitals, shifting from vehicular traffic to pedestrianization can serve as a security feature, while creating vibrant public spaces that work for residents and businesses.”

continued on page 7 “Convoy”

Referendum set on hospital privatization

Alayne McGregor

Garage Sale. Other locations are to be confirmed; see [publichospitalvote.ca](#). Volunteers will also leaflet farmers markets, community events, shopping centres, and transit stations.

The referendum is in response to recent Ontario government plans to move more knee and hip replacements, MRI/CT scans, and cataract surgeries to privately run clinics instead of public hospitals. Ottawa was chosen as one of three communities for these trials. The government has just passed legislation ([Bill 60](#)) to fast-track the approval of licenses for private clinics.

The coalition noted that these plans were not

continued on page 5 “Referendum”

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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

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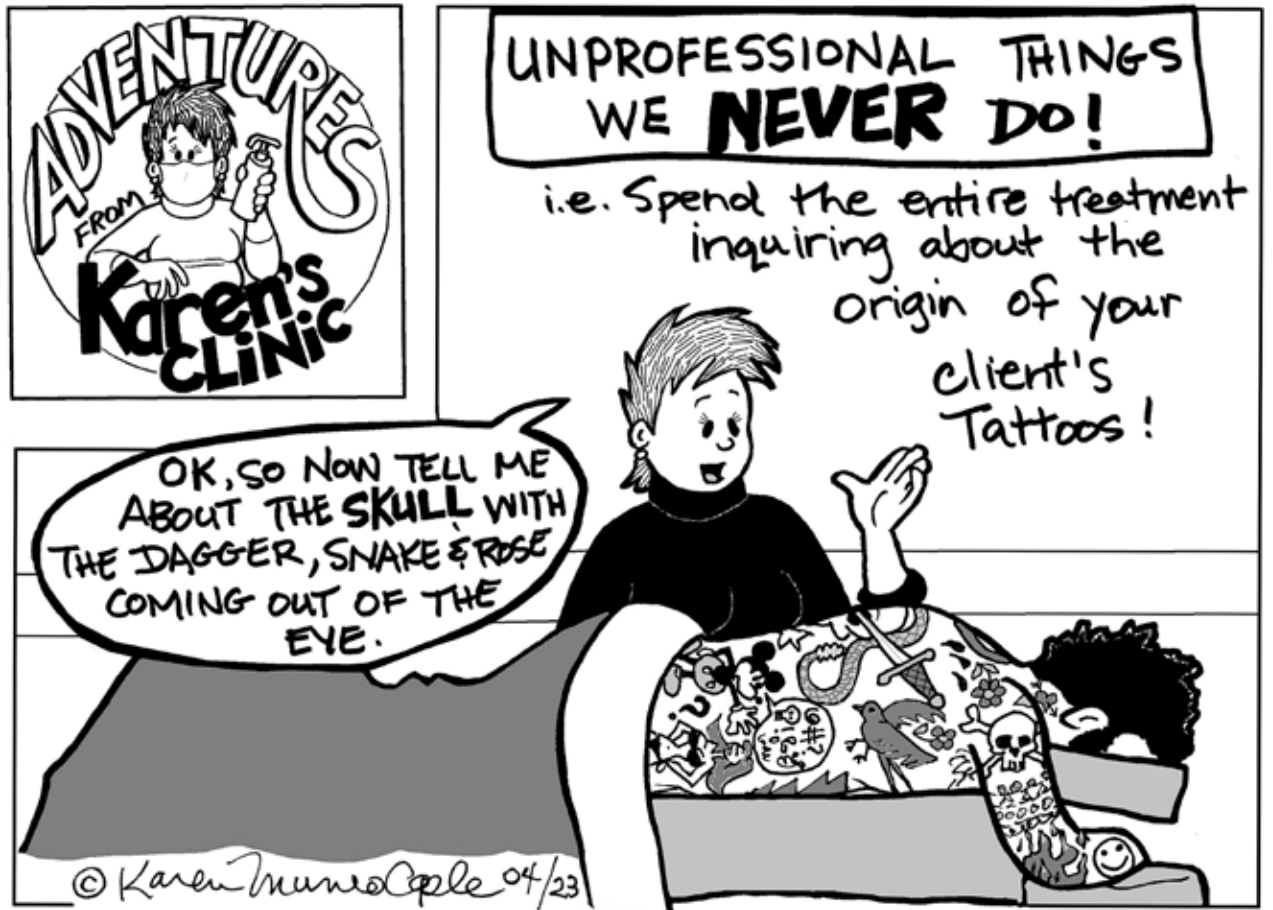
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Adventures from Karen's Clinic, by Karen Munro-Caple



New report calls for affordable city housing at Bayview Station, as part of 1,000 units each year

Alayne McGregor

A new report calls for a major city development on city lands near Bayview Station as one way to help address Ottawa's affordable housing crisis.

It also requests a major redefinition of the income definition of "affordable" and an annual target for the city of approving at least 1,000 non-profit affordable homes.

The report, *Our city starts with home: scaling up non-profit housing in Ottawa*, was presented to the city's Planning and Housing Committee on May 3. It was written by adjunct professor and housing researcher Carolyn Whitzman with policy consultant Melissa Goldstein on behalf of The Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa and The Starts with Home Coalition.

Statistics Canada estimates that one in eight Ottawa households are in core housing need: paying more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing and/or living in an overcrowded or uninhabitable unit. But the report says this underestimates the problem because it doesn't include the homeless, those in rooming houses or long-term care, or students. Nor does it account for suppressed demand for better housing.

At the same time, the report says, house prices and rents increased more than 20 percent from 2021 to 2022, shelters are full, and more people are sleeping on the streets.

"Fewer and fewer people can afford to live in this city, and far too many are on the edge of homelessness due to lack of affordability," said Alliance Executive Director Kaite Burkholder Harris.

Use government land for affordable housing, report says

It recommended that the city create purpose-built, non-profit, permanently affordable housing using three mechanisms:

- Leasing or selling government land at no cost to non-profit affordable housing providers or community land trusts
- Revising zoning to scale up affordable housing
- Fast-tracking non-profit affordable housing through development fee waivers, property tax exemptions, and rapid approvals

With tax exemptions, fee waivers, and rapid approval, it argued, affordable housing for moderate and median-income households can be provided without any additional subsidy.

"This housing would become 20-35 [percent] more affordable over time than private market rental."

For low-income households or those in precarious housing, "federal and provincial housing grants, financing, and subsidies can be layered on to deepen affordability."

Bayview should be a priority location for a large-scale

showcase affordable housing development, the report said. In that area, the city owns 8.4 hectares in two sites; the National Capital Commission owns an additional 2.3 hectares, now used as a parking lot. "Another six hectares, zoned for 30-storey buildings, is under private ownership on City Centre [Avenue], and currently comprises one 15-storey building, a warehouse style light industrial complex, and a very large parking lot."

Up to 12,000 homes, with excellent access to transit, could be built in that area, the report estimated, along with associated social infrastructure and amenities that could serve the whole city. As an example of what could be done, it suggested looking at the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood in Toronto, where 3,500 homes were created on a former rail shunting yard.

More generally, it called for affordable housing to be built on the several hundred parcels of land in Ottawa owned by municipal, federal, and provincial governments that have been identified as suitable for affordable and supportive housing development.

The city is now rewriting its zoning bylaw. The report recommended having the bylaw give special privileges to non-profit housing providers to build more units, bigger buildings, and be subject to less restrictive zoning requirements than the base zoning allows, as is done in cities like Portland and Austin. Recent provincial changes may restrict this, however.

Affordable rent definition skewed by high earners

Affordable rents are often defined as 30 percent of the median income for all Ottawans – but that value is skewed by a small number of high-income earners. [An Ottawa Community Foundation study](#) showed that the median income for the top 10 percent of earners in Ottawa was \$91,700, compared to \$31,100 for the remaining 90 percent.

The report instead recommended that affordable rents be defined as 30 percent of an individual household's before-tax income, in perpetuity.

At the Planning Committee meeting, Councillor Ariel Troster requested that staff provide information on the costs and resource requirements to end chronic homelessness in five rather than 10 years.

The committee asked staff to consider the report's recommendations when identifying programs and initiatives for the city's forthcoming submission to the federal Housing Accelerator Fund, when refreshing the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, and when planning other initiatives in support of the Municipal Housing Pledge.



Don Smith: a tireless activist who was always there when needed

Alayne McGregor

Don Smith, a long-time community activist and *BUZZ* volunteer, saw what needed doing and did it.

"He would easily pitch in," said *BUZZ* chair and distribution manager Archie Campbell. "I heard a story about Tommy Douglas – when Douglas was giving political speeches in church basements early in his career, he said he would always keep a very careful eye, after the meeting, on those who put away the chairs. Those he would then go up to and talk more seriously about helping out with election work.

"So Don was the guy who would put away the chairs after the meeting."

Smith died suddenly of natural causes in his home in the Des Jardins Co-op on Empress Street on April 21. He was 79. He is survived by two brothers, two sons, and three grandchildren.

At his celebration of life on May 6, more than 80 people showed up, including relatives and people he knew through his co-op, political campaigns, community organizing, *The BUZZ* – and English country dancing.

"In politics, there are some who get the limelight, and others who build the stage," said Ottawa Centre MPP Joel Harden.

"Don Smith was a stage builder and a first-class organizer at doing so. I never heard him complain or speak poorly of anyone. But I always saw him taking shifts in the campaign office late at night and pounding in lawn signs in all kinds of weather. Don was tireless, and he carried himself with a quiet dignity that set a powerful tone. I am shocked he is gone in person, but his example will never leave our hearts."

Smith grew up in north-western Ontario. His brother Ray told the celebration of life that their father died when Don was 13 and their family was poor. Don was a voracious reader and invented games for the other children to play from his books. In university in the 1960s, he encountered the activist Student Christian move-

ment which encouraged his sense of social responsibility and service.

In Thunder Bay, Smith worked as a journalist for the *Chronicle Journal*, and as a community developer and project manager. He was a constituency assistant for MP Iain Angus working on non-profit housing development, and helped start a housing co-op. From 1977 to 1982 he served as an alderman on Thunder Bay City Council.

From 1999 to 2013, he worked as house co-ordinator for the Russell Heights Community House in Ottawa's east end. He also was president of his housing co-op, and volunteered on many election campaigns, particularly for the NDP.

Smith supported his wife of 21 years, Mary Cheesebrough, through her fight with cancer ending in 1990. Later he rekindled an old friendship with renowned Ottawa anti-poverty activist Aline Akeson when she visited Thunder Bay on an organizing tour. They married and he moved to Ottawa in 1999. Akeson died in 2013.

For the last eight years, Don was in a relationship with Aurore Trahan. She said he "cared for humanity and wanted to make this world a better place. He had warned me that his mistress was politics, and that was a fair warning. Don's last advice to us would have been, 'Take care of the earth and vote NDP.'"

"He called himself an atheist. He was not sure that God existed, but I called him my gift from heaven. He was a bookaholic. He loved music, any kind of music, but was partial to folk festivals and country music."

He also loved contra dancing and English country dancing, and was out dancing the Saturday before he died. At the celebration of life, a fellow dancer said that Don danced with everyone because "a lot of us liked to dance with him." He would stay til the bitter end of every dance and clean up and sweep the floor and would be the last to leave, she said.

Shady Hassan, the cur-

rent board president of the Des Jardins Co-op, said Smith was a big act to follow. He first met Smith when he was unclogging a drain in the parking lot at 11 p.m. in November, spending 45 minutes with an ice pick and hose until it was all clear.

The co-op will name its library after Smith, he said: "he spent uncountable hours there."

Smith had started delivering *The BUZZ* around 2009. About three years ago, he stepped up to help drop off bundles of papers to other delivery volunteers as well as to larger high rises. Campbell said that Smith was particularly adept at reserving the most convenient Communauto cars for deliveries.

In the last two years, Smith and Campbell would drop off 70 bundles (of 100 papers each) on Thursdays, Smith and Eleanor Sawyer would do some door to door delivery on Friday, and then the three would do what was left over on Saturday. Smith kept thinking of creative ways to refine the system and make it more efficient, Campbell said, and it was getting to be a pleasurable exercise.

Robert Fox met Smith when Smith first moved to Ottawa because they were both organizing around anti-poverty issues, tenants' rights, and access to non-profit housing. They met socially through Akeson, and at meetings, rallies, vigils, protests, and marches.

"He was a very gentle person, a very generous person, but he was a fierce advocate for social justice. He was fearless in going forward and speaking to people whom he didn't know about issues and talking to them in a way that connected with their reality. He loved participating in campaigns and never missed an opportunity to encourage someone to get out and vote progressive."

At Russell Heights, he worked to build the community, Fox said. "He was not someone who had a big ego or was in the front of the room trying to steer the conversation. He was usually keeping out of the limelight but was

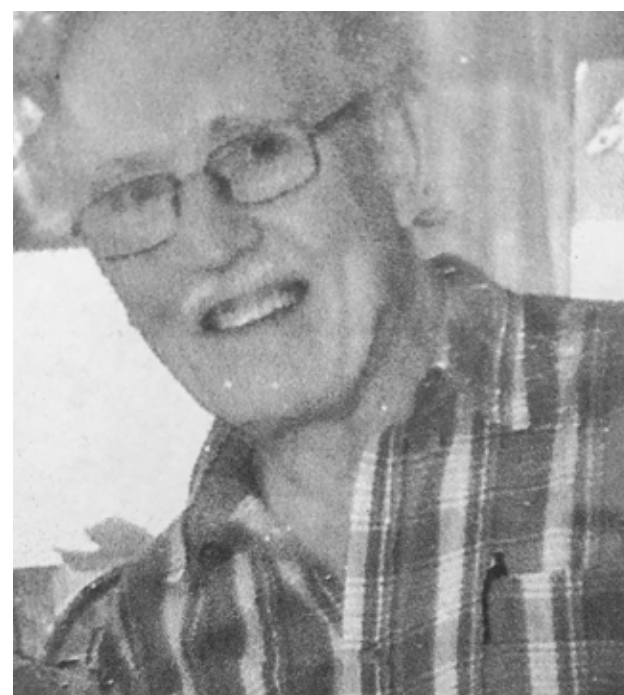
always playing a very active and important role bringing people together and organizing to make change.

"Some people insert their resume into their conversation. He never did that, because it was never about him. It was about you and it was about the work."

Catherine Boucher said that Smith worked on many campaigns to elect progressives and NDPers. He was a person that could be counted on for the unglamorous tasks after the election. "Taking down 1000 signs, often in November in the pouring rain, when everybody's gone back to work and bye-bye ... the people who come out on E-day +1 and 2 and 3 are the Good Samaritans of election campaigns and Don was one of those."

Ottawa activist Sam Hersh knew Smith through Horizon Ottawa and on campaign sign teams. He said Smith was very passionate about many issues. He knew a lot about housing policy and the history of progressive movements, and had been a member of the Waffle wing of the NDP. "He was a part of the long tradition of trying to make the NDP more left-wing."

Ottawa school board trustee Lyra Evans said Smith cared about poverty and economic issues and would say the NDP needed to do everything it could to



A B&W version of the photo of Don Smith on display at his celebration of life.

advocate for people who were struggling. "He liked the word 'socialist.'"

She said that it "really irked him" that one of the largest areas of deep poverty in the city kept electing centrist politicians instead of the NDP – unlike similar areas in Winnipeg or Vancouver. He also was concerned at how the cost of housing was the top contributing factor to poverty right now.

Smith coordinated signs on four of her campaigns, and was wonderful to work with – except when it came to sending in his expense receipts. But he knew how to

get the signs out fast and in the best places – bending the rules a bit.

"Don would say all of the city election people are going home at 5 o'clock. The legislation says that you can put up signs as of midnight, but they'll have gone home. What that meant [as far as Don was concerned] is the signs can go up at 5:01.

"So you would get all the best sign locations everywhere. He put up signs on all the major corners and because he'd show up at 5:01 p.m. and start knocking in the sign seven hours before the other team started."

Annual General Meeting DALHOUSIE Community Association

Saturday, May 27th, 2023

3:00 - 5:00 PM

Plant Recreation Centre - 930 Somerset St W

14-Minute Neighbourhood:

A conversation with

Yukang Li, Executive Director, Chinatown
Business Improvement Area and
Catherine McKenney, Founder, CitySHAPES



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MPP report: We will end homelessness (with a little help from our friends)

Joel Harden

Politics can be a cynical and vicious business, but it still offers hope for change. Why? Because I've seen how politics can help people.

I saw it firsthand as a graduate student in the 1990s as Toronto implemented a "housing first" strategy for homeless neighbours, a strategy that was inspired by community organizers who care.

City Councillor Jack Layton was one of those organizers. Jack was part of a movement that convinced a Conservative mayor, Mel Lastman, that criminalizing homelessness was wrong. It made no sense on ethical grounds, but it also made no sense in financial terms.

Supportive homes were less expensive than police interactions, paramedic calls, emergency room visits, or jail cells. We could offer people hope and a chance to

remake their lives for far less money.

Mayor Lastman agreed to millions in new spending on Toronto's "housing first" plans, and that started Ontario in a better direction. Decades ago, important progress was made.

But last month we returned to the same crossroads when the City of Ottawa found out we have been allocated far less provincial money than we need to assist homeless neighbours.

This year's allocation from Ontario's Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) had Ottawa receive a paltry increase of \$840,000, while it was expecting between \$15 and \$17 million. In a letter to Premier Doug Ford, Mayor Mark Sutcliffe noted this meant 54 supportive homes would not be created this year, and Ottawa would fall behind in its 10-year housing and homelessness plan.

City Councillor Ariel Troster wrote, in an *Ottawa Citizen* op-ed published May 1, that without these 54 new supportive homes many neighbours would be forced to continue living on the street.

So MPP Chandra Pasma and I wrote an urgent letter to Steve Clark, Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We urged him to reconsider Ottawa's inadequate allocation for the HPP.

If you have time, I would appreciate you lending your voice to this appeal, by emailing Minister Clark at Steve.Clark@pc.ola.org and asking him to increase Ottawa's share of the HPP funding.

Ottawa can end homelessness. Ontario can end homelessness. Canada can end homelessness.

We just need a little help from our friends.

I will continue to raise these and other concerns in the Legislature, but as your representative in Toronto I want to hear from you.

If you have opinions to share with me on Ontario's Homelessness Prevention Program, or any other matters, please send a message to joel@joelharden.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.



ACORN and residents of 219-223 Bank worried about losing their affordable apartments and artist studios, and being forced out of Centretown, demonstrated for more protections for tenants at the offices of Smart Living Properties on April 27. Smart Living has proposed redeveloping that block of Bank into a nine-storey tower with 263 apartments. None would be protected by rent control. Tenants have not yet received notices of eviction. *ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ*

MP report: budget emphasizes affordability

Yasir Naqvi

Spring is here! I hope you and your family and friends are spending time outdoors and enjoying the beautiful weather.

Recently, the Government of Canada released Budget 2023, which delivers targeted and temporary inflation relief to those who need it most. Canadians are facing serious challenges including a high cost of living, a warming planet, and a brutal war in Europe. Inflation has fallen eight months in a row and average wages are up, but we all know our vulnerable friends and neighbours are still struggling with higher prices.

The budget continues our work to make life more

affordable, strengthen our universal public health care system, and build a clean economy. Here is how we are investing in our community:

- Introducing a new Grocery Rebate to make up for the higher prices without fuelling inflation. That's money directly into the pockets of 11 million Canadians who need it most, with up to an extra \$467 for a family of four. Single Canadians without children could receive up to \$234, and seniors could receive an extra \$225.

- Announcing the new Canadian Dental Care Plan which will provide coverage for up to nine million uninsured Canadians with an annual family income of less than \$90,000.

- Strengthening our Health Care System by providing more than \$198 billion over the next 10 years to improve health care for Canadians. Whether it's ensuring you can access a primary care team or getting into surgery quicker, we are addressing gaps in the system to help you and your family get high-quality care.

- Investing in Mental Health Support by proposing to invest \$158.4 million over three years to the Public Health Agency of Canada, to support implementation and operation of 9-8-8, a dedicated suicide prevention line.

- Investing in Substance Use Prevention by proposing to provide \$359.2 million over five years to support a renewed Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy, which would guide the government's work to save lives and protect the health and safety of Canadians.

- Investing in a Greener Economy with new tax credits for projects in clean electricity, clean technology manufacturing and clean hydrogen. Requirements attached to those credits ensure good wages for workers and apprenticeship opportunities.

- Supporting Students with a 40 percent increase to the Canada Student Grants, providing full-time students with up to \$4,200. We are also making all Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans permanently interest-free, including ones being repaid right now.

Learn more about Budget 2023 at Canada.ca/Budget, and please do not hesitate to contact my community office for further information. We are here to help you.

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Skyline: Squeezing in another “background” building

Robert Smythe

Ten years ago, when a team of Toronto planning consultants worked hard to sell the Centretown community on the concept of an ultra-high-rise apartment district in the neighbourhood’s northern district, certain promises were made.

The buildings would be tall, slim and trim, exceptionally well designed, and with plenty of space between them.

In exchange, the old Centretown Plan’s height limits needed to be more than doubled. Densities would now have no upper limits, increasing the previous maximum allowable floor area by up to 400-500 percent. Many landscape requirements would disappear.

Ottawa’s Planning Department was more easily convinced to proceed with these changes.

This new development would bring with it much needed improvements to what was then and still is a grotty “public realm.” The area deserved parkettes and beautified streets, essential services and amenities for the thousands of new residents who’d be living here. Finally, there was to be a furtherance of the laudable goals for a compact and sprawl-free city.

Instead, the intervening decade has brought • towers with floor plates that are double or triple the recommended size; • lot-line to lot-line developments; • little to no outdoor open space on-site; and perhaps what really violates those sound planning principles necessary for future liveability – cramming these buildings in shoulder to shoulder with seemingly no regard to their cumulative impact.

That may sound like the voice of a NIMBY crank. As a skyscraper aficionado, your correspondent is more tolerant of these things than most, but the latest addition to the mindless march of the tall tower – at 100 Gloucester Street – tests that.

If it’s not exceptional, it’s background

In grading tall buildings, the City of Ottawa seems to have only two categories: they are either “Landmark” or “Background.” Thus, if it’s not exceptional in architecture, design, and execution, the built form meant to background these rare paragons need not aim so high – although it will still be reviewed by our Urban Design Review Panel, a committee chosen from a cadre of professional peers deemed to be design experts.

Certainly the calibre of

this development’s urban design is consistent with the standard set by its adjoining towers, derived from fairly bold plans fashioned by the acclaimed late architect Dan Hanganu.

Its hulking size is to be offset by slightly recessed, warm, and engaging street-level treatment. It’s been the city’s view that, if it’s good enough at eye level, we don’t notice what’s above.

Part of 100 Gloucester will sit on the Capital Parking lot once intended for the 70 Gloucester Street portion of Claridge Homes’ Loop 1 and 2 until that was shifted further east. A fair chunk of the new third tower’s considerable bulk will actually be stretched to sit on top of the four and a half storey 1964 office building immediately to the west.

By the numbers

What’s the tale of the tape? 100 Gloucester comprises 315 units broken down as 24 studio, 186 one-bedroom, and 105 two-bedroom apartments – so that it evades shoebox territory.

There are either 68 or 98 car-parking spaces (the application states both figures) and 315 bike parking spaces on three underground levels. 1761m² of amenity space is provided on the ground floor, in the backyard, and on the rooftop.

As is usual for the area, they are requesting no maximum floor space limit, a maximum building height of 27 storeys, and a reduction in the number of car parking spaces by at least half of the current requirement.

They are also seeking permission for ground floor commercial uses like personal services, retail, and a convenience store.

More importantly, the development would eliminate the front-yard setback from 3.0 metres to zero, and the westerly side-yard setback from 1.5 and 6.0 metres to zero as well.

Architects for this project are Montreal-based EVOQ Architecture. A brief Heritage Impact Statement by a local consultant has determined that the building will have no impact on the heritage character of Centretown or the surrounding streetscape.

Will this high-density apartment building strip of Centretown ever be built out? There are at least four more towers on the cards for the immediate area, with potential land assemblies for plenty more.

It’s a significant experiment in city building. One hopes that the promised on-street public realm fantasy can catch up one day.



The full frontal view of 100 Gloucester Street, with adjoining neighbours. No impact on the surrounding streetscape or Centretown’s heritage character? City of Ottawa Development Files/EVOQ Architects



A street level view of the new development that incorporates the small 1960s office building next door. City of Ottawa Development Files/EVOQ Architects

Referendum to give public a voice on for-profit clinics

continued from page 1
revealed during the 2022 provincial election, denying voters a voice on the change.

This winter, the Ottawa Hospital agreed to rent out operating suites at its Riverside campus to the private Academic Orthopedic Surgical Associates of Ottawa (AOAO) for hip and knee surgeries. Concerns have been raised that this will poach nurses from the already short-staffed hospital; [the hospital said in March that](#) “less than half” of AOAO’s staff are hospital employees.

In a fact sheet, the coalition argued that for-profit clinics only serve the profitable patients, those who are quickest and easiest to care for. “For example, private clinics/hospitals do not

take people who are obese, have diabetes and co-morbidities that might put them at risk of coding on an operating table. If a patient gets into trouble in a private clinic, they call an ambulance to send that person to a public hospital.”

Post-pandemic, it said, Ontario’s health care staff shortages have worsened – but for-profit clinics won’t create any new staff. “Across Canada, where for-profit clinics have crept in, they have taken scarce health professionals and staff out of local public hospitals, making shortages worse and leaving the remaining staff in the public hospitals to deal with complex care patients with less staff and less funding.”

Ed Cashman, the co-chair of the Ot-

tawa branch of the coalition, said that using private clinics will end up costing the government more because of the need for profit. In addition, patients can be pressured to buy extras not covered by OHIP, he said.

With the Ford government majority, what success can the referendum have? “It’s all going to depend on how successful we are in terms of doing outreach and getting people to vote,” Cashman said. “It’s all about voter turnout.”

He said the referendum response has already been good: on the first day, May 2, more than 10,000 votes were received.

Referendum results are expected to be available May 30.

Comment

In building our city, the cheapest price shouldn't be mistaken for the best value

Toon Dreessen

If we want a better city, creating a design culture that demands better buildings is only half the equation.

Suppose we agreed that the public wants welcoming, sustainable, accessible, and beautiful places. How do we get them? The answer is found in the hiring process.

We need to be concerned with how our government, at all levels, buys design services. That is the key word – design is a service; it isn't a commodity.

Unlike a “thing” where you can compare three identical samples and choose the cheapest, it is harder to compare services and skills. Comparisons of services often require qualitative comparisons that can be rooted in our own bias or perceptions and don't account for the value we might gain between different levels of service.

Through a Request for Proposal (RFP) the city will set out a standard contract and then add restrictive criteria and conditions. This usually means that a bidder has to spend countless hours wading through hundreds of pages of legal documents to prepare a response. At times, bidders have to hire their own lawyers or seek advice from insurance companies to find out if the modified contract offered is even legal or insurable.

Similar experience a barrier to new ideas

To even be considered for a project, a firm often must have previous experience. The more identical the experience, the higher the bidder scores. If you've worked on community centres, you might not qualify for a field house; if you've worked on rental apartment buildings, you might not qualify for an affordable housing project.

Even though the buildings themselves

might be nearly identical, someone with more identical experience will get more points. This process effectively shuts out new firms and rewards the same firms over and over.

Why is that bad? It means we only ever get the same sort of ideas. What if the only musicians getting contracts were ones who had previously released at least five albums? How would anyone new break into the music business?

Stefan Novakovic wrote about this recently in *Azure*: if the problems with long term care (LTC) homes in Ontario are evident, as we see from the tragedy of deaths due to COVID-19, why is the prerequisite to design new LTC facilities based on your prior experience? It may not result in better performance if the same teams are hired. And no one new, with fresh ideas, can win the job.

Profitability through charging for extras

Suppose a bidder meets the requirements and takes a gamble on the legality of the contract. The next hurdle is winning with a low fee. Successful firms look for gaps in the project that they can exploit for changes and ensure profitability. When the RFP attempts to codify, for example, how many meetings are to occur, every extra meeting, every change in scope (no matter how small) is an avenue for extras.

Sometimes that profitability is based on using legal exemptions that allow them to not pay their staff (or not pay them fairly). Inequitable employment practices are driven by a desire to win the project with a low fee; our government rewards this unethical, but legal, behaviour through its procurement process.

Suppose we want a project to meet a sustainable goal but the RFP fails to mention it, or proposes one that is unachievable, too low, or not practical. The successful bidder



A major criterion for bidding on Ottawa's LRT system was price.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

can submit a low fee, expecting to make their profit by adding change orders for obvious or inevitable and predictable scope changes or schedule delays.

The city and other public sector clients will argue that, if the best firms are all equally good on technical scores, a low fee is good value because a low fee saves money. Why is this wrong?

Technical scoring is often subjective: is the person who scored 76 out of 80 points objectively different from the person who scored 74? What if there is a qualitative difference between the two firms that doesn't show up on a checklist?

FCM: Cheapest price is not best value

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities' *InfraGuide*, a best practices guide to choosing a professional consultant, illustrates this challenge well. As it says, “Often, cheapest price gets mistaken for best value. ... A requirement to bid fees in a proposal call does not achieve the expected outcomes. Inevitably it forces the consultant to focus on ‘how to minimize fees to win the assignment’ instead of ‘how to deliver a service that will add the most value for the client.’”

We should invest in design because the payback can be enormous. Suppose a project costs \$200,000 to design, \$2 million to build, and \$9 million in operational costs (for utilities and maintenance) over its lifetime. If a better design costs 10 percent more, but saved five percent of the operational cost, a city would spend \$20,000 to gain \$450,000 in savings. That design skill is worth something. When the difference between winning or losing a commission is two technical

points that you can make up on a lower fee, the low fee can win the job. That lower fee comes at the price of service.

Since 1972, the United States has barred financial scoring in hiring architects and engineers for this reason. Since 2008, Edmonton has done the same, setting out fee expectations through a standard that values the quality of design, the skill, creativity, and ideas proposed. Recently, Toronto Community Housing has done the same.

These organizations recognize that the effort that goes into a better design makes for better places; that this means fewer change orders, better jobs, a smoother construction process, and better results overall. In 2020, the City of Edmonton received a quarter of all Governor General's Medals in Architecture, and is routinely featured in international design press for the quality of public buildings and parks. The City of Ottawa has never won a prestigious design award and its built environment rarely features in a positive way.

Ottawa needs to recognize that opening the door to better procurement means new ideas, creative solutions and support for economic growth. It is time for the city to see that a better procurement model will improve the quality of life for the people who live and visit the nation's capital, independent of federal projects.

We need to be our best Ottawa. Reforming procurement is the way to start.

This was the second half of Dreessen's op-ed on the importance of design in city facilities. The first was on page 6 of the April BUZZ.

Toon Dreessen is an architect and president of Ottawa-based Architects DCA and is past president of the Ontario Association of Architects.

Transit survey shows 80 percent dissatisfied

continued from page 1
41.8 percent very dissatisfied, 39.8 percent dissatisfied, and only 7 percent satisfied.

The respondents rated availability (frequency and reliability of the service, hours of operation), information (availability and quality of maps, timetables and information on delays), time (journey time and on-time running), and feeling safe and secure as top concerns.

One comment said, “Bus cancellation has to become less frequent, it undermines any kind of trust one can have in the system.”

Kelly said he wrote the report to introduce his transit advocacy to the new City Council and to give them the hard data they needed to make decisions. He sent the report to councillors in February. While he got good feedback from some councillors, about two-thirds did not respond.

The report recommends giving public access to OC Transpo's trip database in order to provide accurate cancellation reporting; fixing inaccurate GPS reporting of bus locations; implementing Google RealTime for trip re-

porting, as has been done in Gatineau; and piloting real-time information screens at regular bus stops.

This would create an “open and honest experience,” and allow breathing room while other issues affecting reliability, like driver shortages and budgets, are addressed.

Kelly has traveled on foot and by transit since he moved to Ottawa more than 15 years ago. He had a car for one year, but found insurance too expensive. He was inspired to start occasionaltranspo.ca in November 2019 by the frequent breakdowns of Ottawa's new LRT, and used the site to show LRT uptime and downtime.”

For a 2023 status report, Kelly will have to change how he counts trip cancellations, because OC Transpo has stopped announcing cancellations on Twitter as of May 1. Twitter is now charging more for certain features, it said, and the new prices make “the posting of specific trip information cost approximately \$675,000 per year.”

Kelly said he's planning to switch to a Transpo RSS feed, but hasn't confirmed that will

work yet. He noted that OC Transpo had never posted all trip cancellations on Twitter.

OC Transpo is currently running [its own customer survey](http://its_own_customer_survey) as part of a bus route review, covering issues like walking distance to bus stops, bus frequency, and the maximum number of people on a bus. The survey is open until May 25, and will guide potential changes to the bus route network in 2024.


Kelly said he is running [his own parallel “Better Bus Review” survey](http://his_own_parallel_Better_Bus_Review_survey) with the similar but upgraded questions, to give a better look at how people are interacting with specific routes.

He expected that OC Transpo would use its survey to justify cutting routes. “They're essentially fishing for the information they already want. They're trying to justify an already assumed position.” He hoped that, if he received hundreds of replies on his survey, that it could show what riders are looking for, “and then when OC Transpo does probably the dead opposite, we'll know exactly where their mentality is.”


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Comment

A balanced proposal for Wellington

Xavier Bradbury-Jost

One year after the “Freedom Convoy” occupation, the time is up on the temporary closure of Wellington Street and ideas are bouncing around about the future, and the role, of this important street.

But this discussion is mainly focused on whether or not to reopen it to vehicles, without much thought on how we would use either option to restore and improve the vitality of this street. What I’m advocating is a solution that falls somewhere in between, and can achieve the goals that both sides of this debate have mentioned.

I propose we keep Wellington Street open to regular traffic, but as a two-lane road with left-turn lanes at intersections, bus loading zones, a curb-separated bicycle lane, and some on-street parking.

I also propose we shift the fewer lanes of traffic to the north side of the street fronting Parliament to widen the sidewalk on the south side, using this extra sidewalk space for benches, patios, and added pedestrian-scale activities both outdoors and in existing

buildings.

It will be difficult to animate Wellington Street for pedestrians without the help of the adjacent buildings. Yet most of these buildings have little to offer to people walking by, since they lack ground-floor attractions that can animate the street.

Some of these buildings might be rightfully closed off for reasons concerning security or their core mandate, but those that can accommodate storefronts and ground-floor patios, should.

The federal government’s Block 2 project, which will start construction next year, will completely renovate the buildings on the south side of Wellington between Metcalfe and O’Connor. It offers opportunities to reanimate the street, including a planned “People’s Square” in line with the Eternal Flame on the other side.

However, that project will not be finished until 2030 or 2031, and alone it would act only as an example of animation efforts that should be implemented on the entire street rather than only at that one prominent intersection, Wellington and Metcalfe.

Improving the pedestrian experience in this area could be achieved by closing Wellington Street to vehicles altogether. But this isn’t necessary, and it risks creating unintended problems.

If we close any stretch of Wellington Street to vehicles, except perhaps the proposed STO tramway, here’s everything we’re excluding from the street: tour buses, taxis, school buses for students visiting Parliament, and emergency vehicles passing through the area.

Wellington not ideal for tram

Meanwhile, Wellington Street isn’t ideal for the proposed tramway because it would be two blocks away from our existing LRT stations that many transfer to – which may be acceptable for regular users who are somewhat accustomed to the walk, but would be confusing for tourists and newcomers.

An expensive rail tunnel under Sparks Street might not be the only alternative, either. Queen Street might theoretically have the capacity to accommodate a tramway, which could provide much more direct transfers to the Confederation Line,



Motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians were all visible on Wellington, on the Sunday after the street was reopened to cars. Between Metcalfe and Elgin, the delimited bike lane ended halfway, leaving cyclists to navigate within a right-turn lane with cars. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

whereas the STO seems to have overlooked this possibility only because the street was recently renovated. That’s hardly a reason to immediately dismiss a potentially excellent transit route, but that’s a topic for another discussion.

Some also argue that fully closing Wellington Street to cars will further segregate and “bubble” the Parliamentary Precinct from the rest of the city, rather than cohesively integrating the two. This is a compelling argument – but here’s why restoring the street to the way it was before, or anything similar, won’t do any better job at knitting the neighbourhood together.

The five-lane width of Wellington Street, which includes the left-turn lane, may look good for drivers as

a conventional cross-city artery. But it leaves little space to walk along it, let alone to include attractions that encourage pedestrians to linger and enjoy themselves – especially on the south side of Wellington Street, which is only made worse by the lack of pedestrian attractions in the buildings that front it.

Pedestrianizing Wellington Street, and reopening it to vehicles in its current form, are ideas that each have their own merits. But in both proposals, we haven’t thoroughly addressed how we plan to improve the vitality of the area surrounding the Parliamentary Precinct for the people there.

The mere presence of “people-spaces” isn’t enough to achieve this, and neither is simply going back to the pre-convoy status quo.

Vehicle access to Wellington Street, and an improved pedestrian experience on this street, both seem to be popular ideas. Let’s combine the two in a thoughtful compromise that gets down to the fundamentals of what we’re trying to achieve.

Xavier Bradbury-Jost is a student in Urban & Regional Planning at the University of Waterloo, and is actively involved in municipal politics in Ottawa where he was raised. You can reach him at reimventer.ottawa@gmail.com

What do you think should be done with Wellington Street? Should it be closed and made part of the Parliamentary Precinct, or left open to motor vehicles as a commuter street? Send The BUZZ a letter at editor@centretownbuzz.com



As soon as cars were allowed on Wellington, “freedom convoy” supporters reappeared. This car was parked in a loading zone on Metcalfe at Wellington on April 30. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Convoy protest exposed security gaps: Jacek

continued from page 1

The illegal convoy occupation in 2022 “exposed vulnerabilities associated with Wellington Street serving as a main roadway running through the Parliamentary Precinct. It also highlighted several long-standing security and policing gaps,” Jacek said, and these risks will only increase as more parliamentary offices move south of Wellington [into the Block 2 development].

On April 6, Sutcliffe replied, reiterating the council decision, and saying that city and federal staff would continue to work on a traffic study to be ready by Q1 of 2024. He said it would be “premature” to leave the road closed to traffic before the study is finished.

Staff will also explore temporary road closures of Wellington this summer for special events and community programming “or for the safety and well-being of the residents

of Ottawa,” Sutcliffe said. They will also continue discussions with the federal government about redefining the precinct, along with consulting businesses and residents.

Environmental groups like Ecology Ottawa had [called for continuing to keep cars off Wellington](#), saying that gave more options for people to use the space for everything from road hockey to an Asian Night Market, and was in accordance with city policy to prioritize non-car trips.

On April 28, Ottawa Centre MP Yasir Naqvi tweeted that “Wellington Street is not just a regular city road, as demonstrated by last year’s illegal occupation.” Allowing cars back “sells our nation’s capital short and prevents us from reinventing this historic space for all Canadians to enjoy.”

He said that the federal government “remains in active negotiations with the City on Wellington Street’s future.”

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It takes a community!

Earth Day in Dundonald Park: hundreds learn about the environment and have fun



A few of the scenes from Earth Day in Dundonald Park on April 22, captured by photographer Raymond Bertrand. Above: Local magician Mark Montreuil, who has been enthralling audiences for four decades, mesmerized children and adults, and local jazz group Sax Appeal closed the event with intense grooves. Many local groups hosted booths with information on improving the environment. The event was co-hosted by the Centretown Community Association and the Centretown Community Health Centre; see the CCA column on page 9 for more info.



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DCA: AGM, 384 Arlington, roving tree troupe, Booth to reopen to traffic

Ed McKenna

The DCA board was pleased to welcome Councillor Ariel Troster to its regular meeting this month. Her report was comprehensive and sensitive to community concerns, and the discussion that followed informative.

Annual General Meeting May 27

But let's begin with an arms-open-wide invitation to attend the Dalhousie Community Association Annual General Meeting! We'll gather at the Plant Recreation Centre, on the last Saturday of this month, May 27, at 3 p.m.

Yukang Li, executive director of the Chinatown Business Improvement Area, will join Catherine McKenney, founder of CitySHAPES, for a conversation on a "14-Minute Neighbourhood." (That's not a typo – it's a call to action!)

What We Learned at the Public Meeting on 384 Arlington

On April 19 we met, via Zoom, to hear from city planners, the developer, and the architects and consultants behind the redevelopment of the Korean Community Church property at Arlington and Booth. It was an instructive meeting. A few things stood out:

As DCA Planning Committee chair David Seaborn put it, "Each iteration [of the design] has made it more sensitive to context." Over the past year, city staff (with contributions from the DCA) have pressed the developer to refine the design to respond more and more to the existing buildings on the site and

in the neighbourhood. Each time this is done, the design improves.

During the meeting, the developer was determined to convince us that the proposed 24-storey residential tower was a fit for the neighbourhood, or at least the imagined high-rise neighbourhood of the future. Although the tower will be more than twice as tall as any building within sight, no one argued very strenuously about building height.

Here's what the community *is* concerned about: What's the experience going to be at street level when a new tower is dropped into an established residential community? And will local families have an opportunity to live there?

The desire to have a pleasant experience at street level and to accommodate local families may be in conflict, the developer told us. As the design pulls the buildings back from the street to improve the public realm below (including making space for street trees), and, in this case, to ensure the historic church facade will continue to anchor the south end of Bell Street, the new tower becomes taller and pointier. That makes laying out affordable, family-size units difficult, we heard. There will be 274 residential units, but the majority (67 percent) will be bachelor and one-bedroom apartments.

During the discussion, Councillor Troster spoke of her determination that affordable housing be included in future residential developments in Dalhousie. Developers will be asked to partner with local non-profit housing groups to ensure there is a substantial affordable component in new residential buildings.

Cash-in-lieu of Parkland: The councillor also responded to a discussion about adjacent trees and greenspace. She pointed out that Ward 14 has a large portion of available funding for the improvement of city parks. Community consultations on priorities for city parkland are planned.

Watch for the Roving Tree Troupe!

The DCA Public Realm committee is preparing an inventory of vacant properties in Dalhousie where city parkland funds can be put to work.

The committee also announced that the DCA will be joining CAFES (Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability) to co-host a Climate Resiliency Community Dialogue. The event will take place June 13 from 7-9 p.m. at McNabb Community Centre.

And watch for the Roving Tree Troupe on your street! Committee members will canvas the neighbourhood, promoting tree planting programs and identifying spaces with potential to add to the urban tree canopy.

City Accelerates the Return to Commuter Traffic on Booth

Stop me if you've heard about this issue! The DCA Mobility Committee reported that the city soon will re-introduce south-bound commuter traffic on Booth, lifting current restrictions at the intersection with Albert. And again, the city will prohibit Lett Street residents from accessing Booth from the Parkway.

The committee had been led to believe that the current configuration of the Booth intersections would not be changed until September, with time for research and advocacy. Now we're told the city is aiming for changes next month.

The committee is not deterred and advocacy continues. Councillor Troster will meet



This church will be redeveloped as part of the 384 Arlington project. See the city signs on the side.

Ed McKenna/The BUZZ

with the Mobility Committee and city staff this month to discuss the next steps toward making Booth an accessible and safe corridor for local residents.

Remember to join us at the DCA Annual General Meeting on May 27.

Contact: president@ottawadalhousie.ca, and visit our website: ottawadalhousie.ca

CCA report: Kent skyscraper, tree TLC, Earth Day in the park



Jack Hanna

Volunteers needed to ensure TLC for trees

The CCA's NeighbourWoods team is offering training for new volunteers on Saturday, June 3.

The team is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the tree canopy. Volunteers are surveying all of Centretown's trees and compiling a comprehensive database. The goal is to track the health of trees over time and make sure they get the TLC they need.

Volunteers also identify good spots for new trees. As well, they encourage residents to use the city's Trees in Trust program to obtain new trees for front yards.

To get involved or for information: NeighbourWoods@centretowncitizens.ca

Be heard on proposed Kent St. skyscraper

A public meeting on the 30-storey skyscraper proposed for Kent and MacLaren is scheduled for Thursday, May 25, at 6:30 p.m.

The CCA argues the building is far too high. A skyscraper has no place in a neighbourhood of low- and mid-rise buildings.

Developer Taggart would build the 30-storey high-rise under the city's Landmark Buildings Policy. The CCA says the proposed skyscraper fails to meet the policy. It is not "iconic" architecture, a fundamental requirement of the policy.

The public meeting will include a presentation by the developer's team, followed by questions and comments. For the Zoom link, email jack.2014@icloud.com

Magician brought the magic to Earth Day

The magician stole the show.

At the CCA's annual Earth Day celebration in Dundonald Park in late April magician Mark Montreuil drew a huge audience. "He mesmerized," said event co-ordinator Brian Beaven. "Parents and kids were five

deep," said CCA volunteer Stuart MacKay.

The Earth Day Event in the park at Somerset West and Lyon set a record for attendance, with well over 300 guests.

"Folks had a chance to learn about all sorts of community environmental initiatives, engage with community leaders, and reconnect with neighbours after a long winter," said MacKay.

There were kids galore. They did a variety of arts and crafts, planted flower seeds in the park's beds, and enjoyed the free popcorn.

There was a big sculpture of a ferocious dinosaur, *Plastisaurus Rex*, made entirely out of empty windshield washer jugs. It was the creation of artist and anti-single-use-plastics activist Stuart Kinmond.

The band Sax Appeal closed the afternoon with live jazz.

The Earth Day Celebration was sponsored by the CCA and the Centretown Community Health Centre.

Volunteers clear park of deadfalls

CCA volunteers worked for a day clearing big deadfall branches littering Dundonald Park in the wake of the April wind storm, the gale that caused power outages across Ottawa.

"The branches were big and heavy, and required four or five people to move them," said CCA volunteer Cecilia Shea.

The clean-up crew included teenagers, who logged community-service credits needed for high school graduation.

The volunteers worked most of the day, and besides moving windfalls, cleared the park of debris, paper coffee cups, broken glass and cigarette butts.

They cleared winter debris from the park's big flower beds in preparation for gardening. The CCA's crews of volunteer gardeners soon will get a start on planting the beds in Dundonald Park (and elsewhere in Centretown).

Jack Purcell Recreation Association



Free drop-in safety sessions for the fitness structure in St. Luke's Park

This season there is a new outdoor fitness structure in St. Luke's Park. To support its safe use, the Jack Purcell Recreation Association is providing 4 free drop-in safety sessions brought to you by the expert gymnasts at Kazam Gymnastics.

The drop-in sessions are open to everyone and will introduce how to exercise using the structure.

Dates: Sundays May 14 - June 4

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For more information:

<https://www.jackpurcell.ca/free-demonstration.html>

Somerset Ward report: help neighbours who are struggling

Ariel Troster

There is a song by the Riot Grrrl band Le Tigre with a chorus that rings true these days: “Get off the Internet, I’ll meet you in the street.” This has become a motto for me, as I have been spending my time trying to meet with all the people and organizations that are working to make Centretown a welcoming, accessible, and fun place to live.

From the seniors who serve meals out of church kitchens, to the volunteer gardeners, to the harm reduction outreach workers, our community would certainly be in much worse shape without this hard work.

But I still dream of the day when we can put food banks and shelters out of business. The most heartbreaking part of my first few months as councillor for Somerset Ward has been coming face-to-face with the sheer scale of human need in our communities.

Our ward has a lower median income than the rest of the city and the highest rate of pov-

erty. There are more than 2,000 people experiencing homelessness in Ottawa, and our family shelter system is at more than 350 percent capacity. And food banks are reporting record demand, as inflation and the rising cost of food forces more families to ask for help.

My staff and I spent most of the city budget consultation process in February working to ensure that there were no cuts to the front-line services that help our most vulnerable neighbours. I was part of a group of councillors who won an increase to the city’s capital budget for affordable housing. As we establish our top priorities for this term of council, I have no doubt that ending chronic homelessness and scaling up the construction of affordable housing will be at the top of the list.

Last month, I was pleased to see the mayor, all of City Council, and a coalition led by the Ottawa Alliance to End Homelessness united in our advocacy to the provincial government. As part of a new increase in the province-wide Homelessness Prevention Program, Ottawa is set to receive a mere

\$845,000 (or 0.4 percent) from a total pot of \$202 million. In comparison, Toronto, a city with a population three times the size of ours, received 60 times that. We continue to raise our voices, at council, in media interviews, and in meetings with MPPs to say that Ottawa needs more.

So thank you to all of you who are working hard to care for our neighbours who are struggling. If I have not met you yet, I hope to do so soon. With spring weather and outdoor events now upon us – I’ll see you in the street.

Ariel Troster is councillor for Somerset Ward.

Climatarian: all that you do adds up

Cathy Woodgold

The International Panel on Climate Change met in Interlaken, Switzerland, in March. They report that, even while various measures have achieved less energy-intensive GDP and less carbon-intensive energy, total greenhouse gas emissions have still continued to rise due to increased human activity.

The environment has experienced “widespread and rapid changes” resulting in “widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people,” and “vulnerable communities who have historically contributed the least to current climate change are disproportionately affected.”

Some people are eating vegetarian once a week as one way to cut back on emissions and deforestation. Different people have different additional motivations for their choices. For some, it’s concerns about animal welfare.

Centretown residents Sam and Summer are trying to reduce their milk consumption, with mixed results. They’re concerned about factory farms where the focus tends to be on efficiency rather than the welfare of the animals. “They’re fed corn products which they’re not good at digesting,” says Sam.

Summer adds, “What about forcing pregnancy so they keep making milk, but their babies [calves] are taken away from them? They’re also locked up in cages so they never

see the light. It’s a lot easier for me to accept grass-fed cows.”

Another Centretown resident, Hayden Avery, points out that emissions are higher with grass-fed cows, adding that “a lot of grass-fed comes from rainforest deforestation.”

There are claims that grass-fed animals offset their emissions by regenerating the soil. Studies have found that grass-fed beef has higher greenhouse gas emissions per pound of meat because the animals grow more slowly. Either way, vegetarian foods such as grains and beans use only a fraction of the land area and resources.

Getting enough protein from vegetarian sources isn’t as hard as it sounds. Almost every food contains some protein.

In a hypothetical nutritious all-plant-food diet from the classic book *Diet for a Small Planet*, just under half the protein comes from the higher-protein foods beans, nuts, and seeds. The rest is easily made up by a combination of all the other foods one would naturally tend to eat – mainly grains, vegetables, and fruits.

This is the time of year to consider signing up for a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) or other service that delivers food to you directly from a farm through the summer, and to look forward to when the local farmer’s markets will be open.

Everything you do to reduce emissions adds up.

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August 4 to August 27



What's on in Ottawa and beyond this month



The Polish ambassador joins Polka at the Grassroots Folk Festival. *ALISON BOWIE*
Tony Wohlfarth

The 11th Grassroots Folk Festival on April 20-23 kicked off the annual music festival season. This month, I look back at this festival and look forward to what's on this month and beyond. Ottawa's poet laureate Albert Dumont opened the Grassroots Festival. Dumont, an Algonquin storyteller and poet, brought a warm welcome as the fest was hosted on unceded Algonquin territory. He spoke about growing up in Quyon, Quebec, where he canoed the waters of the Kitigan Zibi River. The performance by 19-year-old Gatineau singer-songwriter Mia Kelly was a musical highlight, as was the appearance by Polka, an ensemble of musicians performing traditional Eastern European tunes. Polka wrapped up its show with a dance performance – which included the Polish Ambassador to Canada.

It's A Wrap
The Irish Film Festival of Ottawa (IFFO) wrapped up with a screening of *Tarrac* on April 16. The director and screenwriter joined

the audience for a lively discussion following the screening. Over 400 participants screened the best of Irish cinema along with conversations and some pints of stout from the Green Isle. The IFFO returns April 12-14, 2024.

National Arts Centre (1 Elgin)
On May 13, the NAC welcomes Franco-Ontarian and Abenaki singer-songwriter Mimi O'Bonsawin, who just returned from a tour of performances in Ireland. She will also be here in July at Bluesfest. Every Thursday until June 15, you can hear free noon-time concerts in Peter A. Herndorf Place on the main floor of the NAC. The "Jukebox Lunch" series will offer blues, hip-hop, Indigenous, and singer-songwriter music. In July and August, more free concerts will be offered outside on Wood Terrace by the Rideau Canal on Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Some will also be offered indoors in Atrium O'Brien on Wednesday at noon. The music ranges from Celtic fusion to reggae to traditional Mexican or African rhythms to Arabian jazz grooves to flamenco. Check out the "Wooden Terrace" and "Feeling of Free" series on nac-cna.ca

Jagged Little Pill
From May 30 to June 4, the NAC stage welcomes Broadway Across Canada's production of *Jagged Little Pill*, telling the story of a "perfectly imperfect American family". The music by Alanis Morissette is iconic. The show brings to the NAC an outstanding cast from the Hollywood musical. Tickets: ottawa.broadway.com/shows/jagged-little-pill/

Ottawa Jazz Festival
The 2023 Ottawa Jazz Festival kicks off on June 23. This year it ends on June 30, so there will be no jazz on Canada Day. The lineup in Confederation Park, Marion Dewar Plaza, and indoors, includes international stars like Herbie Hancock, Brad Mehldau, Melody Gardot, Gretchen Parlato, John Scofield, Snarky Puppy, Buddy Guy, Vijay Iyer, the Sun Ra Arkestra, and a celebration of Toots Thielemans by harmonicist Grégoire Maret and Toots' longtime collaborator Kenny Werner. Canadians like Colin Stetson, Kate Wyatt, and Angelique Francis will also be featured. ottawajazzfestival.com

Live on Elgin (220 Elgin)
Sunbloc is an Albany, NY-based five-person pop-rock band. They perform one night only on May 17. On May 18, Ottawa jazz vocalist BettyAnn Bryanton presents *Spring into Jazz*, a benefit show for Operation Come Home's Homeless Youth Dinner program. www.liveonelgin.com

Redbird Live (1165 Bank Street)
On May 26, Redbird Live features Ottawa's own Lynne Hanson. On June 1, Irish Mythen has two shows, bringing her unique blend of Irish folk music and Prince Edward Island. June 2 brings local audience favourite Megan Jerome and the Together Ensemble. redbirdlive.ca/shows

Out of Town
Hot Docs Film Festival
Yekaterinburg is the fourth largest city in Russia, located east of the Ural Mountains. It is also where Tsar Nicholas II and his family were assassinated in 1918. An Estonian filmmaker, Marianna Kaat, takes us there in this brilliant film made over four years. *The Last Relic* had its world premiere in Toronto at the Hot Docs festival on April 29.

Watching the film I learned that opposition to Putin is deeply rooted and protests against Navalny's imprisonment are widespread. The film, in Russian with English subtitles, runs 1h43m.



A scene from *The Last Relic*. *TEN THOUSAND IMAGES*

Springtide Music Festival
Uxbridge, Ontario (northeast of Toronto) is the place to be on June 9-11 for a celebration of music and community. Ottawa's own Amanda Rheame is one of the headliners along with Gatineau's Mia Kelly, a headliner at the OGFF. Weekend tickets are \$90 at springtidemusicfestival.com

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

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RADIO CLASSIQUE.CA

How can we safeguard and enhance Centretown's tree canopy?

Darlene Pearson

Now that the debris from the ice storm has been cleared away, Centretown is left with red Xes on many mature trees still slated for removal and big gaps where large trees once stood. Many trees lost in the 2018 tornado and the 2022 derecho have not yet been replaced.

These losses are devastating for a ward that already has Ottawa's lowest tree canopy coverage and one of the lowest ratios of available greenspace.

The NeighbourWoods Team has spent two summers surveying over 1500 trees in parts of Centretown. Our volunteers met many residents who told us how much they value their trees and want more done to protect them.

City plans call for more trees

Like us, you may wonder what can be done to safeguard and enhance our tree canopy. The answer is in a robust application of the city's own tools and citizen activism to ensure this happens.

Our new Official Plan provides the basic policy foundation for protecting and enhancing our tree canopy. It recognizes the value of trees and the role they play in building resilience to the impacts of climate change and in supporting a healthy community.

It establishes a canopy target of 40 percent with equity as a guiding principle. It says that development should maintain the urban forest canopy by preserving and providing space for mature, healthy trees. It directs the city to prioritize trees in infrastructure design and singles out the value of large mature trees for their contribution to the city's character and climate resiliency.

The Ottawa Urban Forest Management

Plan (2018 – 2037) is a roadmap that guides the city's Forestry Services. It states that "the urban forest must be recognized and managed as a valuable infrastructure asset and a positive investment".

No shade for cyclists?

And yet this principle does not appear to be given priority in city operations. An example is Hydro Ottawa's severe "V" pruning of trees, leading to their decline and eventual removal.

Moreover, good intentions by one department can often undermine efforts by the city's Forestry Services. For example, city cycling lanes and new traffic control installations are important to enhance safety, yet their design has often sacrificed existing mature trees. Lack of shade works against the active transportation that the city wishes to promote. Better collaboration between city departments could help.

The new Transportation Master Plan calls for updating design guidelines and standards to incorporate trees and to prioritize corridors with low canopy cover and high heat island effects. This mirrors existing direction in the Official Plan which states that street and road networks shall support multi-modal travel as well as street trees and/or shade corridors.

Why not apply this approach proactively now to infrastructure projects that we have to live with for years to come?

Ottawa's Climate Change Master Plan is another city document that articulates high-level support for trees and recognizes their many benefits. And yet Ottawa's Tree Protection By-Law sets a value of \$400 for trees to be removed. This low amount does not recognize the value of existing trees in a densely populated urban setting with an already diminished tree canopy and limited opportunities for new plantings.



Last summer, this tree (above) shaded the sidewalk on Gladstone Avenue near Bay Street. Today, it has been replaced in favour of a traffic signal (see below). CHARLES AKKEN-MARCHAND/THE BUZZ



put into important new documents that will govern the landscape of Ottawa for years to come. The city has begun consultation on a new zoning bylaw and is currently asking for comments, including on a section on how to accommodate trees in zoning provisions.

Visit engage.ottawa.ca/zoning for more information.

Centretown deserves more trees

Despite all these good policy intentions, the city plans to plant only 14 trees in Somerset Ward in 2023. Our ward deserves better. Advocacy for our trees is essential to seeing our canopy grow.

If you would like more information on the Centretown NeighbourWoods program or to participate in our work, contact us at neighbourwoods@centretowncitizens.ca



This young street tree on Somerset Street West may not survive after losing this much bark. It needs protective fencing.

DARLENE PEARSON/THE BUZZ



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Replace trees at 3:1 to meet target

Mayor Mark Sutcliffe's campaign promise to plant one million trees is an excellent opportunity to have Forestry Services begin a proactive program of planting and maintenance. The Centretown NeighbourWoods Team has noticed that the city has over the years removed many trees in the city right-of-way and not replaced them. The mayor's vision should lead to replacing these lost trees at a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio. It will be vital to ensure that the 2024 city budget provides the funding to translate this promise into action.

Young trees need protection

Planting new trees is one thing, but their protection is critical until they become established. Our team has noticed that few new plantings receive any kind of protection. This results in many of them being damaged by the sidewalk snow clearing equipment, thereby diminishing their viability.

A simple solution of temporary fencing to create a protective space should be standard treatment for street trees, in particular those along busy corridors such as Somerset, Bank, and Gladstone.

Zoning bylaw another opportunity

There are opportunities to provide in-