Minutes - Community Meeting

Lowertown Community Association

7 December 2020, Zoom

19:00 – 20:30

1. **Welcome**

Meeting called at 19:02 with 72 participants. The President welcomed the participants and explained the procedures of the meeting.

1. **LCA Vision**

The President of the LCA presented the [Lowertown Vision](http://www.lowertown-basseville.ca/uploads/4/2/5/9/42591915/lowertown_vision_2035.pdf) to participants from NCC, highlighting areas of mutual interest.

1. **Presentation by the National Capital Commission (NCC) on the role of the NCC and the relations with local communities**

The NCC reached out to the LCA a couple of months ago about their project on Nepean Point, which initiated a broader discussion on how the LCA and NCC’s work intersects, and subsequently the NCC was invited to present its work and projects in the area to the community.

Presentation by Luc Fournier (Tobi Nussbaum absent) – Any point at time the NCC is happy to come back on a regular basis. NCC does have a national mandate, the National Capital Act requires us to look nationally and ensure the seat of government is in a great capital city. However, at the heart of it are the associations and the engagement with citizens through these forums or through public engagements.

Community members can reach the NCC at any time, through a 24 hr Infoline (613) 239-5063 or info@ncc-ccn.ca

1. **NCC Presentation**

Long-Term Integrated Interprovincial Crossing

The long-term integrated interprovincial crossing study was launched in late Spring and it will carry on until summer 2021. This study is reviewing the trucks going through the downtown core and the need for a new bridge in general.

The objectives of the plan include improving mobility on the existing bridges, assessing future travel needs, recommending innovative and sustainable solutions, reducing heavy truck traffic through Capital core, assess the influence of new trends and emerging technologies, and recommending a governance framework for the 2050 plan.

Examples of potential solutions that may emerge from the study include a new bridge or a traffic tunnel or high-occupancy vehicle lanes, better transport facilities, bridge tolls.

Questions posed to the NCC by the community or LCA included their assessment of the possible options for a new bridge, emerging technologies, climate change, and timelines.

Traffic patterns and residential considerations will be strong factors in determining potential options. For instance, Kettle Island bridge was a strong candidate in the initial study conducted in 2013. However, today the traffic patterns and residential considerations have shifted. The study being undertaken today is much broader.

In terms of timeline, community members can expect a solution to be implemented by 2050. The NCC is factoring in emerging technologies, such as autonomous vehicles, and climate change. The study is factoring in assumptions on infrastructure, but there are policy levers that will be applied to inform scenario-based analysis.

Alexandra Bridge Replacement

The 2019 budget instructed the replacement of Alexandra Bridge based on its degrading condition. It is currently ranking 2 out of 6 and per industry standards, bridges must score 4 or higher. The bridge requires 100 million in capital work and 1 million a year in maintenance. Considering this investment, the NCC did a cost assessment and the report concluded that it would be more financial sense to replace it within the next ten years than continue to funnel money into it. It was determined PSPC should begin a replacement project. Key documents are being translated and they will be added to the PSPC website.

The functional requirements of the bridge include two lanes of vehicular traffic, but the design will be adaptable to shift to meet new or different transit requirements such as a tramway. The active transit lanes will be maintained but improved; cycle lanes will be segregated from pedestrian lanes. The surface of the bridge would be changed, removing the grating, and reducing noise.

The design guidelines fall under 6 categories – (1) enhancing views and heritage (2) blend with the urban and mobility fabric (3) public spaces and civic experiences (4) structure, height, proportions (5) materials and sustainability (6) additional equipment such as signals and signage.

The NCC is conducting studies to assess the impact of the project.

Questions and comments on this project included concern that the studies informing the conclusion to replace the bridge were not made available to the community prior to the decision. The decision to maintain the bridge as a bridge for car traffic was also challenged. There were questions also concerning the environmental impact of dismantling the bridge.

The LCA stated it would like to see broadened options for the bridge and flagged that it is concerning that the NCC is jumping to a decision without thorough consultation.

The NCC expressed that the heritage of the bridge does not merit conservation from an engineering perspective. It is difficult to maintain and a challenge to find contractors who understand and can easily repair it.

The key documents have not been made available to the public yet because they over 100 pages long and require translation and adaptation to ensure they are accessible. They should be available online by January.

Nepean Point Redevelopment

The project is expected to be completed in 2023. It envisions a seamless connection linking the existing Major’s Hill park pathway system and provides a universally accessible path to Tavern on the Hill. It will include an outlook area, perimeter pathway, ridge pathway, and a pedestrian pathway. The NCC is coordinating with the National Art Gallery (NAG) and other stakeholders. The project is currently in the design phase and will be submitted for approval in January 2021.

Questions on this project related to its relationship with the Alexandra Bridge project, washroom accessibility, and indigenous consultation. The NCC said that the time is ripe for this project and it is going ahead in close consultation with the planners of Alexandra Bridge to ensure complementarity. There are no plans to add public washrooms but there is intent to link with the NAG so that people can easily access the washrooms located in the NAG cafeteria. Efforts have been taken to engage with the two indigenous communities. Both councils met with the NCC project team and walked through the location. A number of issues were raised, and a consensus was reached on how indigenous consultation and perspectives will be included in the project’s proposal going forward.

Lady Grey Drive

The NCC is analysing reports on health and safety about the current condition of the wall. As a safety precaution the pathway is temporarily closed.

Majors Hill Park

Project team is working on developing the design process of the park. One important aspect of this project tis to ensure connectivity with the chateau.

King Edward Rail Bridge

Recent on-site meeting with Friends of Bordeleau Park. We have money for this project. Temporary rehabilitation have been put in place Community outreach and consultation will be organized.

Sussex Drive

NCC is in support for City of Ottawa’s ByWard Market public Realm Plan. The NCC is looking into the courtyards and managing the wear and tear.

**5) Update from Councillor Mathieu Fleury**

ByWard Public Realm Plan was initially to be brought to council for Wednesday 9 December, however, the Councillor will push for a deferral because there are already a number of hot topics being raised that day and there is risk that it will be overshadowed.

Shepherds of Good Hope applied for the rapid housing investment to enhance the kitchen, barrier- free LITE program, and indigenous housing.

Vittoria Trattoria fire site on William has gone to Committee and construction is likely to start soon.

126 York Major Building redevelopment has number of takeaways in terms of heritage and recognition.

The church on Clarence and King Edward ownership is going to the Committee this week.

The STO tram proposal was presented at the last council meeting. There were two recommendations – one was a tram connection from Aylmer connecting to Spark Street near Lyon and the other one was a connection on Wellington. The Councillor is more in favour of a loop option. Many have spoken in favour of this. There were a number of politics stirred. The Chair of Transportation and Chair of Transit and reaffirmed by the Mayor and that is federal priorities for funding, it spoke to transit but this lowered the priority of finding a solution to the truck challenge. For the Councillor, it is not a matter of transit vs transportation, it is a matter of consistency. Ottawa paid for an underground tunnel, the STO should be underground in the city too.

A question was raised concerning the closure of the Bytown Cinema. The Councillor expressed that he will get in touch with the owner to understand all elements. The primary focus will be to retain the location as a cinema.