



June 29, 2021

SUBJECT: Follow-up on Civic Hospital Redevelopment - Self-Sustainable Food System

To: **Cameron Love**, President and CEO

Joanne Read, Executive Vice-President of Planning for The Ottawa Hospital and the lead on the new Civic development

In 2015, when the original consultations on the Civic Hospital redevelopment took place, the Ottawa Food Policy Council (OFPC) was in communication with CEO Jack Kitts, with the aim of working together to create a self-sustainable food system for the new hospital campus. One mandate of the Ottawa Food Policy Council is to promote food production in the Ottawa region and insist on thoughtful consideration of any development within the city and region to ensure it does not diminish the stock of arable land. With the development of a new Civic Campus of The Ottawa Hospital in stage 2 of the Ontario Ministry of Health's Capital Planning Process, the OFPC hopes that the partners of the planning committee are looking at the architectural design and planning process with a food lens in mind.

With the development of the largest and most advanced hospital in Canada comes the opportunity to be a leader in creating a self-sustainable food system, using urban agriculture within the hospital grounds to both physically and mentally nourish patients, visitors, and staff. With the 50 acres of land looking out over the Central Experimental Farm and expanding on the research fields of the NNC property, it would be a missed opportunity not to use an organic landscape as part of the patient food system, to grow your own food, provide a seasonal and local menu for both patients, staff and visitors.

We strongly recommend developing a scratch kitchen to improve the quality of food provided at the hospital. Doing this can improve the health of patients by ensuring their nutritional needs are met with fresh produce, and locally grown during the seasons available in our climate. Rooftop and courtyard gardens and greenhouses have been demonstrated in other hospitals worldwide to not only provide fresh produce, but also the therapeutic benefits of nature. Such natural spaces create a relaxing atmosphere and restorative environment, while also providing environmental benefit/opportunity.

Many innovative hospitals in the United States are groundbreaking in their ideas to grow their own food. Some have urban rooftop gardens, terraces, green roofs (designed for environmental benefits and to lower energy use to reduce heat load and water run off into the storm water system, by using soil and drought resistant plants to create a natural insulation). The Boston Medical Centre has a 7000 square foot rooftop farm that grows fresh vegetables for use in patient food system, and the cafeteria for staff and visitors. John Theurer Cancer Centre at Hackensack University Medical Centre in New Jersey has a

2000 square foot garden and features vegetables and herbs that dietitians use to lead cooking classes in an onsite teaching kitchen for patients living with cancer.

Designing a self-sustaining food system, including within your hospital grounds, would truly transform healthcare in Ottawa. We were pleased to see that the initial proposal included greenspace and a covered green roof/park. Incorporating plants and nature throughout the design is not only an environmentally responsible act, but access to outdoor gardens/landscapes and recreational areas will provide horticultural therapy that will without a doubt improve the physical and mental health of patients and staff of The Ottawa Hospital and its community.

Building on the key directions being set to address future needs, The Ottawa Hospital can continue to lead the way and innovate alongside other world class institutions committing to grow their own food:

I would like to request that someone from your planning team set time to speak with our Council about this exciting opportunity, which will help maintain the innovative work that has led The Ottawa Hospital to be [recognized](#) as one of the top 3 smart hospitals in Canada, and number 75 worldwide. Let's keep up the good work!

Yours in community,

Chris Evans

Chair, OFPC

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