

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

DATE 17 March 1998

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator,
Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee

FROM/EXP. Planning & Development Approvals Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **LINKAGES INITIATIVE**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Receive for information a presentation from the Linkages Initiative;**
- 2. Endorse the priority linkages system plan developed by the Linkages Initiative;**
- 3. Direct staff to continue to work with the Region's other partners in the Linkages Initiative to ensure that the priority linkages are implemented either through related downtown developments or as separate projects.**

BACKGROUND

The Linkages Initiative was formed in 1995 as the inter-agency Rideau Redevelopment Project steering committee was completing that project and its mandate. The committee felt that the partnership's success and momentum could further address the revitalization of downtown Ottawa and strengthening of the tourism and convention industry. More specifically, they felt that two challenges could be addressed: the challenge facing pedestrians in a downtown divided by the Rideau Canal and separated vertically by the bridges that span it; and the challenge facing the tourism and convention industry in marketing the world's second coldest capital as a year-round destination to meeting planners, given the lack of connected facilities.

The committee recognized the importance of the tourism and convention sector and downtown revitalization in the wake of federal government downsizing:

- The Ottawa region welcomes 5.1 million visitors annually
- The annual local economic impact of the tourism and convention sector is \$187 Million
- Total local employment supported by tourism and convention spending is over 11,000 jobs
- Local daily spending per tourist/visitor is \$578; per convention delegate is \$914 [if there is an associated tradeshow, exhibitors spend a further \$1,100].

Twenty-five private and public sector downtown Ottawa business agencies (including the Region) formed the *Linkages Initiative*, a working network with the common vision of implementing a physical network of tourism, convention and other complementary attractions. The network would be directly linked by a limited number of strategically located pedestrian connections, comprised of both enclosed pedways and outdoor pathways, located at, above or below grade. The limited network proposed reflected the desire to avoid extensive systems like those found in Calgary and Toronto, which impact negatively on exterior street-level activity.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The Linkages Initiative commissioned consultants KPMG and Delcan to undertake an economic impact analysis of the linkages concept. Completed March 15, 1996, the report confirmed that:

- in selecting convention destinations, meeting planners place a high priority on the comfort and convenience of their clients, especially whether meeting space and hotel rooms are connected
- downtown pedestrian linkages are common and popular in, and actively promoted by, other Canadian and American winter cities and are viewed as a means to maintain vitality, provide protection from severe weather conditions and encourage shopping downtown
- the greatest users of downtown linkage systems are local residents
- more conventions, delegates, visitors and residents would be attracted to downtown Ottawa if additional linkages were provided

Having confirmed the public and economic benefits associated with downtown pedestrian linkage systems generally, the consultants further addressed the Ottawa context specifically.

The consultants highlighted that three clusters of linked buildings already exist in the Rideau/Congress Centre area:

- The westernmost cluster includes the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (CMCP), the connected Chateau Laurier Hotel and parkade, and extends southward under Rideau Street through a below-grade pedway to the federal Conference Centre.
- The easternmost cluster, *Albion Place*, is comprised of the Hotel Les Suites, the Novotel Hotel and above it, the 12 storey Albion executive office tower, the heritage Albion Hotel/*Café Nicole* building and an underground parking garage.
- The largest cluster is situated between the other two and extends southward from York Street through a sheltered parkade, under George Street through a pedway into The Bay, over Rideau Street through two pedways into the Rideau Centre/10 Rideau office tower/Westin Hotel/Congress Centre complex and under Mackenzie King Bridge through a pedway into National Defence Headquarters and through to the Laurier Bridge. Also connected into this

cluster are three parking garages and two major components of the transit system, Rideau Street and the Mackenzie King Bridge transitway corridor. The Rideau Centre pedestrian system stays open from 6:00-2:00 a.m. daily to accommodate transfers between these major bus routes. About 400,000 pedestrians pass through the Rideau Centre system weekly.

The consultants noted that the construction of just two additional pedestrian linkages would in turn connect these three clusters into one system and strengthen Ottawa's competitive position vis-à-vis other Canadian cities. These additional linkages would connect a total of four nearby hotels, or 1,473 rooms, to the Ottawa Congress Centre -more than any other city in Canada. This would help to attract more medium-to-large conventions which require delegates being accommodated in more than one hotel. As well, these hotels would offer a range of choice of room types and costs.

The report projected that if more visitors [tourists and business travellers] and just two additional conventions were attracted as a result of these linked facilities, the potential additional local economic impacts would be significant, including:

- \$2.6 Million in new expenditures
- 61 full-time equivalent jobs
- \$1.2 Million in new salaries and wages
- \$0.95 Million in new tax revenues to all levels of government
- 13.5% increase in winter convention delegate expenditures [retail, restaurant, entertainment]

EVALUATION OF LINKAGE PRIORITIES

A number of linkage options were examined and recommended for consideration by the Linkages Initiative. The Initiative affirmed a number of priority linkages, including enclosed pedways, below, at or above grade, and exterior pathways. Based on the consultants findings, the highest priority linkages were determined to be those that directly connected additional existing hotel rooms to convention space. Other priority linkages would connect other complementary uses and supporting services [transit, parking] and help to complete a continuous system.

The highest priority enclosed linkages include:

- Through the government Conference Centre and between it and the Rideau Centre/Westin Hotel/Congress Centre complex, across Colonel By Dr.
- Between the Rideau Centre/Westin Hotel/Congress Centre complex and the Albion Place [Novotel/Les Suites] complex, across Nicholas St.

Other priority enclosed linkages include:

- Between the Chateau Laurier and the Daly Site, across Mackenzie Ave.
- Between the Daly Site and Chapters, across Sussex Dr.
- Between Chapters and The Bay and 99 Rideau, through the developments
- Between the government Conference Centre and the National Arts Centre, across The Canal
- Between One Nicholas and the Rideau Centre/Westin Hotel/Congress Centre complex, across Nicholas St.

Exterior linkage improvements include:

- Pedestrian environment and access improvements across Confederation Square
 - to Sparks Street Mall; and
 - to Rideau Street/Centre -at grade, replacing the below grade 'Terry Fox' underpass
- Seasonal pedestrian access across The Canal near the Conference Centre and NAC
- Pedestrian environment and access improvements along The Canal and under the Plaza Bridge
 - between the Conference Centre, CMCP and Chateau Laurier along the east side; and
 - between the NAC, Bytown Museum and Canal Locks along the west side
- Pedestrian environment and crossing improvements at the intersection of Daly Ave. and Colonel By Dr.

Prior to their presentation to CSED Committee, the Linkages Initiative will be distributing a briefing package which will include excerpts from the KPMG report and a colour map of the priority linkages system.

CONSULTATION

The Linkages Initiative has confirmed the support of affected property owners for the implementation of the proposed priority linkages system. In developing the system, the Initiative also consulted with elected representatives, committees of the National Capital Commission, special business and community interest groups and informed the public through presentations to City of Ottawa Council and the media.

The response to date has generally been very favourable. Concerns expressed have related to the potential negative impacts of an extensive grade-separated pedestrian network such as those found in Calgary or Toronto. This type of network has not been systematically implemented in downtown Ottawa and is clearly not the objective of the Linkages Initiative, which is pursuing a limited, strategic system. Most of those consulted have expressed an interest in providing further input as the initiative progresses to the operational and design development phase.

POLICIES AND APPROVALS

The Linkages Initiative presented the priority linkages system for information to the 6 February 1997 joint meeting of the National Capital Commission's national Advisory Committee on Design and Advisory Committee on Planning and Real Asset Management. The overall response was to encourage the Initiative to pursue the proposed system and agreement that pervasive systems like those found in Calgary are undesirable. Particular interest was expressed in how the Initiative will address the design and operation of publicly accessible linkages where they extend through and interface with privately owned and operated developments. There was also strong interest in the potential design approach to linkages crossing The Canal.

The Initiative subsequently made a presentation to the 25 February 1997 Planning and Economic Development Committee of the City of Ottawa Council. The presentation was accompanied by a staff report with recommendations relating to the City's commitment to pursue and facilitate implementation of the priority linkages system in concert with other agencies and through its own approvals processes. Other recommendations related specifically to the City's support for, and potential involvement in, ensuring that linkage and parking facilities are implemented in the Daly Site redevelopment. The recommendations were approved by the Committee and by City Council on 02 April 1997. A copy of the report recommendations, and approvals is attached (Annex A).

The City of Ottawa Official Plan also includes design criteria relating to pedways.

The Region has also addressed downtown pedestrian movement and facilities in its new Official Plan policies. Section 3.4 The Central Area, states that Council shall:

- Provide a transportation system which encourages the use of walking, cycling, and public transit (especially for commuting) as the principal means of improving access to and mobility within the Central Area.
- Accommodate pedestrian movements in the Central Area primarily at grade along public streets.
- At selected locations, support the development of a below-grade or above-grade weather-protected pedestrian network, such as between hotels and convention facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Linkages Initiative has provided input which has been reflected in the design of the following 'Restore the Core' projects now underway:

1. The Mackenzie King Bridge rehabilitation project, which includes new exterior steps connecting the bridge to Confederation Park (to open Spring 1998) and an improved passerelle connecting the Rideau Centre and DND Headquarters beneath the bridge associated with the new transit station
2. The Plaza Bridge/Confederation Boulevard project, which will introduce improved pedestrian spaces, pathways and lighting. This includes:

- barrier-free access from Sparks Street Mall, across Confederation Square to the pathway system along the west side of the Canal, and extending under the west arch of Plaza Bridge to the Bytown Museum
- new steps connecting Confederation Square with the west arch pathway below
- new steps adjacent to the government Conference Centre connecting the Plaza Bridge deck with pathways along the east side of the Canal, including new pedestrian access under the east arch to the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (CMCP)
- new steps providing a further connection from the east arch area/CMCP to the Chateau Laurier terrace and Major's Hill Park.

The priority linkages system has also been addressed in the terms of reference for the RMOC Convention Centre expansion project and the NCC Daly Site redevelopment project. The priority linkage proposed in association with the federal government Conference Centre is also premised on the expectation that the centre will be redeveloped for a more active, visitor-oriented use with linkages as a key component. These redevelopment projects represent one time opportunities to achieve the vision of a 'capital connection' and further advance revitalization of the downtown.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications to this report.

Previous financial commitments associated with the Linkages system are the pedestrian improvements incorporated in several larger Regional projects, as detailed earlier in this report. Future financial implications can be expected to be similar in nature. Regional Council will have the opportunity to approve these expenditures as part of associated projects.

CONCLUSIONS

The Region is part of an established working network pursuing implementation of a downtown pedestrian priority linkages system. The consultant report commissioned by the Linkages Initiative affirmed the public and economic benefits of implementing a pedestrian linkage system. The public benefits include greater accessibility and convenience for downtown residents, workers and visitors, particularly persons with disabilities and especially in the winter months. The economic benefits include attracting more visitor, tourism and convention activity and related economic activity and development spin-offs. The overall result is a more vital, attractive and liveable downtown core. Although several proposed improvements have been addressed through recent projects, a number of imminent projects will provide additional opportunities to implement some of the most significant linkages.

Approved by
Nick Tunnacliffe, MCIP, RPP
 CAL/

Attach. (1)

CITY OF OTTAWA/VILLE D'OTTAWA

From/De: Department of Planning,
Economic Development
and Housing

Ref.: ACS1997/1401-061 PD1D0137

Policy Action
Exécution politique

Date:
March 21, 1997

Ward/Quartier
OT-5 - Bruyère-Strathcona

Interpretation/Interprétation []

[1] Planning and Economic Development
Committee/Comité de l'urbanisme
et de l'expansion économique

[2] City Council
Conseil municipal

SUBJECT/OBJET

I. Linkages Initiative Implementation: Daly Site Redevelopment


L'implantation d'initiative des liaisons piétonnaires; réaménagement du site Daly (TWA3200/0124, TWA3205/0124)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the City affirm its desire to pursue the priority pedestrian linkages system developed by the inter-agency Linkages Initiative.
2. That City staff work with the Linkages Initiative, other agencies, affected property owners and special interest groups to ensure that the design and implementation of the linkages is in keeping with its related Official Plan policies and is addressed through site-specific planning approvals processes, facilitation of voluntary commitments to linkages by adjacent site owners, and negotiation of any necessary agreements for linkages requiring access over or under City land.
3. That, given the importance of the Daly Site redevelopment to downtown revitalization, the implementation of the linkages initiative, and increasing the supply of parking within Ottawa's tourism and convention districts, City staff:
 - a) continue to work with the National Capital Commission, Daly Site redevelopment proponent(s), and adjacent property owners, to confirm the feasibility and ensure the implementation of the priority pedestrian linkages connecting the site westerly (at Mackenzie Avenue) and easterly (at Sussex Drive) to the adjacent properties, and thereby, to the overall priority linkages system;
 - b) pursue with the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, making available the sub-surface lands below Mackenzie Avenue (between the

Chateau Laurier and the Daly Site) for inclusion in the Daly Site redevelopment envelope; and

- c) report back to Council on the appropriateness of contributing funds from the Parking Development Reserve Fund for any parking or linkage component of the redevelopment project.

for 
James L. Sevigny,
Commissioner of Planning,
Economic Development and Housing.


Approved By:
John S. Burke
Chief Administrative Officer

CAL:sk-1

Contact: Catherine Lindquist 244-5300 ext. 3696

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION - March 25, 1997

The Committee concurs and so recommends.

CITY COUNCIL DECISION - April 2, 1997

The Departmental recommendations, as presented, carried.

FINANCIAL COMMENT

Recommendations 1 and 2

The Linkages Initiative Downtown Ottawa Pedestrian Infrastructure Programme was presented to City Council for information purposes in the 1997-2001 Capital Expenditure Program. The recommended funding for this project is public debenture financing in the amounts of \$500,000 in 1999 and \$500,000 in 2000.

Recommendation 3

With respect to Recommendation 3 specifically pertaining to the Daly Site redevelopment, funds in the amount of \$1,940,000 are currently in the Parking Development Reserve Fund (Account 639711 income from cash-in-lieu of parking). The appropriateness of using these funds for this project will be identified in a subsequent report.

for 
City Treasurer
GWS/BH/drw 1997/03/24