

**Submission on D02-02-21-0082, the Proposal for
3430 Carling Avenue**

**by the
Crystal Beach Lakeview Community Association (CBLCA)**

**Issue 1.0
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1.0 Introduction

Crystal Beach Lakeview Community Association (CBLCA) was grateful to receive the advanced notice about the Zoning Bylaw Amendment application for 3430 Carling Avenue application from Lisa Stern and Councillor Theresa Kavanagh and that a preliminary meeting was held in February between CBLCA president, Kevin Brewer, representatives of Omnipex, and Councillor Kavanagh. We are grateful to have been able to attend two public meetings on the proposal arranged by Councillor Kavanagh in June and September 2021. We also appreciate that the proponents wanted to avoid the summer rush to have a better turnout for public consultation.

Members of our association do have concerns about the proposal as we explain in this submission.

2.0 The lot is simply too small

The lot is simply too small for the proposed buildings—in either of the versions (the wide six-storey or two tall nine-storey) presented to the CBLCA at the June 22 meeting.

2.1 The area claimed as of right does not map to the lot size

They cannot, in fact, build such huge buildings with such small setbacks. The current zoning of the lot, GM20[2628], has a Floor Space Index (FSI) ratio of 2. The applicant is seeking a bylaw amendment to almost double the permitted height from 18.5 m to 30 m.

The applicant's proposal summary does not show the FSI ratio, the depth of the lot, or the aggregate floor space of the buildings. It does give the area of the lot as 6,149 square metres (1.52 acres). If the lot size in the application document (6,149 square metres or 1.52 acres) is correct, the proponent cannot achieve the required Floor Space Ratio (FSI) of 2 (that is, the ratio is $6149 \times 2 = 12,298$ sq m). The planning Rationale and Design Brief says the proposed development will incorporate a total floor area of 18,853 square metres.

In fact, at the June public meeting, the developer's consultants Fotenn Consultants Inc., told the public that they could build up to **27,210 sq meters** as of right!

2.2 The lot is too shallow

The shallowness of the lot prevents a graceful transition to the low-rise residential homes abutting it to the south.

The Planning Rationale and Design Brief says, "Prior to a required Right-of-Way (ROW) widening along Carling Avenue, the subject site has a depth of approximately 46 metres." (Page 5) The Carling Avenue right-of-way really has nothing to do with anything; it would be helpful to have the document say what the depth actually is, but it looks shallow.

This outer urban neighbourhood, well away from the LRT, is not intended to intensify quickly. At a meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee, June 15, 2021, Alain Miguelez, Manager, Policy Planning gave some guidance on how neighbourhoods should begin to transition to more intensity. He said, "Neighbourhoods are low-rise, so that stays." He stressed the importance of having lots deep enough to give a graceful transition to neighbouring homes and remarked that it is important "to get it [small-scale intensification] right."

This development, if approved, would be an example of getting the small scale wrong.

3.0 The height is inappropriate for the neighbourhood

Carling west of Bayshore is not classified as a major or even as a minor corridor. According to the new Official Plan, it should be treated as part of a neighbourhood in the Outer Urban transect, which means buildings will be “Low-rise: no minimum and generally, zoning will permit at least 3 storeys but no more than 4 storeys” (from page 128, in Table 7, Minimum and Maximum Height Overview Based on Official Plan Policy).

3.1 Neighbouring buildings are three storeys or less

Although the zoning permits six storeys at this site, on Carling west of Holly Acres, other than the five-storey retirement home, none of the neighbouring buildings is taller than three storeys and both the home and the three-storey apartments are surrounded by large, pleasant greenspaces.

Keep in mind that, in fact, an additional three-storey apartment building would introduce significant intensification by replacing the restaurant and parking lot. In fact, 613 flats or townhomes would be more appropriate for this location.

3.2 Even in Bells Corners, nothing is taller than six storeys

Even in commercially developed Bells Corners, amongst the office buildings and hotels at Richmond Road and Moodie Drive, nothing is taller than six storeys. Only down at the Bayshore hub and the part of Carling that is designated main street corridor do buildings exceed four storeys.

4.0 The community response is negative

The comments on the CBLCA web site and in the recordings and chats from the public meetings as well as the response to the survey are mainly negative regarding this development. CBLCA has concerns over the buildings, especially their height, for several reasons.

- Loss of privacy, noise, damage to property values
- Shadow and sunset damage
- Fear it will set a precedent
- The built form does not “fit”
- There is a risk of flooding

4.1 CBLCA survey

In July, the CBLCA conducted a survey of residents’ thoughts on the proposals presented at the first public meeting in June 2021. From our email distribution list of 850 addresses, we received 365 responses—a terrific 43 percent response rate. This shows we have an engaged community that is concerned about how our neighbourhood develops.

Here’s what we learned:

- 84 percent of respondents are opposed to nine-storey towers (the current design).
- Privacy and property values are concerns for those in proximity to the proposed towers.

- The community is generally not opposed to development, so long as it fits in with the existing Crystal Beach Lakeview environment.

For more information on the survey, including residents' comments, see

<https://crystalbeachlakeview.ca/community-views-on-proposed-villa-lucia-development/>

Further resident comments follow articles in the community association newsletter:

- in July, <https://crystalbeachlakeview.ca/2021/07/>
- in August, <https://crystalbeachlakeview.ca/2021/08/>
- in September, <https://crystalbeachlakeview.ca/2021/09/>

4.2 Nearest neighbours fear loss of privacy, noise, damage to property values

The nearest residents, for example, those on Elterwater Avenue, fear the windows and balconies of nine-storey buildings that would hang over their homes. They fear the impact the proposed development will have on residential properties abutting on Elterwater Ave in terms of noise, encroachment, construction, lack of privacy and loss of potential market value. Our political system gives residents little recourse and no recompense when their quality of life and their property value are damaged by neighbouring development.

4.3 Shadow and sunset damage

This stretch of Carling Avenue rather “comes into its own” in the evening, and people love to stroll along Carling Avenue, at the sailing club, or in Andrew Hayden Park. The sunsets are spectacular. At certain times, these proposed buildings would cast shadows, not just on the properties across the street, but on the sidewalk and multi-use path. It may ruin the sunset for some neighbours and will intrude on the skyline for everyone. The June evening shadow on homes to the south is a depressing prospect.

4.4 Fear of precedent

Throughout the neighbourhood is a concern that this development can be used as a precedent anywhere in the community for future developments that seek to build higher than the zoning permits.

4.5 The built form does not “fit”

Will these buildings “fit in” with the character of our community(s)? The built form is dramatically different from the rest of the buildings in the neighbourhood. While it is on the far side of the community for many, what happens here can happen near anyone in the future.

4.6 Risk of flooding

It would be important that the developers explain how they would deal with the extra load on the storm and sewage systems. There is already a major issue with flooding in the immediate area.

Digging a deep underground parking lot this close to the river's floodzone may also result in water table flooding issues (as happened in Constance Bay where flooding occurred despite the sandbagging).

5.0 Inappropriate transportation

The location is a bad choice for the addition of 216 residential units and 266 parking spaces. The development does not align with the City's goals as outlined in the new Official Plan.

The community is pleased to see sufficient parking to keep vehicles from parking on neighbouring streets. Unfortunately, however, inclusion of 266 parking spaces is an admission that cars are needed here and that this development will put more of them on the road.

5.1 Nowhere near the LRT

Unfortunately, the section in the Planning Rationale and Design Brief is filled with misleading statements about transit. The proposed site is well away from either of the two nearest LRT stations. According to Google, Bayshore station is a 31-minute walk away and Moodie station 24 minutes away.

5.2 Not even near the third stage of the LRT

As the LRT expands in its third phase, it will be well south of Carling Avenue, heading out to Kanata in close parallel with highway 417, and giving a wide berth to this western stretch of Carling, the national patches of greenspace that line Carling west of Moodie, and the narrow railway underpass still further west.

5.3 Infrequent local bus service

The local bus routes are route 58 and, in rush hour, route 258. Route 258 will probably cease to exist when stage two of the LRT is complete. The local bus, route 58, comes half-hourly, hourly on weekends. It's a short trip to get from Crystal Beach Drive and Carling to Bayshore, and then the route meanders to Lincoln Fields (if that's of use to anyone). It only takes five or ten minutes to get to Bayshore, but the wait to get on the bus can be long. The bus shuts down early at night, starts late on weekends, and runs infrequently most of the time.

58 bus, Sunday schedule:

<https://www.octranspo.com/en/plan-your-trip/schedules-maps/?sched-lang=en&date=20211003&rte=58>

58 bus route map

https://www.octranspo.com/images/files/routes_pdf/map_carte_058.pdf

5.3.1 Low ridership will continue to prevent improved service

OC Transpo made it clear to our community association in August, and, in the past, on more than one occasion, that low ridership levels will continue to preclude better service, particularly to Bells Corners, which is the community's (almost 15-minute) destination, a frustrating five-minute drive away. We all (including any new residents on Carling Avenue) will continue to need vehicles. We are one of many communities that want better bus service.

OC Transpo is increasing service on route 57 from Bells Corners down Moodie Drive to the DND Campus, but that won't help new residents on Carling Avenue.

New residents on Carling Avenue, like the rest of us, will need to have vehicles.

5.4 Traffic concerns

Anyone who does take the bus will have trouble crossing Carling Ave to and from the bus stops.

The proposed buildings will have vehicle entrances directly off Carling Avenue and anyone who attempts to drive out of the buildings' parking lot will have trouble, especially making left turns. Drivers will have trouble getting out in rush hour and will be at risk from speeding drivers even at other times of the day.

It is noteworthy that the neighbouring three-storey apartment buildings have entrances onto side streets (Crystal Beach Drive and Ullswater Drive); they do not attempt to exit directly onto Carling Avenue.

6.0 Reclaim the vision for lac Deschenes

At one time, Nepean had a vision that the southern shore of lac Deschenes would be a destination. Andrew Hayden Park was created as a regional park, and the Nepean Sailing Club was built with its Dick Bell Park. Automobiles ruled back in that day, so they made Carling Avenue too wide, but they did create magnificent spaces. The sunsets in the summer are particularly spectacular in those parks.

The park and the sailing club are popular and busy. In the summer, their parking lots are full in the evenings. This stretch of shoreline is an asset that the City should guard and enhance. We should not lose site of Nepean's vision.

6.1 The proposal does nothing to enhance this special location

The bland boxy architectural design does not enhance or take advantage of the truly special location. These buildings could be built anywhere.

Just putting in windows and balconies does not make creative reference to the nautical flavour that other developers have already added to the street.

7.0 What Crystal Beach Lakeview would welcome

Based on the survey about this development, on comments on the website, and on feedback on other developments along Carling, the community association can see that Crystal Beach Lakeview understands that development occurs, and that their neighbourhood will change over time. The neighbourhood is generally not opposed to reasonable change and would welcome some improvements. The following are criteria the community does want to see:

- A reasonable size, preferably three storeys
- A fresh design with a nautical flair
- Setbacks in keeping with the rest of the street
- Fewer, bigger units
- Amenities for seniors
- Small-scale commercial development

7.1 A reasonable size, preferably three storeys

While recognizing that 18.5 m (six storeys may be allowed, with large enough setbacks), residents would prefer to see no more than three storeys, that is, the maximum height of

nearby apartment buildings and town homes, to fit in with the existing character of the neighbourhood and to maintain privacy and property values for the homes nearby.

By replacing the existing restaurant and parking lot, even a three-storey building would add substantial intensification.

7.2 Setbacks in keeping with the rest of the street

The community would like to see setbacks similar in size to those of the nearby apartment buildings, to maintain the style and look of the street.

7.3 Fewer, bigger units

Ideally, the proponent would consider exploring other options, such as building townhomes, 613 flats, or fewer, larger units that might accommodate families or downsizing seniors. The community also supports affordable housing including for family-sized units that seem to be in short supply across Ottawa.

7.4 Amenities for seniors

Although the application declares, “The target demographic for this development is seniors looking to downsize from a detached home,” the proposal seems unlikely to attract seniors. Rather it seems aimed at the usual young, single, working people catered to everywhere else.

The Carling Avenue vehicular access with no traffic lights and speeding traffic is not a selling point for retired downsizers.

Most seniors who move to a new home are looking for less property upkeep. This means that they are looking for a nice apartment with recreational amenities within the building, that is, a main floor “living room” where people can sit and chat, play cards, exchange books in a library alcove, hold minor events, and so on, and look out on to a lovely outdoor terrace and gardens area. Where is the swimming pool and mini gym?

To attract seniors, a developer must offer an appealing building that seniors can make their home; where they will meet new friends in communal indoor activity spaces, or at the pool or gym, or at an outdoor communal area. There would need to be larger units, more greenspace, maybe a bit of private gardening space to make the project more inviting to seniors, although, truthfully, it would be difficult to solve the transportation and traffic issues.

7.5 A fresh design with a nautical flair

The proposed bland boxy design does not enhance or take advantage of the truly special location. These buildings could be built anywhere.

Just putting in windows and balconies does not make creative reference to the nautical flavour that other developers have already added to the street

7.6 Small-scale commercial development

When development along Carling is proposed, CBLCA residents always mention that they are in favour of small-scale commercial development and the zoning does allow it. Residents have made many suggestions for what they would like to see, such as:

- Coffee shop (that one comes up a lot)
- Ice cream shop
- Day care centre
- Little mall
- Bakery
- Grocery store

Wouldn't it be terrific to have a pub or restaurant here that catered to sailors and park visitors, maybe with takeout picnic baskets? Even the former convenience store at Bedale and Carling Avenue that sold popsicles and milk is still missed. It's unfortunate that the neighbourhood will lose still more commercial space if Villa Lucia disappears.

8.0 Were the proponents aware of Ottawa's new Official Plan?

It's hard to imagine, but perhaps the proponents were considering this proposal just before the first draft of Ottawa's new Official Plan was released and were not aware of the plan's intent.

The proponents may not have realized that Ottawa would want to stimulate public transit and reduce the use of cars by encouraging development along the transitway. They may not have realized intensification would all be based around transit and their application shows they did not recognize that this site is not near the LRT, nor that local bus service is limited.

They may not have realized that Carling Avenue would cease to be a main street corridor at Holly Acres Road and that the nearest hub would be a half-hour walk away at Bayshore.

The proponents may not have known that shady, grassy, low-rise Crystal Beach Lakeview would be designated an Outer Urban neighbourhood with no intensification overlay and no plan for a great rush towards intensification.

Sometimes it's obvious that planning mistakes have been made when developers (or planners) don't visit a site in person. The developers may not have realized what it would be like to drive out from the buildings onto Carling, how long a walk it would be to the stations, how hard it can be to cross Carling Avenue, how cold it is waiting for the 58 bus, what the neighbourhood looks like, and just what an intrusion such buildings would be.

8.1 Just too many exceptions for the wrong location

For the above reasons, the nine-storey height is inappropriate and an amendment to the zoning bylaw to allow it is inappropriate and counter to the City and community's goals. An exemption to allow an FSI of greater than 2 is inappropriate and counter to the City and community's goals.

As one neighbour said, "I hope they reconsider the height and mass of the proposed design to be more in keeping with what is around here, while respecting the privacy of the people in this neighbourhood."