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THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

Chief William Commanda Bridge opens



The Chief William Commanda Bridge finally opened on August 4. Centretowner Tannis Bujaczek was one of many cyclists and pedestrians immediately took advantage of the new active transportation connection from Ottawa to Gatineau. *BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ*

Alayne McGregor
The Chief William Commanda Bridge finally opened on August 4, just in time for the long weekend, and to the delight of several Centretown cyclists and pedestrians.

The opening was announced without prior warning in a video by Mayor Mark Sutcliffe. He said this was a soft opening, and the official opening would be in September.

The bridge links the Trillium Pathway (and the Ottawa River Pathway and the Bayview LRT station) on the Ottawa side with the Sentier des Voyageurs pathway on the Gatineau side. It allows cyclists and pedestrians to avoid the continuing construction on the Chaudière and Champlain Bridges.

The former rail bridge has been under construction since November, 2021, to add a new deck, lighting, and railings and to rehabilitate the substructure. Further work is expected on the substructure until next summer. A city release said there will be temporary disruptions to bridge access over the next year for this work, which will be announced in advance.

Tannis Bujaczek, who lives in Little Italy, told *The BUZZ* she was thrilled at the opening.

continued on page 11 "Bridge"

No more parkland in new 1010 Somerset plan



The boundaries of the approved 2021 expanded Plouffe Park space (in red) overlaid on the current concept plan for 1010 Somerset. (David Seaborn / Hobin Architecture)

Alayne McGregor

A new city concept plan for developing the area near Somerset and Preston has highly disappointed the Dalhousie Community Association (DCA).

The association had been expecting an increase in badly-needed greenspace and recreation facilities with the 1010 Somerset development, and instead is facing the possible loss of Plouffe Park for several years.

"It's not an acceptable solution to anything for us," said DCA President Catherine Boucher.

The plan, unveiled by the city in late June, is now open for public comments on engage.ottawa.ca. The city is running a survey asking residents' priorities for the site, and will also accept

written comments.

The site, which runs from Somerset Street West south to Gladstone Avenue, and from slightly west of Preston Street to LRT Line 2, had been owned by the federal government. It was bought by the city under an agreement in which the southern half of the site would be developed for housing (the Gladstone Village development) by Ottawa Community Housing.

The northern half—which the concept plan covers—was supposed to include an expansion of the Plant Recreation Centre, a new location for the French public Louise Arbour School (now in a temporary location on Beech Street), more greenspace and playing fields, and affordable housing. In 2021, the city approved the Corso

Italia Secondary Plan, which set out these goals and the general plan for the area.

In 2021, the DCA had teamed up with the Plant Pool Recreation Association (PPRA), the community and recreation associations in Hintonburg, and the Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC) to form the P4X Coalition to push for the best use of this land. They were planning to work very closely with the city on planning the site, Boucher said.

"We were assured at the time by the head of the planning department that we would definitely be considered and that we would be consulted throughout. Essentially we have not been consulted at all."

The one meeting the group was to have with staff in July, 2022, was cancelled and not rescheduled, she said.

"Then, all of a sudden, they're ready to go to Engage Ottawa with essentially this proposal. We are told that Engage Ottawa is just a draft, and nothing's etched in stone, but it's obvious that the city has gone ahead and done a fairly significant planning exercise."

The concept plan places the new four-storey school where Plouffe Park currently exists, and moves the greenspace further west. A

bus drop-off road for the school would surround the current Plant Recreation Centre (PRC). That road and the school building appear to cut off the PRC from the new greenspace and from the new rink, meaning a loss of

continued on page 10 "1010"

See page 4 for community reactions to the 1010 Somerset concept plan.

BIA rebrands from Bank Street to Centretown

Alayne McGregor

The largest business improvement area (BIA) in Centretown has rebranded itself as the Centretown BIA, and is planning to expand its boundaries.

Formerly the Bank Street BIA, it now is looking to serve businesses on Somerset, Gladstone, Flora, Laurier, Slater, Albert, Arlington, Catherine, Kent, and O'Connor as well. It currently represents 150 properties on 15 blocks of Bank Street in Centretown; according to its new strategic plan, that would increase to 1000 members.

At the same time, the Sparks Street BIA is also considering expansion.

The rebranding was an-

nounced at an event August 2. It comes as downtown businesses have had to re-adjust to fewer customers caused by hybrid work, plus the discouragement of continued LRT breakdowns and the lingering effects of the 2022 convoy occupation. Some businesses, mostly recently Sports4, have moved out of downtown.

Michael Wallack, the BIA chair, described the announcement as a huge change of direction, "a change in how we look at our downtown core." The BIA started this strategic planning process during the pandemic, he said. "We realized that nothing is going back to normal, and never will."

BIA Executive Director *continued on page 11 "BIA"*

August 11, 2023 — Vol. 28, No. 7

THE CENTRETOWN BUZZ

AT THE HEART OF OTTAWA SINCE 1995.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *The BUZZ* will be published September 15, 2023. Deadline for ads and submissions: September 5.
ISSN 1204-1604

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

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



Op-ed: The bully, the bullied, and the bystander

Deborah Cumming (Board Member)
Michelle Hurtubise (Executive Director)
Centretown Community Health Centre

The Centretown CHC is appalled about the ongoing attacks and violence against members of our community. Individuals who are trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse are disproportionately targeted with verbal and physical threats and online harassment merely for asserting their human rights.

We have continued to see increasing transphobic reactions over simple things like drag queen story time at public libraries. These reactions are significantly affecting access to basic health care.

This is unacceptable. We believe that we all have a role to play in stopping it.

What can you do?

Patterns of violence and bullying always involve bullies, people who are bullied, and bystanders. Some of us may have experienced bullying and various forms of violence at different times in our life, at school or at work. Despite the feeling of helplessness we may all feel from time to time, we all have role to play in fostering a safe and healthy community for everyone.

What can you do as a member of our community to help create a safer community? Work with us to become better allies to trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse people as well as all the 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two-spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual plus) community.

Here are some simple things you can do in your daily life to be a better ally:

- Share your pronouns when you introduce yourself – “Hi, I’m Jane and my pronouns are she/her;”
- When a person shares their pronouns, use them. If they don’t share their pronouns, don’t assume that you know them;
- Report vandalized property and submit incident reports to the organization, businesses that are impacted;
- Remove community posters that have been defaced with anti-trans/2SLGBTQIA+ messages, and let the owners of the posters know that they have been defaced and removed so that they can choose to replace them;
- Be mindful when retweeting in social media and ensure you’re not “retweeting the trolls.” If you want to call attention to a negative tweet, screenshot it and link the image to your tweet rather than boosting the tweet by retweeting it. When addressing a “troll,” don’t tag the person being targeted by the hate – it only fuels more negative engagement on their twitter feed;
- Ensure you are undertaking your own education on the issues facing 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. If you are a member of an organization, ensure education is taking place within your own organization. Some resources are shared below.
- Encourage your community groups and boards to increase representation from members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities (but first ensure you undertake education to ensure a safe and welcoming space);
- Show up for community events such as supportive counter-protests for drag queen story time, and when transphobic protesters target school boards

and their inclusive policies.

These are the most basic first steps that anybody can take to start showing solidarity with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

As a community health centre, CCHC provides a wide range of health and social supports for individuals in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. As part of this work, we believe it is important for us to support and advocate with clients, community members and our community partners.

We will not be silent on violence against the trans community and we will speak out in support on social media and other platforms against this abuse. Please join us in these efforts.

Resources

- CCHC Trans Health: www.centretownchc.org/trans-health
- CCHC 2SLGBTQIA+ Programs and Services: www.centretownchc.org/lgbtq2s
- Momentum Canada: www.momentumcanada.net/about
- Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity: ccgsd-cceds.org
- Max Ottawa: maxottawa.ca
- Rainbow Health Ontario: www.rainbowhealthontario.ca
- The Trevor Project: www.thetrevorproject.org

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Skyline: What's old is new in two recent developments

Robert Smythe

From crumbling bricks...

Somerset House's incident blotter is already stained with innumerable notices of violation, ignored orders, missed deadlines, and broken promises.

In 2007, the heritage building at Bank and Somerset Street West collapsed as a result of unauthorized renovations.

As recently as 2017, the 10th anniversary of that collapse, Ottawa City Council finally approved plans for the building's restoration upon heritage planners' laboured recommendation.

But the building's owner, TKS Holdings, failed to proceed.

So Centretowners, weary of this dismal blight on one of the community's most prominent corners, can be excused for greeting the latest version of Somerset House's resurrection, designed by architect Richard Chmiel, with a healthy dose of skepticism.

The redevelopment looks promising. The surviving half of the building would be restored with its missing elements, a corner turret and bay windows replaced. A new addition, on the ugly pit created when a slice of Somerset House was demolished for safety reasons, mirrors the historic portion with the use of brick, paired windows, and lintels.

A consultant's analysis

regarding its suitability in the midst of a heritage conservation district is underway.

If built, this project will comprise 14 residential units in the upper storeys and commercial uses on the ground floor. Minor zoning amendments are needed to bring it into conformity for setbacks, amenity space, and parking.

There is a ray of optimism. Thus far this owner has shown an increased level of commitment by investing in fresh studies and reports. The neighbourhood is holding its breath.

To sturdy precast concrete...

After completing the Slayte on Albert Street, the CLV Group has filed plans for an even more ambitious office-to-residential conversion in an uncompromisingly brutalist block at 360 Laurier Avenue West near Kent.

The 12-storey building was designed in 1968 by G.E. Bemis and Associates, architects for Norano Holdings, and is among that architect's most hard edged and best preserved concrete-clad office towers.

The conversion details? In its relatively compact footprint there would be 143 residential units, with a small amount of retail at grade. Amenity space is to be provided indoors on the ground floor plus rear yard, and on a newly built rooftop terrace. The development is intended to have 59 car-parking spaces in the existing underground garage, 13 of them for visitors, with secure parking for 78 bicycles in storage rooms.

Developers CLV are bravely working with an architectural style that is, at the very least, not universally admired. From the urban design brief by LineBox Studio:



The Brutalist conversion currently on display at 360 Laurier Avenue West. ROBERT SMYTHE/THE BUZZ



The dilapidated current state of Somerset House, at Bank and Somerset. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ



Somerset House may at last be reborn. The proposal from the City of Ottawa Development Information files.

"The building envelope will remain largely untouched... The design will retain most of the precast concrete panels." They are rather impressive, deeply coffered, subtly incised with grooves, certainly the Norano Building's

chief feature. "...And they will be cleaned or repaired where necessary."

For fresh air the fixed windows are to be replaced with operating windows.

One change will see enhanced glazing on the

ground floor to make the public areas in this yet-to-be-renamed apartment building more transparent and inviting from street level. This is a welcome alteration. Brutalism has its fans but inviting it is not.

A heritage drop-deadline: High noon for Ottawa's historic buildings list?

Robert Smythe

The tsunami of Ontario's recent bull-in-a-china-shop land use laws, which includes Bill 108, the *More Homes, More Choices Act, 2019* and Bill 23, the *More Homes, Built Faster Act, 2022* was intended to deliver record-breaking volumes of housing.

Instead, Queen's Park has inflicted unintended collateral damage in municipalities across the province.

The roadkill includes one of the City of Ottawa's longstanding, fundamental, policy tools for the protection of both individual historic buildings and entire older neighbourhoods: the Heritage Register, a gargantuan list of potentially significant places. But it should be noted that a building need not be on this list at all in order to be pushed forward for a full-blown heritage designation.

What is the Heritage Register?

The register is a planning instrument that most citizens have probably never heard of unless they've been engaged in the demo-

lition or alteration of one of the more than 4,600 buildings on this roll – the largest in the province.

The birth of this register, formerly known as the City of Ottawa Heritage Reference List, dates back to the mid-1970s when planners conducted quick and dirty "windshield surveys" of Centretown's oldest residential streets, gathering addresses of interest in support of future heritage zones.

Early warning for threatened buildings

As heritage staff reiterated at the Built Heritage Committee's June 13, 2023, meeting, the list started out as "fairly informal demolition protection in all Wards across the City". As such, it functioned as an early warning, red flag system for buildings under threat.

The register also served as a holding pen for properties that could have been designated at some point in the future using the power of the Ontario Heritage Act. That legislation itself was amended in 2012 to formally recognize such lists, establishing procedures for demolition control – a 60-day window for halting such demolitions, pending further study to

confirm or dismiss a building's importance.

A ticking time bomb in the next two years

This state of affairs has now been rent asunder by the force of Bill 23. Holding a ticking bomb to the city's head, it has imposed a two-year deadline during which time Ottawa must designate every address currently on the Heritage Register (an impossible task given its thousands of addresses) – or be compelled to throw the still undesignated off the list into the wilderness.

And those cast out cannot be put back on the Heritage Register for a further five years.

In a report presented to the committee, Manager of Heritage Planning Lesley Collins outlined her department's "Bill 23 Ontario Heritage Act Legislative Compliance Strategy 2023-25." This strategy will

- screen and prioritize non-designated Heritage Register properties for designation;
- establish a plan for the phased removal of non-designated properties from the register;
- approve legal amendments to streamline and speed up heritage designation procedures;
- address the staffing resources and work-

loads needed to handle the implications of Bill 23, and;

- seek the input of community associations and heritage groups for their assistance.

In summing up, committee chair Rawlson King added that, "We must begin to pursue designation more aggressively, using community volunteers as part of the research and evaluation."

It has been hinted that historic building triage is well underway. For the first quarter of 2024, city staff are promising to bring forward a list of priorities for future Heritage Conservation Districts, which will absorb multiple addresses on the list, while developing a monitoring tool for those properties expunged from the register, and draining the administrative swamp to improve the efficiency of heritage approvals.

Unusually, these actions were considered and approved the very next day by City Council when they were bundled into the City of Ottawa's massive omnibus strategy for surviving the fall-out from the Province's orders to upend the planning process as we knew it.

Community comments on the proposed 1010 Somerset concept plan

Building over Plouffe Park

David Seaborn

City staff are proposing major changes to Plouffe Park, and the mostly empty lands known as 1010 Somerset (west of the Plant Recreation Centre/Plouffe Park over to the LRT tracks).

These changes include building over most of Plouffe Park. These plans were developed without community input and are contrary to the City of Ottawa Official Plan provisions for the neighbourhood.

Starting in 2014, local residents, business and land owners, developers, and city staff worked together to develop the Corso Italia District Secondary Plan, balancing the needs and interests of all parties. In February 2021, City Council approved the plan to implement the agreed vision.

Under this plan, Plouffe Park would be maintained, and 1.2 hectare of additional



The proposed site plan from the 1010 Somerset concept plan on Engage Ottawa. (Hobin Architecture)

park space added in the adjoining 1010 Somerset lands when they are developed.

But staff from the city's Recreational, Cultural, and Facility Services (RCFS)

are now proposing a different plan which does not follow the Official Plan, eliminates Plouffe Park in 2024, and provides less than the 1 hectare of green space on the 1010 Somerset lands.

The local neighbourhood is slated to see more than 25,000 new residents in the next 10 years. It already has the lowest per-capita park space in the entire city. Even with retaining the 0.8 hectare Plouffe Park and adding an additional 1.2 hectares of park, the per-capita park space will decline.

But the new proposal will not only build over Plouffe Park but also insert a loop road around the Plant Recreation Centre, further carving

up the site.

The Engage Ottawa documents do not mention that Plouffe Park would be paved over. The City staff's proposal would see Plouffe Park closed for the construction of a new French public school in 2024 without any new parkland for seven to 10 years.

The 1010 Somerset plans have been developed in isolation from meaningful engagement with the people that live in the community and who will use the facilities. This has resulted in a proposal that forces an unnecessary choice between essential public goods (a school vs. park space), that would leave the neighbourhood without green space for

a decade, and that has unnecessarily short timelines for proper consideration.

The present 1010 Somerset/ Plouffe Park concept must be revisited with an aim to properly accommodate the

needs of a neighbourhood that is growing rapidly. We should work together – community, city, Ottawa Community Housing, school boards, and province – to get it right.



The proposed road and buildings that would cover the current Plouffe Park. (David Seaborn / Hobin Architecture)



Plouffe Park (0.8Ha) and a further (1.2+Ha) park area; all in light green, as approved by City Council in 2021 in the Corso Italia Secondary Plan.

What's wrong with the 1010 Somerset concept plan

1. Losing Plouffe Park

2. **Planning for Louise Arbour School on top of parkland** instead of along Somerset or in Gladstone Village. A school located on Somerset Street with its play yards contiguous with the new parkland would be mutually beneficial. Plouffe Park is a temporary flood basin which the school board would have to pay to replace if the school was located there.

3. **Getting short-changed on the size of the future park.** Several buildings are shown encroaching on the park. As well, some of the parkland along the southern edge has been sold to Ottawa Community Housing.

4. **A city facility that takes up too much room on the site.** Park space doesn't grow on trees. It is extremely hard to find park space in built-up areas. New buildings should be higher rather than broad; or else smaller. The facility should firstly serve the local community, and only if there is sufficient space serve a larger population.

5. **Underground parking garages for 840 vehicles** when this site is between two transit stations and on two major bus routes. Having a garage entrance on Oak Street is antithetical to the local nature of that residential street.

6. **Isolating the Plant Recreation Centre inside a bus loop.** This plan would diminish the recreational value of the Centre by preventing it from programming in adjacent outdoor space. Bus loops are for the suburbs, not downtown where land is precious.

7. **Setting buildings that are along Somerset away from and below Somerset Street,** instead of creating an animated street of shops and restaurants immediately adjacent and level with the Somerset Street sidewalk.

- David Seaborn

Stop the cannibalization of Plouffe Park

Robert Fox

The city is seeking input on the concept plan for 1010 Somerset Street and adjacent public lands. Unfortunately, the online feedback form makes it difficult to communicate the depth of my opposition to the cannibalization of Plouffe Park.

Plouffe Park offers one of the few green spaces between Dow's Lake and the riverfront, and one of the very few outdoor recreation spaces in the neighbourhood. Its grass is poorly maintained so it probably isn't used as intensely as it might be, but it remains a vital open green space that contributes greatly to the quality of life in this neighbourhood. Its location directly on Preston Street and immediately adjacent to the Plant Recreation Centre is a huge asset, offering culturally significant street views of soccer games and other pursuits that contribute to our health and quality of life.

To sacrifice this park for a building with the promise there will be a replacement park within the decade is indefensible. We need more park and open space – for both active recreation and for shade, for rest, for picnics, for reading, for family celebrations – not less.

And as the Gladstone Village is developed, the demand for that space

will increase exponentially. To tuck the open space back within the new development, unseen from Preston Street and cut off from the current under-served residents of the neighbourhood, would be an affront and a provocation.

I welcome a new French-language school, but I see no compelling reason it has to be accommodated on what is now Plouffe Park. I would have thought a location on Gladstone, closer to the Corso Italia transit station, or further along Somerset would be more appropriate. Alternately, it could be tucked into Gladstone Village, located adjacent to the LRT track and the active transportation links that border it.

I also welcome an Indigenous cultural element to the concept plan – though again I'm not clear, why here specifically? I would have thought something closer to the Ottawa River and to Adisöke might be preferable, if the target population is dispersed across the city. So I'd want to know whether this idea arose from consultations with authentic Indigenous leaders and organizations – or if rather it's the product of a planning process which is trying to jam onto this site the full wish list of outstanding needs, shortfalls, and deficits the city is trying to address.

The concept of incorporating other arts, recreation, and cultural facilities

on the site is also exciting. But, again, the priority is to meet the needs of the dramatically and historically under-served local residents (and the large numbers who will be relatively densely housed who will soon join us), rather than trying to shoe-horn onto this site region-wide facilities that cannot easily be accommodated.

While I have no objection to private businesses that serve local residents in the mix, I do not support the accommodation of significant private or commercial enterprises within this concept plan. There is available commercial space along Preston and Somerset (and potentially within the City Centre redevelopment and the Canada Lands) and I believe we should be supporting the viability of these businesses and adjacent commercial properties, rather than using this site for uses other than housing, green space, and recreation.

It's crucial that the concept plan be amended to reflect the priorities of the community, while contributing to the City's broader needs and vision. That most definitely includes the preservation – and significant expansion – of Plouffe Park, the value of which is all the more evident as we experience the types of summer heat we can increasingly expect given the impact of climate chaos.

Orange Art Gallery facing eviction; heritage building to be left empty



The gallery's main floor still has the same basic layout as when it was a lumber mill headquarters.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Alayne McGregor

The Orange Art Gallery, which has occupied a heritage building on the west edge of Centretown for the last decade, is facing eviction by the end of the year – with no other tenant scheduled to move in.

Gallery co-owner Jim Hollander told *The BUZZ* that he was told by District Realty about eight months ago that there would be no renewal when his lease expired at the end of 2023. He said the only reason he was given was that they “wanted to see the building empty.

They don't want to negotiate a new deal.”

“That was their way of kicking us out. They had no plans to rent it to someone else because we have a right to match that (offer). So they just wanted us out.”

He said they had had no previous disputes with the landlord: “We've had a good relationship the whole time.”

The building at 290 City Centre Avenue was empty and in “complete disrepair” when the gallery moved in in 2013, he said; they did substantial renovations, including opening up the ceiling, replacing the flooring, and adding air conditioning and

an outside deck.

Hollander suspected the building would stay empty, and the ultimate goal was to tear it down and redevelop the area.

The gallery, which exhibits and sells works by many local visual artists, also runs art classes and private functions like weddings and birthday parties. Pre-pandemic, it ran a regular concert series.

Hollander said they had mostly recovered from the financial effects of closures during the pandemic. “Things are a lot better now. It seems to pay the bills and provide a little bit of a profit as well.” The business is vi-

able and could continue in this building, he said.

The gallery has asked for public support, and is currently displaying two large sheets of paper containing signatures and messages of support. “A tremendous number of people have put down their names and comments. It's been overwhelming.”

However, “I don't know really what we can do, because they own the building. At the end, it's the landlord's decision.”

He said they hadn't yet received their official notice



Jim Hollander in front of the building's fireproof vault.

to vacate, which would have to come by October 1, but they have been told not to take on any new events for 2024. He estimated the gallery had turned down more than 100 events for 2024 and 2025. They have yet to start looking for a new location.

David Flemming, the chair of Heritage Ottawa's advocacy committee, said that the building at 290 City Centre is on the city's Heri-

tage Register, which gives it a small amount of protection (see the story by Robert Smythe on page 3.)

He said the group has contacted city staff to try to have the 90-year-old building considered for heritage designation more quickly, and preferably by the end of 2023. Designation under the Ontario Heritage Act would make it more difficult to demolish.

The history of 290 City Centre Avenue

Alayne McGregor

The small redbrick heritage building at 290 City Centre Avenue – stuck in the middle of the City Centre parking lot and visible from the Somerset Street Bridge – has a story that links back to Ottawa's lumber industry past.

Heritage researcher David Jeanes has been looking into the history of the building, which is currently occupied by the Orange Art Gallery. He's concluded that it was originally the headquarters of the W.C. Edwards

lumber company, which ran a planing mill in the City Centre area which was sold in the late 1950s.

W.C. Edwards owned what was one of the largest lumber companies in Canada. He was also a Senator and lived in 24 Sussex Drive.

Jeanes has not yet been able to find exactly when the building was erected, but has narrowed it down to around 1930. It appears in aerial photographs from 1933.

He is also still researching the building's architect, but suspects it was John P. MacLaren, who also designed

the Mayfair Theatre and the Rideau branch of the Ottawa Public Library. Both have brickwork decoration and a Dutch gable roof similar to 290 City Centre. MacLaren also had family connections to the lumber industry, he said.

The company offices were on the main floor of the building, Jeanes said. The metal-doored room on that floor was not a bank vault (as had been suggested), but rather a fireproof documents room. Downstairs was a recreation centre for employees, with a library and a billiards room.

Ottawa Arts Council offering micro-grants

Alayne McGregor

The Ottawa Arts Council has begun offering micro-grants to Ottawa artists to help them more easily undertake small projects.

The ActivArt grants are available to existing and emerging artists who live in Ottawa. They can be for either a community project (\$500 to \$1000) or an individual artist (\$250 to \$500), and cover all types of artistic endeavours.

The grants are intended to cover the cost of creation materials, professional development, travel, equipment/software, marketing or promotional materials, subsistence, and basic needs for artists' work in all disciplines.

Applications close September 22 and are available at www.ottawaartscouncil.ca

Joni Hamlin, the council's communications and development manager, said that

the grant program has \$5,000 to disburse this year, which came from individual donations and the profits from the council's LUCK! Fundraiser last December.

During the pandemic, she said, the council partnered with the city to identify the impact of COVID-19. “Many of the responses from arts workers indicated that access to funding was difficult, and larger grant applications were challenging to secure.”

The micro-grants “will offer some relief to artists that are looking for a little injection of financial support,” she said. It will also benefit the council because it will bring them into relationships with diverse artists throughout the community. The council will ensure the grants will be distributed across the city.

This is currently a pilot project, Hamlin said, but they hope to continue it with donations.

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Two of the artworks by clients of Belong Ottawa on display at the Main branch of the Ottawa Public Library this month.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Exhibit shows art flourishes everywhere

Alayne McGregor

A new exhibit at the Ottawa Public Library shows that poverty is no barrier to art.

Belong Ottawa, whose three locations serve people who need food and other supports, is featuring art by its nine of its clients at the library this month. The pieces are displayed on the second floor of the Main branch, on window walls around the atrium.

The bright and engaging canvases include both abstract and representational pieces in a variety of styles.

This is the fifth summer that Belong Ottawa's locations have displayed their clients'

art at the library. Liz deMelo, the organization's Community Development Manager, said that the artwork was created in its Creative Expressions program. The program provides supplies such as canvases, paint, and photographic printing to clients.

The exhibit "showcases the talent that exists in all three of our communities, with folks that are marginalized and don't really have a lot of opportunities."

Some of the work is new, while others may have been in clients' portfolios for years, deMelo said. The clients chose the pieces and approached her to join the exhibit.

"It's an opportunity to showcase a side of the folks that we serve. Often community members don't understand what it means to have some of the barriers people have living in poverty or homelessness – that they have these talents and they have these aspirations like any of us."

The artworks are available for purchase, she said.

Belong Ottawa's locations are: The Well on Elgin Street; St. Luke's Table, now temporarily at the Bronson Centre; and Centre 454 on King Edward Avenue. The three locations recently merged into one organization in reaction to the pandemic.

OCDSB report: What a school year! We've accomplished and learned a lot

Justine Bell, OCDSB trustee

I'd first like to thank educators, staff, community groups, committees, students and caregivers on the successful completion of another school year. At graduation ceremonies and school events this past year, I was repeatedly struck by the resilience of students and their support networks. I am grateful for our community and hope you are all enjoying summertime.

As for the board, we had our challenges this year and by the end of it we accomplished more than expected. It was a great honour to be selected by the newly elected board as vice-chair. What this role means in practice is that I chair many of the meetings and help to steer the agenda and governance of the board alongside Board Chair Lyra Evans.

So what did the new board accomplish?

We passed a very constrained budget of approximately \$1.1 billion. With the provincial education funding, we were working with a budget shortfall of over \$19.0 million and made every effort to align the budget with our strategic priorities. It was not easy, but I am confident that student centred decisions were made.

We hired a new Director of Education! Dr. Pino Buffone comes to us with 29 years of experience in education including provincial and public education leadership roles. Most importantly, he is kind and determined to support the OCDSB to be a dynamic, creative learning organization that fosters the achievement, well-being and dignity of every student.

We developed and approved the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. This is the guiding document which directs the district for the next four years. Our strategic priorities are now centred on learning, well-being, and social responsibility.

We faced some contentious issues and

continued to learn so that we can do better. Protesters repeatedly showed up expressing concern about how our school district recognizes and protects gender identity and gender expression rights in schools. Our commitment is firm: to promote inclusivity, and to combat racism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, antisemitism, and all forms of discrimination or hate. To ensure the safety of all participants at our public meetings, we had to take increased security measures to support public access.

Our local schools have also accomplished a lot this year!

Our elementary schools saw significant increases to enrolment, and partnered with community organizations and small business. The Adult High School saw hundreds of students graduate, many of whom are new to Canada and eager to contribute to our community. Students from Urban Aboriginal had a very successful art exhibit of skateboards at the National Arts Centre and went on a canoe trip. Lisgar's arts programming continued to wow the community and Richard Phaff continued to provide an alternate program for students who work better in an independent learning environment. I am so proud of our community and what we've accomplished together for students.

As we begin to implement our new strategic plan in September of this year, we will continue to update and develop key policies and procedures as well as reviews of key programs, such as the review of the English (with core French) program. Our decisions this year will no doubt impact our neighbourhood schools.

As always, I will continue to provide updates via social media, *The BUZZ*, and at school council meetings. Please reach out anytime.

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Audit case exposes election act ambiguity



Sam Hersh of Horizon Ottawa (l) with lawyer Kyle Morrow (r) await the committee verdict.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Alayne McGregor

A prominent municipal advocacy group faces an audit, which will likely clarify the rules around third-party advertisers in city elections.

On July 31, the city's Election Compliance Audit Committee voted to grant an audit of Horizon Ottawa, on the basis that the group started to advertise an event before it registered as a third-party advertiser in the 2022 city elections.

The committee, which is independent of city council, acts in response to complaints. Any eligible elector who believes that a candidate or third-party advertiser has contravened the campaign finance rules in the Municipal Elections Act may apply for a compliance audit of their election campaign finances.

This election, the only three complaints, including that against Horizon Ottawa, came from one person: local developer Edward Phillips. *The BUZZ* asked Phillips why he made the complaints, and why he hired a lawyer to present his complaint before the committee. He replied "No comment" to both questions.

One of Horizon Ottawa's main campaigns has been to calculate how much some city councillors' election campaigns have been supported by those involved in the local development industry. Its development.money website

contains a list of city election donors associated with the development industry. Under "Taggart" in the "[Top Donors](#)" page on that website is the name "Edward Phillips."

Third-party advertisers are relatively new in city elections, only having been introduced in 2018. If a person, group, or corporation wants to advertise in any broadcast, print, electronic or other medium in order to promote, support, or oppose a candidate or a referendum question in an Ontario municipal election, they must register as a third-party advertiser. An advertisement includes traditional ads as well as materials such as brochures or signs.

They cannot raise or spend any money on advertisements that will appear during an election until they have registered as a third party advertiser and opened a bank account exclusively for the election campaign.

Horizon Ottawa registered as a third party advertiser on August 24, 2022, and released its list of endorsed candidates for the city election on August 25.

Earlier that month it had started advertising, with posters and on social media, its HorizonFest event, to be held on September 10. That was a nine-hour event which it called "a full inspiring day of music, speeches from political leaders and other activities

with over a dozen artists" in a September 7 press release.

In its election financial report, Horizon Ottawa included HorizonFest as a fundraising event "out of an abundance of caution," said its lawyer, Kyle Morrow. He noted that it lost \$6,200 on the event.

According to Phillip's lawyer, John Pappas, even if the advertisements and posters were only about HorizonFest and not about candidates, they still cost money for printing and tape and design, and would still be campaign expenses. He argued that campaign expenses should be interpreted broadly, and that it was irrelevant whether an event lost money. The intent and purpose of the event was what mattered.

Morrow termed the complaint a "fishing expedition to silence those who disagree with the complainant politically." There is a legal ambiguity in the act as to what is a third party advertisement, he argued, and there's no current case law from any court about third party advertisers.

The act also does say that free/unboosted social media posts are not regulated under the act, he noted, and posters are not regulated if the soliciting of contributions is merely incidental.

And while HorizonFest provided a platform for candidates to speak, it was not clear that that could be considering promoting a candidate, Morrow said. Sam Hersh of Horizon Ottawa said that about 10 percent of the time at HorizonFest was devoted to speeches.

The committee considered two other complaints. It granted the application to have Doug Thompson audited, on the grounds he undervalued signs he had reused from previous elections in his financial report. It rejected a similar complaint against Shawn Menard.

The committee has now asked the city clerk to provide potential auditors. It will then appoint the auditors and determine the exact nature of the audit. Once the auditors have reported, it will decide whether to start legal proceedings.



The sculpture *Joy* is back on Sparks Street, repaired after it was vandalized in January.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Joy has returned to the Sparks Street Mall

Joy returned to Sparks Street this summer, fully repaired.

The bronze sculpture by Bruce Garner shows four children dancing together in a circle, and has stood on Sparks Street near Elgin since 1970. It was seriously vandalized in January: one of the four figures in the sculpture was left dangling, and another figure's hand was broken away.

"It's great to have it back. It was gone for far too long," said Kevin McHale, the executive director of the Sparks Street BIA. Be-

sides being repaired, the statue was restored and rewaxed, and "almost as good as the day it was installed." The total repair cost was about \$23,000.

He said that the identity of the vandals was never discovered.

The mall had experienced a slightly increase in graffiti and flowers being ripped out in the last couple years, he said, but nothing as dramatic as what happened to *Joy*. It is reporting and tracking these incidents.

Wallack's, IGO Cyber staying in Centretown

Alayne McGregor

The new development planned by Smart Living to replace the east side of Bank Street between Nepean and Lisgar has meant longstanding businesses are being forced to move.

Some are staying in Centretown.

Michael Wallack said that Wallack's Art Supplies and Framing has found new premises in Centretown close to its current location, but could not yet announce the address. He said the new premises would have about the same retail space as the current location.

He said they were given notice to move by next February, but expected to move in the winter.

IGO Cyber House said its computer services business would be moving to 44 Elm Street in the Dalhousie area before the end of the year, and probably in the next couple months.

HLC Laser Clinic/Hairmosa had a sign in its window saying it would be moving out of Centretown to 1012 Wellington Street, as of June 20.

The BUZZ was not able to contact owners or managers of other businesses on the block.

Musica Viva Singers looking for new voices

Ottawa's Musica Viva Singers (MVS) choir is in search of new voices for its Fall term. This Centretown community choir especially needs voices in the lower range of tenor and bass, but continues to welcome sopranos and altos.

MVS meets every Monday evening in-person at the Centretown United Church, 507 Bank St. New singers are invited to try us for free on September 11, but are asked to commit by the next rehearsal on September 18, at a cost of \$110 for this term. You are free to mask if you wish. To learn more: visit www.musica-viva.ca or email Marjorie at MusicaVivaMembership@gmail.com

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Three of the remaining Chinatown sculptures.

ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

Chinatown sculptures returned

Alayne McGregor

The Chinatown BIA has got two of its stolen sculptures back.

BIA executive director Yukang Li said that a dinosaur and a panda sculpture were returned in early July by the three people who stole them, after a video showing the theft of the dinosaur was released.

The three have been identified and reported to the police, he said, but he hadn't received any updates on the case by last week.

No further sculptures have been stolen or damaged, he said, but "there's not too many left."

The bright plastic Chinese-style sculptures and selfie stations were installed by the BIA in late March 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 Economic De-

velopment Agency for Southern Ontario.

However, many were stolen or vandalized. The BIA tweeted that all the panda statues were stolen, as well as two monkeys. One of the Poonie Bears statues was beheaded.

This spring, the BIA also installed several stone lions on Somerset near the edges of Chinatown. Li said those (much heavier and larger) sculptures have not been vandalized.

As part of drawing more people to Chinatown, the BIA ran a well-attended night market in June, with several blocks of Somerset Street West closed off for three days for booths selling Asian delicacies, along with multicultural performances.

Next up is an Ottawa Chinatown Bazaar on Sunday, August 20, in which local vendors will sell crafts, artwork, jams, cookies, clothing, jewellery, home goods, souvenirs, flowers, and seasonal products. The event will be free and held from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the parking lot at 687 Somerset.

DCA report: Parks, Booth St., gardens

Ed McKenna

Save Plouffe Park!

The most recent DCA board meeting, on June 22, was dominated by discussion of a single agenda item: the city's snap announcement that they propose to build over Plouffe Park.

Despite the pressure to respond to the city's plans, the board was able to have some fun last month and enjoy the annual DCA summer BBQ, held this year on July 27 at Middle Hill House on Willow Street.

But it's back to business now. The board will resume its regular meeting schedule August 24, the fourth Thursday of the month. Committee activities are ramping up for a busy fall.

Public Realm Committee sets priorities

The Public Realm Committee has met twice this summer, on July 18 and most recently on August 8. While *Save Plouffe Park!* is number one, work continues on the committee's other priorities.

The success of this year's DCA Community Garden at Preston and Somerset West has underlined the importance of sustaining this community project, given the anticipated development of the property by the Canadian Vietnamese Centre. The former Sweet Willow Community Garden site on Rochester continues to be the most promising alternative.

A third committee goal for the coming year is to ensure the city's cash-in-lieu-of-parkland funding priorities include new locations on city-owned property in Dalhousie. Norman Rochester Park and New Aqueduct Park are in the advanced planning stages, but the committee is working to identify potential new sites for "de-paving and planting" in the neighbourhood.

Priorities four and five? It's all about trees: the Trees in Trust and Neighbourhoods Tree Inventory programs.

Booth Street traffic (again)

With the re-opening of the Chaudière Crossing to two-lane traffic expected in September, Dalhousie residents on both sides of Albert Street are bracing themselves.

Vehicle use of Booth Street will intensify to more than 10,000 daily. Can drivers, especially those piloting heavy trucks, be persuaded *not* to proceed south on Booth through the

residential neighbourhood?

Some Booth Street residents, including members of the DCA's Mobility Committee, met with staff from Councillor Troster's office in July to discuss ways to discourage trucks from using Booth and to encourage them to stay on the designated truck routes through Dalhousie.

A number of traffic calming measures were discussed. It was agreed that a comprehensive traffic study, under the auspices of the National Capital Commission, must be undertaken to ensure that development on LeBreton Flats doesn't result in a decline in quality of life for existing residents.

On August 22, the DCA's Mobility Committee will meet to reconsider its support for the NCC's proposal to eliminate the plan for a Preston Extension from Albert to the Kichi Zibi Mikan. Is the extension the key to keeping trucks off Booth?

224 Preston (at Larch)

Members of the DCA's Plan Your Neighbourhood Committee took part in a public meeting June 21 to hear from representatives of 224 on Preston Inc., who propose to erect a six-storey mixed-use building, with 30 residential units, on the southwest corner of Preston and Larch.

This was also an opportunity for the community to comment on the proposal. We heard many of the questions and concerns that had been expressed by the committee in its letter to the city earlier in June, concerning height, setbacks from neighbouring properties, and landscaping.

You can examine the developer's application by [searching for 224 Preston](#) on the city's "What's happening in your neighbourhood" web page.

Eccles Street Block Party

Finally, let's put on the public record that the Eccles Street Block Party on June 17 was a great success. Supported by the DCA's Peaceable Neighbourhoods Committee, residents, their families, and friends took over Eccles between Booth and Rochester for what is becoming an annual event. We're already looking forward to next year!

Please join us for our August meeting, and check out our website: ottawadalhousie.ca
Contact: president@ottawadalhousie.ca

MP report: Summer updates

Yasir Naqvi

I have recently visited several great organizations in Ottawa Centre. At Tewegan Housing for Aboriginal Youth, I met with the dedicated team to announce a \$1.5 million federal investment in three Ottawa-based Indigenous women's and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations.

Tewegan Housing is an essential transitional home here in Ottawa Centre, providing a safe and culture-oriented environment for young First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women. This critical funding will help them and the other organizations to enhance their capacity and work towards eliminating violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people.

I also visited House to Home, a community-based not-for-profit organization furnishing homes for local refugee families. Their hard-working team of volunteers collect donated furniture and

household items for their warehouse and offer newcomers the dignity and comfort of picking out furniture for they need to make their new houses feel like homes. If you have secondhand furniture to donate, please visit h2hottawa.com to learn more.

Finally, the Federal Government has launched a public online consultation to support the development of a Safe Long Term Care Act. Throughout the pandemic, my team and I spoke with many Ottawa Centre residents about this issue and I'm glad to see that there is a path forward to solidify standards and ensure that long term care is safe, reliable, and centered on residents' needs.

This is a chance to share your perspective and advice on how federal legislation can help advance the quality and safety of long-term care: online, by e-mail, or by mail until September 21. Visit bit.ly/LTC-consultation. Any questions? Reach out to our office.

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Stories from the 2023 Ottawa Jazz Festival

Stephen Thirlwall

The Ottawa Jazz Festival, returned this year with a solid core of jazz, while still maintaining excellent music from other genres and blends that to appeal to all musical tastes.

Herbie Hancock

Herbie Hancock was the festival headliner. He began by educating the crowd, saying that musical performances are not merely entertainment. They are experiences, suggesting that they can deeply affect our lives and be carried away with us. He later talked about faith and spirituality (in his case Buddhism) being at the core of his music.

His fingers flying over the various keyboards that surrounded him, he played pieces from throughout his career ranging from funky R&B, through full on jazz and into intergalactica. He has surrounded himself with younger generation musicians, each a genius in their own right. Terence Blanchard, for example, is himself a band leader who has written film scores and operas.

From Trios to sextets

The highlight of the festival for me were Tuesday eve-

ning's concerts by the Brad Mehldau and Avishai Cohen Trios, followed on Wednesday by the Mark Guiliana Quartet. This was a year of great pianists, double bassists and drummers with each band providing a uniquely identifiable sound and playing with incredible tightness. The musicians were so in tune with one another in timing, spirit and infusion of emotion. The intricacy with which Guiliana played was astounding, whether soft or pounding. Avishai's new drummer, the slender Roni Kaspi, played amazingly as if she had the strength of a muscular rock drummer.

There also exists a parallel family of jazz enthusiasts, extending over several generations. A young professional couple who had travelled from Tennessee to Ottawa just to hear live performances of the groups led by Mehldau, Cohen, Guiliana, and John Scofield were impressed with the festival's manageability, reasonable cost (far below what they would pay in Memphis), and the positive vibe and flow.

The 6:30 p.m. shows on the Main Stage have always been the place to discover amazing Canadian jazz talent. Three such bands were Gentiane MG from Montreal, the Will Bonness Quintet from



Pianist Brad Mehldau with bassist Larry Grenadier.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

Toronto and Winnipeg, and Toronto-based Avataar. Avataar did a jazz set mixed with classical East Indian music.

Laufy, Melody, and Mary

We heard from friends about the concert by Laufy and her beautiful traditional jazz singing. She is also very skilled playing several instruments. Melody Gardot is an excellent singer of sultry jazz, accompanied by a very World Music jazz band. They

even involved some African kora-like (string-gourd) instruments. Unfortunately, halfway through the show, the concert was stopped due to a thunderstorm.

Mary Ancheta's Quintet, with Mary using the Steinway piano for some pieces, performed their funky jazz show even though they also faced moderate bouts of rain.

The Arooj-Vijay-Shazard group is at an experimental frontier in jazz and meditation. Often electronic can be annoying but this form was accessible, soothing and took you to transcendental states and places beyond. It was played on keyboards and guitar, accompanied by the spoken word and song, some from Shi'ite and Sufi texts. Vijay Iyer generated both electronic sounds and melodious themes. The group's performances are improvised to a high degree but in a semi-organized collaborative manner searching for freedom and identity through love and the music.

Non-Jazz

Feist, Lord Huron, and William Prince are all superb performers from the current Canadian mainstream music

pantheon. Feist gave a powerful vocal and guitar presentation, a perfect opening for the festival. Lord Huron mixes folk, rock and country in a very classic Canadian rock style ending with a lovely rendition of Neil Young's "Harvest Moon." William Prince's voice is unusual and beautiful and would probably be outstanding regardless of the genre of music, but his focus is country-flavoured ballads.

Snarky Puppy is a Texas-based collective of about 20 rotating members. Their sound has steadily evolved through folk, rock, and touches of jazz. They now have a very bold, funky and driving sound, totally instrumental, with brass and violin added to the mix. Part of their sound reminds me of Chicago's early records but without singing.

Choices

The challenge of the Ottawa International Jazz Festival is choosing which shows to attend and which ones you can get into.

We could not get into the Fourth Stage for Kenny Werner on piano and Gregoire Maret on harmonica but watched

the performance on the monitor outside the hall. It was an extraordinary presentation of standard songs played instrumentally. "You can do that with a harmonica?"

I was really torn on a few days as to what to see. I gave up seeing Angelique Francis and Buddy Guy to take in something new and different (Iyer and friends). Then friends told me how great the other shows were and that Angelique's performance was a family affair, and at the end of his set, Buddy Guy kindly brought Angelique on stage to play with him. I also missed both shows by John Scofield to see the highly experimental electronics of Sam Gendall and Phillippe Melanson that was played through a saxophone and a percussion keyboard. While interesting to see how it was done, it was hard for some people to take for very long.

Each person has their preferred sound and performers. But you can't see everything and there is a lot of overlap in the schedule. All music festivals are hotbeds of musical intersection, interaction and cross-pollination, and their existence depends on sponsors, volunteers, and audiences.



The horn section of Snarky Puppy.

STEPHEN THIRLWALL/THE BUZZ

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Somerset Ward report: Rethinking community security for all of us

Ariel Troster

What does it mean to feel safe in your community? The answer to that question can be very different, depending on who you are and how you live.

For many of us, it's the right to walk through a city park without being harassed. For the youth I met from a drop-in centre on Somerset Street, it's the ability to wait for a bus and not be exposed to racist taunts. And for my neighbours experiencing homelessness, it can mean finding a place to rest that is sheltered from the elements.

The economic downturn in the core triggered by the shift to remote work has led to more empty storefronts and fewer eyes on the street. Inflation and the rising cost of food have led to record food bank usage all over our city. And out-of-control rents have exacerbated a homelessness crisis that caused Ottawa to declare a city-wide emergency in 2020.

I am not alone in noticing some troubling trends in Centretown, including more instances of erratic behaviour from people experiencing homelessness and more open drug use in areas close to where people live. Harm reduction workers tell me that the new poisons in the drug supply have triggered mental health issues, and with the cost of rent at record highs, many folks who are struggling do not have the stability of a safe place to call home.

Decades of social policy failure have contributed to the crisis we are seeing in down-

town Ottawa, but I understand that residents want to see immediate improvements – because we all have the right to feel safe in the places we live, work, and play.

I am happy to say that two important policies that I have been pushing for were passed unanimously by Ottawa City Council: the creation of a new supportive housing hub, and the introduction of a pilot non-police crisis intervention service.

That said, these programs will take some time to get launched. So, in the meantime, I have been working with community and social services staff, local outreach organizations, Ottawa Public Health, and our community police resource officers to address community security concerns related to overdoses, mental health challenges, and homelessness.

I will be advocating for deeper investments in affordable housing and frontline services as we begin the budget consultation process for Budget 2024.

My office organized a Community Meal and Discussion on Neighbourhood Security with MPP Joel Harden, on Tuesday, August 9. We invited representatives from the Ottawa Police, community social service agencies, Ottawa Public Health, and Business Improvement Associations to join us.

The suggestions that the panel and participants put forward will help guide my advocacy at the council table and my work with community groups over the next few months.

When we work together, our entire community is much stronger – and safer.

City slightly eases right-of-way rules for gardens, Little Free Libraries

Alayne McGregor

The controversy over what will be allowed in the city right-of-way will continue, as city staff have been told to examine further changes to rules about front yard gardens.

In June, City Council passed proposed regulations on what can be planted or placed in the strip of land in your front yard abutting the sidewalk. That's considered to be part of the city's "right of way" for that road, and can be several metres in depth, depending on the road. (See the story in the June *BUZZ*.)

Most of the restrictions proposed for the Use and Care of Roads bylaw, including disallowing gardens near fire hydrants, hydro transformers, and bus stops, and forbidding any landscaping but plants, were approved.

Staff were directed to examine whether growing herbs and vegetables for food should be allowed on rights of way, with a deadline of Q2 2024. Allowing raised garden boxes – currently forbidden because they might interfere with access to buried utilities and other road maintenance – will also be examined.

In response to community complaints, council allowed Little Free Libraries (LFLs) to be installed on arterial and collector roads as well as local roads (which otherwise would have disallowed many residential streets in Centretown). They must be at least 0.5m from the road, but since they're generally placed beside a sidewalk, this should not be a problem.

The maximum height allowed for plants will now be one metre, instead of 0.75m.

A further clarification was added: a list of plants defined as invasive species and thus prohibited from being planted in the right-of-way will be included in the bylaw. The Ontario Auditor-General says in a 2022 report that these plants include lily of the valley, Oriental bittersweet, Creeping Jenny, goutweed, Norway maple, periwinkle, spearmint, and wintercreeper.

The passing of the bylaw does not seem to have affected Centretown gardeners. *The BUZZ* saw many lovely gardens with riverstone, raised beds, sunflowers 1.5m tall, and other violations as we walked through the neighbourhood this summer.

Community upset at 1010 Somerset plan

continued from page 1
easy access to bathrooms and changing facilities.

The new greenspace would contain a fieldhouse, basketball courts, and an ice rink, plus a one hectare park containing two sports fields.

On Somerset, there would be three residential high rises, one of them containing affordable housing, and a two-story city facility connected to the PRC by an overhead walkway. The high rises would be 16, 20, and 25 storeys high. The city facility would contain "a mixture of cultural, recreational, and multi-purpose space."

Boucher said the community had expected the school to be placed nearer the Corso Italia LRT station. In this area, she said, it would be more appropriately placed

near Somerset Street, rather than the city facility. She also questioned why the city facility was only two stories high, when there was such a squeeze for space.

The city facility is supposed to have 220 car parking spots on one level and optionally another 220 on a second level. The PRC currently has 41 surface spots. The high rises are supposed to have another 400 parking spaces on two levels.

Boucher said that amount of car parking was unnecessary given the complex would be served by regular buses on both Somerset and Preston, and was close to the Bayview LRT station. She questioned the expected audience for the facility; she was worried it would be designed to attract users

from across the city, when the Dalhousie area is already deficient in recreation facilities compared to other parts of Ottawa.

Most importantly, she said, this concept plan does not provide any more greenspace, despite the fact that the Gladstone Village development means a big jump in population and the area is also seriously deficient in greenspace.

Boucher was also concerned that there would be no park for children to play in while the new complex is being built. The PPRA currently uses Plouffe Park for all its summer programs, she said.

She said the DCA and P4X will be pushing for a revised plan.

Freedom Convoyers try to dismiss class action

Alayne McGregor

The defendants in the class action against the Freedom Convoy are again trying to get the action dismissed.

They have filed a motion to dismiss on the grounds the action is a strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPP). The motion will be heard on October 11-12. An earlier motion to have the case dismissed was rejected in March.

Their motion argues that the convoy occupation was an exercise of free speech protected by anti-SLAPP laws: "expression made by the defendants that relates to a matter of public interest."

"The harm likely to be or have been allegedly suffered by the plaintiffs as a result of the defendants' expression is not sufficiently serious that the public interest in permitting the proceeding to continue outweighs the public interest in protecting that expression," the motion said.

The occupation gridlocked much of Ottawa's downtown for three weeks in late January and February, 2022, filling streets with trucks. It inflicted horns blaring for hours, diesel fumes, and on-street harassment on

many residents. Essential services like Para Transpo could not access the area.

The Ottawa People's Commission, which held hearings with local residents about the impact of the occupation, concluded that the "entrenched occupation" was marked by "widespread human rights abuse, amidst a climate of threats, fear, sexual harassment and intimidation marked by racism, misogyny, antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and other expressions of hate and intolerance."

The defendants in the class action are those who organized or helped fund the Freedom Convoy. Named in the motion to dismiss are Tamara Lich, Tom Marazzo, Chris Barber, Sean Tiessen, Miranda Gasior, Daniel Bulford, Ryan Mihilewicz, Dale Enns, Freedom 2022 Human Rights and Freedoms, Brad Howland, Harold Jonker and Jonker Trucking Inc.

A further motion has been filed to transfer the class action hearing to Toronto, because several defendants say they can't get a fair trial in Ottawa due to the number of Ottawa residents (including judges and lawyers) who may either be class members

or potential witnesses. This motion is from GiveSendGo LLC and its founder Jacob Wells, Chris Garrah, Nicholas St. Louis (aka @NOBO-DYCARIBOU), Benjamin Dichter, and Brigitte Belton. It will be heard if the first motion fails.

Paul Champ, the lawyer representing Zexi Li and the other plaintiffs in the action, will oppose the two motions. He said he viewed them as "basically as a stall tactic."

He had earlier estimated that a certification hearing (to determine facts and whether this claim is an appropriate class action) would occur in late 2023 or early 2024. If that hearing was successful, then the actual trial would follow.

The \$290 million class action seeks damages for harm and losses incurred by residents, businesses, and employees from the 2022 convoy occupation in Ottawa. It has had money raised by occupiers, about \$5.3 million, frozen to possibly pay part of those damages.

Lich and Barber will soon go on trial for criminal charges related to the convoy. The trial is scheduled for early September in Ottawa.

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Youth basketball and family fun in St. Luke's Park

Gail McGuire

On Saturday, July 29, the annual basketball game between the St. Luke's Bulls – the park's team – and the Ottawa Police Services team – the Police Blues – took place in St. Luke's Park at 166 Frank Street.

The event is organized by an informal community association of St. Luke's basketball players and has been held almost continuously since 2005.

The event is part of the St. Luke's Family Fun Fest. But a key focus for the organizers is the basketball game for youth and to make it a fun day for families. Youth players were recruited for the game by an adult and a youth player from St. Luke's court. The team was named the All Stars and players were assigned to either the Gold or Blue Teams.

Patrick Allen, director of ticket sales for the Ottawa Blackjacks, Ottawa's professional basketball team, was at the event and explained that pro basketball organizations across the country actively support youth basketball such as this.

Mo Hagggar, who played at St. Luke's court and continues to do so, is now assistant coach of the Algonquin College Men's Basketball Team. Algonquin College Students Association provided a prize for the Most Valuable Player from one youth team and Sport Chek did so for the other team. The t-shirts for both teams were provided by Alycia Koulamallah, a nutritionist and co-owner at Songui Fitness in Centretown.

A St. Luke's Park neighbour, who has enjoyed watching basketball in the park from her second-storey balcony, arranged for a donation of food from Loblaws on Isabella Street. Other volunteers cooked and served food to approximately 250 people. CHUO FM Radio's DJs added the music.

At the invitation of the St. Luke's Bulls, Somerset Ward Councillor Ariel Troster attended the event. The Bulls are advocating for repairs and other improvements to the basketball court such as new poles and backboards for the hoops, and improved lighting. Troster said she was "happy to... meet neighbours and also to see a really thriving

part of the community that a lot of people might not know about unless they come here."

The event is partly organized by Ottawa Police Services who provided activities for children. Officers, such as Constable Brad Peak, one of the original organizers of the event and who used to play basketball at St. Luke's, was on hand, along with a fellow officer and two safety officers from Ottawa Community Housing, to provide outreach for recruitment for the service.

Active Youth Ottawa was also represented. It focuses on youth empowerment, building healthy connections with youth and supporting other youth organizations through fundraising and participating in events. The organization has volunteers from Ottawa Community Housing (OCH), Ottawa Police, Ottawa Bylaw, hospital security, Canadian Blood Services and more.

The final outcome of the youth basketball game saw the Gold Team as winners. As for the game between the Police Blues and the St. Luke's Bulls: the Bulls have always won and this year was no exception!



The Gold and Blue teams face off at the St. Luke's Park Family Fun Fest July 29.

GAIL MCGUIRE/THE BUZZ



Paul Pothier was one of many cyclists on the new bridge.

BRETT DELMAGE/THE BUZZ

Commanda Bridge opens

continued from page 1

"I cycle to work in Gatineau, and will now have exactly one street to cross between my home and work, versus crossing streets and sharing the road with cars at various points in the commute, making me much safer. Plus, I'll get to avoid some really bad construction (the War Museum, the terrible Chaudière crossing). It wasn't open when I went to work this morning, but it is how I am getting home tonight!"

Paul Pothier, who lives in the Golden Triangle, said his bike trips to Gatineau Park will improve.

"My 'usual' route involves taking the bike lane on Laurier, then north on Bay to Wellington and cross on the Portage Bridge. Many drivers on Laurier can't be bothered to respect the cycle lane and it's often blocked with cars and trucks. I have nearly been hit several times by turning vehicles. The surface is in poor condition.

"The Bay St. cycle track is not very comfortable to ride on – given the way it rises and falls to avoid the slightest inconvenience to any driver that has to cross it (and don't get me started about its condition on the

southbound side.) Approaching the Portage Bridge there is the start of protective curbing that is out of place (intruding into the bike lane) more often than not."

With the Commanda Bridge open, he can take the Queen Elizabeth Driveway to Dow's Lake, then a path to Carling and then the Trillium Pathway, and then across the bridge.

"Far fewer opportunities to get hit by inattentive drivers; far fewer requirements to deal with poor quality infrastructure."

Alex Duncan said that she and her grandmother, who walk together each week in Centretown, "are looking forward to the pedestrian access the bridge will provide. We love to walk down to the park and check out the hydro dam, but crossing the bridges over to Gatineau-Hull in that spot is unpleasant due to the existing infrastructure which prioritizes vehicles.

"We've found so much mental and physical health benefit from these moments alongside the river. Living downtown and having access to nature and multi-use paths a few blocks away is a treasured part of living in Ottawa for both of us."

BIA rebrands from Bank Street to Centretown

continued from page 1

Christine Leadman said that the reception of the rebranding has been "very positive. One of the things that we found was Bank Street is a very long street, so when we would say Bank Street, they would say, 'You're from Bank Street South or Old Ottawa South or the Glebe.' It was never Centretown."

The new name "encapsulates where we are. And with the expansion as well, it even speaks more to that. It does speak to us representing the Centretown area."

The BIA's new slogan will be "Uncommon to the core." "We're a very diverse community and we have to embrace that," Leadman said. "We have a little grit, we're a little edgy, and we're the centre of the city."

"There needs to be more support – to understand that if we're going to survive, if our city is going to do well and [retain] the economic vitality of our city, we need to have all areas of the city supporting each other, and particularly the core. Because without a strong core, your city becomes endangered."

She expected the change to take "close to two years," and said it was supported by the Downtown Revitalization Task Force.

Leadman said that the budget for the expanded BIA

would reflect the services it provides to businesses, such as graffiti removal, its mural program, and banners and flyers. "That would be built out as we move along; there's no set budget as yet." The 2022 Bank Street BIA budget was \$923,400, and its levy on businesses was \$691,508, according to figures provided by the Ottawa Coalition of BIAs (OCOBIA).

The BIA's strategic plan for the next decade also includes goals of an 80:20 ratio of specialist stores to big box/franchisees stores; a zero percent vacancy rate; and establishing 20 patios, five outdoor convening spaces, 10 murals/public art, and eight new greenspaces.

BIAs are created by the City of Ottawa at the request of businesses and property owners in a specific area. They beautify their areas with improvements like benches and flowers; they promote economic development in their areas; they run events and festivals like Glow Fair or night markets.

Each commercial property in a BIA pays a levy towards the BIA, which is collected along with property taxes by the city. Both these property owners and their commercial tenants belong to the BIA and have a vote in its decisions. Each BIA is governed by an elected board

of management.

Any change to a BIA, including to its boundaries, must be approved by Ottawa City Council and the affected businesses.

Ivan Gedz of Union 613 attended the event both on behalf of his restaurant and for the Somerset Village BIA on Somerset between Bank and O'Connor. He said the change was "phenomenal", and that his BIA is looking at merging with the new Centretown BIA.

Kevin McHale, the executive director of the Sparks Street BIA, said the Centretown BIA's rebranding "looks fabulous. I think it will make a great connection between the business community and the local population that it serves." Over the last few years, he said, BIAs had been looking at their roles in and connections to the local community.

"There are a lot of areas of downtown that we realized, during and after the convoy, that didn't have a BIA presence. Because of that, they weren't aware of a lot of things that were going on, funds that were available to them. They really felt they were isolated and alone. One of the biggest roles of a BIA is to ensure that its members know what's going on around them, help them with community stuff and things with the city."

He said the Sparks Street BIA may expand to some surrounding areas – "something that geographically and logically makes sense" – but is still in preliminary discussions with business and property owners in its area, as well as with the Centretown BIA.

"We realized there were a lot of businesses and property owners that weren't necessarily connected, so that's what we're in the process of exploring now. We're not in a rush to do this."

Yukang Li, the executive director of the Chinatown BIA, said that he didn't expect the change to the Centretown BIA's boundaries to affect his BIA, which covers Somerset between Bay and Preston. He said that his BIA has discussed boundary changes but doing that would take time and resources, and perhaps could be considered in 2024.

Somerset Ward Councillor Ariel Troster approved of the name change – "Centretown is how we all describe our community" – and the expansion: "I know there are a lot of businesses around the Bank Street area that are not officially part of the BIA, so I think it makes sense for the BIA to be able to represent more businesses."

Centretown Community Association President Mary Huang said the change was a great idea.



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What's BUZZing in Centretown: Don't forget your honey

Dinah Robinson

August is prime honey-producing time – but how it's produced is more complex than you might realize.

A single honeybee can only produce 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey in her entire life. Twelve bees need to work for a lifetime for us to have a single teaspoon of honey in our cup of afternoon tea.

Honeybees forage within a 3km radius from their hives. Younger field bees stay closer to home. Depending on the type of flower and the abundance of nectar, bees will visit up to 40 flowers in a single minute.

Bees will work from dawn until dusk, if the temperature is over 10°C and it is not raining. They only live for up to six weeks at this very active time of year.

How do bees make honey?

Bees collect nectar and convert it to honey in several steps. Nectar is high in water content (approximately 60 percent). To create honey, bees need to reduce the amount of water it contains. They fan their wings inside the hive to help evaporate the water. Honey must have no more than 18 percent water,

or it will begin to ferment.

Honey can last “forever” if it has the right water content and it is stored in an airtight container. Archeologists enjoyed a sweet treat during the excavation of King Tut's tomb, when they discovered a jar of honey. King Tut died in 1324 BCE; his tomb was discovered in 1922. The honey was still perfectly safe to eat after all that time.

The other step in transforming nectar into honey involves enzymes added by the bees. When they collect nectar, they carry it back to the hive inside their honey stomachs.

There are enzymes in the honey stomach that become part of the nectar mixture as the forager-bee transfers the liquid to another bee that is waiting to receive it inside the hive. This process repeats a few times until the nectar mixture is deposited in a cell of honeycomb. As the nectar is passed from one bee to another, more of the critical enzymes are added.

The enzymes convert the sucrose-rich nectar into a combination of fructose and glucose. Honey also contains small amounts of 25 different compound sugars, vitamins B and C, anti-oxidants,

and other substances which are not found in table sugar.

Honey differs from table sugar because the enzymes the bees add to nectar break the sucrose, a disaccharide, into glucose and fructose, both monosaccharides. These simple sugars are easier for humans to digest. Honey also has a lower glycemic index than sugar. All sweeteners are not the same.

What does the beekeeper do?

August is prime time for honey collection by bees and the beekeeper. Now is the best time to find fresh local honey at farmers markets and local shops. Before beekeepers can remove any honey, they need to wait until the bees have added a little cap of wax to each cell. This is the signal that the water content has been appropriately reduced.

Next, the honey needs to be extracted from the frames of honeycomb. An extractor is used to spin the liquid honey out of the honeycomb cells using centrifugal force.

Bees need to build the honeycomb where the nectar will be stored and transformed into honey. Wax is an expensive thing to create. It takes bees four times as much energy to make wax



Honeybees forage within a 3km radius of their hives.

DINAH ROBINSON/THE BUZZ



Honeybees drinking from wet wood at the beach.

DINAH ROBINSON/THE BUZZ

as to forage for nectar. The frames of honeycomb, wet with drippings from the extraction process, can be returned to the bees for further honey production. The bees then don't need to waste time building new wax when the nectar is flowing.

Storing honey for winter is the top priority at this time of year. A beehive needs 80 to 100 pounds of honey to survive the six- to eight-month-long winters.

Raw honey will be strained to remove any big chunks of wax or bee parts in the honey. Raw honey is unpasteurized because heating above 110°F

(43°C) will destroy the pollen, propolis, antioxidants, and enzymes. Most commercial honey is heated and filtered, which removes the best natural components.

After the honey is extracted, it is stored in buckets or stainless-steel tanks before bottling and labeling.

Honey history

Beekeeping began roughly 10,000 years ago. Native honeybees exist in locations such as Africa, China, parts of Europe, and Russia. Honeybees were introduced to North America by colonists in the 17th century.

The Langstroth hive is the most used beehive today. This moveable frame hive was developed in the 19th century by American apiarist Reverend Lorenzo Langstroth. He discovered the “bee space,” the ideal amount of space to have between frames of honeycomb so the bees can easily move around without filling the extra space with wax or propolis. These substances limit the beekeeper's ability to move the frames without damaging the honeycomb and crushing bees.

Honey has anti-microbial properties that can assist with wound care and infections. These uses date back to early Egyptian times (2000 BCE).

In the 21st century, the British Medical Journal has supported honey as a superior method for dealing with upper respiratory infections, which could help slow anti-microbial resistance. Honey should be part of your emergency preparedness kit.

CCA report: heritage, bike share, QED closure, too-tall skyscrapers, fall festival

Jack Hanna

Launching a new heritage district

The Centretown Community Association is working with city officials to create a new Heritage Conservation District (HCD) in the area between Kent and Bronson.

The big challenge for the CCA is to recommend where exactly the boundary of the new HCD should be drawn.

A series of leisurely Saturday afternoon walking tours will explore the streets of this area and discuss whether particular city blocks should be included in the HCD or not. The walks will happen each Saturday at 2 p.m., beginning September 9.

More information: jack.2014@icloud.com

Learn about the new heritage district for Centretown

The drive to obtain a new Heritage Conservation District (HCD) between Kent and Bronson will commence with an information session hosted by city heritage staff the evening of Thursday, September 7.

The session will explore how to determine where exactly the HCD boundary should be drawn. Which city blocks should be included? Which excluded?

For information or the Zoom link, email: jack.2014@icloud.com

Elgin Street Market on Sundays

The Elgin Street Market is back Sundays until October.

The CCA-sponsored market, in Boushey Square at Elgin and Waverley, is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There are vegetables, both organic and

not; gourmet mushrooms; herbs; artisanal breads; and apple pies. There will be craft beers and ciders, coffee beans, and take-away Italian and Lebanese foods. Artisans will offer candles, soaps and lotions.

Free yoga Sundays in Jack Purcell Park

In conjunction with the Elgin Street Market, Cattleya Yoga Studio is leading free yoga sessions Sundays from 10 to 11 a.m. in Jack Purcell Park, until September 3.

Fall Festival

The annual Fall Festival returns to Donald Park on Saturday, September 23.

It will be a kid-friendly event. Expect children's crafts, a read-aloud, a magician, and free popcorn.

Grown-ups can watch live music and dance performances. There will be an abundance of information booths on such diverse topics as pollinators, nature photography, trees in Centretown, and native flowers and plants.

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

Let's share bicycles

The city is studying the possibility of a bike-share program. In a presentation to city councillors, the CCA's Transportation Committee said that is a great idea.

A bike-share program should be publicly funded and inexpensive or free, just like public transit or roads, the CCA said.

It also needs to be integrated with public transit. There must be bike-hire stations at all LRT stations and transit hubs, with payment via Presto card.

A publicly funded bike-share program would recoup costs because it reduces road



Many local varieties of apples, including a few from this year's crop, were for sale at the Mountain Orchards booth at The Elgin Street Market in July. *ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ*

maintenance. It also increases equality, serving those who cannot afford a car. And it is great for the environment.

Do not close the QED for two years

Ontario's Ministry of Transportation plans a two-year closure of the roadways on both sides of the Rideau Canal, in order to replace the Highway 417 bridges across the canal. The closures could commence as early as 2026. ([See the story in the June BUZZ.](#))

The new Queensway bridges would be constructed on Queen Elizabeth Driveway and Colonel By Drive, and that's why those roads must be closed for such a long period, the ministry says.

However, the CCA's Transportation Committee argues a slight shifting of the construction site would result in shorter closures.

As well, the CCA says in a letter to the province that bike and pedestrian pathways along the canal need to be kept open throughout construction.


Shorten skyscrapers at former bus depot

The CCA opposes the trio of skyscrapers proposed for the site of the former bus station on Catherine Street at Kent.

Developer Brigil proposes skyscrapers reaching to 26, 36, and 40 storeys. The CCA argues the towers are too obtrusive in the low-rise neighbourhood and would cast big shadows over surrounding streets.




In formal comments to the city, the community association says that the skyscrapers should respect the city's official plan and the zoning, which restricts heights on Catherine to 25 storeys.

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Centretown's food centre now allows clients to choose the food they need. ANISHA EIPE/CCFC

New name, new address for our neighbourhood food centre

Patricia Marsden-Dole

On May 1, after many years in the basement of Centretown United Church, Centretown's emergency food centre relocated to 370 Catherine Street.

At its new address, the centre is located within the City of Ottawa's Catherine Street Community Service Hub, where clients can access many city services under one roof. The hub offers a welcoming drop-in centre with washrooms, charging

stations, public computers, Wi-Fi, and access to government services.

The new location is just a 10-minute walk from its earlier location on Bank Street, but offers a bright, new, accessible facility with a comfortable waiting area.

In keeping with the new space, the centre is now offering a shopping experience where clients choose what they need, using their own bags for groceries.

The centre's hours have expanded. It is now open Mondays, Tuesday, and Fri-

days from 12 to 3 p.m.

With the move comes a new name and website. The Food Centre removed "emergency" from its name, adding instead "community." Manager Diana Mahaffey says the name Centretown Community Food Centre better reflects the service the centre offers.

"We are part of the community, here to help our neighbours in need," she said.

More information on the new operation can be found at www.cfcottawa.ca

MPP report: Doug Ford and Ottawa's LRT have a lot in common

Joel Harden

Guess who found his way to Ottawa last month? Premier Doug Ford!

He was in town for a health care announcement at CHEO, just a week away from a provincial by-election in Kanata-Carleton. I'm sure that was just a coincidence.

(In fairness, Marit Stiles, the leader of Ontario's Official Opposition, was also in town for her own health care announcement at the Queen-sway Carleton Hospital. Health care is top of mind for everyone in Ontario, that's for sure).

At his CHEO press conference, Ford was asked about Ottawa's struggling LRT system. Local news articles had suggested that large Bluesfest crowds or humid weather may have damaged the trains.

LRT trains were regularly used by the large crowds at last month's Bluesfest music festival, which, come to think of it, is kind of the goal for transit systems. But the outcome of heavy usage, officials suggest, may have compromised train axles and bearings, damaging the trains. On a similar note, the Ottawa Police closed

the LRT's Pimisi Station on Canada Day this year, citing the "station's design and its inability to handle crowds." Yikes.

Reacting to this news, Ford said the province may withhold funding for Stage 3 of Ottawa's LRT (which would extend service to Barrhaven and Kanata) until serious problems are rectified. He even suggested that Metrolinx, the entity created in 2006 to coordinate and integrate transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, assume control of Ottawa's LRT to improve outcomes.

Hearing this caused a mess in my own lap as I spat out a mouthful of coffee. Why? Because handling Ottawa's LRT system to Metrolinx is like handing one's house keys to a burglar. That's my takeaway as Ontario's Transit Critic.

Metrolinx has become a cabal of consultants who design secretive public-private partnership (P3) transit deals that make insiders rich.

The Eglinton Crosstown project stands as a case in point. The project is two years delayed (with no timeline to completion), and a billion dollars over-budget. This has all happened on Metrolinx's watch.

And let's not forget that Brian Guest, a former Metrolinx VP (and a key architect in stage 1 of Ottawa's LRT) earned millions in LRT contracts for his own firm. He was fired, and the Ford Government promised an investigation (which hasn't happened).

That's why I think Premier Ford and Ottawa's LRT have a lot in common. Both are secretive, dysfunctional, and havens for insiders making tidy profits.

We don't need Metrolinx making our current LRT problems any worse.

We have serious issues with public transit in Ottawa. Thanks to provincial cutbacks, OC Transpo is facing a \$39 million budget shortfall, and is poised to lay off cleaners who keep vehicles sanitized for passengers. We have regular service issues with OC Transpo and Paratranspo buses. We need provincial investments now.

So enough with the knee-jerk announcements. Enough with the flimsy talk about "accountability." If you can, write Premier Ford and tell him to stop the cuts, fund public transit, and end the profiteering by P3 consultants.

Join the VHA Board of Directors



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VHA adheres to a policy governance board model, which entrusts Board members with establishing the overarching policies of the organization. VHA is currently seeking interested individuals to help guide our efforts in the following key areas:

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- Strategic management
- Health system and its regulatory environment
- Issues affecting the health system and the people served by VHA.

Our Board is made up of volunteers. The Board of Directors provides stewardship to the organization, sets the strategic direction and monitors organizational risk. VHA seeks a Board that informs dialogue and supports strong decision-making, reflects the community it serves, and has the ability to identify and question biases.

Board members must commit to:

- contributing to the Board's consensus-building decision process by attending and actively participating in 6 to 8 Board meetings each year.

Board meetings are held at 4 to 6:30 p.m. on Mondays.

- having a clear understanding of the distinction between the role of the Board versus the role of management.
- being informed of issues affecting, or likely to affect, the organization.

Interested applicants should submit their resumé plus a letter outlining their skills and reason for interest to jobs@vhaottawa.ca no later than September 5, 2023.

The Nominating Committee interviews prospective candidates and provides recommendations for new members to the Board of Directors. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

This is an opportunity to contribute to your community and to help shape the future of community-based health services in our region.

VHA Health & Home Support 250 City Centre Avenue, suite 700 www.vhaottawa.ca/about-us/leadership/#bod

VHA Health & Home Support (Ottawa) is not affiliated with VHA Home Healthcare (Toronto)

What's on this month, in Ottawa and beyond

Tony Wohlfarth

Get Proud!

August welcomes Capital Pride – a week of celebrations for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and its allies, leading to the Pride Parade on August 27. It kicks off August 19, and includes events for youth and families as well as evening shows.

There will be dances, a drag show, panels, poetry, an art exhibition, a trivia night, a clothing swap, and a two-day street festival that will close down part of Bank Street. The week-long celebration is a must.

A list of activities: capitalpride.ca

Lac Megantic – This Is Not an Accident

In 2013, a runaway freight train laden with oil tankers crashed into the picturesque town of Lac Megantic, Quebec, killing 47 people and incinerating much of the downtown. The film's release coincided with the 10th anniversary on July 6 of the event.

Filmmaker Philippe Falardeau meticulously documents the tragedy in a film currently streaming via CBC Gem. Falardeau interviewed residents, train operators, and scientists to create a narrative which suggests the crash was foreseeable and not an accident. The script is based on the book *A Train in The Night*, by Anne-Marie Saint-Cerny.

Blame was assigned to Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway (MMAR), a short-line operator which took over the rail line from CPR. Falardeau dissects this view, concluding the weakness of rail safety as the real culprit.

The running time is 2h58m. I streamed the film during its world premiere at Hot Docs Festival in April. It is an incredible piece of photojournalism by one of Quebec's most accomplished filmmakers. On Gem, it is screening in four episodes. gem.cbc.ca/lac-megantic---this-is-not-an-accident

Falardeau is best known for directing *My Salinger Year* (2020), *Monsieur Lazhar* (2011), and *The Good Lie* (2014). The last two films won major awards.

Berlinale 2023

Past Lives

Past Lives had its world premiere at the Berlinale in February. Nora (Greta Lee) was born in Seoul and lives in New York City. In a chance encounter, she meets her first love Jung Hae Sung (Teo Yoo). They form a unique bond, born of their earlier acquaintance in South Korea 30 years prior.

Past Lives is an engaging film love story, with a unique Canadian story angle. It turns out that Nora emigrated to Toronto with her parents and later moved to New York. The Canadian content is not just a footnote. The storyline is based on the director's personal life.

Writer and director Celine Song created a meticulously crafted romance. The acting is superb, and the cadence draws you in. The running time is 1h45m.

Ottawa Jazz Festival

A highlight of the 2023 Ottawa Jazz Festival was the incomparable electric blues guitarist Buddy Guy, who invited the Angelique Francis Band from Ottawa to join him on stage. Missed it? You can catch it here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2z3POla0YTY

Ottawa Bluesfest

A highlight of Bluesfest for me was seeing Montreal musician and activist Allison Russell in her first appearance in Ottawa. The JUNO winner (and GRAMMY nominee) will be back in Ottawa for CityFolk on September 16.

Canadian Museum of History (100 Laurier Street, Gatineau)

Canada Day 2023 was the perfect opportunity to visit the CMH. All its exhibitions – *From Pepinot to PAW Patrol*, *Unexpected!*, the Canadian History and First Peoples Halls plus the Postal and the Children's Museum – were open. Tucked away in the lower level, I discovered a treasure trove of four animated films from the National Film Board of Canada.

A highlight of my visit was screening *Jane Goodall - Reasons for Hope*. This forty-five-minute IMAX film features the 88-year old environmentalist visiting Sudbury, Phoenix,

Montana, and the Austrian Alps and discovering work underway inspiring for young people.

www.historymuseum.ca



Cirquonscient will perform in Strathcona Park August 22 (Photo by HDImagery.ca)

Strathcona Faerie Pop-Up Circus

On August 22, I recommend an impromptu pop-up circus performance in Strathcona Park (25 Range Road). The show begins at 6:30 p.m. and features a range of entertaining acrobatic performances. Bring your picnic blanket and lawn chairs. The best news? It's free and child-friendly. www.cirquonscient.com

Northern Lights

This month, a nighttime visit to Parliament Hill is special. *Northern Lights* is a sound and light display each night at 9:30 pm. It runs Thursday to Monday until September 4. Admission is free. The show may be cancelled without notice in the event of heavy rain or thunderstorms.

For a preview, check out: www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/sound-light-show/watch.html

Broadway Across Canada

From August 22 to 27, Broadway Across Canada (BAC) brings the Tony Award-winning musical *Hadestown* to the National Arts Centre. The show intertwines two mythic tales: that of young dreamers Orpheus and

Eurydice, and that of King Hades and his wife Persephone. ottawa.broadway.com/shows/

Queen Street Fare (170 Queen)

On August 19, broadcaster and "professional music geek" Alan Cross will hold a ticketed music salon, "an open Q&A/audience participation event where all things music are discussed." On August 23, trombonist Nick Adema hosts the regular evening of jazz grooves (no cover). queenstfare.ca

Live on Elgin (220 Elgin)

On August 17, the comedian Jared Nathan is on stage. On September 3, hear roots music from Lawrence Maxwell from Prince Edward Island. www.liveonelgin.com

Redbird Live (1165 Bank Street)

Redbird welcomes storyteller and singer Dave Gunning on August 22, and singer-songwriters Colleen Brown and Sarah Hiltz in a joint show August 26. Looking ahead, on October 3-4, outstanding gypsy jazz guitarist Stephane Wrembel and the Django à Gogo All Stars touch down in Ottawa to explore the music of Django Reinhardt. The first night will feature Django's early years; the second, his later years. redbirdlive.ca/

City Folk 2023

City Folk wraps up the summer festival season September 13 to 17, with concerts at Lansdowne Park. Highlights include Iggy Pop, the Arkells, the Headstones, Hozier, and a tribute to Ray Charles. cityfolkfestival.com

Out of Town

The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec in Quebec City (179 Grande Allée Ouest) has an exhibition of the art and fashion of renowned British designer Alexander McQueen on display until September 10. www.mnbaq.org/en

Tony Wohlfarth is an Ottawa-based freelance film and entertainment writer. He covered Bluesfest in July and is currently covering the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh.

Users defend the car-free Queen Elizabeth Driveway

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She uses the Driveway "all the time" from her home in Ottawa South. Her five-year-old daughter is new to cycling and "the experience of seeing her use the Driveway in a safe way feels revolutionary. As a parent who is nervous about their young kid toddling around on their bike, it's really quite amazing to see her just travel freely. I can ride beside her instead of calling ahead and hoping she does the right thing. I can speak to her in a normal voice and she sees me. I see the future of what we could have at the city if we embrace this comfortable and safe active transportation route."

Her three-year-old son rides in a chariot or in a bike seat, she said. In the quiet of the Driveway she can talk to him while cycling, which isn't possible in the noise and smells travelling with cars on Colonel By Drive.

"It is quite special and it's not something that you're used to having in a city. It really shows you what we've been missing this whole time."

The Driveway is blocks away from many shopping streets. When asked if that's actually convenient for errands, Maher said riding on the Driveway still allows the main portion of a trip to be made in a car-free zone, and then the rest on side streets. "It provides a backbone to the densest parts of the urban core."

The canal pathways, on the other hand, are so crowded that "it really doesn't work when you're trying to actually use it for transportation." A cyclist will have to slow

down or stop over and over again to give pedestrians priority or look out for dogs, she said. "You wouldn't expect a car to do that kind of stop."

Being able to separate modes on the Driveway gives a more comfortable experience for everyone, she said. It allows pedestrians to avoid being surprised by a cyclist lingering behind them waiting to pass, and allows cyclists to travel at a consistent speed.

Other solutions to traffic woes

Troster said the city should be looking at dedicated bus lanes on Bank Street to handle traffic demand from large events at Lansdowne, especially since Lansdowne is being built up with more housing and entertainment destinations. "It's not sustainable for people to get [to Lansdowne] solely by using their cars."

"Bank Street is absolutely a parking lot on game days, even when the Queen Elizabeth Driveway is open. So I think we have to deal with the real problem, which is how to deal with the traffic flow on Bank Street, and the best way to do that is to get more people out of their cars and on to the bus."

Ultimately, Simpson said, the CCA wants to reduce car traffic downtown by improving transit (especially on Bank Street) and cycling access. Leading cities like New York and Toronto provide very efficient and convenient ways to get downtown that are not cars, he pointed out.

"There's such limited space downtown that if everyone tries to drive, it can be dif-

ficult for anyone to get around."

Maher argued that allowing parking on Bank Street was not as useful as a transit lane. "Why should we let five cars or 10 cars or 20 cars dictate the use of space that could otherwise be afforded to dedicated transit lanes? It would be successful in helping to reduce car traffic for everybody, but those those things aren't being tried and there's no indication that they will be tried. I find it a bit lacking ambition."

New visions for the Driveway

Simpson said the CCA would like the Driveway to be permanently redesigned to be people-focused without cars. That could include street trees for shade, more public washrooms, and more places serving food and drinks, he said. "We would love to hear more ideas and lots of public input."

Maher said the NCC should look at what other cities are doing with their waterfront spaces and make the Driveway more of a linear park. Possibilities include floating docks, picnic tables and places to sit – "affording people the opportunity to to linger and enjoy the beautiful greenspace."

It could even climate-proof Winterlude by providing winter activities and vendors along the Driveway for times when the Rideau Canal hasn't frozen over, she suggested, "so people can still appreciate that same vibe that Winterlude offers."

Greening the Driveway could also help Ottawa mitigate and adapt to climate change,

she said, by creating an outdoor space for people when temperatures spike. The city's heat island maps show most of Centretown as orange (very high) except for along the canal, which is the coolest spot in the area. "The more trees we plant along there, the cooler we can make it."

NCC response

The NCC controls the use of the Queen Elizabeth Driveway. Mayor Sutcliffe sits on the NCC board, but does not have a vote.

In a Citizen op-ed two days after Sutcliffe's, NCC CEO Tobi Nussbaum responded by pointing out that the city's own Official Plan calls for reducing the Driveway's "importance as a commuter route in favour of pedestrian activity and green space connections with consideration of canal crossings. This may include limiting vehicular access and reducing traffic speed."

Since May, he said, there have been "thousands of users daily on the [Driveway] street alone, not counting the neighbouring, often crowded, pathways." The NCC's parkways were never designed as commuter corridors but rather as destinations themselves, he explained.

Nussbaum also noted that the closure to cars reduced carbon emissions, "especially urgent as we experience a summer of unprecedented climate impacts."

According to the NCC, over 100,000 visits have been made each year during the Driveway's active use program.

Users defend the car-free Queen Elizabeth Driveway

Alayne McGregor

Mayor Mark Sutcliffe recently suggested chopping half of the active-transportation-only section of the Queen Elizabeth Driveway. He's got a lot of pushback from community groups, city councillors, and the CEO of the National Capital Commission (NCC).

For July and August, the NCC has closed the Driveway to motor vehicles from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week to allow more space for pedestrians, cyclists, scooter users, and those in wheelchairs. After Labour Day, it will be open to cars on weekdays but still closed on weekends until Thanksgiving.

The exceptions when cars are allowed are three hours before and after major events at Lansdowne Park (such as football games), and the two weekends (including this weekend) when Queensway bridges are being replaced. Emergency vehicles are also allowed on the Driveway.

The result has been a peaceful thoroughway, noticeably more quiet than the rest of Centretown. On one Sunday in July when *The BUZZ* walked down the Driveway, pedestrians tended to stay on the associated pathway and bikes and scooters on the Driveway. There was a

steady stream of users, without it being crowded and with no apparent conflicts.

The closure covers a 2.4 km stretch of the Driveway between Somerset Street West and Fifth Avenue. In an [op-ed in *The Ottawa Citizen* in mid-July](#), Sutcliffe proposed that the closure should only run from Somerset to the Pretoria Bridge, because he contended the closed southern section increased traffic on residential streets in the Glebe and on Bank Street.

Councillor Ariel Troster disagreed. "The vast majority of residents whom I spoke to during the election campaign are desperate for more active transportation options, particularly north-south. It's a very small piece of road in the context of the city, and I really support the NCC's move towards ensuring more space for people who get around the city in other ways."

Councillor Jeff Leiper responded to Sutcliffe in an open letter, saying he was upset the mayor would "advocate to reverse a real safety gain" for residents who travel by active modes. "Suggesting that residents who travel by foot, on bike and using mobility devices share very crowded Canal paths in order to make connections between neighbour-

hoods is not a solution [...] in an intensifying city."

The Centretown Community Association (CCA) has been pushing for the Driveway to be people-first, since it was originally closed to cars for periods during the pandemic. Derrick Simpson, the co-chair of the CCA Transportation Committee, objected to Sutcliffe's proposal.

"I know a lot of people, myself included, use all of the [Driveway] to get to the south. I'm not really comfortable biking down Bank or Kent or any of those streets so when I head all the way to the south, I take the [Driveway]. So I think it does make a difference."

The advocacy group [Parkways for People](#) has been pushing for more active transportation on NCC parkways since 2021. Co-lead Erin Maher described the Mayor's idea as "perplexing" and "a huge lost opportunity."

She said the closure should at least include The Glebe because it provides a more meaningful route into other city neighbourhoods. She noted that the city's Official Plan calls for more than half of trips to be made by sustainable modes by 2046, and "this would seem to be a very simple way" to do that.

She suggested increasing signage on streets con-



These two young entrepreneurs set up a lemonade stand by the Queen Elizabeth Driveway in July to help quench the thirst of cyclists and runners going by. ALAYNE MCGREGOR/THE BUZZ

necting to the Driveway, like Fifth Avenue, to let drivers know about the closure so they can pick alternate routes not on local streets.

Benefits of removing cars

Closing the Driveway to cars is "better place making," with less air pollution, Simpson said. Walking or cycling in greenspace is good for mental health; making it easier to walk and bike improves equity; and removing cars makes it safer for children.

He said he'd heard from many people that they go to the Driveway with their children, or they use it as the only place they really feel they can run without having to stop.

"We know there's a path, and we do appreciate the path, but it gets very busy. It can be difficult with pets and with kids and with older people and people in wheelchairs. So we find the active use program works very well in making sure that everyone can participate."

Maher said that removing cars from the Driveway during the pandemic "allowed us to see our city in a different way."

She said the current closure allows Centretowners to access other dense neighbourhoods like the Glebe safely. "It allows them to experience active transportation with their families. I have small children, so it allows a family ride to do an errand that wouldn't frankly be as accessible navigating through city streets."

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PRIDE NIGHT MARKET

SATURDAY AUGUST 19
5PM-9PM

Parkdale Market
366 Parkdale Ave.

Shop from local 2SLGBTQIA + artists, makers, small businesses, restaurants, bakeries and more!

MUSIC BY:

5 - 6:30PM: MusicbyJayel	6:30 - 7PM: OK Naledi	7 - 9PM: DJ del Pilar
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