

PRESS RELEASE

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Lansdowne Park 2.0: Community Stakeholders call for informed and meaningful Public Consultations before new Council makes any further decisions

Mayor Sutcliffe and his new Council are facing hard decisions over the future of Lansdowne Park.

OSEG (Ottawa Sports & Entertainment Group) wants a new deal with the city. The City is being asked to spend another \$332M of taxpayer dollars. OSEG claims that it is not in its financial interest to continue to operate under the original agreement.

But is the proposed deal in the public interest?

Community Associations in the Glebe, Old Ottawa South, and Old Ottawa East, as well as the Federation of Citizens Associations, Synapcity, and Parkways for People think that informed and meaningful consultations are needed to give citizens and taxpayers, as well as Council, greater understanding and input to what is being proposed.

Lansdowne 2.0 would be one of the largest projects considered in this Council's term, second only in investments made in the LRT. The city would spend roughly \$150M on a brand new arena/performance venue, removing existing green space from the urban park roughly the size of a football field. Most of the remaining budget would be spent tearing down the north side stands, as well as the Civic Centre arena and surrounding retail space, just 10 years after the City invested \$120M in this same facility. The north side stands would then be rebuilt along with building additional retail, and three very tall towers (we know, after pressing City staff, that they will be 46/40/34 storeys high) overlooking the football field, along with some improvements to the urban park.

OSEG claims that this could be a real opportunity to reset and put Lansdowne Park on the solid footing it deserves, in order to serve the greater Ottawa community.

But there is a decided lack of transparency regarding tower heights, real loss of green park space, and the financial track record of Lansdowne in what has been presented to date. Are assumptions made in the Financial model still valid given interest rates, construction cost inflation, etc? The idea that the Financial Strategy with its ongoing tax diversion is "revenue neutral" to taxpayers is highly debatable and requires greater scrutiny. Should taxpayer dollars be allocated to this project without consideration for other budget priorities such as social services, housing, climate mitigation, etc.

And where does Lansdowne Park 2.0 fit in the larger picture, given the NCC's proposed LeBreton Flats Development? Does it support or leverage huge investments in the LRT, or double down on a site that is significantly challenged by transportation links?

In February, community stakeholders wrote to Mayor Sutcliffe and Council, united in seeking the Mayor's assurance that the City recommit to informed and meaningful public consultations, before any further decisions on this project take place. The letter (attached) laid out the specifics of key elements regarding consultations, in line with the Mayor's commitment to greater transparency and to restoring public trust in decision-making.

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. By embracing meaningful community consultation, this Council can learn from the past, and create a great future for Lansdowne Park that serves us all.

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