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The Editor
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Dear Editor:

Randall Denley may be upset with City Council's treatment of Lansdowne Park ("Time for a clean sweep at City Hall", Ottawa Citizen, Sept. 6/09) but the fact is that, despite the charming pictures, the "Lansdowne Park Partnership" fails the first principles of planning - how to get large numbers of people to and from this major destination.

No modern city would permit a shopping complex with more than 25,000 square meters of retail space, 2,700 sq. m. food store, 1,100-seat cinema, 2 office towers, etc., without access to rapid transit. There is none at this site, and the road infrastructure surrounding Lansdowne Park is not built to accommodate the traffic that would result. No modern city would permit a 26,000-seat stadium and 8,000-seat arena on the same site without access to rapid transit. Indeed, the City of Ottawa's Official Plan - the legal document that guides the City's growth - requires retail complexes and major public facilities each to access rapid transit. It's not here.

Further, the proposal provides only 1,385 parking spaces for a sports and shopping complex which would, under current policies, require more than 10,700 spaces. This is another failure in planning. The proponents expect the local neighbourhoods to absorb 5,000 cars but that leaves the rest searching for non-existent parking on nearby streets. The proponents propose adding 180 buses on Bank Street for events up to 45,000 people at Lansdowne but such transit will be slow to clear the area and will face some 15,000 cars leaving as well - a recipe for gridlock. For events of over 45,000 people the proponents plan to have more buses on Queen Elizabeth Drive leaving every 30 to 60 seconds for the Transitway 5 kilometres away. The proponents' expectation that public transit can clear 15,000 people from Lansdowne while 30,000 others leave by car at the same time is unrealistic. The infrastructure is not there.

While some point to the glory days when thousands thronged to Lansdowne to watch football in its heyday, it is not the same City any more. Ottawa today has over 800,000 people and will reach a million in 3 decades. We are building a Rapid Transit Network which includes a downtown tunnel precisely because we cannot handle loading people into buses every 30 to 60 seconds. Why commit to 30 to 50 years of traffic chaos in the name of nostalgia? Let's do this right - if we want a sports stadium, then put it where rapid transit is. That would be good planning.

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