

MEMO TO: Members, First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa  
Residents & Governors, Unitarian House  
Parents, River Parkway Children's Centre

FROM: Blair Erskine, Chair, Unitarian Campus Planning Committee  
Maury Prevost, President, First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa  
David Curry, President, Board of Governors, Unitarian House  
Alex Cullen, President, Board of Directors, River Parkway Children's Centre

RE: Status of proposed City Light Rail Transit (LRT) route through Unitarian campus

DATE: July 15, 2015

Dear Friends:

As you may know, Ottawa City Council, at its July 8, 2015 meeting, has approved a plan to extend Stage 2 of its Light Rail Transit (LRT) system both east, west and south, dependent on obtaining both federal and provincial funding. This plan affects our campus on Cleary Avenue – this note is to bring you up to date on this development and what can be expected in the near future.

*A brief re-cap:* in 2013 the City of Ottawa began its Environmental Assessment on extending the LRT west from Tunney's Pasture to Baseline Station and Bayshore Station via Lincoln Fields Station, as well as extensions east to Orléans and south to Riverside South. Some 7 options were considered for the route running from the current Transitway station at Dominion to Lincoln Fields, running close by our campus on Cleary Avenue. City Council at that time chose route R12 (Richmond Underground), which ran west of Dominion Station along the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway, descending underground and turning south to Richmond Road through the plaza at 747 Richmond Road (northeast corner of Cleary Avenue), with an LRT station just east of Cleary Avenue, and another west at New Orchard Avenue. While this route raised concerns at Unitarian House due to the proximity of the proposed Cleary station, as there was no direct effect on the rest of the Unitarian campus there was no reaction to this proposal from either the First Unitarian Congregation or River Parkway Children's Centre.

In early 2014 City officials informed the components of the Unitarian campus (First Unitarian Congregation, Unitarian House, River Parkway Children's Centre) that, for technical reasons relating (in part) to the location of nearby water and sewer lines, the R12 route running under 747 Richmond Road was being modified in favour of a route running west through the Unitarian campus, between Unitarian House and the properties fronting Richmond Road to the south, turning south to cross under the Kristy's Restaurant on Richmond Road and then running west to the LRT station at New Orchard. The original Cleary LRT station would be moved up (westward) to front onto Cleary Avenue directly.

As you can imagine, this news was disturbing to all 3 components of the Unitarian campus. All 3 components expressed their concerns regarding noise and vibration to City officials, both verbally and in writing, not only about noise and vibrations during the construction phase (the City intends to use a cut-and-cover approach, involving blasting) but also during the operation of the LRT following construction, and the impact on access to the campus from Cleary Avenue (among other

issues). Both Unitarian House (a seniors residence) and River Parkway Children's Centre (a licensed childcare centre) are classified as "sensitive receptors" by the Ministry of the Environment with regard to noise and vibrations.

Unfortunately, as we were formulating our concerns to convey to the City, the NCC and the City engaged in what was called "the 100-day working group" process, to deal with NCC concerns over the City use of the NCC's Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway. The NCC initially preferred an alternate route that was considered by the City in 2013: the R14 (Rochester Field-Byron Park Underground) route. However, after examining both routes (R12 and R14) and making some adjustments, the City and the NCC came to an agreement on this section of the LRT route, which was still proposed to run through the Unitarian campus.

This new alignment was presented for public consultation this past spring, and was presented to the Council's Finance & Economic Development Committee for approval late in June. At each occasion representatives of the components of Unitarian campus (as well as a number of Unitarian House residents and First Unitarian Congregation members) made presentations to the City expressing our concerns over the impact of noise and vibrations from the construction and operation of the LRT through our campus. To be fair, City officials did recognize the "sensitive receptor" class of Unitarian House and River Parkway Children's Centre and suggested that our concerns could be remedied by a number of mitigation measures. The view of the Unitarian campus planning committee (with representatives from the 3 campus components) was that, as there were better options available that did not threaten the seniors residence and childcare centre, pursuing these options would be better for all involved. Unfortunately we were not able to convince City Council of this position.

On July 8, 2015 City Council adopted the LRT Stage 2 plan without any changes to the section affecting the Unitarian campus. While the Mayor has since written to both the federal and provincial governments asking for a financial contribution (each level of government is to contribute \$1 billion each to this project), there is still another step for the City to take, and that is to file its Environmental Assessment (EA) of this project with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, for its approval. There is an opportunity to file objections to the EA, which the 3 components of the Unitarian campus intend to exercise. We believe we can show that there is a better alternative than force-fitting the LRT through our campus. The City expects to file its EA later this fall – we may not know the results of this process until next year.

The City talks of beginning construction of the Stage 2 LRT in 2018, but that is dependent on receiving both federal and provincial funding by that time. As well, there is still the formal expropriation process the City must follow to access the Unitarian campus lands, where issues like mitigation and compensation can be explored. At this point, it would be optimistic to expect construction to begin as early as 2018.

We will keep you informed should there be significant changes to the City's plans as they affect our campus.