

# CHECKPOINT



## The art of accessibility

When it opens in 2028, every day, thousands of patients, staff and visitors will come to The Ottawa Hospital's new Civic hospital campus. When they arrive, clear, intuitive wayfinding will make it easy to move through the buildings. Patients will communicate with families, friends, even their clinical teams, through smart television sets in their rooms. Accessible washrooms, clinical areas, public spaces, and staff areas will be welcoming and comfortable for everyone, for people of all abilities.

"By ensuring that the space is designed to meet the needs of all people, we can improve the experience of staying, visiting or working at the new hospital, and remove unnecessary stress," said Marnie Peters, Accessibility expert on the GBA Project Advisory Team for the new Civic development.

"No matter someone's age, abilities or body size, we have to be able to accommodate them," added Peters, a world-renowned expert in creating accessible spaces, and a former gold medalist in the Sydney Paralympics for wheelchair basketball. "We need to design to accommodate the complexity of the human condition – including accommodations that people may not always associate with accessibility."

This means that the Project Advisory team needs to think beyond meeting building codes

and to strive for "universal accessibility," a design approach that assumes people will come to the new hospital with a range of abilities, which need to be accommodated in a wide range of accessible building features and equipment to be used by everyone.

The latest advances in accessibility technology will be applied to the new hospital, including new-age communication devices that accommodate persons with hearing loss, speech and communication disabilities. Each patient room will have a Smart television that will facilitate video relay services, medical charting, and even sign language interpretation.



**Marnie Peters** is the project's accessibility expert on the GBA Project Advisory Team.

# "Everything we do in this new hospital is going to be assessed against accessibility"



**Serge Falardeau** is The Ottawa Hospital's Accessibility Coordinator.

"I am the accessibility expert, but accessibility is not my job. It's the whole team's job," Peters stated. "It needs to be in our DNA as part of every decision the team makes."

Serge Falardeau, The Ottawa Hospital's Accessibility Coordinator, has worked on many projects to improve accessibility at The Ottawa Hospital's campuses. He finds it inspiring that a focus on accessible design is now incorporated into each of the planning and design phases of the new Civic development.

"When accessibility is an afterthought, it is very costly to retrofit the design to correct it. In some cases, it's impossible to correct, and that means our goal to be as inclusive as possible is compromised," Falardeau said.

"With a project of this magnitude and importance,

we want to get it right from the beginning," he added. "To ensure access to excellence in health care for all, we need to use that accessibility lens to continue to identify, remove and prevent new barriers."

People who come into the hospital should be in an environment where they can focus on their care, on visiting their loved ones, or on their work, added Peters. They shouldn't have to request special accommodation or expend any emotional stress worrying about whether the equipment in an exam room will meet their needs, or if they'll be able to locate an accessible washroom.

"If every washroom is accessible, then you no longer have to worry about whether someone is giving you directions to a washroom you can't actually use," said Peters. "Universal accessibility brings back human dignity, for everyone."

Designing for universal accessibility also improves the experience for people who live with multiple types of disability. In a facility built to today's modern building codes, for example, someone who is recovering from a concussion might still become nauseous when looking at a busy flooring pattern. Someone who has hearing loss might not hear his or her name being called in a busy waiting room, causing an appointment to be missed. Disabilities come in many forms, both visible and invisible.

"People with disabilities are everywhere, and they strive to do everything, and be part of what life has to offer. There was a time when society may have considered the patient in the wheelchair as disabled, but that is only a glimpse of reality. People with disabilities are also visiting loved ones. They're nurses, doctors, physiotherapists and volunteers. They are staff members at The Ottawa Hospital," added Peters.

"The new Civic development is taking a holistic look at accessibility to plan, design and operate the most inclusive and user-friendly hospital anywhere in the world. Our goal is to meet the needs of the whole region we serve, when we open in 2028 and well into the future."

# Governing the future of the new Civic development

An interview with Katherine Cotton, Chair of the Board of Governors,  
The Ottawa Hospital



"Recognize the value that this 21<sup>st</sup>-century hospital campus will bring to each one of us."  
**Katherine Cotton**, Chair of the Board of Governors,  
The Ottawa Hospital.

## What motivates you, as a community leader and Chair of the Board of Governors, to bring a state-of-the-art, academic tertiary hospital to life in the next eight years?

The delivery of health care in a hospital setting touches us all at some point in our lives, whether directly or through varying degrees of separation. As a non-medical member of our community, being involved with The Ottawa Hospital is an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in this exciting and complex undertaking.

I joined the Board almost nine years ago out of a desire to give back to the community by applying my skills and experience in corporate governance to support the hospital in achieving its mission of providing world class care to the community that we serve. That experience has been gratifying and enlightening beyond measure.

The Hospital team is a dedicated group of medical professionals and health-care workers who are deeply committed to providing the best care to the sickest and most gravely injured people in our region, every day. They are there and giving their best effort when you need them the most.

The Ottawa Hospital is a key player on the world stage in many disciplines. The extent of innovation and practice-changing research is mind-blowing. I see the challenges of delivering care in a building that was constructed near the turn of the last century. The new campus will provide an environment that will foster innovation, pushing the boundaries of 21<sup>st</sup>-century health care and attracting the best talent in the world. The new Civic will better serve our talented and dedicated team in providing their compassionate care to our community.

## What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the Board of Governors as you lead this major development through a pandemic, economic upheaval, and clinical staffing pressures? How do you stay the course?

The biggest challenges are driving our message out into the community, embedding awareness, and engendering the same level of excitement that is shared among those of us working on the inside to bring this project home. We have a remarkable level of expertise at our disposal to deliver the 'bricks and mortar' of the project. We need the support of our community to aid in that objective.

## What do you ask of the region in terms of support for you, the Board, patients, physicians, staff, and volunteers?

Engage. Stay informed. There is plenty of information that is available to keep you up to date on this community-building project which is one of the biggest transformational undertakings in the history of our city.

Recognize the value that this 21<sup>st</sup>-century hospital campus will bring to each one of us. Be a vocal supporter of the hospital in our community. Consider donating to our fundraising campaign if you can. Any amount is helpful. I am always mindful that the Board members represent the interests of the people in the community, that we serve in our role as governors. We try to lead by example and my 'ask' is that everyone gets on board. We all need to own this.



## Welcome to the new site

Perched on the edge of Dow's Lake on Carling Ave., The Ottawa Hospital's new Civic development will be a jewel in the region's health system. The new hospital will serve patients from across Eastern Ontario, Western Québec, and Nunavut who need specialized and complex care; it will be the site that promotes life-saving cures and treatments, and where the next generation of clinical minds comes to learn.

When it opens in 2028, the new hospital will be among the largest and most advanced in Canada. To make sure it stands the test of time and supports its mission, the site needs to be carefully planned out and designed, said Joanne Read, Executive Vice-President of Planning for The Ottawa Hospital and the lead on the new Civic development.

"The federal government has graciously leased us a 50-acre piece of land that we find very inspiring," said Read. "We imagine this futuristic health-care centre sitting up on the hill, looking out over the Central Experimental Farm and Dow's Lake, embedded organically into the landscape."

The site's surroundings and unusual topography make it unlike any other hospital development in Canada. It's roughly triangular, bounded by busy Carling Ave. to the north, Dow's Lake and the scenic Prince of Wales Dr. to the east, and by Maple Dr. on the west, past the storied research fields and heritage buildings of the Central Experimental Farm.

A ridge divides the site into two tiers: an upper plateau on the north-west side, where an inpatient building will sit, and a lower tier, where plans for outpatient clinics and

dedicated research and education areas are beginning to take shape into a health "village."

To start his day, Project Advisor and GBA Group President, Graham Bird often cycles through the site. "I like to sit on top of the ridge – our own little ski hill – and reflect on how the site might develop and how the pieces will fit. It's a puzzle for us to manage. The more we understand the nuance of this unique site, the better we can solve the puzzle."

For the thousands of staff, patients, and visitors on site every day, the site will be transit-oriented, with all buildings connected directly to the Trillium LRT line through accessible walkways. Multi-use paths will



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



**Graham Bird** is the Project Advisor for the new Civic development.

provide convenient access for cyclists and pedestrians. A rooftop helipad, connected directly to the Emergency Department and dedicated emergency vehicle access routes, will save precious minutes and help patients with life-threatening injuries and illnesses get the care they need.

The site will be designed to be resilient through all kinds of emergencies and hospital pressures, including major trauma events like the 2019 Westboro bus crash, climate change, or future pandemics. The Project Development Advisory Team is incorporating lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic into its plans, ironic, given that the current Civic Campus, a short walk down Carling Ave. from the new site, was built in response to the 1918 Spanish Flu.

A strong team and a network of partnerships will be the key to shaping the site, said Bird.

"We've knitted together a great team, with experts that will make sure we get this right. We're working with our partners in government, in health care, and in the construction unions already – and we intend to grow this partnership to everyone across the region," he said.



The boundaries of the new site are formed by Carling Ave., Maple Dr., and Prince of Wales Drive.



# Have you ever heard of a Franki pile? How about 2000? Cleanup of the new site begins

The new Civic development project team continues to work together as a driving force towards the completion of the Stage 2 Capital Planning process, scheduled for delivery to the Ministry of Health in early 2021.

The team is focused on every aspect of planning for the new hospital, and the way forward from finance to design, planning, technology, furniture, equipment, to name but a few activities.

One of the first steps is to work with Public Services and Procurement Canada to ensure that the cleanup of the site is done so that all future applications run smoothly. For the curious among you, the site contains over 2000 50-year old structural footings, formally known as Franki piles, that were invented in 1909 by Edgard Frankignoul, a Belgian engineer.

In use for almost one hundred years around the world, these Franki piles are cylinder-shaped, concrete-filled steel casings, about eight feet in length. The ones on the new Civic site were installed in the 1950s to help stabilize the soil beneath federal government buildings, specifically the West Annex Building and the Sir John Carling Tower.

The West Annex Building is slated for demolition in early 2021, along with the removal of the Franki piles.

To date, a successful test removal of several Franki piles was completed in the land under the former Sir. John Carling building. The next challenge is to ensure removal of all remaining piles for site preparation and well ahead of the start of construction, scheduled in 2024.



# Engaging with our communities on the new Civic development

The new Civic development project management team recognizes that without community support, there cannot be a new 21<sup>st</sup>-century contemporary hospital. Our community includes all Eastern Ontario, Western Québec, and Nunavut because these are the regions from which The Ottawa Hospital's patients are referred.

In our effort to keep every community up to date, we intend to reach out on a regular basis to review where our planning is and to get your feedback. Engaging with the communities we serve will help us build the best hospital possible to meet the needs of patients with complex illnesses or injuries, contribute to our research endeavours, and to help train the next generation of clinicians.

Last month, the project team met with the Campus Engagement Group (CEG), which focuses on impact of the new facility on the local community. The CEG was presented with the latest planning initiatives on the new hospital, and the details on the work done to complete Stage 2 of the Ministry of Health's

Capital Planning Process for new hospitals. The group asked questions about traffic control around the new campus, and parking regulations, although these issues are not yet being addressed at this stage.

The team also presented to The Ottawa Hospital's Patient and Family Advisory Council, which had a number of suggestions on enhancing the patient and family experience in the new hospital, as well as supportive commentary on the inclusion of natural light, single patient rooms, and new-age approaches to infection control.

Over the next several months, the project management team will be scheduling updates with several groups including municipal leaders, building and trades organizations, community groups, neighbourhood associations, to name but a few.

Feel free to reach out to Kathryn Hendrick, VP, Communications, GBA Group at [khendrick@gbagroup.ca](mailto:khendrick@gbagroup.ca) to schedule an update for your organization.





# Community support will help turn new Civic vision into reality

This past year has shown us that we live in an incredibly caring and generous community – community where health care matters, now more than ever. It's fitting that we are about to embark on the most important health-care project in the history of our region – the new Civic development on Carling Ave.. In the coming years, we will be asking our community for their support as we turn the vision for our new hospital campus into reality. It will be the most unprecedented and ambitious fundraising campaign our city has

seen, but the result – the most modern and state-of-the-art hospital in the country – will revolutionize health care and benefit each of us. When future generations read this chapter in the history of our great city, they will see, without a doubt, that we understood the significance of this moment. We hope you, too, will join us in this moment as we re-imagine the future of health care.

**Tim Kluke**

President and CEO

The Ottawa Hospital Foundation

## **Wishing you a safe, restful and happy holiday – from all of us on the New Civic Development Project Team!**

Look for the next CheckPoint in January to learn about the functional programming in the new Civic, the development schedule with Board of Governors member Tony Sottile, how research benefits patient care at The Ottawa Hospital, and much more.



**CheckPoint is a newsletter of the New Civic Project Development Team**

**Visit us at**

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