



June 24, 2021

Mayor Jim Watson
jim.watson@ottawa.ca

Dear Mayor Watson,

RE: Proposal to remove 680 trees at the new campus of The Ottawa Hospital

On behalf of the Glebe Community Association (GCA), I am writing to urge you to reject the proposed design for the new campus of The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) which would eliminate 680 living trees on the site and to require a revised proposal that would preserve substantially more of this valuable green infrastructure.

The GCA fully supports the new campus and the addition of patient beds and services, and understands that some trees must be removed to accommodate essential infrastructure. But we strongly oppose the destruction of this substantial part of the site's urban forest – in particular where removal is requested for the purpose of putting in 600 to 700 surface parking spaces.

The GCA acknowledges the City of Ottawa for its achievements in recent years with regard to the climate crisis and tree protection:

- Declaration of a Climate Emergency for the purposes of protecting our economy, our ecosystems, and our community from climate change (April 2019).
- Adoption of an ambitious Climate Change Master Plan that prioritizes use of a climate lens for capital projects and the exploration of carbon sequestration (January 2020).
- Building on the Urban Forest Management Plan (June 2017), enactment of the Tree Protection By-Law which aims to protect privately- and City-owned trees, requiring that tree retention be considered as a priority in any design project including renovations and new developments (January 2021).

The Tree Protection By-Law specifically mentions protection of trees with stems of 10 cm or more in diameter at breast height (DBH) on urban area properties over 1 hectare in size and, according to the Tree Conservation Report, conducted as part of TOH site assessment there are 1315 living trees with stems over 10 cm DBH. Of these 1315 living trees, 680 would be cut down in the current proposal, of which 368 are 10-29 cm DBH, and 312 are over 30 cm DBH and considered “distinctive” trees under the Tree Protection By-Law.

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Increased surface parking is the reason for many of the proposed removals, including for the new Ottawa Heart Institute facility that is not expected to be constructed until 2037. At the same time, the TOH proposal lacks an integrated public transit plan, with the Light Rail Transit (LRT) station on Carling Avenue positioned a significant walk from any hospital entrance. Far from encouraging the use of public transit, the plan's added surface parking and lack of convenient connectivity to the LRT station undermines the City of Ottawa's Climate Change Master Plan goals and its investment in the LRT.

The City's ambitious Climate Change Master Plan recognizes the value of green infrastructure in mitigating the impacts of climate change. Trees which sequester carbon are a valuable asset in our collective efforts to reduce the impact of climate change. Compensatory tree planting is encouraged but given that it takes 20 to 30 years to grow a canopy tree such efforts are second best and often occur in other areas of the City than the one from which trees are removed. Therefore, preserving as many trees as possible at this central urban area location, at a facility dedicated to the health and well-being of residents, is more than just sensible. It is crucial.

You have an opportunity to apply a climate lens to the new hospital campus proposal that will protect trees and promote the health and welfare of all residents. We urge you to take it. Please turn back this proposal and require a new one that respects the imperatives set out by the City of Ottawa and responds to the needs and wishes of citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Smith, President
Glebe Community Association (GCA)

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