

As We Heard It Report – Public Information Session #3 267 O'Connor Street Redevelopment

This *As We Heard It Report* summarizes the virtual public meeting held on April 2, 2025, from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM EST between the applicant team—including Taggart Realty Management, Hobin Architecture, UN Studios, and Fotenn Planning + Design—and the Public, including meeting moderation from Councillor Ariel Troster's office.

The purpose of the meeting was to engage with the Public, provide an update on the planning process, share design refinements based on previous public feedback, and invite further input. The discussion fostered a productive exchange of ideas, helping to address questions, provide clarification, and ensure an improved understanding of key aspects of the project.

The purpose of this *As We Heard It Report* is to summarize and synthesize the feedback and comments received.

1.0 Project Overview

- The applicant is proposing to redevelop the subject property with two (2) high-rise mixed-use buildings, a significant institutional use, and ample publicly accessible space at-grade interfacing with the public and private realm.

The planning applications required for this re-development proposal include a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBLA), and Heritage Permit Application with a Site Plan Control Application submitted at a later date.

2.0 Public Consultation Requirements

- Due to the height (27-stories) of the proposed towers, the "Landmark Building" policy of the Central and East Downtown Core Secondary Plan is applicable. The Secondary Plan describes specific criteria for the consideration of a "Landmark Building" and states that prior to considering a proposal for a Landmark Building in Centretown, a formal and rigorous application and review process that includes public consultation shall be developed for consideration by the appropriate standing committee of Council and shall be adopted by Council.

As such, the proposed Public Consultation Strategy was approved by Ottawa City Council on October 14th, 2020.

3.0 Approved Public Consultation Strategy

- The Formal Review and Public Consultation Plan is guided by the overarching principle of ongoing and consistent community engagement and conversation during the entirety of the application process, which is critical to the success of the project. Therefore, the proposed strategy is integrated into the overarching development applications process and will be refined through discussions with City Staff, the Ward Councillor, and the Centretown Citizen's Community Association.

The most important element of a successful Formal Review and Public Consultation Plan is clarity. The applicant team aims to provide user-friendly, plain-language messages throughout the project.

Our public consultation plan includes the following components:

- / A comprehensive list of planned public engagement initiatives including on-line public open house as well as a planned site visit if appropriate and advisable;
- / An approach to ensure inclusivity regarding participants and other community stakeholders;
- / A strategy specifying our approach for engaging and informing citizens through various forms of social media platforms including a project website and online surveys to build project interaction and awareness;

- / A comprehensive management plan to acknowledge, incorporate, and address the submitted public consultation feedback received from all stakeholders,
- / A thorough and project-wide update meeting schedule for Staff and Council.

A series of regular postings will be prepared to keep the public updated on the progress of the project and upcoming opportunities for participation in the process. It is anticipated that all public engagement events and activities will be advertised using the full suite of tools, but that more targeted messaging may be used in certain cases for specific groups.

The approach to public consultation will be based on the following principles:

- / Draw on previous consultation records and make connections between the processes;
- / Produce clear and consistent messaging to effectively inform the public from the outset;
- / Ensure that stakeholders are being educated and informed to allow for meaningful participation in the process;
- / Identify ways of contacting hard-to-reach groups, and provide a variety of options to engage in the process;
- / Ensure public consultation events and methods of providing feedback are inclusive and accessible to people of all ages and abilities;
- / Allow for a balance of formal and informal engagement opportunities, and
- / Make engagement fun and rewarding.

4.0 Public Meeting Introduction – April 2, 2025

- The meeting was opened and moderated by representatives from the Ward 14 Councillor's Office. The format included a presentation from the applicant team, followed by a moderated question-and-answer period. The applicant team and representatives from Taggart expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage with the community and receive feedback.

5.0 Project Overview and Planning Context

- **Presentation Overview:** Fotenn provided an overview of the planning and public consultation process that has been undertaken thus far, highlighting the consultation meetings with the Centretown Community Association (CCA) and the local Ward Councillor, as well providing a review of the definition and criteria for a Landmark Building. The team then provided an overview of the proposal, highlighting key elements such as the introduction of 510 residential units, the transformation of an underutilized surface parking area, and the integration of privately owned public space (POPS) and institutional uses.

PROCESS UPDATE

THIRD ROUND CONSULTATION

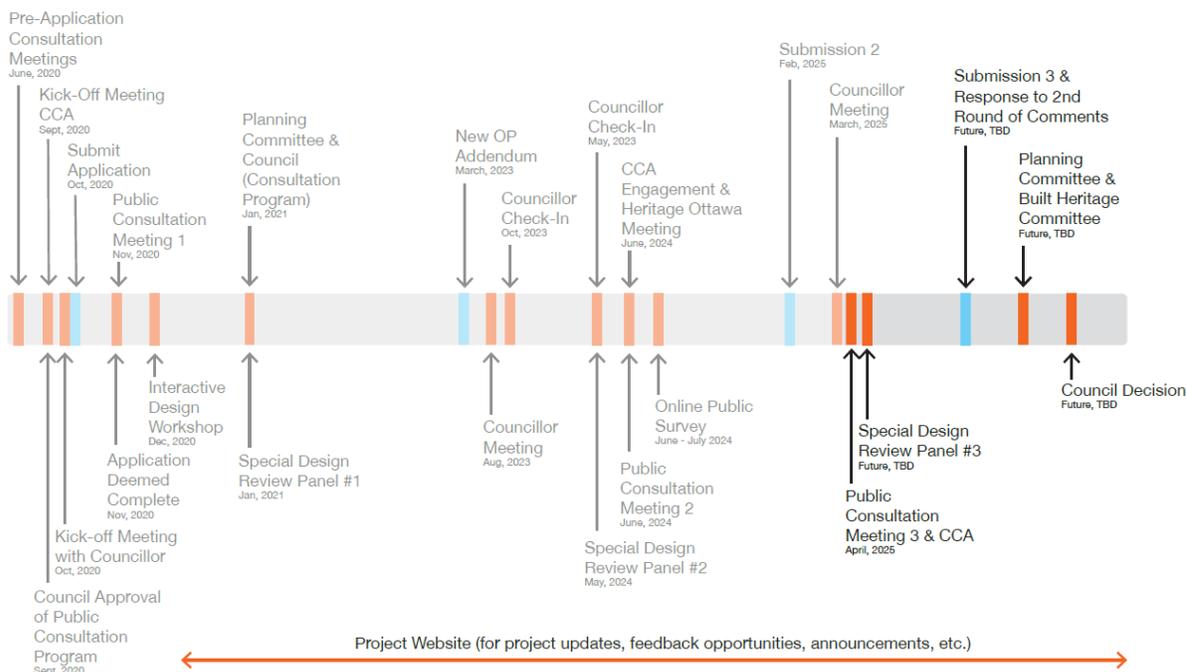


Figure 1: Graphic depicting the process thus far, with completed items greyed out, and future steps in full colour.

- **Consultation Process:** The applicant team emphasized the importance of engagement throughout the project’s development. The approach is deliberate and methodical, ensuring all feedback is properly integrated within the decision-making process. It was noted that the process has followed a very robust and Council approved public engagement strategy, which is an important component of the Landmark Building policy.
- **Legal and Planning Considerations:** The CCA raised the issue that due to Ontario Law, the design is largely established and not likely to change. Ontario’s Planning Act requires municipalities to issue a decision on zoning applications within 120 days, after which applicants have the right to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal if no decision has been made. The applicant team clarified, that while the project design is largely established within these planning constraints, the applicant team is continuing to work with City staff to address outstanding matters, and there is still an opportunity to incorporate minor refinements based on community feedback.

6.0 Design and Architectural Considerations

- **Architectural Approach:** UN Studios provided an overview of their design philosophy, emphasizing a focus on human-scale development and placemaking. The broader urban context was considered, with views drawing attention toward Parliament and the downtown core. The materiality of the building takes inspiration from Ottawa’s monumental heritage buildings, incorporating key elements such as arches and masonry.
- **Key Design Adjustments:**
 - Addressing concerns regarding massing, particularly the perceived small scale of the two-storey podium and the optical impact of cantilevered elements.
 - Increasing tower separation to a minimum of 20m to align with Urban Design Guidelines for High-rise Buildings.
 - Revising the atrium design to improve accessibility and enhance its role as an open and welcoming public space.
 - Adjusting the southern tower setback from 3m to 6m.
 - Reconfiguring the site layout to prioritize external views and improve the integration of POPS.

- Eliminating an enclosed internal room to ensure public accessibility and enhance engagement with the open space.
- Drawing inspiration from Centretown’s architectural language, incorporating elements such as arches and light-colored masonry to better align with the surrounding heritage context.



Figure 2: Massing adjustments including reduced cantilevers on the south tower and podium increase from 2 to 3 storeys.



Figure 3: Tower separation adjusted to 20m and reduced podium level connection of towers to increase porosity.



Figure 4: Interior urban room redesigned to POPS.

7.0 Mobility, Accessibility, and Sustainability

- **Site Access:** Key entrance points are strategically positioned along Gilmour and MacLaren Streets, with an emphasis on directing pedestrian movement through central POPS to animate this space.
- **Parking & Transportation:**
 - The bicycle parking entrance is located on Gilmour, with a dedicated ramp for comfortable and convenient access.
 - The vehicular access to the underground car park is located via MacLaren Street.
- **Sustainability Measures:** The team emphasized four critical sustainability categories that have guided the project's design:
 - High-performance building standards.
 - Operational energy disclosure.
 - Life-cycle assessment of construction materials.
 - Construction waste management.

8.0 Community Discussion and Key Concerns

Following the presentation from the applicant team, the floor was opened to a question-and-answer period.

- **Mixed-Use Considerations:** Some attendees expressed a desire for more commercial space in the podium rather than residential units. The team responded that, given the ongoing housing crisis, residential development is the primary focus, though commercial spaces will still be included.
- **Accessibility:** Concerns were raised regarding the integration of accessible design. The team confirmed that the project complies with building code requirements, including 15% barrier-free units of each unit type, and that CMHC financing is being explored, which may lead to additional accessible unit types. Universal design elements are still being refined and improved.
- **Sustainability and Parking:**
 - The project will include a percentage of EV-ready parking spaces, estimated at 5-10%, with provisions for future expansion.
 - The development will meet Tier 1 High-Performance Energy Standards.
 - The bicycle parking ratio is approximately 0.85 spaces per unit, with opportunities to further increase bike parking capacity based on feedback.
- **Traffic and Circulation:**
 - Concerns were raised about the impact of additional traffic in an area, particularly since the site is surrounded, and can only be accessed, by one-way streets. The team clarified that the project includes only one vehicular access point (on MacLaren) and that peak-hour traffic is expected to increase by only 10-20 cars. Currently, the site is occupied by a large surface grade parking lot, and this is proposed to be replaced with an underground residential parking garage.
 - The parking ratio is 0.5 spaces per unit, aligning with City of Ottawa standards and encouraging sustainable transportation options such as walking, biking, and public transit.
- **Cyclist and Pedestrian Safety:** Concerns were raised about vehicle-cyclist conflicts at the MacLaren intersection. The team stated that the building's setback will improve sightlines, and a corner sight triangle will enhance visibility. This represents an improvement over the existing building, which currently obstructs views.
- **Heritage Considerations:** It was confirmed that the existing building on-site does not have heritage value. However, the design process continues to consider the surrounding heritage context.
- **Building Height and Massing:** The team evaluated alternative massing approaches, including a U-shaped design, but found it would create awkward unit layouts, reduced privacy, and additional internal shadows. The current design, which incorporates setbacks and differentiation in height (25 and 27 storeys), was determined to be the optimal approach.
- **Noise and Air Quality:** Attendees inquired about potential noise and odors from commercial tenants. The team clarified that there are no plans for large restaurants, and that air handling systems will be located on the rooftop to mitigate noise and odors at street level.
- **Construction Impacts:** Construction is expected to take approximately 2 to 2.5 years. There will be no blasting, however, excavation will be required, and noise barriers will be implemented throughout the construction process to help buffer noise.

- **Garbage and Loading Areas:** Separate garbage areas will be provided for residential and commercial uses, with ventilation to minimize odors. Garbage collection will occur from both MacLaren and Gilmour Street.

9.0 Landscape and Public Space Design

- **Public Space Activation:** The POPS will include raised seating, seating walls around planters, and lush landscaping to create an inviting and vibrant courtyard. A slightly elevated platform will allow for potential community uses, such as performances or art installations.
- **Vegetation and Greenery:** The landscape design prioritizes year-round visual interest, featuring native plant species and adequate soil volumes to support large, healthy trees.

10.0 Closing Remarks

- The meeting concluded with an invitation for further feedback. The project team reiterated their commitment to considering community input as the design continues to be refined.
- For any additional comments or suggestions, please reach out to the project team and/or Councillor Ariel Troster's office. Your input is greatly valued in shaping a development that serves the community effectively.

11.0 Report Conclusion & Next Steps

This report is an important opportunity for the applicant team to report back and share what we have heard during our public engagement events. The preceding document represents a summary of the discussion held and comments received during the public engagement event held on April 2nd, 2025, between the applicant team and the Public, facilitated by Councillor Ariel Troster's office. As a next step, the project team will review, consider, discuss, and where possible incorporate the feedback we received into the project design. Upcoming project milestones include:

- **Special Design Review Panel #3:** A third and final special Urban Design Review Panel consisting of local, national, and international panel members will be held to facilitate an in-depth discussion on the design and architectural merits of the proposal.
- **Submission 3 and Response to the Second Round of Comments:** The applicant team will submit the third submission and second response to the technical review comments received from Staff. Once complete, the proposal will be scheduled for a public hearing at Built Heritage Committee & Planning & Housing Committee.
- **Planning and Housing Committee & Built Heritage Committee:** When ready, the application will be presented and considered at Built Heritage Committee and Planning & Housing Committee. This process will involve the opportunity for public delegations to present their position on the application. The project team will also attend to present the proposal and answer any questions posed by City Councillors on both Committees. The City of Ottawa Heritage Committee & Planning & Housing Committee will then make a recommendation to City Council.
- **Council Decision:** Ottawa City Council will ultimately consider and decide on the proposal.

To receive more information on this proposal or to make a comment please visit the City of Ottawa Development Applications website:

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