



October 14, 2015

Ms. Allison Hamlin, MCIP, RPP  
Planner II, Development Review  
110 Laurier Ave. West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 1J1

## RE: Planning Rationale Addendum – 350 Sparks Street/137 Bay Street

---

In response to the City of Ottawa's technical circulation comments dated September 4, 2015, FOTENN Consultants Inc. has prepared the following addendum to the planning rationale dated June 2015. This addendum includes a discussion of the of the Sparks Street character area within the Central Area Secondary Plan, and of *Downtown Moves* in the context of the proposed development.

### **CENTRAL AREA SECONDARY PLAN – SPARKS STREET CHARACTER AREA**

The subject site is located within the Central Area Secondary Plan, which constitutes a more detailed policy direction beyond the Official Plan for select areas within the Central Area of Ottawa. The Central Area Secondary Policy Plan defines area-specific visions, objectives, and policies for identified Character Areas and Theme Streets. Aside from the *Core Precinct* character area, the site is also located within the *Sparks Street* theme street and is therefore subject to its policies.

Sparks Street's vision is as a focal point of the Central Area focusing on retail, commercial and pedestrian activity in the Central Business District. At-grade interest is highlighted, along with a mix of uses and tower setbacks to retain direct sunlight on the mall. The City's stated objectives are to strengthen Sparks Street as an integral part of the CBD, with a mix of uses which focus on an open-air pedestrian shopping mall; to protect the architectural, historical, cultural, social and environmental significance of Sparks Street by conserving and enhancing its heritage resources, maintaining a vehicle-free pedestrian mall with opportunities for socialization, and ensuring sensitive development; and to promote the function of Sparks Street as a linear open space and a significant east-west pedestrian corridor linking the Central Area.

The relevant policies that will help to achieve the vision and objectives of The Sparks Street precinct include:

- City Council shall require continuous pedestrian-oriented uses at grade in development which is designed to give preference to narrow storefronts with direct street access;
- Permitting commercial, residential and other appropriate uses above the street;
- Encourage uses which promote tourism and evening activity, such as food and restaurant uses, specialty stores, galleries, entertainment, restaurant-bars, outdoor cafés, arts and cultural, and residential uses;
- Ensure the protection, enhancement and conservation of heritage resources on Sparks Street, and shall ensure that the design of development respects, and is sensitive to such heritage;
- Ensure that the profile of development along Sparks Street respects heritage buildings and the visual integrity and symbolic primacy of the Centre Block;



- Ensure that the upper stories of infill development on the south side of the mall are generally set back from the street to maximize direct sunlight on the mall and to minimize over-powering effects;
- Ensure that a distinctive, coordinated streetscape treatment and a pleasant pedestrian environment are established and maintained along Sparks Street.

The proposed development is consistent with the vision for Sparks Street, and meets the policies for development along this theme street as follows:

- The proposal includes the redevelopment of the west portion of the block of Sparks Street bounded by Bay Street to the west and Lyon Street North to the east. This is the first block of Sparks Street that is not part of the pedestrian mall, and is fully open to vehicular traffic.
- Despite this fact, the redevelopment includes pedestrian-oriented uses at grade along Sparks Street, including the existing office tower entrance, a new entrance to the residential tower, a commercial retail unit, and the dining room associated with the proposed hotel.
- In addition, two publically-accessible private spaces (POPS) are being proposed. One in front of the existing office building, and one at the northwest corner of the site, where a notch has been created at the corner.
- Residential and hotel uses are proposed above the street, to bring people to Sparks Street at all hours of the day, but in particular during the evening.
- Nearby heritage resources are being protected as per the Cultural Heritage Impact Study submitted in support of the applications.
- A design exercise was undertaken to ensure that the profile of development respects heritage buildings and the visual integrity and symbolic primacy of the Centre Block (see pages 25-27 of the Design Brief prepared by WZMH Architects).
- Although not within the pedestrian mall, the upper storeys above the 6<sup>th</sup> storey of the proposed residential tower along Sparks Street are set back from the street in order to maximize direct sunlight on the street and improve the pedestrian realm.
- As well, a distinctive streetscape treatment is proposed, including an irregular paving pattern and ample soft landscaping.

### *DOWNTOWN MOVES: TRANSFORMING OTTAWA'S STREETS*

In 2013 the City of Ottawa published Downtown Moves: Transforming Ottawa's Streets, a Transportation and Urban Design study that identifies ways to create more vibrant, inclusive, safe and accessible streets for residents, workers and visitors of all ages and abilities across Ottawa's Central Business District (CBD), in anticipation of the Confederation Line. Downtown Moves guides the renewal of downtown streets, promoting active transportation, improved urban design conditions and creating an inclusive environment to people of all ages and ability levels. Although primarily relevant to City capital projects, the study includes design considerations for the proposed development at 350 Sparks Street and 137 Bay Street, broken up into guidelines relevant to pedestrians, cyclists, transit and vehicles.

Some of the relevant guidelines include:

- Create a High Pedestrian Level-of-Service by establishing pedestrian walkway widths based on pedestrian volumes.
- At minimum, sidewalks should have a width of 3.0 m (of that 3.0 m, 1.8 m should have no obstructions or other elements such as trees, plantings, utilities, etc.).
- Allow sufficient space to create a canopy of trees and establish meaningful plantings.



- Create a finer and more permeable pedestrian network by introducing mid-block outdoor and indoor pedestrian connections.
- Articulate facades at the lower levels of buildings with emphasis on the relationship of the building at the street grade level.
- Create a network of small open spaces throughout.
- Ample and easy to find bicycle parking and amenities.
- Safe interaction between vehicle access points and sidewalks.
- Provide on-street parking and loading on at least one side of the street, non-asphalt surface is encouraged to allow these spaces to function as shared sidewalk space when not used.

The proposed development is generally consistent with the vision of the Downtown Moves Study:

- The proposed development prioritizes pedestrian movements around the site.
- Wide sidewalks are provided along all four abutting streets, with bulb-outs on Queen Street and Lyon Street North. In addition, two POPS are proposed, one at the corner of Lyon and Sparks Street, and one at the corner of Bay and Sparks, which provide additional active pedestrian spaces.
- Meaningful plantings are proposed along all four frontages.
- The at-grade facades of the proposed podium have been articulated with an overhanging canopy, and through materiality and colour.
- Secure internal bicycle parking facilities are provided at grade.
- Vehicular ingress and egress points are not differentiated from the sidewalk, in order to maintain pedestrian priority.

Carl Furney MCIP, RPP, AICP  
Senior Planner  
FOTENN Consultants Inc.

Mike Dror, M. Pl.  
Planner  
FOTENN Consultants Inc