

City Editorial

OUR VIEWS

A bridge too many

What is Ottawa-Gatineau without its magnificent parkland, the Rideau Canal, its lovely parliamentary district and great national museums? An ugly city with bad weather.

Fortunately, that's not the case. In fact, precious Gatineau Park, with its skiing and other outdoor activities, turns a winter climate into a glorious palette of white, blue and green. In summer, it supports a community and industry of outdoors people.

If we are to sell this region to the smart people we need to run our governments, to push the tech community forward, and to invigorate our tourism and retail sectors, we must have a stunningly livable community that attracts the best — who may not want to live in traffic-snarled, boring, polluted cities. Thus, Ottawa-Gatineau needs its greenspace, arts, entertainment, festivals, sports, playing fields, schools, top-ranked universities, libraries, superb hospitals ... the list goes on and on.

All this brings us to the topic of Ottawa River bridges. One of the great barriers to urban sprawl is the river. That's because it takes about \$100 million to build a such a crossing.

A team of experts appointed by the federal and provincial governments exploring bridges has indicated that Kettle Island and Lac Deschenes are, early in the examination, the favourite sites. The group's analysis is half-right and half-wrong.

The east-end bridge is vital to get dangerous trucks out of the core of Ottawa. A day is coming when a large petroleum truck will flip on a tight turn downtown, spilling its flammable load onto a crowded sidewalk.

For public safety, the east end bridge is necessary. Were it not for safety, such a crossing would be just an expensive extra.

For bridges just increase urban sprawl in the beautiful Outaouais — an area, from a recreational view, that is a vital selling point for Ottawa-Gatineau. Already, roads and development are nipping at the edges of Gatineau Park. Thus a west-end span should not be built. A bridge at Lac Deschenes will only increase Outaouais sprawl, destroy Andrew Haydon Park, ruin the pristine nature of Aylmer, and be just as crowded at rush hour as the other river bridges.

The last bridge expansion at the west end's Champlain Bridge has not stopped traffic jams leading to the crossing and has turned Island Park Drive — once a scenic road — into a parking lot.

By not constructing a second bridge, we encourage people to live near their work and cut money-wasting, polluting idling on the approaches to the bridges. We also encourage development intensification on the Ottawa side and reduce the threats to Gatineau Park.

A west-end bridge is environmentally and developmentally unsound. It will lead to the destruction of one of the best selling points of Ottawa-Gatineau. And then we'd be just an ugly city with bad weather.

OTTAWA CITIZEN



Kevin Stolarick of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto says Ottawa should market its deep well of intellectual resources when selling the city.

RAW THOUGHT POWER: THAT'S OTTAWA



KEN GRAY

When Kevin Stolarick is asked about what he identifies with Ottawa, he draws a blank.

"Not a lot," he said in a recent interview. "How is that for an answer?"

And that's unfortunate. Because Mr. Stolarick is the associate director of the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. And even more unfortunate for Ottawa, Mr. Stolarick was one of the researchers for the new guru of cities, Richard Florida.

Mr. Florida, who wrote the ground-breaking book *The Rise of the Creative Class* for Mr. Florida, has applied some of the statistical methods used in the Florida book to Canada. Mr. Stolarick, an American, came to the Rotman school in August, following Mr. Florida to the same institution.

In fact, despite doing substantial research in Canada, particularly in Montreal, Mr. Stolarick was unaware that Ottawa had a significant high-tech community. He had never heard of the term "Silicon Valley North," saying that a lot of communities had used the term "Silicon Valley" in naming their communities during the tech boom.

That said, he had heard of the high-tech nodes in Waterloo, Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and the oil-related technology community in Calgary. "Not really Ottawa," he said.

However, his news on Ottawa was not especially bad — not bad at all. His statistics show that Ottawa is the best-educated community in Canada. That, he surmises, is because most government jobs require university degrees and the companies that deal with government require a substantial education as well.

In fact, Mr. Stolarick thinks Ottawa has the potential to be one of the creative

centres that Mr. Florida has made famous. For human capital, creative human capital, Mr. Florida maintains, is the currency of successful cities and economies. "Talent has become a primary driver of economic prosperity," Mr. Stolarick says. Ottawa not only has a well-educated population, but in terms of technology levels, Ottawa finished third of Canada's cities in Mr. Stolarick's analysis, behind Montreal and Toronto respectively.

The four Ts are fundamental to Mr. Florida's analysis of creative cities. They are the aforementioned talent and technology, plus tolerance and territorial assets.

His analysis showed that Ottawa finished in the middle of the pack in tolerance (an asset, represented by the number of visible minorities in the city) but that measure did not take into account the distinct French and English cultural mix because those groups are not visible minorities.

When it comes to marketing the city, the message should be truthful and authentic, emphasizing the community's real strengths.

In terms of territorial assets (a lesser T in Mr. Stolarick's estimation), Ottawa does well because of its nearby outdoor activities. He likens it to Denver, a creative city, where people rave about its mountains, skiing and the like.

If he were to market Ottawa (you will remember the failed local effort, *Technically Beautiful*), he would say something like "Raw Thought Power," emphasizing the large well of thinking people in the community, the high-skill jobs in government, noting the three major universities here plus one large community college. Ottawa should be the kind of city where smart people can connect, he says. As a government town, he knows that "really good thinking goes on on really good issues."

The city also needs "an urban vibe," he says, that presumably includes an active street scene found in the By Ward Mar-

ket, the Glebe, New Edinburgh, Westboro or on Elgin Street. The community should emphasize activities that appeal to that thinking community, such as the arts and, he says, those organizations must be hooked into the local creative scene and the high-tech community.

To get that urban excitement, he says you need a modern transit system. Mr. Stolarick has heard of Ottawa's Transitway. "Why don't you make that rail?" he asks. "I've never known a person to go to a city to ride a bus."

He is surprised to hear that Ottawa does not have the active local arts community found in many smaller Canadian cities. "For a city this size, it is surprising." He said arts might not bring in young creative people to the city, "but it might attract the owner of the company."

Mr. Stolarick thinks art, a cerebral pursuit, is more important than sports in attracting creative people. That said, and particularly in Canada with regard to hockey, "having these things is better than not having them."

To lure talented people to the community, he says you need a thick pool of opportunities. That's because people, in his studies, tell him they are loath to leave a city they like, but are quite prepared to change jobs. He maintains that young university grads are likely to have as many as five jobs in their first seven working years. The huge federal government and a deep tech community can provide those career opportunities in this city.

Mr. Stolarick says Ottawa, given its makeup and statistics, "should be more than it is perceived. It is better than the perception but the reputation isn't there."

So when it comes to marketing the city, the message should be truthful and authentic, emphasizing the community's real strengths.

"Understand your ... selling points. What are the things that make the city unique?"

Raw thought power. Not a bad place to start.

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OTTAWACITIZEN.COM/BLOGS

I may end up looking like an idiot in a few days, but why is everyone talking about Senators goaltender Ray Emery getting traded as though Bryan Murray's phone is lit up with calls from other general managers? This is the so-called new NHL, right? The one where it's nearly impossible to move overpaid, underperforming players?

How about ones who are overpaid, underperforming, aggressive towards senior motorists, perpetually late and share basketball star Allen Iverson's views on practice?

Last year, Ray Emery had a lot of upside and took his team to the Stanley Cup final. But how good could he really be in the future? Top five in the NHL? Probably not. Top 10? Maybe.

This is a different Ray Emery, anyway. He would probably be poison for most dressing rooms, let alone one with the talent and semi-maturity this one has.

If I were a general manager, I would never give up the money, cap space, players and stress-free living to bring him aboard. When people are talking about signing a player such as Peter Forsberg for \$3.5 million, why would you tie it up in a cranky, irresponsible and lazy player like Emery?

I'm out of theories, so I ask you: If you were the general manager of an NHL team, would you consider trading for Emery?

— James Gordon
Hockey Capital

LETTERS

'Best' bridge sites are actually 'the worst'

Re: Kettle Island, Lac Deschenes best spots for bridges: traffic study, Jan. 30.

I would argue that the Kettle Island bridge corridor which the government traffic study has identified as being the "most used" is, not the best, but rather the worst.

Do we want to encourage gridlock and poorer air quality downtown (on both sides of the river) due to the greatest influx of automobiles?

Do we want patients of the Montfort Hospital to endure a steady stream of traffic, including heavy trucks, rumbling past their windows? Would we take our children to watch the RCMP Musical Ride horses when their grazing area is sliced in two by a free-way?

Are east-end commuters looking for additional congestion at the notorious Highway 417 and 174 "split" due to an additional 3,000 cars at busy hour from Quebec?

The environmental assessment process addresses two issues: removing heavy truck traffic from the downtown core and relieving peak-period interprovincial automobile congestion. The latter issue was inserted in the process at the request of the Quebec government, which is partially funding the study.

Most residents would agree that addressing the first issue is both laudable and long overdue. The second issue is a different matter. Thirty-five years after Jane Jacobs and her allies stopped the Spadina Express-

way in Toronto, some residents of the national capital region still believe that building more expressways and encouraging single-occupant automobile commuting is a solution to congestion.

The article refers to opposition to the Lac Deschenes and Petrie Island corridors. None of the 10 corridors under study is ideal, and understandably all have opponents.

Once the consultants have reported on all aspects of each corridor, the decision needs to be made as to which is the least bad overall. This is a matter for careful consideration based on overall costs and benefits.

JOHN FORSEY, Ottawa
President, Manor Park
Community Association

Never enough

Re: Don't go to war, Jan. 27.
Bravo to Janice Kennedy for her excellent column on the escalating language stupidity in Russell Township.

I identified with her experience, which led to her leaving La Belle Province in 1989. I wonder how many people realize the hearts that were broken at having to make the same decision back then.

Montreal had been my very happy home for 40 years, but it became untenable for me to live or work there as the extremists took over. I tried many times to write of the anguish anglophones experienced then, but the tears just keep rolling down.

The language woes just seem never ending — enough seems

never enough. People from Herouxville and Russell Township should take a deep breath and reconsider the damage to their country by their selfish persistence. Surely we should have learned to live together by now.
JENNIFER M. COOK, Kanata

We deserve respect

Re: On a tight leash, Jan. 24.

I began reading Arthur Milner's opinion article with apprehension wondering if it would be true. But I realized how his experience was similar to mine.

To exercise my dog off leash in Ottawa means driving to one of the few "legal" locations. If you leave the road and explore some green space there is a high probability it's National Capital Commission property. If I cycle, cross-country ski or mountain bike — it's usually NCC land. The best public spots are the Greenbelt or Gatineau hills that are patrolled by NCC officers.

If you participate in all these

activities, then eventually, like Mr. Milner, there's a good chance you'll slip up on one of the dozens of rules. Woe be to those who encounter a NCC officer. I have done so on two occasions over the years. Both times, I was left with the same feelings of exasperation and dismay as Mr. Milner wrote about. Aggressive, overbearing NCC officers who wallowed in their "police" powers as they zealously enforced the NCC bylaws was what I found. This behaviour is supported and condoned by the NCC and the RCMP as I discovered, too.

Mr. Milner's expectation of being treated in a respectful manner, even if he breached a bylaw, should not be too much to expect. And it is so difficult not to see the judge's comment to Mr. Milner in anything but a cynical light. After all, citizens would get along with NCC officers so much better if they just were more co-operative and respectful.

PETER BISSETT, Ottawa

SUBMISSIONS

We welcome opinion articles on local matters or personal experiences of interest to other readers. Contact: Ken Gray, City Editorial Page Editor, at 613-596-3758. E-mail: kgray@thecitizen.canwest.com. Fax: 613-726-5858. Mail: City editorial page, 1101 Baxter Rd., Ottawa, Ont. K2C 3M4.

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