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Key Takeaways from the Report: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

Given the length of our comments provided in the report, we have prepared a list of key points from those comments, while also highlighting further details in a breakdown of what is good, not so good and ugly in the current Lansdowne 2.0 proposal. Further background on Lansdowne—and our campaign to improve Lansdowne 2.0—can be found at our website betterlansdowne.ca. This information is also cross posted there.

The Good

- Staff have moved away from misleadingly framing Lansdowne 2.0 as "revenue neutral";
- The high-rise tower in closest proximity to the historic Aberdeen Pavillion has been removed, and in its place, some new accessible green space is being proposed;
- One of the remaining two towers is now being proposed to have a relatively more modest height of 25 storeys;
- The report suggests that through traffic may be removed from Aberdeen Square, though falls short of committing to it;
- The report proposes to increase the trivial annual rent charged to the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) for their use and operation of Lansdowne Park, raising it from $1.00 to $500,000.00; and
- The number of additional parking stalls proposed for the site has come down significantly with the removal of the third tower, with the initial number of 739 parking stalls reduced to 336 parking stalls.

The Bad

- The cost has risen to $419 million for taxpayers;
- Despite moving away from talk of "revenue neutrality", property tax uplift is still being used as a way to finance, in part, the Lansdowne 2.0 proposal;
- One of the two towers proposed is still a luxury skyscraper at 40 storeys with zero affordable housing; this type of built form does not contribute to supply-side efforts to address the housing crisis;
- There remain too many additional parking stalls proposed, which will bring hundreds of additional cars to the site while providing no means of managing the increased traffic;

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- There is no new transportation plan proposed, and there are no commitments to make needed changes and improvements to our transit and transportation system to resolve longstanding problems with the site that continue to negatively impact local residents, users of the park and the economic success of the site;
- The proposed investment for public realm enhancements is the bare minimum of what was proposed in the 2022 report ($10 million), and there is no advanced timeline to implement these needed investments;
- The new proposal assumes that other levels of government will contribute $20 million to the plan, without which, Ottawa taxpayers will be forced to pay more;
- *From a sports fan/entertainment perspective:*
    - There will be no green space from which to enjoy a game or event with friends and family as the hill be replaced by an arena with no green roof;
    - There will be fewer seats to choose from in both the new arena and the stadium;
    - Ticket prices will increase;
    - There is no roof proposed for the north side stands (as there is now);
    - No new transportation solutions are being proposed for suburban and rural commuters, such as more park-and-rides or permanent free shuttle service on Bank Street; and
    - The proposed music hall has been removed.

The Ugly

- The green roof initially proposed for the new event centre—that we campaigned on making accessible—has been jettisoned entirely;
- The initial inadequate commitment for 10% market affordable units to be provided on site—through a requirement of the purchaser of public air rights—has been abandoned entirely;
- Worse, the report calls for council to waive the requirements of our Affordable Housing Land and Funding Policy, a policy that ensures that, when the city sells off public land for private residential use, 25% of the proceeds are directed toward our affordable housing budget. The report calls for that requirement to be replaced with a 10% requirement instead. This means both property tax dollars and revenues earmarked for affordable housing will be redirected to pay for Lansdowne 2.0;

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- Small retail, GoodLife Fitness and all of the "J-block" built in 2014 is to be demolished with construction expected to take 7-10 years on site to replace it;
- The city will maintain a large loan for the roof of the civic centre that is to be demolished as part of this project;
- We will incur $18.6 million of debt for the city to build 140 parking spaces for the new residential towers (under the new proposed North side stands). Annual debt servicing after revenues (from selling or leasing the spots to the residential towers) is expected to cost the city $600,000 annually. The developer would also build an additional 200 residential parking spots underneath the proposed towers;
- There is substantially more risk for the city in this plan as the debt repayment relies, in part, on waterfall returns from the partnership, which so far have produced $0 after the city said we would recoup over $100 million in Lansdowne 1.0;
- The retail podium land would be sold to a developer ($39 million) and then repurchased at market rates by the city (estimated at over $34 million) once that retail is built, with a renegotiated retail loan that OSEG is to secure. The scheme seems to be absent from the $419 million total cost; and
- The city has identified a proposed risk that OSEG could leave the deal, but there has been zero risk mitigation or alternative planning for what would occur in that scenario (e.g., bringing in a not-for-profit to run the site, finding another private corporation to take over or keeping the teams in city ownership). An identified risk without any substantial planning to mitigate that risk would seem to indicate that the risk is being used for talking points to pressure councillors and the public to accept whatever plan they have in front of them.