



Coopérative d'habitation Voisins Inc.

440 Wiggins Private, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 1A7
Tel. 613 565-0284 email: coopvoisins@rogers.com

March 18th, 2021
Andrew McCreight
Planner
City of Ottawa

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2 Robinson Ave. development. This submission is written on behalf of Coopérative d'habitation Voisins, located at 440 Wiggins Pvt. We have summarized our position into five key areas below.

1. Affordable Housing

This future development will be situated a stone's throw from our Co-op. While we understand the need to densify, we want to ensure that this densification results in a wide range of housing, including affordable housing. This is in line with the City of Ottawa's '5 Big Moves' planning document which calls for "providing housing for a range of income levels and backgrounds."¹ It's exactly this diversity in housing that fosters inclusive, supportive, resilient communities and is what the Sandy Hill community wants to see more of. In the ASH survey, 42% of respondents answered 'affordable housing' when asked what other ideas they had for this project.

The City is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis and needs to use all the tools in its toolbox to get more affordable units built. We call on the City to mandate that the developer allocate **30% of units as affordable** (a mix of below market rent and RGI) and work with community housing organizations who are ready and willing partners to make it happen.

2. Livability

Ottawa Public Health notes that the "built environment can affect our behaviours and how we feel."² The City has a chance here to ensure that this new development has a high level of livability from the get-go, that will positively affect future and current residents health and well-being.

¹ City of Ottawa 5 Big Moves, "Big Move 4: Climate, Energy and Public Health," Pg. 16

² Ottawa Public Health, "Health and the Built Environment,"
<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/health-and-the-built-environment.aspx#What-makes-a-healthy-built-environment> March 12, 2021



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We therefore call on the **City to designate this development a 15-minute neighbourhood**, which will foster “social connections and [positive] mental health, reduce injuries and chronic diseases, and make [communities] more resilient to climate change.”³

Further, a very important aspect of ensuring livability for current residents is their access to sunshine. The current ‘Arch Shadow Study’ submitted in the development application does not meet the City of Ottawa standards for shadow studies. Of note:

- The standard requires hourly imaging for mid- and high-rise buildings. The current report only notes imaging at 2- hour intervals from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Further, the study does not show the full extents of the shadowing on all of the images. For example, at June 21 at 8 a.m. the shadow extends west of the page, but curiously the engineer has chosen to move the extents of the map eastward to cut this area off. Further, because the study is only showing the shadows until 4:00 p.m., it is deliberately omitting the worst-case scenario shadowing of for example, summertime in June, when the sun sets at 8/9 p.m.
- There are requirements for a written report and evaluation of net new shadows on public spaces, communal amenity areas and “ground level residential private outdoor amenity space.” The grounds of Co-op Voisins (facing onto Lees Ave.) are considered to be outdoor amenity space and are not noted in these studies, but will most certainly be affected by these buildings. The gardens along the public footpath leading to the sloped path down to Robinson Field will also be affected.
- Referring back to the standards, the City notes that:
 - “No new net shadow within the no impact zone of any residential private outdoor amenity space being cast in shadow for more than two consecutive hourly test times during the June and September test date only.”
 - “The new net shadow must allow for an average of 50% of any communal amenity area being exposed to sun light during two consecutive hourly interval times per day between 11 am and 3 pm during all three test dates.”

Therefore, because the current study does not meet the above standards, Co-op Voisins requires the developer to complete an accurate new arch shadow study report that meets the standards as set by the City.

³ City of Ottawa 5 Big Moves, “Big Move 4: Climate, Energy and Public Health,” Pg. 17



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3. Access to amenities & community space

While our co-op is excited to hear that a focus of the commercial and community spaces will be on 'health & wellness,' it is critical that these spaces are accessible for **all** members of the community and meet the needs of community members.

Specifically, we are calling on the city to require the developer to fit up a portion of commercial space for a **grocery store**, and a **community centre and park** that provides "recreation amenities for all ages."⁴ These services and amenities are urgently needed in our end of Sandy Hill and were highly rated in the community survey as priority needs.

The community centre would ideally include a satellite hub for a library and the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre. A 'central park' of sorts would ideally be located in the central courtyard (in addition to the park being proposed for the corner of Chapel and Lees.) A central park would allow for it to become a landmark gathering place, with ample more room for trees, biodiverse features (eg. pond, butterfly garden), active spaces (eg. basketball court, outdoor amphitheatre, skating pad) and relaxation (eg. picnic tables, hammocks). To encourage a space that promotes active living and positive mental health, we believe there should be zero traffic inside the development; rather lay-bys can accommodate pick-ups/drop-offs and accessible access.

Further, we call on the City to mandate that the developer **keep commercial rents affordable**, so as to attract a range of local businesses and services (eg. healthy restaurants, bakery, areas for cultural programming, bike shop etc.) We want to see a development that lives up to the City's aspirations for 15-minute neighbourhoods, where current and future residents can access their day-to-day needs by foot, biking or transit.

4. Sustainability & Design Excellence

The City has an opportunity here to ensure this development becomes a world-class, sustainable, attractive and community-building landmark in Ottawa.

We call on the City to use the tools at its disposal in the '5 Big Moves' planning document to make this a reality. Namely, to "move from simply encouraging sustainable site and building design to influencing it through the City's development

⁴ City of Ottawa 5 Big Moves, "Big Move 3: Urban and Community Design," Pg. 13.



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application and review process.”⁵ This can include ensuring the development is LEED accredited and employs passive house design principles. Further, the development needs to show how it will be net-zero, and how it will be an early implementer of the City’s Energy Evolution actions.

Secondly, the City will encourage the architect to use materials and design features that “boost creativity in design rather than conformity to the rules.”⁶ Modifications to the current design should include **varying the heights of the towers to avoid a repetitive look**, in particular the NE tower, which will likely not meet the terms of the shadow arch study (see ‘Livability’ section).

Regarding storm-water management, there doesn’t appear to have been a storm water management report completed. For a development of this size, and with it being a mere 375 m away from the Rideau River, we are concerned about pollutants going into the Rideau. We are also concerned about the ability of current storm-water systems in Sandy Hill to manage in-flow from this development. We call on the City **to mandate that the developer complete a storm-water management report, and also receive a record of consultation from both the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.** These letters would note if there are any “sensitives” of receiving storm-water into the Rideau River from this site.

Finally, a community-friendly street design in the podium aspect of this development will encourage social connectedness, making it easy for people to connect with each-other and services. This creates a community that is vibrant and livable.

We encourage you to read through the results of the ASH community survey, where many community members shared their thoughts on how this development can employ best practices in design. One community member shared the following:

“As a community we need to positively and proactively engage the City and the developers to help make this a landmark addition to Sandy Hill through excellence in design, best practices environmentally, and a focus on aesthetic quality that ensures the development has a strong relationship to the architectural history of Sandy Hill. What an exciting, once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the neighbourhood – let’s make it count!!”

⁵ City of Ottawa 5 Big Moves, “Big Move 4: Climate, Energy and Public Health,” Pg. 19

⁶ City of Ottawa 5 Big Moves, “Big Move 3: Urban and Community Design,” Pg.14



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Co-op Voisins whole-heartedly supports the above, and wants to see this development bring beauty, vibrancy and possibility to this neighbourhood through sustainability and design excellence.

5. Connectivity

It is critical that the City work with the developer to ensure that current and future residents can safely and easily connect to and through this development.

This means that the community will be connected to this development through safe bike paths and walkways, which were both highly rated as priorities in the community survey (see slides 17-18.) We call on the City to **designate Lees Ave a complete street**, and prioritize walking, cycling and access to transit/LRT. Please also refer to ASH's submission for further details on connectivity priorities.

A second way that the City can ease the amount of new traffic from this development is through the installation of a traffic circle at Lees & Robinson Ave. We ask that the City **require the developer to complete a traffic circle study for this intersection, to explore installing a 2-lane traffic circle here**. We believe a traffic circle will enable easier access/egress to the site and will have a calming effect on traffic coming downhill on Lees.

Closing

With 2 Robinson Ave, the City has an opportunity to set the tone for what the new standard for urban developments will be. Will it become a world-class, 15-minute neighbourhood that focuses on affordability, community health and well-being, and sustainability? Or will it become another generic, soul-less development that could be found anywhere along the 401?

Our Co-op and the surrounding Sandy Hill Community look forward to working with the City and the developer to ensure it's the former. We are excited by this opportunity, and thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Mitchell
Vice-President, Board of Directors
On behalf of Coopérative d'habitation Voisins