

New Official Plan follow up question responses: Sandy Hill

Sent by email 16-Mar-2021 to Elizabeth Whyte, Program and Project Coordinator, Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department, City of Ottawa.

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for your February 26 email to which was attached your responses to our questions and concerns about various aspects of the new Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan, which is to replace the Sandy Hill Secondary Plan (SP). After reviewing your responses, we find ourselves obliged to repeat our requests below, and ask that they be reflected in the next version of the new CEDCSP and OP:

1. ASH asks that the Sandy Hill Rationale found in section 5.3.4(1)b of the existing Sandy Hill Secondary Plan be included in the proposed CEDCSP and requests that this section include a commitment that the Sandy Hill part of the proposed CEDCSP will be updated upon completion of a visioning exercise, before the end of 2022.

We are seeking a commitment from staff that section 5.3.4.1.b. will be included to provide an understanding of the heritage character in Sandy Hill and to ensure that it is retained and respected. This section mirrors a similar introductory section to the Centretown piece of the CEDCSP; there is no reason why it would be removed. We reiterate that the current Sandy Hill Secondary Plan is nearly 50 years old! Our neighbourhood has undergone major changes which are not reflected in this old document, and remains under the same market pressures that have caused inappropriate development. The City has decided to arbitrarily retain and in some cases introduce new actionable items into the new Secondary Plan, yet is refusing to recognize the community input that is required to direct future development. As this lack of respect for neighbourhood-level context is a common theme to the many comments the City is receiving from individuals and community associations across Ottawa, we expect a fresh approach from the City.

2. ASH asks that this section also contain a requirement for future development to respect the heritage character of all the contributing properties identified in the Sandy Hill Character Study Area, as well as those on the Heritage Register that fall within the larger Sandy Hill character area.

Again, and in complement to the above comments, we request a commitment from the City to take this approach to planning in our neighbourhood. This is a similar request to that of Rockcliffe Park's request to create a singular Transect for neighbourhoods with Heritage Conservation Districts.

3. ASH asks that the City NOT re-classify Chapel Street as a minor corridor.

We remain firmly against this re-classification. Chapel Street features largely intact heritage fabric that is almost entirely residential in character. Designating it as a minor corridor will stimulate demolition of extant good housing stock given that current typology is exclusively residential and not conducive to ground floor commercial business (low ceiling height, low fire rating between floors, etc.). Traffic calming

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measures have only just been implemented (between Somerset and Mann). 2 Robinson will put additional pressure on Lees/King Edward. We do not want to see Chapel opened up to ease these pressures. It has many family-oriented single homes and safety is an issue. We note that Laurier Ave E. and King Edward Ave. are also both designated as minor corridors. We cannot accept that Chapel St is placed in the same category as these other two. The other Sandy Hill streets with commercial LCA zoning, including Rideau St., have not yet experienced the benefits of such zoning, and we do not want to dilute those efforts by creating yet another street open to commercial zoning. We also have no confidence that this reclassification would not lead to opening the south end of Chapel to through vehicular traffic, which is completely unacceptable, especially with the developments that Lees Ave. will see in future years.

4. ASH asks that the City rectify the lack of definition and specificity with regard to Section 4.7.31.1 98 Preserve and enhance a stock of “good housing”.

Others have asked the City to be much more rigorous about the language they are using in the draft Official Plan. The same comment applies to the use of the term “good housing”. See our previous comments for constructive suggestions on how to improve this.

5. ASH asks that the City rectify the building heights in Sandy Hill West and South

If there is no intent to up-zone lots from R1 to R4 in southeast Sandy Hill then why has the City indicated in Schedule C that the maximum building height is four stories in this area? This Schedule contradicts the City Zoning Bylaw and will be used by developers as a rationale for building a maximum of 4 storeys in this area. This Schedule must be changed to agree with the City Zoning Bylaw. Similarly, Schedule C must be changed to show Sandy Hill West as an area with a maximum building height of four storeys, again to align with the current City Zoning Bylaw.

6. ASH questions new text in Section 4.7.3.5 A future park at the former St. Joseph's school

The change in the text in the new secondary plan lumps the St. Joe's parking lot together along with the King Edward corridor as open for re-development for institutional use by UofO. This is not a change that should occur without community consultation and is another example of how a visioning exercise is necessary. It begs the question will 174 Wilbrod (St. Joseph's Church) remain a possible site for a future park? What type of redevelopment is being planned at 174 and 200 Wilbrod? Will this be a partnership between the City and the University and why is this just now being brought to the attention of the community?

7. ASH asks that Somerset St. E. be formally recognized as a cycling corridor

Somerset St E is now an important cycling corridor which links east Ottawa neighbourhood existing and planned bike lanes to downtown and other cycling paths beyond. This important role should be included in the SP, as should be the need for future improvements as active transportation increases. This is an example of what the Sandy Hill section in the new secondary plan should recognize, and we ask that it be added now. Item 114 in the new proposed plan also addresses the topic of priority

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cycling connections and explicitly mentions Cumberland St. We ask that Somerset St. E is included in this section.

8. ASH asks that the wording about the inter-provincial truck route be strengthened

The draft OP no longer contains any reference to removing King Edward and Rideau Streets from the Truck route network whereas this is a policy goal of the 2013 OP. The 2013 language must be retained. The section should make specific reference to the impact of the lack of suitable connection between the 417 and 5/50 provincial highways and the resulting impacts that this has led to in the communities along the approaches to the Macdonald-Cartier bridge. The current OP does a better job of describing the issues and creating policy space for multiple potential paths of action besides just waiting for a new bridge to be built such as “modifications to bridges and their approaches”. This at least creates the policy space for a potential solution such as the already studied truck tunnel. The proposed OP text leaves no policy space for such an alternative to be even considered.

9. ASH asks for an explanation why the area identified as institutional development of the University of Ottawa been expanded to include Wilbrod between Cumberland and King Edward?

This is a major change for a Heritage Conservation District, and requires community consultation.

10. ASH asks that references to the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor be removed from the new OP

Finally, we reiterate here ASH’s historic opposition to the Alta Vista Transportation Corridor. This outdated idea is unnecessary and would act to induce demand. We ask that you remove any references to it from the Official Plan.

Sincerely yours,

Susan Young
President, Action Sandy Hill
Présidente, Action Côte-de-Sable