

Mayor Mark Sutcliffe
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa ON K1P1J1

19 February 2023

Re: Key elements of meaningful consultations for the future of Lansdowne Park

Dear Mayor Sutcliffe

We are writing as concerned community organizations regarding the future of Lansdowne Park.

Lansdowne revitalization will be one of the largest projects considered in this term of Council. We believe that **no further decisions should be taken until there has been meaningful consultation with the community.**

The attached document, *Key elements of meaningful consultations for the future of Lansdowne Park*, lays out our views of what constitutes meaningful consultation. **We ask for your assurance that the City approaches this consultation with the intention to fully engage, and not simply inform, citizens and that the information requested in this note is made available to the public**, in line with your commitment to greater transparency and to restoring public trust in decision-making.

Everyone in Ottawa should have an opportunity to weigh in on the proposal. Ottawa residents should have a chance to understand all of the complexity of the proposal and the track record so far. The process should allow for everyone involved to share and discuss their ideas given how important Lansdowne is to Ottawa. We should be deliberate about community benefits and engage in extensive public consultations, as agreed to by the previous Council, before any new construction takes place.

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The LRT inquiry has taught us what happens when items are rushed through Council with selective sharing of information, lack of community scrutiny and insufficient accountability. With meaningful community consultation, this Council can avoid repeating the mistake of its predecessor. We are ready to serve as engaged community partners in advancing the revitalization of Lansdowne and look forward to working with Council and staff in an open, collaborative and constructive manner.

Yours sincerely,

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cc: Councillor Shawn Menard and other Ottawa City Councillors
Sean Moore, Director, Lansdowne Park Redevelopment Project

Key elements of meaningful consultations for the future of Lansdowne Park

Community representatives stand firm in the belief that no further decisions on Lansdowne Park be taken before there has been **meaningful consultation** with the Ottawa community.

Lansdowne revitalization will be one of the largest projects considered in this term of Council, and involve significant additional borrowing during a time when the City is under financial strain. Transparency and a process that builds public trust in decision-making is essential. Based upon best practices seen elsewhere, meaningful consultations should include (albeit not be limited to) the following key elements:

Process

- A **clear timeline** of all decisions and specific consultations leading to those decisions is published in advance of the process starting
- Consultations take place with **Indigenous communities**
- Consultation materials are made available at least 7 days **in advance** of meetings
- The **comment period** following the circulation of documents should be at least 21 days; and a minimum of 14 days following presentation by staff at a public Open House (or equivalent)
- City **staff are available** at all consultations to provide information only
- During online discussions, **community members are able to “cross-talk”** – i.e., to see who is in attendance, to read the chat comments of others, and to ask questions and offer comments themselves rather than have remarks filtered through a moderator
- Financial data is provided in spreadsheet format**, allowing community members and stakeholders to undertake their own financial due diligence
- A Staff Report following consultation that takes into consideration all feedback received (verbal, emails, letters, webforms, etc) **provides a clear explanation of how public input influenced the final outcomes** of the decision-making process and **an explanation for comments not incorporated**

Information-sharing and Communications

- A clear description, including a map**, is provided of all significant current and proposed **roles and responsibilities, as well as ownership stakes**, of partners (including the City) in Lansdowne
- Design concepts are provided as 3D models**, and not simply architectural drawings; **clearly indicating the scale and dimensions** of proposed elements to support informed feedback
- A commitment is provided that the **names of companies bidding** on the residential units is publicly disclosed and an outline of what steps the City will take to insure that the construction companies owned by OSEG members are not the only companies to own and build the proposed units

Financial Information

- Financial data since 2014** is made available, including City investment levels in the full Lansdowne site and in the partnership, and financial performance compared to baseline projections
- Audited financial statements of the Lansdowne partnership four sub-components** (retail, stadium, Redblacks, Ottawa 67s) are shared
- The **City staff report of the OSEG proposal is updated** in light of new financial data, such as expected sources of funds, current interest rate expectations, construction inflation, and expected ownership structure of the proposed apartment buildings
- Assumptions of the financial model are explained**, such as projected rental rates including those proposed as affordable, and the justification that 90% of property tax revenue would not be needed to fund services provided to residents
- The Lansdowne 2.0 proposal **risk matrix** and **variability analysis** is provided, including the year-by-year spreadsheet analysis showing discounted cash flows

Finally, we are of the view that meaningful consultation involves engaging the community at the earliest stage possible, including prior to the release of an initial proposal. Meaningful engagement takes place when the proposal can be modified and when it is cost effective to do so. It requires clarity regarding what is fixed, and what is up for debate. The process should allow for residents to have an informed discussion of ideas given how important Lansdowne Park is to Ottawa.