

JUNE 2018

NEW DESIGN FOR EXTERIOR SPACE AT OUR LADY OF FATIMA CHURCH (PARKING AND LANDSCAPING)

Our Lady of Fatima Parish is surrounded by houses, apartments and businesses. Our property is bounded by Woodroffe, Byron and Knightsbridge. Like many of our commercial neighbours, our Church relies on-site parking and roadway parking for its week-end services, marriages, funerals and other well-attended events. Our primary source of off-site parking is Byron Avenue.

In 2016, the City of Ottawa initiated the Byron Linear Park Renewal Initiative to guide the re-design of the Park. The New Orchard/Cleary Study was also initiated in 2016 to develop proposed policy directions for zoning and suitable development around, and in proximity to, future LRT stations at New Orchard and Cleary. Information sessions and on-line surveys were used to obtain input and suggestions from residents. Representatives of affected communities formed a working group to provide guidance to City staff and the LRT Stage 2 Project Office.

Based on information from the above consultations, the City of Ottawa decided to close Byron to vehicular traffic from Lockhart to Woodroffe to expand the Byron Linear Park following LRT construction in the same area. This decision also reduces the number of lanes of traffic moving through the intersection of Richmond Road and Woodroffe. This is a dangerous intersection and surrounding communities have been advocating for improved safety for many years.

A representative of the LRT Stage 2 Project Office contacted the Parish Office on February 14, 2017. He requested an urgent meeting with Pastor Wong to discuss the “proposed” closure of Byron in front of the Church. The Pastoral Council met LRT staff in February 2017 and in April 2017 to communicate Parish concerns. The primary concern was the loss of roadway parking on Byron. The Parish’s initial efforts focussed on presenting alternatives to the proposed closing Byron to vehicles. For example, proposing making Byron a one-way roadway for travel along Byron when turning East off of Woodroffe.

Deputy Mayor Mark Taylor met with Parish representatives on May 16, 2017. It became clear during that meeting that the eventual closure of Byron to vehicular traffic was not a proposal but a fact. Deputy Mayor Taylor confirmed that a decision had been made in January 2017, and that the decision is firm and final.

The Parish formed a sub-committee of parishioners to represent the Parish’s interests in this matter. Collectively these individuals possess in-depth knowledge of: the Parish’s operations and related needs; the functioning of City government; property law and owners’ rights; and public works. Their efforts focussed on securing roadway parking alternatives, and site improvements to be implemented and paid for by the City of Ottawa.

Five conditions guided the selection of a new design for exterior space:

- No decrease in overall parking capacity
- Maximized use of on-site parking space
- Improved pedestrian safety
- Protection of the parking agreement with the Ottawa Catholic School Board
- No change to the location of Our Lady’s exterior shrine

Numerous meetings between LRT Office staff and the Sub-Committee were held between February 2017 and January 2018. The Sub-Committee communicated the Parish’s needs and reviewed six draft design options to

meet those needs. Parishioner input and a Parish Meeting on June 8, 2017 provided useful guidance to the Sub-Committee. The six options were ranked by the Sub-Committee, and the results presented at two Joint Meetings of the Pastoral and Financial Councils in June 2017. Between July 2017 and January 2018, the selected design was refined through several meetings where each design element was discussed, clarified and confirmed.

Details of the negotiation process, the design selection process and the new design were shared with parishioners on May 10, 2018. Attendees also benefitted from an overview of LRT Stage 2.

The Parish will be notified several months before the Contractor begins work on the South side of Byron in preparation for LRT construction on and under the Byron Linear Park. This is not likely to occur before 2021.