

June 26, 2010

City Centre Coalition (CCC)

Recommendations on Lansdowne Redevelopment Proposal

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

The City Centre Coalition (CCC) is writing to you today to advise you of our perspectives on the Lansdowne development proposal. We can appreciate the challenge you face in coming to a decision both from the number of public comments you are receiving and the sheer weight of technical reports to wade through.

It is a shame that what could be such a landmark project that all of Ottawa could be excited about has instead come down to such a divisive and polarized undertaking. We should have realized a long time ago that this is where we were headed. Then instead of trying to tweak things here and there in order to try and chip away at the opposition we could have focused on a vision that support could coalesce around.

It must be exhausting trying to shepherd this project through the public process having to contend with contentious issues on almost every front...process, business structure, retail scale, amount of green space, heritage and lastly transportation.

The CCC's raison d'être has been a focus on transportation issues with a particular emphasis on ensuring that transportation solutions taken in one area of the city not be achieved by the shifting of problems to other areas. This Lansdowne proposal then is of great interest to us. In the rest of this letter we will focus our comments on these aspects of the proposal and in particular the challenges surrounding the accommodation of special events of 10,000 or more attendees.

We understand that in the past such events have been accommodated at Lansdowne. The issue is not whether we can move all of the attendees on and off the site. We appreciate that the consultants have done a good job in determining the best possible way to achieve this but what will be the overall quality of experience for the event goers, the other users of the site, the surrounding residents, and at what cost? Will this be consistent with 2010 planning values and best practices? For a 130m\$ capital investment in a public stadium it should be.

The combination of measures that are proposed as part of the Lansdowne special event transportation scheme give the impression that we are delivering a 2nd class solution in each of its aspects:

- No rapid transit lines to the site
- Very few event goers will actually be able to park at the site
- A large portion of drivers to the event must park in residential neighbourhoods competing with their on-street parking needs and then walk a considerable distance

- The majority will then have to park remotely and be shuttled in using a large number of buses on special assignment, none of which will be able to travel on transit lanes segregated from general traffic

We believe the overall quality of experience of event goers will be far from what it could be if the site were located along the core of Ottawa's rapid transit backbone. Quality of experience is touted as an important reason for investing in refurbishing this stadium but it is seldom spoken about as part of the overall process of getting to and from events. We're sure people will not mind for one or two large events per year, but what about those contemplating attending a dozen or so games per year. When will they finally decide the hassle just isn't worth the fun?

We wish that as part of the overall analysis of this project we had some information on other recent investments in public stadiums and what the transportation solutions look like for those projects in comparison to those proposed for Lansdowne.

Trying to stand back from the 200 pages of the transportation report, here are the main points as we see it.

For 10,000 person events (67's games)

- The vast majority of the site parking will be used by all the other mixed uses
- so instead of having 2000 parking spots available for games as today, all of this parking will have to be accommodated in surrounding neighborhoods and attendees will have to walk on average 1-2 km to attend a game, something which few are having to do today.

For 25,000 person events (football games, some concerts)

- the same parking issues apply as mentioned above for the 10,000 person events
- the number of additional buses on Bank street for 90 mins before/after the game:
 - o 26 articulated buses per hour (special buses from park & ride lots)
 - o Plus 24 additional trips / hr of the regular #1 and #7 buses
- Plus 106 buses/hour on Queen Elizabeth Drive as shuttles to off-site lots
- Summing up the above, the region around the site will experience 156 buses per hour for 3 hours. That is a bus circulating around the area every 23 secs
- a total cost of providing additional transportation of approx \$100,000 per event
 - o for 20 such events per year this is \$2 million extra transportation costs

For 40,000 person events:

- the numbers and frequency of buses are even higher than above
- the cost of these supplementary buses and shuttles is \$200,000 per event
- for 2 such events / yr this is an additional \$400,000

So with the above information we can try to make some observations on community impact and on cost.

Community Impacts:

Parking: The surrounding communities will be filled to the brim with cars entering and leaving the area and cruising around in search of parking for perhaps 40 times per year (all 67's games, all football games, all concerts). This would probably be twice as often as ever before. Imagine a resident relying on on-street parking and returning home during this period only to find there is virtually no available spots in the whole surrounding area. How many people will be affected in this way?

Congestion: Secondly, although the transportation study shows the adjacent roadways could accommodate the anticipated traffic it is fairly clear that they will be filled to capacity. At that level of utilization there is a high probability for the 90 minutes before and after events of 25,000 or more the surrounding arterial roads will be completely congested. Movement through those streets will be extremely slow and residents will most likely be heavily inconvenienced if they need to be mobile during this period. And Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons surely are high mobility periods for residents. On top of all of this, the area around Lansdowne will experience a bus moving through every 23 seconds. Is this a burden that should be imposed on any residential area? Maybe a few times per year could be considered but 20 or more times per year seems like a frequency that no councillor could ever support in their own wards.

Transportation Cost Considerations:

The Lansdowne major event transportation scheme (assuming 20 events of 25,000 people and 2 events of 40,000 per year) results in approx 2.4m\$ extra yearly transportation costs. We know the plan is to bury this as an extra 4\$ to 5\$ cost per ticket.

We wish we could know what these costs might be if a stadium were located on the new LRT rapid transit route. Imagine having the capacity to move 1000 people every 5 minutes (500 to the east and 500 to the west and requiring only 2 drivers to accomplish this!). If under such a scenario the costs were to be half of the bus-centric Lansdowne scenario then the difference of 1.2m\$ per year could have been realized as a return on investment of our new LRT line and have been used to contribute to the costs of financing a new stadium. Imagine also the availability of off-site parking accessible to the LRT line (Tunney's and all the downtown parking lots, each accessible through beautifully designed weather protected LRT stations). Imagine again how much more pleasant this will be to the eventgoer's mobility experience than the basket of solutions in the current Lansdowne plan.

Members of council, we would love to see Lansdowne re-developed. We appreciate too how hard so many people have worked to improve on the original proposal. However the transportation issues surrounding an investment of 130m\$ in a stadium at this location just seem to be too much of a stretch for us to be able to enthusiastically embrace this project. Surely the right solution is not to tie the re-development of Lansdowne to the location of our flagship public stadium.

We urge you to reconsider this ill-conceived investment into the existing Frank Clair stadium with its tight coupling to the whole Lansdowne re-development proposal and to

explore other ways to temporarily accommodate professional sports while a more fitting stadium proposal is pursued consistent with the vision we all have for a livable and prosperous city that invests wisely.

John Verbaas
Chair: City Centre Coalition
jverbaas@rogers.com

MEMBERS OF CITY CENTRE COALITION:

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Centretown Citizens' Community Association
Dalhousie Community Association
Hintonburg Community Association
Westboro Community Association

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