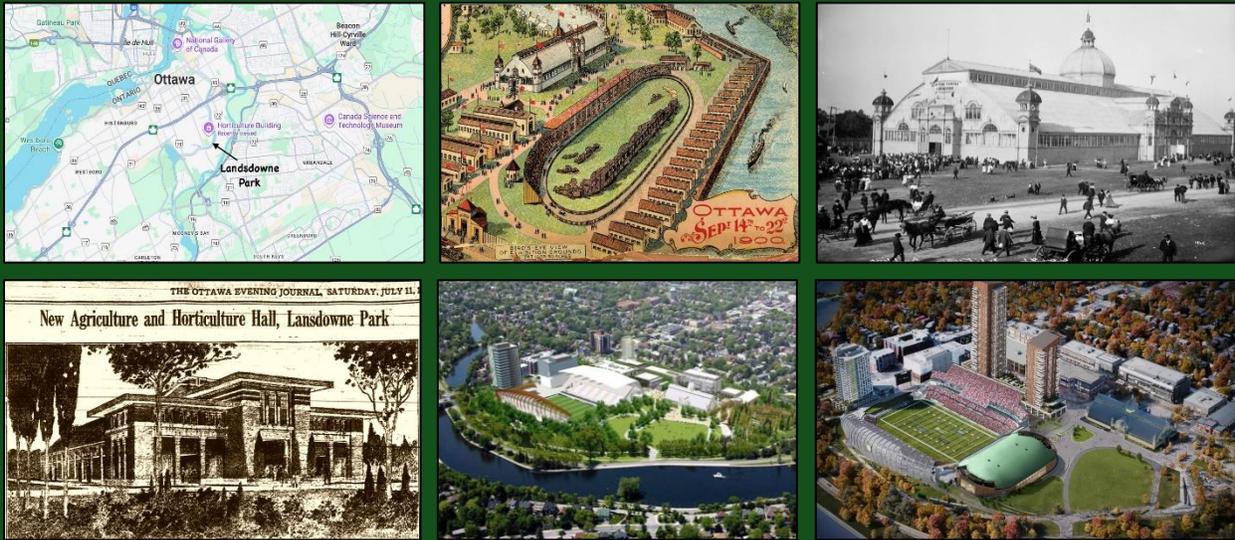


Lansdowne Park Legacies of Failure: Giving Credit to Whom Credit Is Due



Open Report to Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and Councillors, City of Ottawa

Dr. Barry Wellar, C.M., RPP-Ontario (Lifetime)

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President, Information Research Board

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<https://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>

December 2025

Re: Calling Ottawa Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and Complicit Councillors to Account for Their Legacy of Failures on the Lansdowne Park File

I was asked to add a report to the Information Research Board (IRB) website regarding the decision by 15 members of Ottawa's 25-member council to approve the "Lansdowne 2.0" redevelopment proposal, and to make public access to the production free, easy, timely, direct, and online.

I am pleased to respond in the affirmative, and to dedicate the Open Report **(1)** to Mayor Mark Sutcliffe and the 14 complicit councillors who followed Sutcliffe's lead on Lansdowne 2.0, the successor to Lansdowne 1.0.

1. First Things First: The Name of the Site is Lansdowne Park, Not Lansdowne 1.0 or Lansdowne 2.0.

Lansdowne Park is Lansdowne Park. It was established in 1847, and as of this date has a history of 178 years. The marketing gimmick of labelling this historic heritage site Lansdowne 1.0 and Lansdowne 2.0 is designated Sour Legacy A.

Sour Legacy A. Three previous councils and the current council engaged in a series of ploys whereby two latter day Lansdowne Park redevelopment initiatives invoked a renaming tactic. That is, the word "Park" was dropped in favour of "1.0" and "2.0" as in Lansdowne 1.0 and Lansdowne 2.0, in what amounted to a tawdry marketing gimmick.

The underlying fact of the matter is that the site at issue is Lansdowne Park, which was named Lansdowne Park in 1847, 178 years ago.

It is bizarre in the extreme that Ottawa's here-today-gone-tomorrow municipal politicians have the unmitigated gall to throw into the dumpster 178 years of history that belongs to all Canadians.

And it is welfare bum financing to use public funds for private sector marketing or branding purposes, whatever might they be. What a shamefully disrespectful way to treat Canadian history and heritage, and taxpayer dollars.

The substitution of Lansdowne 1.0 and Lansdowne 2.0 for Lansdowne Park is a top-end sour legacy among those selected for this report. A thinking person could worry that Byward 1.0 could be next. **(2)**

That said, it is necessary in parts of the report to use Lansdowne 1.0 or Lansdowne 2.0 for identifier reasons.

However, I hasten to emphasize that such usage is done with great reluctance, because I deeply resent having to engage in callous misrepresentation of the place name Lansdowne Park by replacing Park with 1.0 or 2.0.

Mayor Sutcliffe and complicit councillors, as you may appreciate, the essence of a legacy tome is giving credit to whom it is due for an event, action, outcome, etc. In this Open Report, the mission is to document a selection of the downside legacies of the Lansdowne Park/2025 decision for which the mayor and 14 councillors are responsible.

As others have stated, identifying and prioritizing among failures of the Lansdowne Park/2025 file is a daunting task, and I agree. However, with 53 years of empirical context in which to assess the decision, a strong network of knowledgeable contacts, and education and training in pertinent fields such as planning, commerce, geography, engineering, finance, housing, business statistics, forecasting, and research methods, I welcome the challenge of documenting some of the downside legacies.

2. Images of Lansdowne Park Then and Now: From World Class to Mundane

As all members of council know or should know, the history of Lansdowne Park began in 1847. And, as members of council could know if they checked, a Google search using “Lansdowne Park” yields 1,500,000-1,600,000 results, that is 1,500,000-1,600,000 mentions of “Lansdowne Park” in webpages, which in turn could mean many hundreds of thousands of additional mentions in government documents, broadcast media stories, community newspaper stories, and other means of communications which are not recorded by Google or other search engines. **(3)**

For this report, six exhibits are provided for context purposes.

- **Exhibit A. Location Map of Lansdowne Park, Ottawa, Canada.**
- **Exhibit B. Image of Lansdowne Park in its “Crown Jewel” Days, Ottawa, Canada.**
- **Exhibit C. Aberdeen Pavilion, Lansdowne Park, Ottawa, Canada.**
- **Exhibit D. Horticulture Building, Lansdowne Park, Ottawa, Canada.**
- **Exhibit E. Rideau Canal, Ottawa, Canada.**
- **Exhibit F. Lansdowne Park/2025 Contribution to the Mundanity of Ottawa’s Parkland.**

The Exhibit images are presented without textual interruption in order to create a sense of flow for the visual representations. As the reader may be aware, there are thousands of images that depict the changes to Lansdowne Park over time and space, and giving those changes their full due is best done by heritage groups. The images are briefly described in Table 1 to indicate the sour legacy theme of this report.

Exhibit A. Location Map of Lansdowne Park, Ottawa, Canada

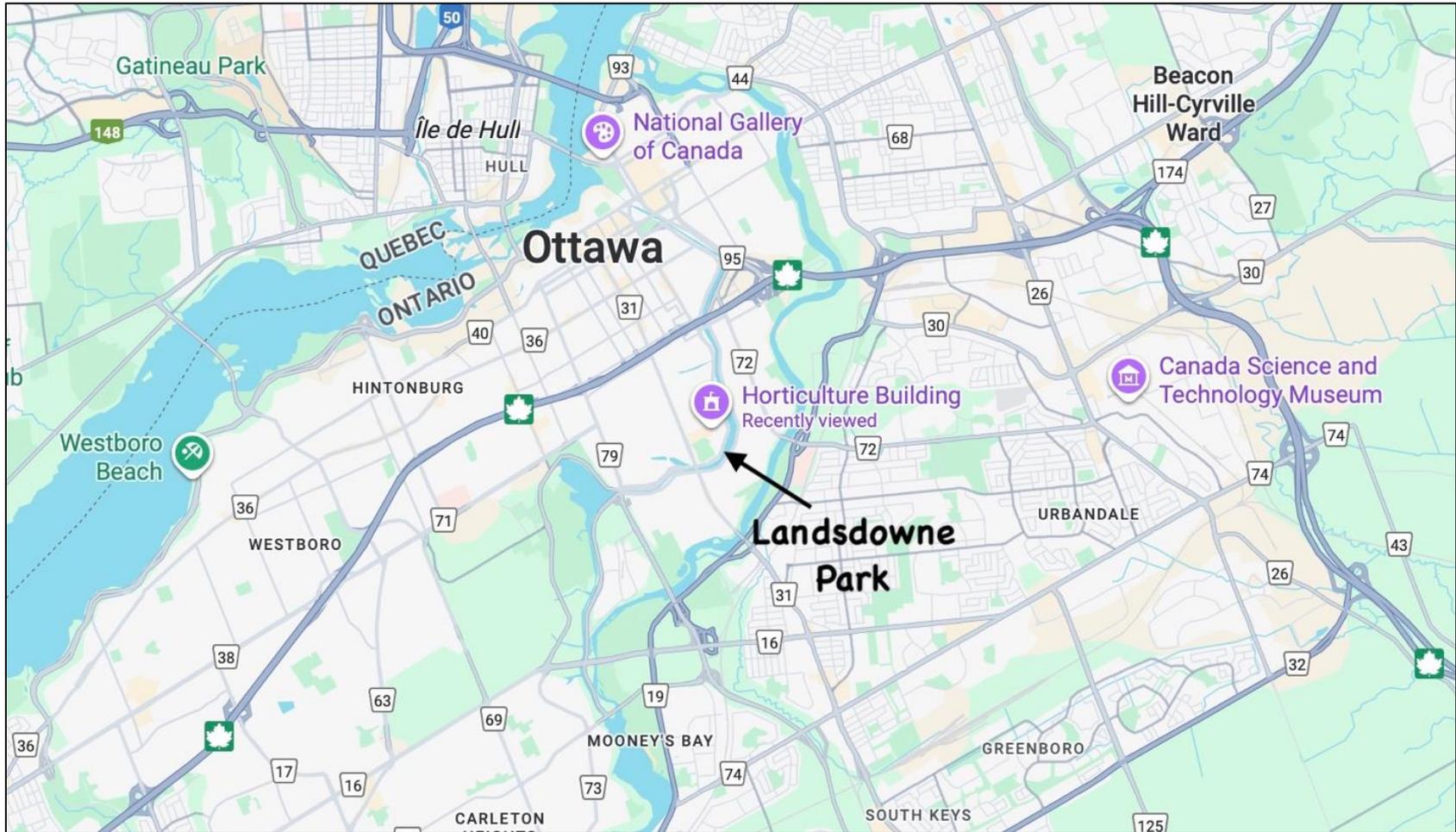


Exhibit B. Image of Lansdowne Park in its “Crown Jewel” Days, Ottawa, Canada



The cover of the 1900 Prize List from the Central Canada Exhibition shows an aerial view of the grounds. PHOTO BY CITY OF OTTAWA ARCHIVES /Ottawa Citizen

Exhibit C. Aberdeen Pavilion, Lansdowne Park, Ottawa, Canada



Exhibit D. Horticulture Building, Lansdowne Park, Ottawa, Canada

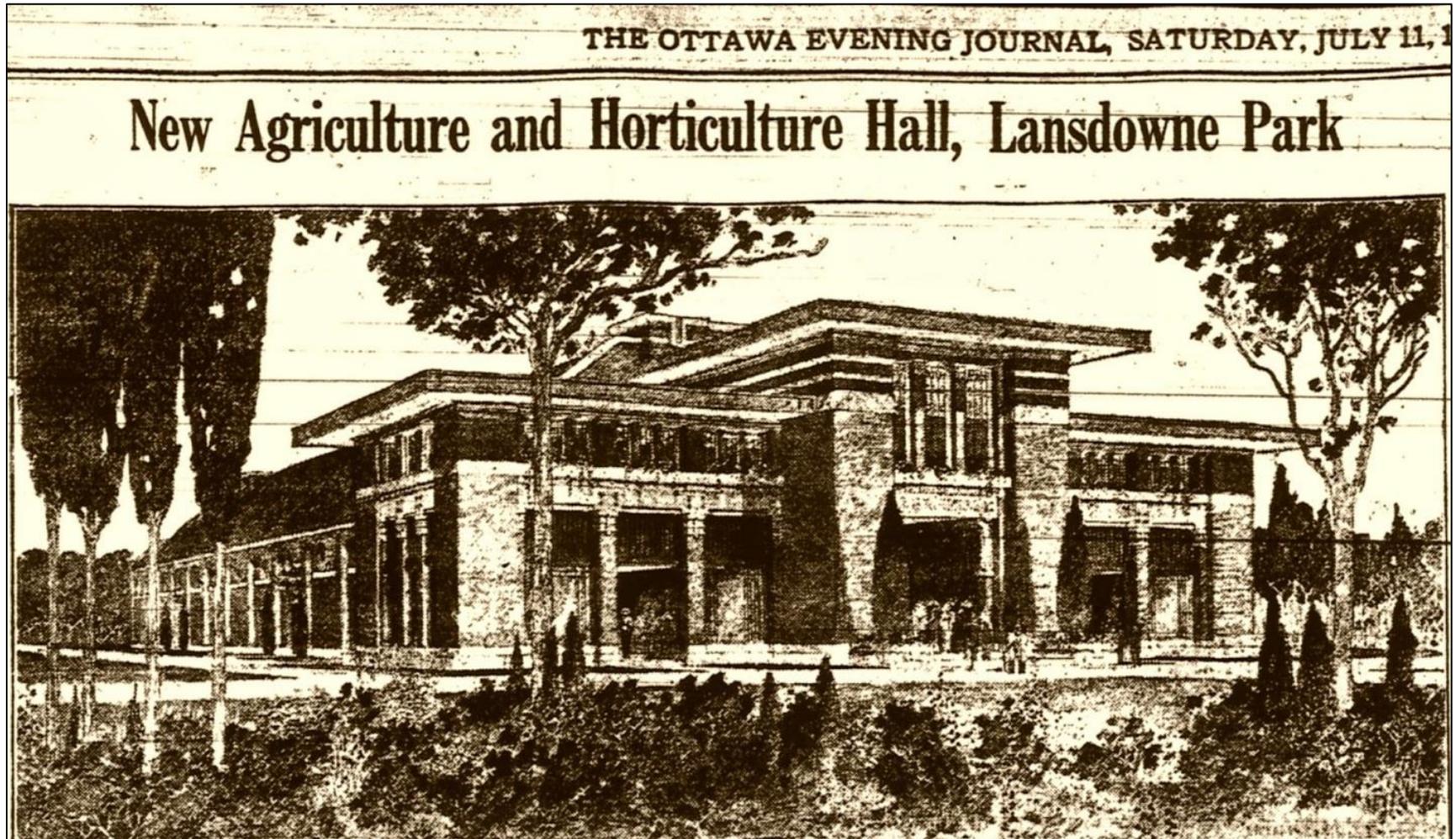


Exhibit E. Rideau Canal, Ottawa, Canada



Exhibit F. Oh, the Mundanity! Lansdowne 2.0, Ottawa, Canada



Table 1. Contributions of Exhibits A-F to the Sour Legacies Theme

Note. We are not positive about the original person or entity to whom credit should be given for each image since Lansdowne Park-related materials are available from many sources, leading to many derivative productions. To our knowledge we have not violated any copyright conditions but, if that is the case then we ask to be so informed as soon as possible and the error will be corrected post-haste.

Exhibit A. Lansdowne Park

Ottawa’s original feature park was located in a broad parkland setting within walking distance of many Ottawa residents, and public meant public for many years, because very little of the site was “re-purposed” for private residential or commercial use.

It was a park and respected as a park and was neither seen nor created as a commodity to be plundered.

Exhibit B. Crown Jewel

The adjacency of the Aberdeen Pavilion and the Horticulture Building to the Rideau Canal created a landscape composite at the crown jewel level that has been unique to Canada for close to 75 years, 1914 to 1990.

Searches have not revealed a triad of such exemplary, intimately located, public heritage entities anywhere else in Canada, and numerous historical productions put them in a class at the level of esteemed.

However, it appears safe to say that when it comes to the Lansdowne 1.0 and Lansdowne 2.0, to Ottawa councils, land is a commodity that means development money.

Moreover, as the bean counters might say, you can take esteem to the bank, but it has no pecuniary value.

Exhibit C. Aberdeen Pavilion

Lansdowne Park was cursed by development and commercial forces breaking off pieces of the original parkland that embraced the Aberdeen Pavilion and the Horticulture Building.

Further, there were decades of outright neglect of Lansdowne Park by councils of both the City of Ottawa and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton.

As a result, the Aberdeen Pavilion built in 1898 is all that is left of Lansdowne Park that City of Ottawa politicians or other promoters can name to support any claims using the term “world class”.

In that regard I hasten to remind, lest any member of the current council or future council gets carried away with delusions of adequacy, that any world-class claims are piggybacking on the values of those who were responsible for true visionary decisions and actions taken more than 100 years ago.

The apparent fact is that no council in about 100 years, including those of the past 25 years, had a serious, action-oriented productive thought about enhancing that crown jewel of a site.

Exhibit D. Horticulture Building

There are many images from a variety of angles of the Horticulture Building, which was built in 1914. This one illustrates the original park site with its openness, viewability, and walkability that made it an appealing edifice, as opposed to what happens as a result of jamming more and more built features onto the Lansdowne Park site, and thereby whittling away at the public land component of the so-called public park.

Unfortunately, whittling away is not sufficient to describe the fate of the Horticulture Building. Rather, it ended up on chopping blocks after repeated assaults by Ottawa's heritage barbarians who easily ripped up the fragile "protections" that politicians seem to erect to easily breach rather than to protect and preserve.

Exhibit E. Rideau Canal

Strolling, jogging, and cycling along the Rideau Canal in Spring, Summer, and Fall, and skating on the Canal in Winter makes it a go-to place for residents and visitors. The Lansdowne/2025 development plan does nothing to enhance the connections made more than 100 years ago, and the two towers will increase the motor vehicle presence in a former easy-does-it parkland area. Lose, lose.

Exhibit F. Oh, the Mundanity!

Over the course of about 75 years, 1950-2025, a number of nails were hammered into the Lansdowne Park coffin by council after council. Exhibit F contains the latest of hundreds of images available to illustrate the drift into profound mundanity.

Long story short is that no evidence has been found to establish that images of Lansdowne Park/2025 stir anybody, not even the developers, other vested interests, or even the members of council who approved Lansdowne Park/2025.

Should I be wrong about the failure of Lansdowne 2.0 to stir anybody, then I await the substantive reasons for any claimed stirring – e.g., intellectually, emotionally, culturally, esthetically, mentally, psychologically, spiritually – that passes the mundanity test which is summarized as follows.

Entities in the public domain are mundane if they can be described by terms such as banal, blah, boring, common, downer, drab, dull, humdrum, ordinary, routine, run-of-the-mill, stale, tedious, trite, unimaginative, uninspiring, uninteresting, and unremarkable.

Using those descriptors, Lansdowne 2.0 is totally mundane, and the only exception to the mundanity is the Aberdeen Pavilion constructed in 1898, and sections of the Rideau Canal which can be viewed from the Lansdowne Park site.

The Universal Law of Location comes to mind, mayor and councillors, and the takeaway from previous productions **(5)** is that while there is only one Lansdowne Park in the centre of Ottawa, the two new towers can be located most anywhere that space permits in the city for a very good reason.

That is, the towers are far from one-of-a-kind of any type, they are just structures of the variety that can be found in most if not all large cities in Canada, and there would not be any public outcry should the towers be removed from the viewshed of neighborhood residents or passersby.

Or, to rephrase, based on renderings of the towers they appear to fit the mundanity profile to a capital M, so their removal is not likely to be missed by casual observers.

Consequently, there is nothing, nothing that citizens have been told about the towers that compels their location in Lansdowne Park, which is one-of-a-kind public space. Indeed, arguments have been made that citizens have not been fully informed about matters which suggest that the towers should not be located in Lansdowne Park in case this or a future council chooses to undo the Lansdowne Park/2025 decision.

3. Background

Four compelling reasons for documenting some of the downside legacies to date of Lansdowne Park/2025 are summarized as follows.

1. The Lansdowne file is deep in controversies involving trust, transparency, and accountability, which are three personal character attributes that are universally claimed by wannabe politicians running for office, including all members of the current Ottawa council. (If I am in error in this regard about the position of any member of Ottawa council, please contact me at the earliest and the report will be amended as needed.)

This engagement is a continuation of my advocacy for more than 50 years on behalf of the public interest, and it follows decades of data-driven and evidence-based research. (Details are available at <https://wellar.ca/informationresearch/> and <https://wellar.ca/wellarconsulting/>.)

2. An Open Report is an opportunity to state the names of members of council making a pro-development decision that will negatively affect many thousands of current and future Ottawa residents.

As noted above, a legacy tome gives credit to whom it is due, and in my view it is best to do so while the politicians are still around to appreciate how their decision is evaluated and rated by those they affect.

3. In my life experience, many politicians who commit blunders escape the blunder crunch through the passage of time and the absence of records.

I believe that designing and illustrating a crowd-sourced legacy approach will contribute to ensuring that those who committed Lansdowne Park/2025 blunders are on record for their contributions while they are in office, and their blunders will be “out there” for future reference by citizens long after the politicians have left city hall.

As current politicians and citizens may appreciate, such documentation could be of significant public value if it precludes or even limits the number of future politicians making similar blunders.

4. In February 2023, some 32 months ago, I asked the 2022-2026 City of Ottawa council a survey question about the public’s right to know, which is a cornerstone of a free and democratic society:

Do you agree that citizens are entitled to free, easy, timely, and direct online access to public records?

The survey was repeated to confirm positions of members of council, and to gain insights into the depth of their convictions over time and circumstance.

Published reports on the surveys include:

- [Interim Report 28. Implications of the “New Gang” of Non-Respondent Councillors Ignoring Calls to Improve Trust, Transparency, Accountability, and Public Access to Public Records;](#)
- [Interim Report 27. Implications of the “Old Gang” of Non-Respondent Councillors Ignoring Calls to Improve Trust, Transparency, Accountability, and Public Access to Public Records;](#)
- [Interim Report 26. Events Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 Which Could Affect City of Ottawa Politicians’ Respect for Trust, Transparency, and Accountability, or Citizens’ Access to Public Records;](#)

- [Interim Report 25. City of Ottawa Mayor and Councillors, 2022-2026: Do You Agree that Citizens Are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the City of Ottawa? Survey #2.](#)

The time has come to revisit mayor's and councillors' respect for the cornerstone question, with responses and non-responses to the surveys possibly serving as a guide to determining bias in votes by mayor and councillors on November 7, 2025, regarding the Lansdowne Park/2025 development proposal.

4. Communication Structure

Two types of commentary are included in this report.

The first type of comment is a 'short story' which was disseminated to individuals and groups in mid-November for information and for feedback purposes.

The short story is a letter sent to the Ottawa Citizen letters editor on November 10, 11, and 12, (6) and then re-formatted in an email of November 28, 2025 to the mayor and councillors.

The email to council is presented in Exhibit G. I note for readers who may be curious about responses, that none were received.

Exhibit G. Email to Mayor and Councillors, City of Ottawa, Lansdowne Park/2025 Legacies of a Failure

From: wellar.barry@gmail.com <wellar.barry@gmail.com>

Sent: November 28, 2025 11:47 AM

To: mark.suttcliffe@ottawa.ca; Ariel.Troster@ottawa.ca; Allan.Hubley@ottawa.ca; Catherine.Kitts@ottawa.ca; cathy.curry@ottawa.ca; Clarke.Kelly@ottawa.ca; David.Brown@ottawa.ca; David.Hill@ottawa.ca; Glen.Gower@ottawa.ca; Isabelle.Skalski@ottawa.ca; Jeff.Leiper@ottawa.ca; Jessica.Bradley@ottawa.ca; Laine.Johnson@ottawa.ca; Laura.Dudas@ottawa.ca; Marty.Carr@ottawa.ca; Matt.Luloff@ottawa.ca; Rawlson.King@ottawa.ca; Riley.Brockington@ottawa.ca; Sean.Devine@ottawa.ca; shawn.menard@ottawa.ca; Steve.Desroches@ottawa.ca; stephanie.plante@ottawa.ca; Theresa.Kavanaugh@ottawa.ca; Tim.Tierney@ottawa.ca; Wilson.Lo@ottawa.ca

Cc: 'George A. Neville' <george.neville@ncf.ca>; 'douglasarnold douglasarnold' <douglasarnold@sympatico.ca>; 'le hibou' <ottawaowl2@yahoo.ca>; 'Horizon Ottawa' <info@horizonottawa.ca>; wellar.barry@gmail.com

Subject: Lansdowne 2.0 legacies of a failure

Mayor and Councillors, City of Ottawa

Lansdowne 2.0 legacies of a failure

My association with Lansdowne Park began in 1972, and I take issue with what transpired during the Lansdowne 2.0 debacle 53 years later that I wish to 'put on record'.

Complaints by citizens about lack of timely access to Lansdowne 2.0 details and consultations are ultra-concerning because of a declaration by Mayor Mark Sutcliffe in the Ottawa Citizen, August 23, 2023, that "Increasing trust, transparency and accountability [is] a tremendous priority for me." (You were informed about that quote in a previous email. Meta details are provided in a forthcoming report.)

Something went seriously wrong with Sutcliffe's promise, and five sour legacies come to mind due to council's ill-advised decision to proceed with what is an obvious boondoggle.

1. Sutcliffe's failure to respond to questions about not matching his and council's performance with that promise means this reckless caper will likely dog him for many years after he leaves behind his chain of office.
2. The bitter narrative linking the Lansdowne money pit and the LRT flop begins with the dire LRT legacy of former Mayor Jim Watson, and the regrettable choices of seven members of the current council – Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura Dudas, Glen Gower, Allan Hubley, Matt Luloff, and Tim Tierney – who supported both Watson's and Sutcliffe's reckless disregard for the public interest and the public purse.
3. The 'who cares treatment' of the Ottawa Charge by Sutcliffe and his council supporters is a shameful message that will be talked about for years in Ottawa and in other PWHL cities.
4. Based on the LRT and Lansdowne fiascos, the terms world-class, data-driven, and evidence-based have lost all legitimacy at Ottawa city hall.
5. And this is the unkindest legacy of all: the financial and other burdens imposed on Ottawa taxpayers will last for decades and perhaps generations.

What a colossal blunder.

Sincerely,

Barry Wellar, Nepean

We are informed that the email to council members has been forwarded by some councillors to individuals as well as to community associations and public interest groups.

In addition, the Lansdowne Park/2025 legacies of a failure short story (thus far) is posted as a Special Report on one of Ottawa's most active and influential community-based websites, <https://bellscorners.wordpress.com/>.

Exhibit H. Blog Post of Email to Council re Lansdowne 2.0 legacies of a failure

Dr. Barry Wellar, Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa, Member, Order of Canada, and a resident of Bells Corners, sent an email to mayor and councillors in which he identified five "sour legacies" resulting from the Lansdowne 2.0 decision. His report that expands on the email is scheduled for publication in the near future. In the meantime, I am pleased to post the email which Dr. Wellar sent to council.

Lansdowne 2.0 legacies of a failure

Mayor and Councillors, City of Ottawa

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Something went seriously wrong with Sutcliffe's promise, and five sour legacies come to mind due to council's ill-advised decision to proceed with what is an obvious boondoggle.

1. Sutcliffe's failure to respond to questions about not matching his and council's performance with that promise means this reckless caper will likely dog him for many years after he leaves behind his chain of office.
2. The bitter narrative linking the Lansdowne money pit and the LRT flop begins with the dire LRT legacy of former Mayor Jim Watson, and the regrettable choices of seven members of the current council – Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura Dudas, Glen Gower, Allan Hubley, Matt Luloff, and Tim Tierney – who supported both Watson's and Sutcliffe's reckless disregard for the public interest and the public purse.
3. The 'who cares treatment' of the Ottawa Charge by Sutcliffe and his council supporters is a shameful message that will be talked about for years in Ottawa and in other PWHL cities.
4. Based on the LRT and Lansdowne fiascos, the terms world-class, data-driven, and evidence-based have lost all legitimacy at Ottawa city hall.
5. And this is the unkindest legacy of all: the financial and other burdens imposed on Ottawa taxpayers will last for decades and perhaps generations.

What a colossal blunder.

Dr. Barry Wellar, C.M.

Source: <https://bellscorners.wordpress.com/2025/12/11/landsdowne-park-sour-legacies/>
Craig MacAulay, Blogger

The second type of commentary is an expansion of the previously circulated comments, and several other comments that I did not include in the letter due to space constraints.

In the expansion commentary, namely, this Open Report, I begin the contribution to “informed posterity” with elaborations of the legacies identified in Exhibit A. These elaborations serve as a first expansion, with further expansions to follow as time permits. (7)

But first, there is need for a statement of context that may resonate with some members of council, as well as visitors to the Information Research Board (IRB) website (<https://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>) who recall productions on the topic of citizens having free, easy, timely, and direct online access to City of Ottawa public records.

I believe a revisit to findings from that earlier research may serve a useful purpose in explaining the reasons behind citizens’ complaints about the lack of proper access to public records, consultations, and negotiations during the lead-up to the Lansdowne Park/2025 vote on November 7, 2025.

5. Members of Council Who Did Not Agree that Citizens are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely and Direct Online Access to City of Ottawa Public Records, and Who also Voted to Approve Lansdowne Park/2025 Despite Citizen Complaints about Lack of Proper Access to City Records, Consultations and Negotiations

Links to reports asking members of Ottawa council about their positions on citizens having free, easy, timely, and direct online access to City of Ottawa public records include, as previously stated:

- [Interim Report 23. Analysis and Implications of Survey #1, City of Ottawa Mayor and Councillors, 2022-2026: Do You Agree that Citizens Are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the City of Ottawa?](#)
- [Interim Report 25. City of Ottawa Mayor and Councillors, 2022-2026: Do You Agree that Citizens Are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely, and Direct Online Access to the Public Records Held by the City of Ottawa? Survey #2](#)
- [Interim Report 26. Events Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 Which Could Affect City of Ottawa Politicians’ Respect for Trust, Transparency, and Accountability, or Citizens’ Access to Public Records](#)

- [Interim Report 27. Implications of the “Old Gang” of Non-Respondent Councillors Ignoring Calls to Improve Trust, Transparency, Accountability, and Public Access to Public Records](#)
- [Interim Report 28. Implications of the “New Gang” of Non-Respondent Councillors Ignoring Calls to Improve Trust, Transparency, Accountability, and Public Access to Public Records](#)

A point of particular significance to the Lansdowne Park/2025 failure theme of this Open Report is how those who voted to support Mayor Mark Sutcliffe’s exhortations promoting Lansdowne Park/2025 responded to surveys about citizens’ access to City of Ottawa records.

The survey question that was asked several times is.

“Do you agree that citizens are entitled to free, easy, timely, and direct online access to City of Ottawa records?”

Sutcliffe did not respond to the surveys despite his claim about trust, transparency, and accountability.

Councillors who did not respond to the question are:

- Marty Carr
- Cathy Curry
- Steve Desroches
- Laura Dudas
- David Hill
- Allen Hubley
- Glen Gower
- Clarke Kelly
- Stephanie Plante
- Tim Tierney

Small wonder, one might say, that with no apparent evidence those named did anything to improve citizen access, many citizens complained and are still complaining about the failed level of access to Lansdowne Park/2025 documentation.

And that failure is compounded by the failed level of access to details about consultations and negotiations when 11 members of a 25-member council do not respond to a survey asking a fundamental governance question in a free and democratic society,

“Do you agree that citizens are entitled to free, easy, timely, and direct online access to City of Ottawa records?”

With the non-responses to surveys about a fundamental governance question a matter of record, the seeming perpetuation of the non-response mindset by those named above is designated Sour Legacy B, with specific reference to the cone of silence that is seen to define discourse control over the past 15 years at Ottawa city hall. **(8)**

Sour Legacy B. What we have here is a stark reminder of the cone of silence that governed Ottawa city hall's approach to communications during the 12 years when Jim Walson was mayor.

That is, it appears fair to say, a state of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose* prevails with Mark Sutcliffe as mayor, and a cone of silence is also characteristic of this council's performance regarding the Lansdowne Park/2025 decision process.

6. Members of Council Who Agreed that Citizens are Entitled to Free, Easy, Timely and Direct Online Access to City of Ottawa Public Records, but Voted to Approve Lansdowne Park/2025 Despite Citizen Complaints about Lack of Proper Access to City Records, Consultations and Negotiations

Members of council who agreed in surveys that citizens are entitled *to free, easy, timely, and direct online access to City of Ottawa records* are:

- David Brown
- Catherine Kitts
- Matt Luloff.

However, these councillors voted to approve Lansdowne Park/2025 despite numerous citizen complaints about lack of proper access to city records, consultations, and negotiations.

The apparent contradiction of saying yes to citizens having informed access to city of Ottawa public records and then also saying yes to Lansdowne Park/2025, which has been subject to citizen complaints about lack of access to Lansdowne Park/2025 records, consultations, and negotiations, is designated Sour Legacy C.

Sour Legacy C. This is another reminder to citizens that although municipal politicians use the cliché about being in the government closest to the people, that does not preclude them saying one thing and doing another.

7. Failed Promises about Trust, Transparency, and Accountability Regarding Tests of Public Access to Public Records Applied to the Lansdowne Park/2025 File

Complaints by citizens about lack of timely access to productions containing Lansdowne Park/2025 details and consultations are ultra-concerning because of a declaration by Mayor Mark Sutcliffe in the Ottawa Citizen, August 23, 2023, that “Increasing trust, transparency and accountability [is] a tremendous priority for me.”

Sutcliffe and council were asked about this matter on several occasions, and three Information Research Board reports are dedicated to the topic:

- [Interim Report 26. Events Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 Which Could Affect City of Ottawa Politicians’ Respect for Trust, Transparency, and Accountability, or Citizens’ Access to Public Records](#)
- [Interim Report 27. Implications of the “Old Gang” of Non-Respondent Councillors Ignoring Calls to Improve Trust, Transparency, Accountability, and Public Access to Public Records](#)
- [Interim Report 28. Implications of the “New Gang” of Non-Respondent Councillors Ignoring Calls to Improve Trust, Transparency, Accountability, and Public Access to Public Records](#)

In the absence of any response from Sutcliffe to questions asked in the reports, it comes as no surprise that he is deemed by citizens to not be sufficiently forthcoming on the Lansdowne Park/2025 file.

However, in terms of spelling out legacies, it is my opinion that many things went seriously wrong with Sutcliffe’s promise from the front end to the rear end of the Lansdowne Park/2025 process.

As a result, the longer the process continued the more interconnected sour sub-legacies occurred and then stuck together. The image that comes to mind is a snowball rolling downhill and picking up flakes and debris along the way.

The following sour sub-legacies are among those that come to mind due to Sutcliffe’s off-heard failure to deliver on his transparency, accountability, and trust promise.

i. Shortly before the Lansdowne Park/2025 decision day took centre stage at Ottawa city hall, Sutcliffe awarded the Order of Ottawa to former mayor Jim Watson.

That decision was widely mocked by citizens according to social media communications. A popular, high-response demonstration placard on decision day was a circled photo of Sutcliffe labelled “Watson 2.0”.

On the one hand there is disdain for Watson due to his lengthy mishandling of such big-ticket financial items as, for example, 12 years of the Lansdowne Park file (2010-2022), 12 years of the light rail transit (LRT) file (2010-2022), and 12 years (2010-2022) of low-balling tax increases as a vote-grab plank and, as some kind of heading off into the sunset gaffe, the tumultuous convoy blockade mess in downtown Ottawa in 2022. **(9)**

And, on the other hand, there is disdain for Sutcliffe due to his embarrassing misadventures which include flying the U.S. flag at city hall on July 4 after the U.S. ignored Canada’s Maple Leaf flag on July 1, his obsequious acceptance of Trump’s erratic babbling about Canada as the 51st state, his caving on the speed camera vote grab by Doug Ford, his do-nothing approach to Bill 9 on accountability reform for municipal politicians, and his empty million trees campaign pledge in 2022 which was just so much sawdust. **(10)**

ii. The bitter narrative linking the 2010-2022 Lansdowne Park money pit, the 2022-2025 Lansdowne Park money pit, and the LRT flop that began with the dire LRT legacy of Jim Watson.

iii. The regrettable choices of seven members of the current council (Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura Dudas, Glen Gower, Allan Hubley, Matt Luloff, and Tim Tierney) who previously supported Watson on the LRT and Lansdowne Park 2010-2022 fiascos and now support Sutcliffe in adding another expensive and sour chapter to the shameful Lansdowne Park file.

iv. Many citizens questioned the public-private partnership that the City of Ottawa engaged in with the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) regarding Lansdowne Park/2010-2022.

Involved politicians included Watson and seven members of the current council: Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura Dudas, Glen Gower, Allan Hubley, Matt Luloff, and Tim Tierney.

If I understand the numbers correctly, the PPP arrangement with OSEG had not achieved a positive return and a financial payment to the City of Ottawa in any year of the partnership through to November 2022 when the current council took office.

It is likely that the Lansdowne Park/2025 decision will invoke the terms trust, transparency, and accountability thousands of times per year by Ottawa's municipal politicians.

However, there is a caution about those who proclaim too much as well as those who protest too much, and about too many oft-heard proclamations about trust, transparency, and accountability that lead us to Sour Legacy D.

Sour Legacy D. Politicians earn the public's trust by meeting standards of transparency and accountability which satisfy the public's standards, and the Lansdowne 2.0 file is a lost cause in that regard.

Worse, due to the failure of four consecutive councils to implement the pledge that citizens are entitled to *free, easy, timely, and direct online access to City of Ottawa records*, the Lansdowne Park 1.0, 2.0, and potentially 3.0., 4.0 etc., files may be under a cloud of doubt for decades.

8. Perpetuating the Failed Financial Promises of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG)

According to findings from readily available extant explanations, every member of the 2022-2026 council knew or should have known that the city's PPP with OSEG had been a losing financial proposition since the PPP agreement was signed in 2014.

Further, by the time of perpetuating the PPP with OSEG on November 7, 2025 by their votes, every member of this council knew or should have known that for the preceding three years of this term OSEG had not demonstrated any return to City of Ottawa taxpayers on the so-called Lansdowne 1.0 investment

The adage "Follow the money" seems very applicable to the financial message that Lansdowne 1.0 has for Lansdowne 2.0, and citizens seem to be of a mind that the message was lost on 15 members of council, which takes us to Sour Legacy E.

Sour Legacy E. Ottawa's Auditor General pointed out numerous "frailties" in the Lansdowne Park/2025 financial package, and one of the frailties that caught the attention of citizens is the perceived underperforming private partner in the PPP arrangement, namely, OSEG.

The apparent failure by council to critically review and act on the disappointing performance of the private partner in the PPP arrangement after eleven consecutive years of underachievement points to a total failure regarding transparency.

accountability, and trust, and the high likelihood of a long-term legacy of financial gloom and doom for taxpayers.

9. Shades of Baseball Manager Casey Stengel Who Asked After Another Loss by His Sorry New York Mets, “Does anybody here know how to play this game?”

I used Casey Stengel’s rhetorical question in presentations 15-20 years ago about Ottawa’s dismal sustainable transportation record (see, for example,

https://wellar.ca/wellarconsulting/BW_BestPracticesFramework_SustainableTransitOttawa.pdf;

https://wellar.ca/wellarconsulting/Wellar_2ndSustainableCommunitySummit.pdf),

and

https://wellar.ca/wellarconsulting/Kiwanis_Transport3.pdf.)

However, I upped the ante from playing to winning because many can play with public dollars, but not everyone is a winner when it comes to return on investment.

In this case the ‘game’ is the Lansdowne Park site, and 2.0 is an early marker in a likely series of numerics that could jump from 1.0 to 2.0 to “X.0” over the next 75 years or more due to the need for numerous in-course corrections.

And, I hasten to add, as part of the ‘game’ it seems likely that there will no end of efforts to totally drop the ‘Park’ from Lansdowne Park and re-label the site with some dull-witted destination name.

That tactic could be used to assist in diminishing the perception that many of Ottawa’s municipal politicians suffer from a pro-development syndrome, whereby public land is just a real estate commodity, and even scarce parkland is for sale.

Consequently, given the amounts of public funds, public spaces, and public impacts associated with private sector exploitation of the Lansdowne Park site, citizens are justified in their concerns about the difficulty of ascertaining which research methods and techniques were considered and used by internal staff, consultants, and politicians in making decisions, and also have concerns about which research methods and techniques were employed by external evaluators. **(11)**

As a case in point, and despite the contentious nature of this proposal, it seems apparent that the pro-development side made little use of available methods and techniques for critically evaluating the Lansdowne Park/2025 proposal.

For example, I found no evidence of the counterfoil research approach, which is one of the most substantive means for demonstrating to residents that their politicians practiced due diligence to meet or exceed citizen's expectations about pledges by politicians regarding trust, transparency, and accountability.

Politicians are among those who make the oft-heard declaration that you can't manage what you don't measure, but too often it comes off as trite or superficial. The point is that measuring is an important database development activity.

However, in the cases of Lansdowne Park 2010-2022 and 2022-2025, the key measurement questions are about what is measured, why, how, and by whom, and those questions are driven by the methods and techniques used to analyse and synthesize the data derived from measurement.

A critical problem with both cases is that the methods and techniques employed were not and are not open books for citizens, leading to Sour Legacy F.

Sour Legacy F. After numerous mentions of the "complexity" of Lansdowne Park/2025 by mayor and councillors, it flies in the face of logic that citizens were not properly informed and heard regarding the methods and techniques upon which decisions by mayor and councillors were based.

Worse, there is a perceived "bum's rush" aspect to the decision process whereby the proposal was rammed through committees and council without proper regard for due process and due diligence as seen by citizens.

The term sour as in sour legacy is especially appropriate for describing the sense by citizens that the decision to proceed with Lansdowne Park 2025 is a decision to serve vested interests before the public interest and is not a data-driven much less an evidence-based decision.

10. The 'who cares treatment' of the Ottawa Charge and the PWHL by Sutcliffe and his council supporters is a civic stain that will be talked about for years in Ottawa and in other PWHL cities

On its face the attitude of Sutcliffe and his supporters towards the Ottawa Charge and the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) is lower-order bush league at best.

However, it smacks of a deep bias against the Charge and the PWHL when compared to the fawning attitudes and expedited activity schedules adopted by area politicians and staff to support planning and zoning amendments to facilitate locating the Ottawa Senators in Kanata in 1992.

Moreover, the bias aspect is seen to be exacerbated by current politicians and staff at the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa doing so again, 30-35 years later, by facilitating and expediting the move from Kanata to LeBreton Flats.

I hasten to note for any member of council whose research did not include reviewing the 1992 OMB hearing into the Senator's site development proposal, that I was the expert witness for the Federation of Citizens Associations which objected to the decisions by area councils to approve the development application submitted by the Senators franchise.

In that regard it may be informative to note that all my opinions on land use, transportation, traffic, attendance, etc., that objected to the Ottawa Senators development application have been validated by the passage of time.

Further, they continue to be validated some 30 years later because the pro-development claims, promises, assertions, assumptions, etc., presented by Senators' experts at the OMB hearing failed to materialize.

With that backstory in place, my response to the belated and seemingly phony 'let's talk' supplications now being put forth by City of Ottawa regarding PWHL and the Charge may be politely summarized as "Pathetic".

All negotiations between the City of Ottawa, PWHL, the Charge, OSEG, and other vested participants should have been done in public long ago.

Further, in the true spirit of trust, transparency, and accountability, the negotiations should have been conducted in an open forum and completed for all to review before citizens were sucked into the current morass of confusion and bad feelings, all of which were precipitated by the city's heavy-handed tactic of harm now as necessary in the name of expediency and seek forgiveness later.

After all, as many residents have said, if lawsuits flow from politicians' bad faith behaviour, then the politicians wobble on their skates for the exits and, if judgements are made against the City of Ottawa, then they are settled with taxpayer dollars.

Sour Legacy G. The widespread perception is that Sutcliffe and Councillors Curry and Dudas disgraced themselves and Ottawa residents by creating a toxic situation with

their abusive and totally uncalled for treatment of Ottawa Charge and PWHL representatives.

However, this sour legacy also includes councillors who did not call Sutcliffe, Curry, and Dudas to account for their noxious behaviour, and who compounded the mockery already made of the mantra of trust, transparency, and accountably proclaimed by Sutcliffe.

11. Learning and Respecting Lessons from Previous Mistakes. What a Concept.

There is an 'old saw' about learning from one's mistakes, and in my experience in Ottawa over the past 53 years there is much to be learned from the many mistakes made by municipal and regional council after municipal and regional council.

As a case in point, consider the transportation aspect of Lansdowne Park /2025.

In my experience every transportation aspect of the development has been encountered from several to dozens if not hundreds of times at various locations within Ottawa's urban boundary, and yet the transportation future in the impact zone is still totally murky and iffy, iffy, iffy.

And, as a second case in point, consider the financial envelope that might be best described as 'sketchy' because it too seems iffy beyond belief from the perspectives of those who expected more substance, much more substance, from those explaining the unfolding of the money aspect.

Citizens can be excused for having trouble keeping track of just the terms used to describe the financial story that is to extend out 70 years or so.

My tally of financial terms and terms in financial statements or about financial statements expressed by municipal politicians, staff, OSEG reps, journalists, letters to editors, as well as by citizens and vested interests includes assumptions, conditions, default, fixed cost, forecasts, guarantees, guesses, interest rates, investments, limited liabilities, loans, off-loading, predictions, projections, qualifications, rates, returns, risks, sunken costs, supply chains, tariffs, trends, uncertainties, and variables.

And then there are the multiple combinations of those terms.

But that is just the pre-analysis stage, which is followed by trying to understand what all the possible relationships mean to Ottawa's municipal politicians who voted on Lansdowne Park/2025.

Which takes us back to the limited amount of thinking time available to citizens to process the financial roll-out which has been uneven, jerky, and too often sitting in thin air for weeks at a time due to failures in communications, documentation, and access to files.

Sour Legacy H. The response by pro-development members of council to the Auditor General of Ottawa's report was little more than a handwaving exercise when it should have been a detailed and comprehensive line-by-line deconstruction of the report given such matters as the amount of money involved, citizens' perception of the murky nature of the financial component of the PPP agreement with OSEG, vague notions about accelerator, multiplier, and opportunity cost and sustained benefit effects of the development deal. But, regrettably, this dismal picture gets worse.

Repeated searches did not yield substantive and evaluable documentation on the seemingly large number of unknowns regarding the temporal and spatial effects of site development in the next decade, and for numerous decades after. Worse again, no such documentation even seems to be on any drawing boards, which affirms citizens' concerns about the pig-in-a-poke descriptor of Lansdowne/2025.

Citizens have oft heard Sutcliffe and his on-board councillors use the word complexity in association with Lansdowne Park/2025, but not once have I encountered any reference to the learning triangle or constraint triangle which is based on simultaneously reconciling complexity with reliability and utility.

Based on the productions that I have encountered it is my belief that council created this sour legacy by getting in way over its head – an image of the tail trying to wag the dog comes to mind – by trying to massage 2.0, and even now does not realize that it requires a new paradigm in order to take control of the Lansdowne Park site in a way that properly serves the public interest.

12. Putting an End to the Legacy of Inflated Language that Passes for Informed Narrative at Ottawa City Hall

Based on the costly and disruptive LRT, convoy, and Lansdowne failures, which are still top of mind for many of Ottawa's informed residents, the terms world-class, data-driven, and evidence-based have lost all legitimacy when used by our municipal politicians and staff.

Political puffery is one of the last things that citizens want or need from their politicians and bureaucrats, and City of Ottawa politicians and bureaucrats are abusive users and frequent offenders regarding each of those terms.

Sour Legacy I. Broadcast media and social media communications by citizens reveal deep irritation because of being treated as though they would readily buy into what many see as politicians using flowery language to create a “snow job”.

Due to verbiage overkill in trying to sell Lansdowne 2.0, use of the oft-heard terms world class, data-driven, and evidence-based by all members of council may now be totally construed as political puffery in municipal wards across the city.

13. The Elephant in the Room that Escaped Serious Scrutiny at Crunch Time: The Towers

Time and again in Ottawa, developers seek profit-driven densities of the highest order for commercial space as well as residential space in their Official Plan amendment petitions as well as in zoning and rezoning applications.

In the case of privately-owned lands, that has been the way of Ottawa’s development world since 1972 in my experience.

Without exception that I can recall, the notion of highest and best use as seen by developers is to cram as much onto a site as can be achieved in order to generate as much revenue as possible for as long as possible, which often means repeated Official Plan amendment requests and rezoning applications.

Public land, however, should mean what it says, that is, land set aside for the public, and the public greater good for that matter, which supposedly means that the public and not OSEG nor any other private entity decides how to define and achieve the greater public good at the Lansdowne Park site.

However, when OSEG apparently (term chosen advisedly, who knows for sure?) plays a major role in parlaying its 25% share of the site (thanks to earlier councils led by mayors Larry O’Brien and Jim Watson) into a mixed-use residential, commercial and retail complex, and seemingly acquires far more influence than is generally due for its minority share, something seems out of whack with the PPP deal.

My comparison of the Lansdowne 2.0 outcome with privately-owned redevelopment sites in Ottawa did not reveal any substantive differences in the density achieved, nor in the negative off-site impacts.

Rather, it has all the appearances of the ‘same old, same old’ development world that has marked the relationship between Ottawa developers and municipal politicians for more than the past 50 years, with its emphasis on serving vested interests rather than prioritizing the public interest from start to finish.

Sour Legacy J. When a prime piece of public land is treated like an everyday commodity for sale by the council of the day, all of Ottawa's public lands are at risk of fire sale disposition.

For the first part of Sour Legacy I, readers are referred to the National Trust for Canada and its succinct statement "A Legacy Sold Short", which can be viewed at <https://nationaltrustcanada.ca/nt-endangered-places/lansdowne-park>.

It has been suggested that Ottawa councils have disgraced themselves for decades on the Lansdowne Park file, and the inference of a sell-out by Sutcliffe and 14 members of the current council is likely to stick to them as well as to Ottawa residents who may be blamed by future generations for letting it happen.

As for the second part, when a prime piece of land and amenities are commodified, and their disposition as commodities is talked about in glowing terms as a 'deal', then heads up Ottawa residents, that *Big Yellow Taxi* may be just around your corner.

14. Politicians Come and Go, Baggage and All, but Taxpayers and Other Citizens Have No Such Luxury if Things Turn Sour

When a municipal politician leaves office the files are scrubbed, and nothing is passed on to the successor by way of commitment, obligation, track record, etc. The next term starts *de nouveau*, so to speak.

That is not the case for taxpayers and other citizens, of course, because they are obliged forever and a day to pick up the tab, hold the bag, cover financial or other shortfalls, and otherwise live with all the consequences that arise from whatever happens or does not happen after the Lansdowne Park/2025 signing is done.

Sour Legacy K. It is my belief that in very short order the Lansdowne 2.0 deal is going to begin to unravel.

That being the case, residents in the wards of members of council who opposed the deal – Jessica Bradley, Riley Brockington, Sean Devine, Laine Johnson, Theresa Kavanaugh, Rawlson King, Jeff Leiper, Wilson Lo, Shawn Menard, and Ariel Troster are limited to sending their grievances to Mayor Mark Sutcliffe who was the primary force behind the unravelling deal. Good luck with that.

And, residents in the wards of councillors who supported Sutcliffe and the deal – David Brown, Marty Carr, Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura Dudas, David Hill, Allen Hubley, Glen Gower, Clarke Kelly, Catherine Kitts, Matt Luloff, Stéphanie Plante, Isabelle Skalski, and Tim Tierney – have a hard row to hoe when it comes to calling

Sutcliffe or OSEG or any other private entity in the PPP to account for a flawed decision process, agreement outcome, or any development outcome.

The sticking point for all councillors who lined up with Sutcliffe, OSEG, and other private entities is that they have already made explicit public commitments to Sutcliffe and other pro-deal councillors, and it may simply be too tempting to put heads down, not make eye contact, and run out the clock rather than put themselves “out there” with still a year to go on this term of office.

15. More Sour Legacies

Even as this report is being written, additional sour legacies emerge daily. Moreover, these are not casual, here today, gone tomorrow situations, but systemic flaws that apply to the process of arriving at the Lansdowne 2.0 vote by council, as well as to structural and functional aspects of what seem to be likely contents of the Lansdowne 2.0 final agreement between the City of Ottawa, OSEG, and any other signatories brought on by council to develop the Lansdowne Park site.

It is necessary to emphasize, again, that when it comes to encountering more sour legacies they are not likely to be announced to area residents, nor will they be flashed large screens for all to see, because that is not how the Lansdowne Park saga has unfolded or unravelled over the past 20 years.

Rather, the sour legacies identified here are only a part of the already known list of sour legacies, and signs are showing that others that are emerging and will continue to emerge because there are numerous financial, legal, planning, transportation, infrastructural, housing, heritage, tenant, and other development questions which are still begging for answers.

As previously noted, citizens are confronted by what is seen by many observers to be a pig-in-a-poke deal, and the majority of their municipal politicians are seen to be crowding under a cone of silence rather than being forthcoming at every opportunity.

Further, citizens are conflicted by an overwhelming number of loose ends, moving targets, and anything else that causes confusion and uncertainty when the complexity card is seemingly played for non-public interest purposes.

On the evidence to date, it is unrealistic for citizens to expect that Sutcliffe and his supporters are likely to fix a failed information disclosure problem that is in part or whole the cause of the sour legacies identified in the preceding pages.

Further, it is unreasonable to expect that councillors who are concerned about the sour legacies discussed here, and others that have been identified elsewhere, can turn all those things around during this term of office.

However, it is within the purview of citizens to build on these and other sour legacies and take Sutcliffe and his supporters to task during the remainder of this term.

And, to further their establish their authority over what happens at the Lansdowne Park site, citizens can make each sour legacy arising from Lansdowne 2.0 an early, frequent, and probing topic of conversation in upcoming municipal election campaigns, with emphasis on holding to account those municipal politicians responsible for the sour legacies of Lansdowne 2.0 and, for some of us, Lansdowne 1.0.

16. Conclusion

The title for this report, **Lansdowne Park Legacies of Failure: Giving Credit to Whom Credit is Due**, was derived after consultations with citizens and other researchers about an appropriate title for this Information Research Board study.

First, there are multiple legacies of failure in both the Lansdowne 1.0 and 2.0 phases of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement between the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) for the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park.

In the face of orchestrated cheerleading by Mayor Mark Sutcliffe accompanied by non-critical judgements on the parts of a coterie of councillors to promote Lansdowne 2.0, it was deemed appropriate to use the term failure in the title and in the text of the report for clarity and for posterity.

Or, to rephrase, Lansdowne 2.0 is seen to be a dud, and it is described as a dud throughout the report.

As for the second part of the title, and as citizens have so often learned, while there is no shortage of politicians eager to take credit when things turn out well, they rarely step up and take credit for failures.

The sense of citizens is that in the case of Lansdowne Park redevelopment, municipal politicians responsible for planning and development failures for decades have gotten too much of a free ride for too long and calling them to account in certain terms is overdue.

Bearing in mind, then, that from a research design perspective this report is at the pilot study stage, the finding that the focus on failures has traction with citizens can

reasonably be taken as a positive indication that there will be more research of this nature as Lansdowne 2.0 unfolds and/or unravels.

And, the focus on naming names of politicians who are deemed to cause the failures on the Lansdowne 2.0 process and agreement outcomes – **Mayor Sutcliffe and Councillors David Brown, Marty Carr, Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura Dudas, David Hill, Allen Hubley, Glen Gower, Clarke Kelly, Catherine Kitts, Matt Luloff, Stéphanie Plante, Isabelle Skalski, and Tim Tierney** – is intended to serve a very specific purpose.

That is, to identify for short-term scrutiny and long-term posterity the municipal politicians in Ottawa who took the concepts of trust, transparency, and accountability in vain when making decisions that adversely affected and currently affect Lansdowne Park, formerly one of Ottawa's prime public spaces.

17. Endnotes

1. The concept of an open report is similar to that of an open letter, whereby the primary recipients are designated, and the report is made available to the public at large. In this case the primary recipients are City of Ottawa municipal politicians Mayor **Mark Sutcliffe and the 14 councillors – David Brown, Marty Carr, Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura Dudas, David Hill, Allen Hubley, Glen Gower, Clarke Kelly, Catherine Kitts, Matt Luloff, Stéphanie Plante, Isabelle Skalski, and Tim Tierney** – who followed Sutcliffe's lead in voting in favour of Lansdowne 2.0, a public-private partnership arrangement to further develop Lansdowne Park, a prime piece of the City of Ottawa's limited inventory of public parkland.

2. A comparable situation that comes to mind is whether bureaucrats and politicians responsible for City of Ottawa heritage designations would stoop to using Byward 1.0. to name a PPP arrangement before or after submitting a proposal to Parks Canada's National Historic Site program that the Byward Market be designated a National Historic Site in recognition of its 200th anniversary in 2027.

Sour Legacy L. On its face it seems beyond implausible that a City of Ottawa council would replace Market as in Byward Market by 1.0 or 2.0 as in Byward 1.0. or Byward 2.0. However, Ottawa councils had no apparent qualms about replacing Park in Lansdowne Park by 1.0 and 2.0, so there seems to be no end of sour legacies that could be on the horizon. such as councils stooping to the low of substituting Byward 1.0 or Byward 2.0 for Byward Market.

3. Several search engines including Google report that there is only one Lansdowne Park anywhere on Earth, and it is in Ottawa, Canada. It appears fair to say that from a

sour legacy perspective, the failure by mayor and 14 councillors to appreciate the uniqueness of the site means that they have no clue as to the true meaning of “world class” when a one-of-a-kind public park is treated as a real estate commodity to be parcelled out in bits and pieces.

4. Links to Universal Law of Location publications that were sent via email to members of council, City of Ottawa, include [Universal Law of Location as a Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Analysis of Ottawa Mayor's Pledge to Plant 1,000,000 Trees](#); [Applying Universal Law of Location as a Transportation Planning Decision Tool: Ontario Government Data and Evidence Fail to Support Positions on Gridlock, Congestion, and Removal of Bike Lanes](#); [Applying Universal Law of Location as a Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Ontario Government Data, Evidence, and Research Studies Must be Upgraded to Enable Informed Decisions that Best Use and Preserve the Province's Threatened Farmland Inventory](#); and, [Applying Universal Law of Location as a Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Municipal Government Data, Evidence, and Research Studies Must be Upgraded to Enable Informed Decisions that Best Use and Preserve the Province's Threatened Agricultural Land Inventory](#).

5. The Universal Law of Location (ULoL) states that something is everywhere under, on, and above the surface of the Earth which means, for example, that if you want to put a mixed-use tower on a site then something already under, on, and above the land surface of that site must be removed. Further, for example, if a road is to be widened, then some other land use must be modified, such as by being replaced by the road. In effect, there is limited elasticity when it comes to ULoL and land.

6. The text of the email to council was submitted on November 10, 2025, to the letters editor, Ottawa Citizen, with the suggested title, ‘Lansdowne 2.0 legacies of a failure’. It warranted my first-ever communication from the Ottawa Citizen’s Editor-in-Chief along the lines of “thanks for that” but was not published.

7. My research encountered numerous comments about other Lansdowne 2.0 failures, and I encourage them being documented by individuals as well as public interest groups. I believe that the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park stands alone as a case of lessons not learned by local municipal politicians, and the number and nature of blunders by council after council cannot be over documented.

8. Information Research Board productions containing discussion of the cone of silence presence at Ottawa city hall include: [Interim Report 14. Asking the Question: Is Freedom of Information Legislation a Citizens’ Conduit to Public Records, or an Institutional Barrier to Public Records?](#); [Interim Report 15. Identifying Tactics Used By Politicians to Restrict Citizens' Access to Public Records](#); [Interim Report 19. Nomination for the 2020 Code of Silence Award: City of Ottawa Supporting Evidence – Reports](#)

[from the Pilot Study Chronicling the Use of Transparency and Accountability as Political Buzzwords, and as Drivers Ensuring the Standard of Access to Public Records in Canada is Best Practice](#); [Interim Report 20. Nomination for the 2020 Code of Silence Award: City of Ottawa Supporting Evidence – Communications to Mayor and Councillors that Received ‘The Silent Treatment’](#); [Interim Report 21. Nomination for the 2020 Code of Silence Award: City of Ottawa Supporting Evidence – Media Stories That Indicate a Code of Silence Has Been Adopted by Members of Council](#).

9. Watson was also a councillor and mayor of the pre-amalgamation City of Ottawa, so he was engaged in Lansdowne Park, public transit, and tax low-balling deliberations and choices for years prior to his tenure as mayor of the post-amalgamation City of Ottawa.

10. Information Research Board reports in those regards, several of which present broadcast media productions include, ["America is More than the U.S." Information Research Board Letter to the Editor, Temiskaming Speaker, October 22, 2025](#); [Canadian Broadcast Media Wrong to Use 'America' in Productions Solely about People or Entities in or from United States](#); [Canadian Politicians Wrong to Use 'America' in Public Statements Solely about People or Entities in or from United States](#); [Hearing on Bill 9 Municipal Accountability Act, 2025: Statement to Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy Government of Ontario](#); [Universal Law of Location as a Land Use Planning Decision Tool: Analysis of Ottawa Mayor's Pledge to Plant 1,000,000 Trees](#).

11. It is my finding that no credentialed external evaluators were engaged to critically assess any aspect of the Lansdowne Park re-development process undertaken during the 2022-2026 term of office of Ottawa council.

Moreover, based upon examination of the documents made readily available in a timely manner, it is my impression that none of the 15 members of council who voted in favour of the Lansdowne Park 2.0 proposal has the technical skills to design or approve a robust Request for Proposals or Terms of Reference for a re-development project that starts off at more than \$475 million, and due to ‘nasty surprises’ will likely add more costs in the vicinity \$12-15 million annually for the next five years (2030).

As to forecasts after 2030, in large part that is a mug’s game due to erratic Donald Trump and the damage he can do with his tariff, trade, military, and other nonsense, but not all is lost. That is, while Ottawa taxpayers are wise to expect getting hit with Lansdowne Park 2.0 overrun bills, one lesson learned from Trump in cities across the U.S. is for Sutcliffe and councillors to get all money due the city from the PPP arrangement **before** shovels go in the ground. If that is done, **Mayor Mark Sutcliffe** and **Councillors David Brown, Marty Carr, Cathy Curry, Steve Desroches, Laura**

Dudas, David Hill, Allen Hubley, Glen Gower, Clarke Kelly, Catherine Kitts, Matt Luloff, Stéphanie Plante, Isabelle Skalski, and Tim Tierney, will have gotten one thing right while committing this colossal blunder.

18. Acknowledgements

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- **Sam Herold**, a University of Ottawa alumnus and one of my former students (Geography, Environmental Studies, and Geomatics) who made valuable contributions to this report through his text formatting, graphic design, and technical assistance.