



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

To / Destinataire	Mayor and Members of Council	File/N° de fichier:
From / Expéditeur	Wendy Stephanson City Manager	
Subject / Objet	Lansdowne 2.0 – Increase in Capacity of Event Centre	Date: October 29, 2025

As several Members of Council have advised that they have been approached by representatives on behalf of the PWHL, I felt it would be beneficial to provide information on the impacts of pausing the Lansdowne 2.0 project in order to increase the seating capacity in the new Lansdowne 2.0 Event Centre. Additionally, please find attached correspondence I received from Mark Goudie, President and CEO of Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) regarding the Ottawa Charge of the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL).

In April 2024, Council approved the Design-Bid-Build construction procurement model of the new Event Centre. The City's architect team (Brisbon Brook Beynon) has completed its Event Centre design, which is building permit ready. The new Event Centre is designed with 6,600 capacity for sports modes and over 7,000 capacity for concerts and entertainment events.

An increase in seating capacity of 2,000+ seats would result in an estimated increase in footprint of 20-25%. An increased footprint represents a change in the design and schedule Council approved in 2023. This would terminate the existing project and require a minimum of two to three years to complete.

Staff estimate that a high-level cost for this work, which has no proof of viability on this site, is at minimum an additional \$80 to 100 million for architectural design, planning approvals, permitting, escalation, and building code adjustments for the new Event Centre, on top of the original cost of the Event Centre, which was \$176.8 M as part of the fixed-price bid. Also, this does not account for the \$22 M that has already been invested in the current design, which would be lost. The following actions are necessary to develop a new proposal:

- Cancelling the Construction Tender process (disengage with EBC Inc. as of January 16, 2026), leading to a retendering of the construction project, likely at a higher cost for the other components of the plan
- Cancelling the Air Rights Tender process that has concluded with Mirabella Development Corp and would need to be recommenced.
- Procuring a new contract with the Architect (e.g. BBB) on a new Event Centre design

- Re-engaging with planning, engineering, transportation, and landscape consultants to prepare new applications for the Zoning By-law amendment and Site Plan approvals
- Re-applying for a Building Permit under the new 2024 Building Code
- Re-engaging the Ontario Heritage Trust on their support for a larger Event Centre
- Re-engaging the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) on environmental approvals
- Re-engaging Parks Canada and the National Capital Commission on the Event Centre Design
- Re-engaging on community consultations for the new design
- Determining if the footprint would adversely impact the programming of the Great Lawn for festival, concert, and community use.

In summary, a delay would result in the cancellation and restart of the overall redevelopment plan resulting in increased costs given annual construction inflation ranging from 3 to 5% as well as increased City debt and debt servicing to offset the increase in costs.

Attachment – available in the language in which it was received.

Thank you,

Wendy Stephanson
City Manager

Hi Wendy,

I wanted to give you a quick update — and some background — in response to the PWHL's recent public comments regarding Lansdowne 2.0 and, in particular, OSEG and the Event Centre.

History

The PWHL is a U.S.-based league backed by an ownership group led by Mark Walter, who's the CEO of Guggenheim Partners — a \$345 billion investment fund. Mark also owns the LA Dodgers, Lakers, Sparks, and Andretti Racing, and has stakes in Chelsea FC, RC Strasbourg, and the Billie Jean King Cup.

In the spring of 2023, on the advice of the NHL, a PWHL representative visited Ottawa to learn more about our market. What started as a fact-finding trip quickly turned into Ottawa being awarded one of the six inaugural PWHL teams when the league launched later that year – a franchise that had originally been planned for a US market. The PWHL was impressed by Ottawa's fan base, the Lansdowne site and 2.0 plans (including the new Event Centre) and OSEG's ability to help them get up and running quickly.

Ottawa and TD Place ended up leading the league in attendance in that first season. We're proud of how that came together and of the role we played in helping the league and what became the Ottawa Charge successfully get off the ground. Our relationship with the Charge has been excellent. They were vocal supporters of Lansdowne 2.0, and the new Event Centre (including delegates at city finance committee in 2023 where both the PWHL and Ottawa Charge spoke on our behalf), and they've been actively involved in designing their dressing room and player areas in the new facility. Our chronology with the PWHL and Charge is as follows:

- Aug. 2023 – OSEG first met with PWHL (Jeremy Langer, VP – Broadcast and Scheduling.
- Aug. 2023 – PWHL indicated that their initial attendance expectations were ~ 2,500 per game. OSEG presented the Lansdowne 2.0 project including Event Centre with a 5,500-seat capacity
- Oct. 2023 – lease signed with PWHL that included expectations of a new Event Centre
- Apr. 2024 – PWHL and Ottawa Charge delegated on behalf of OSEG supporting the Lansdowne 2.0 project at Committee
- Oct. 2024 – Event Centre design plans sent to PWHL and Ottawa Charge, GM for input and feedback
- Oct. 2024 – meeting to walk Ottawa Charge through the plans
- Oct. 2024 – OSEG received comments back on plans. No Event Centre capacity concerns were included in comments
- Jan. 2025 – Ottawa Charge sent revised plans including their player facilities (dressing rooms, lounge etc.)
- Jan. 2025 – OSEG received comments on player lounge area, locker room, and medical areas again with no capacity concerns.

- Feb. 2025 – OSEG and PWHL commenced discussion on a lease extension and set a goal of July 2025 to have it finalized.
- 2025 to-date – lease extension negotiations, PWHL expressed concerns over Event Centre size characterized as “something we will need to work around” financially. Negotiations continued including counter-proposal from the PWHL and OSEG submission of a total of three proposals and lease drafts to PWHL

Lease Extension Update

Our expectation had been that we would reach a lease extension with the PWHL. We deal directly with the league office in Los Angeles, not the local Ottawa Charge team, and started lease extension conversations last season with the goal to having an extension completed this summer. These negotiations eventually moved up to Amy Scheer, their CRO. We’ve been flexible throughout given the uncertainty around the PWHL’s long-term attendance, our Event Centre capacity and the importance of ensuring that the Charge have a facilities pathway to remain in Ottawa long-term.

We thought we were close to an agreement on a five-year extension (one year remaining on the current lease, two additional years at TD Place, and three years in the new Event Centre). We had also agreed to allow them to play up to five games a year elsewhere — for example at the CTC — to accommodate larger crowds if they felt they could sell more than the 6,600 or so tickets in the new Event Centre for certain games.

From our side the new lease terms represented a significant financial improvement for the PWHL. In total, excluding the five games they could relocate, the PWHL would have been about \$800,000 a year better off through a combination of improved lease terms (including reduced ticket fees, increased share of food and beverage and merchandise sales), new advertising inventory (including in-ice, scoreboard, and Power Ring rights), and premium seating opportunities. That included a rebate of up to \$200,000 per year over the three seasons in the new Event Centre, funded by redirecting part of our own revenues to the PWHL and accounted for the smaller capacity (I’ve attached the Charge’s actual attendance from 2024/25 below). Beyond that, the new Event Centre would give the Charge the best dressing room and player facilities in the league — roughly a \$1 million investment — at no cost to them in terms of fit-up or rent.

These lease terms are significantly better than any of our current tenant leases (including our Ottawa 67’s).

Two weeks ago, though, Amy came back to say that where we had jointly negotiated to wasn’t enough. I had never spoken to Amy and reached out to attempt to see what we might be able to amend that would allow them to sign the extension. Amy indicated that they needed another \$700K to \$1M in value. I told her that wasn’t something the Partnership could take on; it would mean losing money and effectively subsidizing the PWHL. When I asked what their five-year outlook in Ottawa looked like, she couldn’t really say beyond saying that they expect that their ideal arena size was 10,000-seats.

City staff had previously looked at what it would take to increase the Event Centre capacity. The estimate was that adding about 2,000 seats (to bring it back to today’s capacity) would cost at

least \$100 million — about \$75M in construction and another \$25M in project delay costs — and would push the building into the Great Lawn and heritage view corridors. For those reasons, the City rightly ruled it out at the time.

Amy also confirmed to me that they've hired a Toronto-based lobbyist to represent them. My sense now is that the PWHL were not serious about getting a deal done with us and that their strategy was to understand what they could get from the Partnership before pushing a financial conversation up to the City.

The public comments by the PWHL and their lobbyist last week are extremely disappointing to our staff which have been proud to support and promote the Charge.

Again, I wanted to make sure you had this background in case you are reached out to directly. We're very supportive of keeping the Charge in Ottawa and want to help them grow here. We're happy to work with both the City and the PWHL to ensure that they have a great home, the best player facilities in the league and, if their attendance eventually warrants it, that the Charge have the flexibility they need to be in the right facility that best supports their long-term future here in Ottawa.

Let me know if I can be of any help as this unfolds.

Mark

GAME	DATE	OPPONENT	PAID TICKETS	DROP COUNT
<u>Regular Season:</u>				
1	03-Dec-24	Toronto	6,072	5,850
2	11-Jan-25	Boston	7,652	7,220
3	14-Jan-25	Toronto	6,278	5,751
4	27-Jan-25	New York	5,357	4,636
5	13-Feb-25	Minnesota	5,539	4,178
6	20-Feb-25	Boston	5,165	4,091
7	22-Feb-25	Montreal	8,103	7,436
8	26-Feb-25	New York	4,639	3,842
9	11-Mar-25	Minnesota	5,319	4,949
10	15-Mar-25	Boston	7,754	7,270
11	25-Mar-25	New York	5,238	4,712
12	26-Apr-25	Montreal	8,280	7,430
13	30-Apr-25	Minnesota	5,087	4,646
<u>Playoffs:</u>				
14	13-May-25	Montreal (PO)	6,714	6,885
15	16-May-25	Monteral (PO)	7,588	7,727
16	20-May-25	Minnesota (PO)	5,694	5,724
17	22-May-25	Minnesota (PO)	7,570	7,851
TOTALS:				
Regular season			80,483	72,011
Playoffs			27,566	28,187
Total Season			108,049	100,198
AVERAGES:				
Regular season			6,191	5,539
Playoffs			6,892	7,047
Total Season			6,356	5,894
All season games above 6,500			7	7
Regular season games above 6,500			4	4
Drop count = actual game attendance				