

- Document 2 -

## **Algonquin Interpretation and The Continuing Conversation toward a Vision for a Revitalized Lansdowne**

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- On May 4, 2012, the City of Ottawa participated in a Forum with a number of Elders, Algonquin Negotiation Representatives and community representatives. The objectives of the session, hosted by the Algonquins of Ontario, were to develop a shared understanding of the Lansdowne Revitalization (and other projects underway); explore ways to further integrate and celebrate Algonquin art, heritage and culture; examine opportunities for collaboration between projects and across jurisdictions; and establish a path forward for the Algonquins of Ontario to be meaningfully engaged.
  - During the Forum, the City presented proposed Algonquin interpretive elements for the urban park component of the Lansdowne Revitalization, seeking feedback in an effort to grow through communication.
  - Following the presentation, the Algonquins of Ontario gave voice to a significant concern: the perception that elements celebrating Algonquin art, heritage and culture had been physically relegated to the “backyard.”
  - A related comment expressed by the Algonquins of Ontario is that, though a conceptual approach to integrating Algonquin history, culture and art allows for the subtle integration of Algonquin interpretive elements, it is critical that interpretive boards (or other innovative means) be developed in partnership with the Algonquins of Ontario in order to help to underscore the significance of the various elements while encouraging visitors to gain an understanding of and appreciation for the greater Algonquin story.
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### **GROWING THROUGH CONVERSATION**

- The City has accepted the feedback, and recognizes the significance and impact of this perception.
- The City’s primary focus in the overall revitalization program is shifting the face of Lansdowne to the canal side and seamlessly re-connecting the site with the canal corridor, as it was historically. As such, the City intends for the urban park to be the new face of the re-oriented Lansdowne.
- Notwithstanding, the proposed Algonquin interpretive elements for the urban park as early steps in the journey toward a final vision for Lansdowne. The City intends for continued exploration, in partnership, of additional opportunities to extend Algonquin interpretive elements into other project components and adjacent areas, possibly through:

*‘Anchor’ element on Bank Street and integrated wayfinding*

- As was presented, a wayfinding system is intended to be developed for the site. Consideration is being given to having this system incorporate the four colors of the Medicine Wheel as a means to provide meaningful and integrated Algonquin

interpretation. An Algonquin-themed wayfinding system is proposed as a means to offer a simple but meaningful underpinning of awareness that we are on Algonquin land.

- The City will explore ways to incorporate an interpretive element along Bank Street in the mixed-use area that anchors this wayfinding system. This ‘anchor’ element would offer the story of the four colors of the Medicine Wheel and highlight the Algonquin interpretation within the urban park.
- Beyond Lansdowne, the City will explore possibilities for broader implementation of such a system, making use of the four colours of the Medicine Wheel in various initiatives across the City (suggestions include Ottawa Light Rail Transit, Downtown Moves, and the multi-use pathway network).
- Further, the City will explore related opportunities to launch a coherent, Algonquin-themed system with the NCC, Parks Canada, and Ministry of Transportation.

#### *Stadium presence*

- As part of the general heritage interpretation, the stadium areas is intended to provide within the north stands’ concourse a “heroes hall of fame” that would showcase athletes associated with Lansdowne. The City will explore featuring the sporting culture of the Algonquin with the inclusion of an Algonquin athlete (or athletes).

#### *Canal connection*

- Algonquin interpretive elements in the urban park would be complimented by a related interpretive element with a strong relationship with the water on the federal lands that frame and abut the City-owned lands as part of the face of Lansdowne.
- The City is committed to work with the Algonquins of Ontario toward the realization of such an element as part of Parks Canada’s refresh of the Canal’s interpretive elements, and/or as part of the Lansdowne Revitalization design work to be undertaken in order to achieve full and seamless integration of the urban park with the Canal corridor lands.

#### *‘Algonquin Trail’*

- Critical for achieving the integration of the site with the canal is the connection of the pathways within Lansdowne with the Canal corridor pathway system on federal lands that largely follows the city’s waterways.
- To this end, the existing Canal corridor pathway system will be extended into and through the site as part of the Lansdowne revitalization.
- As was presented on May 4<sup>th</sup>, the pathway through the site that links Algonquin interpretive elements is proposed to feature an Algonquin-themed wayfinding system that makes use of the four colours of the Medicine Wheel.
- The pathway through the site would be complimented by a broader recognition of the pathway system along the canal corridor and waterways as the “Algonquin Trail” and its link to other sites presenting Algonquin interpretation (ie: Parks Canada’s Algonquin interpretative element or elements along the Canal, LeBreton Station, Victoria Island).
- The City is committed to work with the Algonquins of Ontario, Parks Canada and the NCC to further develop this possibility.

## **THE CONVERSATION: Reflecting on the beginnings**

### *City commitment to celebrate Algonquin history, culture and art at Lansdowne*

- Ottawa Council, throughout the staged approvals given through the development of the Lansdowne Revitalization plans, has consistently directed that the revitalization program incorporate elements to reflect Algonquin history, culture and art (as key elements of the overall heritage interpretation and public art program).
- Council has also consistently and clearly prioritized the implementation of Algonquin interpretative elements, and supported this prioritization with Council-approved funding budgeted for the urban park component of Lansdowne.

### *Strategy for integrating Algonquin history, culture and arts into the Lansdowne Revitalization*

- While it supports the refurbishment of the existing stadium and adjacent mixed-use area, the overall revitalization program is primarily focused on shifting the face of Lansdowne to the canal side and seamlessly re-connecting the site with the canal corridor, as it was historically. As such, the urban park is the key component of the overall revitalization program.
- The re-orientation of the site is highlighted by the urban park's approach to the Aberdeen Pavillion – or “Cow Palace” – the gem of Lansdowne, while the Bank Street side (mixed-use area) will reflect a more typical commercial and urban street character.
- As the face of Lansdowne, the urban park will be a fully-accessible green space that will accommodate various programming activities and events. Through continued work with the NCC and Parks Canada, the urban park will seamlessly integrate with the canal and its adjacent greenspace, interconnecting with existing pathways into and through the site.
- The urban park will provide an opportunity to welcome visitors and enhance visitors' cultural experience with integrated elements reflective of Algonquin history, culture and art.

## **THE CONVERSATION: Enriching the dialogue**

### *Algonquin interpretive elements for integration into the urban park*

- Based on research undertaken by the City's park design team and information shared through the OLRT consultative process, a conceptual approach to integrating Algonquin history, culture and art within the urban park has been proposed to offer a meaningful, connective interpretation experience.
- In the context of the overall strategy and conceptual approach intended to offer a meaningful, connective interpretation experience, the park design team has proposed a number of elements that could be incorporated into the urban park design. Significance was assigned to the overall theme of place-making, linked to sub-themes of land and water.
- Integrated Algonquin interpretive elements are intended to be accompanied by interpretive boards, helping to underscore the significance of the various elements while offering a

dynamic and interactive means by which visitors will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the greater Algonquin story.

- These proposed interpretive elements were presented to the Algonquins of Ontario as part of the Forum on May 4, 2012.
- The following provides a more detailed description of the proposed Algonquin interpretive elements.

#### Ethno-Botanical Garden

- A series of demonstration gardens will be incorporated as part of the urban park, east of the relocated Horticulture building.
- The purpose of the demonstration gardens is to introduce urban agriculture to the site as an integral part of urban living and reintroduce the role of horticultural demonstration and the site's former exhibitions. The gardens may showcase garden plants for the Ottawa climate, represent the culinary gardens of Ottawa's many ethnic tables, and/or depict the uses of edible native or medicinal plants.
- Incorporated as part of this would be an ethno-botanical garden, which would showcase various herbs and plants of significance to Algonquin culture. The ethno-botanical garden would support the telling of the story – that is, the importance of the land and plants for food, medicine, and ceremony – as well as the modern interest in how plants connect all people to cultures and environments.
- The demonstration garden would offer a showcase area for school children and park visitors alike.

#### Teaching Circle

- At the heart of the urban park, a diverse collection of play features for children has been developed to complement the other playgrounds in the surrounding neighbourhood.
- One of the seating areas in the play area will be designed as a teaching circle incorporating the four colors and directions of the Medicine Wheel to help foster the spirit of learning and a connection to Algonquin culture among all visiting children.
- This circle is located centrally in the urban park in close proximity to many Algonquin interpretive elements, including the future linkage to the Canal, and provides a unique setting for use by families, school and other groups for storytelling or learning about Algonquin culture.

#### Seven trees of significance to Algonquin culture

- As part of the planting program, which will include native species throughout the park, consideration is being given to surrounding the teaching circle with a planting group comprised of the seven trees of significance to Algonquin culture. Stories and teachings represented by the seven trees could immediately reference the trees themselves.
- These trees would be identified with botanical markers or, perhaps, highlighted by an interpretive panel identifying them and describing their significance in Algonquin culture. It has been noted that certain species may present challenges in an urban environment; further research and consultation with the Algonquins of Ontario will ensure appropriate plantings.

#### Wayfinding

- As part of the Lansdowne revitalization, a wayfinding system will be developed and provided throughout the site.

- Consideration is being given to having this system incorporate the four colors of the Medicine Wheel as a means to provide a meaningful way to integrate Algonquin interpretation throughout the site while directing visitors to other Algonquin interpretive elements.

#### Heritage Interpretive Center

- A heritage interpretive center is being planned within the relocated Horticulture building as part of its adaptive re-use.
- The center would include telling the story of the Algonquin and their relationship to the Rideau waterway (including, but not limited to, the Algonquins' critical role in assisting Colonel By in determining the routing for the canal).
- The Horticulture building will be maintained by the City as a public building, and the heritage interpretive center will be a key feature to share the rich history of the Algonquin, the canal and Lansdowne itself.
- The intent is to work with the Algonquins of Ontario to determine the Algonquin story that would be conveyed within the interpretive center.

#### Programming

- The urban park is being designed as a park for ongoing and dynamic programming that contributes to the culture of the city.
- Providing opportunities for Algonquin programming is considered an important element of the overall programming, and offers an opportunity for an interactive and meaningful showcasing of Algonquin culture.
- One idea is to work with the Algonquins of Ontario to convene a yearly Pow Wow in the great lawn. The City would look to develop this idea with the Algonquins of Ontario, as well as examine other opportunities are teachings for Algonquin youth using the various elements as tools and demonstrations to revitalize, reintegrate, enhance and protect Algonquin cultural traditions, customs, practices, heritage, language and arts.
- Cultural and craft demonstrations, and seasonal market events are other opportunities for further exploration.

#### Algonquin Art Commissions

- A key feature of the urban park is an art screen that will have the potential to showcase Algonquin art. One suggestion is that the display of Algonquin art may be planned to coincide with a larger Algonquin event or activity held at Lansdowne.
- A public art strategy has been developed for Lansdowne Park to guide the placement and development of future art commissions (Algonquin and other) throughout the site.

#### Aberdeen Square Paving

- Aberdeen Square will be the permanent home for the Ottawa Farmers Market. The intent was to delineate this area with a distinctive and unique paving pattern that would give it an identity within the overall public realm area.
- The square will be an element of the urban park experience but also provides for a dynamic interface with the commercial mixed-use area that extends the urban and commercial fabric of Bank Street into Lansdowne.
- A pattern inspired by Algonquin basket-weaving has been developed to define the centre of the pedestrian areas of the market. Through interpretation, the pattern links

the market area to the Algonquin art of basket-making and the historical importance of baskets in Algonquin culture for the transport and protection of food.

#### New Media

- To provide for communicating the story of Lansdowne and, throughout, the significance of the Algonquin at this site, while showcasing elements of the overall revitalization program and its features, the City is looking to develop a smart phone application. The application will allow visitors to download information onto smart phones and iPods from podcast centers that would accompany the interpretative boards found throughout Lansdowne.
- The application provides an opportunity to explore possible integration with similar efforts by Parks Canada (through its Rideau Promenade project, for example) and the NCC.
- The application will provide visitors with ready access to extensive information and various stories – developed in collaboration with the Algonquins of Ontario – and serve to significantly bolster knowledge of Algonquin history, culture and art.

## **THE CONVERSATION: Listening, learning**

### *Enhancing proposed Algonquin interpretive elements, exploring opportunities*

- The City would like to continue working in partnership with the Algonquins of Ontario to further develop and refine the Algonquin interpretive elements presented and to explore additional opportunities to integrate Algonquin interpretation into the broader Lansdowne Revitalization.
- As we grow through communication, the City is seeking the AOO's input on the path forward, and suggests engagement through focused workshops/collaborative sessions along the journey toward a final vision for Lansdowne.
- The City recognizes that the proposed Algonquin interpretive elements serve as a frame of reference for this continued conversation with the Algonquins of Ontario.
- Moreover, the City appreciates the value of further engagement with the Algonquins of Ontario in order to ensure that Algonquin interpretation is meaningful and integrated in the context of the overall revitalization program.

### *Next steps*

- Ottawa Council has directed staff to bring forward a plan that sets out the timing, means and methods for implementation of Algonquin interpretive elements, as well as the overall site heritage interpretation and additional public art.
- Per Council's direction, a report and implementation plan are scheduled to be brought forward for consideration of the City's Finance and Economic Development Committee on July 3, 2012. As such, they must be filed no later than noon on June 25, 2012.
- The report and implementation plan are expected to be brought forward for consideration of Council on July 11, 2012.
- The draft report and draft implementation plan emphasize the City's priority to proceed with the implementation of Algonquin interpretive elements with the funding earmarked in the

project budget (urban park component). (The implementation of other heritage interpretation and additional public art – those beyond the Algonquin elements within the urban park component – is contingent on securing the required funding at later date.)

- The draft report and draft implementation plan speak to the proposed Algonquin interpretive elements, and highlight the concerns raised by the Algonquins of Ontario.
- Moreover, the draft report and draft implementation plan underscore the City's commitment to further develop the proposed Algonquin interpretative elements in partnership, as well as explore with the Algonquins of Ontario additional opportunities to integrate Algonquin elements in the broader Lansdowne Revitalization, including project components beyond the urban park (ie: stadium and adjacent mixed-use area) and on federal lands along the canal (NCC and Parks Canada).
- The draft report and draft implementation plan reference the City's commitment to explore with the Algonquins of Ontario alternative funding sources toward the realization of additional opportunities to integrate Algonquin elements in the broader Lansdowne Revitalization, including project components beyond the urban park (ie: stadium and adjacent mixed-use area) and on federal lands along the canal (NCC and Parks Canada).
- The draft report and draft implementation plan reference the City's interest in establishing a path forward with the Algonquins of Ontario, and suggest additional focused workshops/collaborative sessions along the journey toward a final vision for Lansdowne.
- Committee and Council's consideration of the report and implementation plan do not preclude the continuing conversation toward a vision for a revitalized Lansdowne.

## **THE CONVERSATION: Toward continued collaboration**

### *Moving forward together*

- The City is seeking recognition of the implementation plan as an early step in the journey toward a final vision for Lansdowne.
- The City is seeking support for the general direction in which the implementation plan takes the growing relationship between the City and the Algonquins of Ontario.
- Additionally, the City is seeking a commitment to continue working in partnership to further develop the Algonquin interpretive elements as key features of the face of Lansdowne.
- Finally, the City is committed to continuing working with the Algonquins of Ontario to further explore additional opportunities to integrate Algonquin interpretive elements into the broader Lansdowne Revitalization.