



# Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association

August 19, 2013

Dear Neighbours,

The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) and the City of Ottawa are quickly moving forward with a plan to build a 4 storey, 725 space parking garage at 45 Ruskin St where a surface parking lot is today. The current plan calls for a RFP in the fall of 2013 and construction to commence in 2014. There is a 30-year moratorium on construction for the lot that was signed by the City, TOH and the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association (CHNA) in 1996 but it has been publically ignored or dismissed by both City Council, led by Mayor Jim Watson, and Cameron Love, Vice President of Operations at TOH . Despite this, the CHNA is still actively pursuing legal options in this regard.

## **Recent Developments**

As you may be aware, TOH held a public meeting on June 24th to inform the neighbourhood about the garage proposal. At that meeting, 100 residents expressed numerous concerns and Mr. Love offered to consult with representatives of the neighbourhood. After a long delay, the meeting will take place on August 21<sup>st</sup>. However, since the initial public meeting, several important developments have occurred. TOH has already submitted a rezoning application for 45 Ruskin on July 29, 2013. This followed approval by City Council on July 17, 2013 of a new lease for 45 Ruskin Ave contingent upon TOH specifically building a multistory garage on the site. All of this has been done without public consultation.

## **Rezoning**

The rezoning being requested is required if a garage is to be built. If the rezoning application succeeds, the property will be zoned as I2 – Major Industrial Zone. The rezoning process provides the only significant opportunity residents have to voice our collective concerns regarding this project to the city. Importantly, this process will include all public stakeholders and not just residents of the Civic Hospital neighbourhood. We will not be the only ones to have a say.

The rezoning application public comments period is now open and all information submitted by TOH regarding the development is posted on the City of Ottawa website (see below). We have until September 10, 2013 to submit our comments.

## **The Garage**

The parking garage will be 4 stories with 725 parking spots, operating 24/7, 365 days/year for staff, visitors and patients of TOH, not just the Heart Institute as originally stated. The ground lot is currently used 9-5, Monday to Friday, for Heart Institute patients and visitors. From a City of Ottawa written report submitted to City Council on the plan, the City will fund 1/3 of the construction and receive a portion of the revenue. TOH has not paid its rent on the lot in since before 2007 and the City has evaluated the area parking revenue to ensure it will not lose money. Based on her statements in the above mentioned report, Councilor Hobbs currently supports the project on the basis that it “will reduce, not increase on street parking and traffic issues in the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood.” There was no information provided to support this claim.

## **Traffic Issues**

With the significant intensification of this area including new condominiums at the north end of Parkdale Ave, east of Breezehill Ave, and on Champagne Ave, stress is being placed on the main traffic access point to the Queensway at Parkdale Ave. This access from the 417 directly feeds our neighbourhood and TOH which has thousands of employees and tens of thousands of patient and family visits each year. Parkdale Ave is a two-lane residential ``arterial`` route to Ruskin St.

Despite the growing congestion on Parkdale Ave and at the traffic light at Ruskin St, the City and TOH continue to push more traffic onto this congested area. TOH has other space available for parking development on the Carling side of the campus, but is refusing to use it. Using the Heart Institute expansion as the main reason for the garage (80 new parking spots needed), TOH is seeking to achieve most of its full future requirements (455 spots) for parking in one lot on Ruskin St rather than expand on several of its existing lots at the front of the hospital, accessible from Carling Ave.

At the June 24<sup>th</sup> public meeting, Mr. Love publicly admitted that he is one of many hospital employees and visitors who cut through the residential streets of Sherwood, Reid and McFarlane Avenues during his morning commute in order to avoid the congestion on Parkdale Ave. He also stated that ambulances are more frequently using the Carling Ave exit from the Queensway to access TOH because of delays on Parkdale Ave.

A very preliminary analysis thus far of the Traffic Assessment by the TOH has revealed several weaknesses in data and conclusions used to support this project. More detailed information will be provided when a full analysis is completed by the CHNA.

## **Next Steps**

There will be a public meeting at St. Matthias Church hall on Wednesday, August 28, 2013 at 7:30p.m to give more details on this issue. We encourage you to visit [www.chnaottawa.ca](http://www.chnaottawa.ca) for specific details about the CHNA assessment of the project, traffic issues, TOH site plans, City of Ottawa reports on the lease agreement, the 1995 30-year moratorium agreement. Additionally, CHNA has started a CHNA Ruskin Park Facebook page where we will be posting information and updates as they develop: <https://www.facebook.com/CHNARuskinPark>

The rezoning information and online comments can be made at: <http://app01.ottawa.ca/postingplans/appDetails.jsf?lang=en&appId= 9TKYBC> (or go to City of Ottawa Development Application page and search 45 Ruskin).

We strongly encourage all residents of the neighbourhood to submit a response to this project. We need a very strong response from individual neighbours, not just individual households, providing concerns to the rezoning evaluating team. This will put pressure on TOH and the City to fully address all issues about this project publicly. If we don't speak up now it is likely that this project will proceed swiftly and we will all feel the impact for decades to come of the significant traffic issues expected when hundreds of cars per hour try to reach the expanded parking facility and the traffic flows over into our neighbourhood.

If you have questions or comments, please contact: Karen Wright at [vp@chnaottawa.ca](mailto:vp@chnaottawa.ca) or Paula Burchat at [paula@balanceandmotion.ca](mailto:paula@balanceandmotion.ca)