

March 10, 2023

Hunt Club Community Association  
Ottawa, Ontario

Kelby Lodoen Unseth  
Planning Department  
City of Ottawa

Re: **3930-3960 Riverside Drive (# D02-02-23-0004, # D07-16-23-0001)**

On behalf of the Hunt Club Community Association (HCCA), I am writing to provide feedback on the above applications for a Zoning By-law Amendment and a Plan of Subdivision.

The proposed development at 3930-3960 Riverside Drive provides a microcosm of the challenges which the City of Ottawa faces in balancing the need for increased housing supply with the demand for improved transportation infrastructure.

In the view of the HCCA, the current application is an improvement over previous proposals in several respects, because it:

- *potentially increases the City's supply of housing, including some 589 rental units in the apartment towers, over the medium term;*
- *provides improved access and parking for the Uplands-Riverside Park;*
- *replaces mixed-use development with residential uses in the portion closest to the existing community;*
- *conveys additional woodlands to the City for inclusion in Riverwood Park, and*
- *offers a cost-sharing agreement with the City for a new multi-use pathway to the Kimberwick stormwater pond.*

At the same time, this development proposal raises a number of serious concerns, particularly with respect to transportation capacity. Although many other arterial roads in Ottawa are congested, the intersection of Riverside Drive and Hunt Club Road routinely records the highest number of collisions in the city. The surrounding roads are frequently gridlocked, sidewalks and pathways are missing or incomplete, and the nearest bus stops are currently hundreds of metres away.

In addition, there remain a number of gaps in the information available to the HCCA. Although the Applicant has indicated a willingness to consider including a number of affordable low-income units and local retail services within the new development, there is as of yet no commitment to do so. The Applicant has offered a cost-sharing agreement to build a new multi-use pathway, but it is not clear whether the City is prepared to accept this offer and to provide priority funding for its construction.

This site was first zoned for development in 1988, under very different circumstances, and the vision for its development is still evolving. The current application for a Zoning By-law Amendment, along with future site plan applications, provides an opportunity to better align this project with the City of Ottawa's Official Plan notably through measures outlined below.

In order to conform to the City's ideal of a walkable "15-minute neighbourhood", the HCCA would urge Council members, city staff, and the developer to use every means available to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impacts of this development. Our requested measures, as described in the attached issue paper (*see Annex A*), include:

- **Transportation improvements** - accelerating the City's plans to redesign Riverside Drive from the St. Mary's entrance through to the intersection with Hunt Club Road, to improve the existing intersection with Hunt Club, and to provide convenient OC Transpo service to this site;
- **Affordable housing** - securing a commitment by the Applicant to meet a specified level of affordable low-income housing in the development, in order to contribute to the City's stated target that 20 per cent of all new residential units be affordable;
- **Local retail services** - applying conditions to the Zoning By-law Amendment and future site plan applications, as appropriate, regarding the provision of commercial services for the local residents (e.g. on the ground floor of the towers);
- **Active transportation** - improving active transportation networks and connectivity to the surrounding communities by funding a multi-use pathway to the Kimberwick pond and linking it up with long-planned cycling and pedestrian pathways along the river.

In addition, the HCCA suggests an in-depth review of the Hunt Club and Riverside corridors by the City's Transportation Committee. We will also seek for these corridors to be marked as high priority in the Capital Infrastructure Plan of the new Transportation Management Plan (2024).

Looking forward, the HCCA is prepared to meet with the Applicant and with City officials, as required, to improve its understanding of these key issues and to explore options for the way forward and maximize benefits for future residents in the development and surrounding communities. Further details regarding the HCCA's position on this development will follow when responses are received to the attached list of questions (*see Annex B*).

Sincerely,

Audrey Bélanger Baur  
President

c.c. Councillor Riley Brockington  
c.c. Patrick Morton, Chair, HCCA Affordable Housing and Urban Planning Committee

Hunt Club Community Association  
Submission to City of Ottawa

## **Planning Issues: 3930-3960 Riverside Drive**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this annex is to highlight the key issues posed by the Applicant's proposal for a Zoning By-law Amendment and Plan of Subdivision for the former St. Mary's Cement site at 3930-3960 Riverside Drive.

### **Background**

This development application is only the latest in a series of the Applicant proposals for this site. Previous proposals included a car dealership, a private school, and a retirement home. The current application is completely focussed on residential uses: townhomes, single family homes, and four apartment towers (for a total of nearly 700 units).

The St. Mary's project, however, is in a less than ideal location for a major residential development. It is a "desert island" on the site of a former sand and gravel pit, with minimal connectivity to the surrounding communities.

The proposed development is hemmed in by major arterial roads on Hunt Club Road and Riverside Drive. It is adjacent to one of the most collision-prone intersections in the city, it is subject to constant noise pollution from the nearby traffic, and it is on the very edge of the flight path for airplanes taking off from the Ottawa International Airport.

Nevertheless, the developer's planning rationale contends that the site falls within the parameters of the City's Official Plan. It is located on a transit priority corridor and is zoned for both commercial and residential uses. The application seeks a zoning change to permit the development of townhouses and detached dwellings, and adjusts the height schedule for the towers (ranging from 9 to 17 storeys) to comply with the Airport Zoning Regulations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the zoning bylaw amendment and plan of subdivision, including supporting documents, see: <https://devapps.ottawa.ca/en/search?s=activeOnly&t=3930%2520Riverside&a=all&w=all&i=0&b=0,0,0,0&o=default&ob=asc>

# Key Issues

## 1. Density

The proposed development will contain as many units as the Quinterra-Riverwood community, on a site which is considerably smaller. Although the Official Plan promotes intensification within the Outer Urban transect, it also specifies that high-density developments should be located near major transportation “hubs”<sup>2</sup>.

The St. Mary’s site, by contrast, is located some five kilometres from the nearest LRT station (South Keys) and the nearest bus stops are currently hundreds of metres away on Uplands Drive and Hunt Club Road. As a result, the proposed density for this site will require significant investments in improved transit and transportation infrastructure.

### *Recommendations:*

- 1. The City should clarify whether Riverside Drive is a “Mainstreet” or “Minor” Corridor, and should ensure that the St. Mary’s site complies with this designation.*
- 2. The City should work with the developer to ensure that the new development will provide convenient access to OC Transpo bus service, either on Riverside Drive or within the development.*

## 2. Transportation impacts

The traffic situation on Riverside Drive and Hunt Club Road already rates a “failing” grade, and the proposed development will worsen this situation if no remedial or mitigating actions are implemented by the city. The new intersection at the entrance to the development will lengthen the existing queues and increase the risk of collisions.

### *Recommendations:*

- 1. The City should accelerate its plans to redesign Riverside Drive from the entrance to this site through to the intersection with Hunt Club Road, to improve the existing intersection with Hunt Club, to adopt a “protected intersection” approach to the new intersection, and to make other changes as required to mitigate the traffic impacts of this site;*
- 2. The City’s Transportation Committee should conduct an in-depth review of the Hunt Club and Riverside corridors, and a high priority rating should be assigned to these corridors in the Capital Infrastructure Plan of the new Transportation Management Plan (2024);*
- 3. The City should work with the developer to implement further traffic calming measures on Kimberwick Crescent as soon as possible.*

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<sup>2</sup> The developer’s *Planning Rationale* (p.16) claims that Riverside Drive is a “Mainstreet” Corridor, but Schedule B3 of the Official Plan clearly indicates that it is a “Minor” Corridor and is located far from the nearest “hub”.

### 3. Limited access to local retail services

The proposed site does not conform to the City’s ideal of a “15 minute neighbourhood”. In order to access local retail by foot or cycle, residents would need to cross two busy arterial roads and a large parking lot at the T&T plaza. Alternatively, residents would need to hike along Riverside Drive to the small plaza at Rivergate Way, or the even smaller plaza next to the Esso station at Uplands.

#### *Recommendations:*

1. *As a condition of the zoning bylaw amendment, the City should direct the Applicant to place retail and commercial services on the ground floor of its residential towers<sup>3</sup>;*
2. *The Applicant should provide direct pedestrian access from the southeast corner of the site to the Hunt Club-Riverside intersection, in order to facilitate access to the retail and commercial services on Hunt Club Road;*
3. *As noted above, the City should consider upgrades to the Hunt Club-Riverside intersection to make it more friendly to pedestrians and active transportation users.*

### 4. Need for affordable low-income housing

Ottawa is facing a crisis in affordable housing. The vacancy rate for rentals is at near-historic lows (2.1%), while average rents increased by 4.8% in the last year. These trends particularly affect low-income renters<sup>4</sup>. The City encourages developers to include a number of “affordable” units within their residential developments, and multiple levels of government offer financial incentives for this purpose. In addition, some developers have made contributions of “payments in lieu” to the local ward’s affordable housing fund<sup>5</sup>. For these reasons, the HCCA supports the inclusion of affordable low-income units in the St. Mary’s development. At the recent public meeting, however, it was not clear whether the Applicant would follow this approach and where it has done so in the past.

#### *Recommendations:*

1. *The City should work with the Applicant to maximize the number of affordable units it will provide in the St. Mary’s project at the earliest opportunity, in order to contribute to the city’s target that 20 per cent of all new residential units be affordable (Section 4.2.2 Para.4 of the Official Plan);*

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<sup>3</sup> See *Official Plan*, s.6.2.2, which states that the zoning bylaw in Mainstreet and Minor Corridors may, “where contextually appropriate”, require commercial or service uses on the ground floor.

<sup>4</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Rental Market Report* (January 2023), p.114.  
<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/blog/2023/rental-supply-increases-but-demand-surges>

<sup>5</sup> Trinity Developments, for example, contributed \$195,000 to Kitchissippi Ward’s affordable housing fund in 2022 to support an application for a 9-storey apartment with 88 units at 70 Richmond Road. A similar contribution for the nearly 700 units in the St. Mary’s project would cost approximately \$1.5 million.  
<https://ottawa.ca/en/news/committee-approves-spending-plan-affordable-housing>

2. *In the absence of low-income units in this development, the City should encourage the Applicant to contribute to River Ward’s affordable housing fund.*

## **5. Lack of active transportation opportunities**

The developer is proposing to share the cost of a Multi-Use Pathway (MUP) from its development through the Riverwood Park woods to the Kimberwick Stormwater Pond. Such a pathway would benefit the Applicant by significantly improving the marketability of the St. Mary’s development to potential purchasers and renters. It might also provide benefits to the surrounding communities and to the City as a whole, particularly if the pathway is connected to the City’s active transportation network.<sup>6</sup>

### *Recommendations:*

1. *Given the importance of the multi-use pathway to the Applicant, the City should negotiate a favourable cost-sharing agreement to build this MUP at the initiation of the project;*
2. *The City should use this opportunity to implement its long-held vision for a “Major Pathway” from Mooney’s Bay to Hunt Club Road, starting with an extension of the MUP to the north edge of Riverwood Park;*
3. *The City should implement a segregated cycling lane or multi-use pathway along Riverside Drive from Walkley Road to the Hunt Club Road<sup>7</sup>.*

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<sup>6</sup> For decades, the City’s *Transportation Management Plan* has envisioned a Major Pathway along this stretch of the Rideau River. Tamarack used this proposed pathway as a selling point for its Quinterra development. See *Planning Rationale*, p. 5, and *Official Plan (2022)*, Schedule C3.

<sup>7</sup> One of the candidate projects evaluated for Part 1 of the new Transportation Management Plan envisioned “separated cycling facilities or a multi-use pathway on Riverside Drive from Walkley Road to Rivergate Way”. It received 258 votes, but was not selected for submission to the Transportation Committee in spring 2023.

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## **List of Questions: 3930-3960 Riverside Drive**

### **1. Density**

1. Does the site conform to the intent of the Official Plan with respect to placing high-density developments near transportation hubs?
2. What is the City's plan for improved transit along the Hunt Club and Riverside corridors respectively? How soon could they be implemented?
3. Will OC Transpo provide a bus stop closer to this new community? Where would it be located, given the volume of traffic and site limitations on Riverside Drive? Could the Applicant's site plan include a bus stop within the development?

### **2. Transportation impacts**

1. How reasonable are the assumptions in the Traffic Impact Assessment regarding future traffic volumes?
2. How will these volumes be mitigated by the City? For example, how quickly will the City extend the turning lane leading up to the intersection at Hunt Club and Riverside?
3. Given the poor sightlines for southbound traffic, would it be appropriate to make the new intersection a "no right turn on red" for vehicles exiting the site?
4. What concrete transportation plans does the City currently have to relieve the expected increased traffic that will manifest over the next 10-15 years as a result of this development?
5. The City has issued a request for quotes to extend the bicycle lane and expand the sidewalk on the east side of Riverside, travelling northward from Hunt Club. How soon will this work be completed?
6. What are the prospects for further traffic calming measures on Kimberwick Crescent? Will the Applicant assist in the implementation of these measures?

### **3. Limited access to local retail services**

1. The Applicant has indicated that it will consider placing retail outlets on the ground floor of its residential towers, citing the example of the Tamarack Flora tower in downtown Ottawa. It would be helpful if the Applicant could confirm this intention.
2. Will the Applicant provide direct pedestrian access from the southeast corner of the site to the Hunt Club-Riverside intersection to facilitate access to the retail there?
3. Will the City consider upgrades to the Hunt Club-Riverside intersection to make it more friendly to pedestrians and active transportation users?

### **4. Need for affordable low-income housing**

1. Could the Applicant confirm the number of affordable units it plans to provide in the St. Mary's project?
2. Has the Applicant included affordable low-income units in other developments? What have their competitors done?
3. In the absence of low-income units in this development, will the Applicant contribute to River Ward's affordable housing fund?
4. What incentives from the City are available to the Applicant to provide affordable units?

### **5. Lack of active transportation opportunities**

1. What is the estimated cost of the Multi-Use Pathway (MUP) from St. Mary's to the Kimberwick stormwater pond (as opposed to the cost of the underlying stormwater pipe, which would need to be built by the Applicant in any event)?
2. What is the status of the proposed cost-sharing agreement? What are its terms?
3. If the City agrees to such an agreement, what steps would be required to secure priority funding for this MUP?
4. What would be required to extend the MUP to the north edge of Riverwood Park? Are any relevant studies available (e.g. environment, soil, slope)? Would the Applicant be willing to share the costs of such an extension?
5. What would be required to connect this MUP to Riverside Drive via Rivergate Way? Or to the City's proposed Major Pathway from Mooney's Bay to Hunt Club Road? What is the status of this planned pathway?
6. What are the prospects for a segregated cycling lane along Riverside Drive from Walkley to Rivergate Way?