



**Subject:** Community opposes road opening through a Sandy Hill public park

**Date:** September 3, 2021

Dear Mayor Watson and City Councillors:

In our Sandy Hill neighbourhood, there is a small public park that represents a much larger municipal issue. Besserer Park is nestled in the northeast corner of Sandy Hill, and at any given hour, you may see residents walking their dogs, enjoying a breath of fresh air, or strolling with their loved ones. This park also serves as a patch of backyard for our many neighbours who do not have one. As we have all learned to appreciate throughout the course of this pandemic, parks and public spaces have been essential to mental health and physical well-being.

Besserer Park is under threat: a proposed road opening into the park would reduce usable space and affect residents' ability to enjoy the recreational value of the park. The sole purpose of the road opening would be to provide three private parking spaces for a development at 244 Fountain Place.

**This conversion of public greenspace for private development is unacceptable—in Besserer Park and across our city. Residents of Sandy Hill urge the City to deny this road opening request.**

Action Sandy Hill has been an active participant in consultations relating to the City's new Official Plan. We are alarmed and discouraged that this proposed road opening violates both secondary plans for the area, which essentially de-legitimizes the entire purpose of the Official Plan.

The City's own guidelines advocate "to maintain, improve and where desirable, add to public open space and parks" (Sandy Hill Secondary Plan, 5.3.2 Land Use). For development on a lot next to a park, the City "must ensure that the construction, maintenance and access to the buildings does not infringe on the park through building setbacks or other means" (Uptown Rideau Secondary Plan, 6.1 Public Parks). A report to planning committee (file: ACS2020-PIE-PS-0067) fails to mention these planning provisions.

How can the City disregard its own plans in favour of a decision that runs counter to making Ottawa a livable, green capital? With many new apartments and condominiums under construction or proposed for the Rideau Street area, we must now stand up for our greenspace and smart intensification.

**To show public opposition to this proposed road opening, Action Sandy Hill has organized a park protest for Thursday, Sept. 9 between 4:30-6 p.m. Residents will be signing a petition that objects to the road opening, requesting that Besserer Street be closed where the road meets the park.**

In closing, Besserer Park should not be diminished in any way to facilitate private parking—a decision that sets a dangerous precedent for our City's valuable public greenspace. The City must stand up for public parks.

Thank you for considering our request,

Susan Khazaeli, PhD  
President, Action Sandy Hill