OTTAWA GYMNASTICS CENTRE
CENTRE DE GYMNASTIQUE D'OTTAWA

OGC sent all candidates running in Wards 14 (Somerset), 15 (Kitchissippi), 7 (Bay) and 17 (Capital) 3 questions asking their position on community sport. The candidates that responded are posted as received.

OGC thanks all candidates who took the time to reply to our outreach. We recognize the demands of an election campaign and appreciate the engagement of candidates who shared their perspectives with us.

The responses below are presented to help OGC members and the broader community understand candidates' positions on community sport infrastructure and the future of OGC's central Ottawa facility. Ths information is provided for public awareness and is not intended to endorse or favour any candidate. Responses are presented as received, without changes to their substantive content.

Candidates who did not respond directly to OGC's outreach are not included in the table.

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65 ANNIVERSARY

Question 1: Community Sport Infrastructure

What is your position on maintaining access to safe, affordable sport and recreation facilities in Ottawa's central communities, including Kitchissippi, particularly as existing facilities age, face redevelopment pressures or reach the end of their useful life?

Subhir Uppal (Ward 15)	Safe, affordable sport and recreation facilities are essential community infrastructure, and residents should have access close to home. As Kitchissippi grows, we need to maintain existing facilities and plan ahead for those facing redevelopment or reaching the end of their useful life. I would advocate for timely maintenance, early consultation with facility users and realistic replacement plans that minimize disruptions to programs. My platform calls for a modern recreation and wellness centre in the Tunney's Pasture/Bayview area and more recreation space in new developments. Central communities deserve their fair share of investment so children, families and seniors can stay active and connected.
Brian Innes (Ward 15)	In Kitchissippi, with expensive land and development we're seeing the pressure on our recreation facilities. Our population is growing but we're losing facilities. We've lost four rinks inside the greenbelt in the last five years. We've lost the curling club from Westboro. We're losing OGC. And there's no plan for a new recreation centre, but tens of thousands of people are joining our area. We're fortunate to have fantastic recreation centres like Dovercourt, Plant Rec and Tom Brown Arena in or near Kitchissippi. Our challenge is that these facilities are bursting at the seams, or like OGC and Tom Brown Arena they are facing an uncertain future. With one third of Ottawa's population growth happening within the Greenbelt, aging facilities and no plan for expansion to serve growth, we need a councillor to champion a new recreation facility and prevent us from losing more local recreation options. I'll fight for local recreation. So people of all ages have recreation locally. As councillor, I'll: - Fight for OGC and protect local facilities like Tom Brown Arena - Plan and build a new recreation centre to serve a growing population - Make sure children, families, seniors and residents of every age can find recreation close to home.
Joanne Chianello (Ward 15)	The candidate engaged with OGC with additional questions but did not provide responses to the three questions submitted.

Xavier Commerford (Ward 15)	I'm proud to be the only candidate (other than Jeff Leiper who is now running for Mayor) supporting an Infrastructure Levy, to address the catastrophic lack of long-term maintenance affecting our city's infrastructure; whether it be sports facilities and parks alike. We can't push our facilities out to the edge of the city just because "land is cheap." We need to leverage property opportunities like the Bayview Yards development to merge residential, commercial and recreational spaces; to ensure that you never have to leave the ward just to play your favourite sport.
Farah Gulzar (Ward 17)	I strongly support maintaining safe, accessible and affordable sport and recreation facilities in Ottawa's central communities. These facilities are essential community infrastructure, particularly for children and youth. As facilities age or face redevelopment pressures, the City should plan proactively rather than wait until established programs are at risk of losing their homes.
Dillon Anderson (Ward 14)	Access to safe, affordable sport and recreation facilities is fundamental to community health and youth development. As central wards like Kitchissippi and Somerset experience intense infill growth and aging infrastructure, the City must take an active role in protecting these spaces. We cannot afford to lose established non-profit community sports hubs to redevelopment without a clear continuity plan. I support prioritizing municipal asset management and partnering with community stakeholders early to prevent the displacement of vital recreation anchors.
Michael Tay (Ward 14)	I strongly support maintaining access to safe and affordable sport and recreation facilities in central Ottawa. Sport and recreation have been an important part of my own life, from soccer to other community activities, and through my work in social services I have seen how access to recreation can build confidence, connection, skills and a sense of belonging. One of the biggest barriers is often cost and access to space. As central communities grow and space becomes more limited, I believe we need to treat recreation facilities as important community infrastructure and look for practical ways to keep these opportunities accessible.
Robert Dekker (Ward 14)	Our recreational facilities must be a safe space for all residents. I am not familiar with the facilities you may be referring to in Kitchissippi Ward. We need to protect the recreational space we have, it is at a premium in the city.

Nicholas Gollé (Ward 14)	I support maintaining access to safe, affordable sport and recreation facilities in Ottawa's central communities. When facilities are approaching the end of their useful life or facing redevelopment pressures, I think we need to understand what losing those facilities would mean for the communities they serve. That means looking at existing demand, the availability and accessibility of alternatives, the costs of maintaining or replacing facilities, and the consequences of losing that recreational capacity. I would want those considerations to inform decisions rather than treating the closure of an existing facility as simply a property or financial matter.
Spencer Radford (Ward 7)	I believe every ward in Ottawa should have access to at least one facility for affordable sport and recreation. These kinds of facilities are vital for many residents, from kids to seniors, as sports and recreations aren't just fun and games, but fuel for the soul. When facilities start to reach end of life, or are being looked at for redevelopment, I would want to look into possible options in order to keep a facility that is being actively used.

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Question 2: Facility Continuity

Would you support working with the City, community organizations and other partners to explore municipal properties, co-location opportunities, partnerships or other options that could help established non-profit sport organizations such as the OGC secure suitable long-term facilities within or near the communities they serve?

Subhir Uppal (Ward 15)	Yes. I would support working with the City, community organizations and other partners to explore practical options that help established non-profit sport organizations such as the OGC secure suitable, long-term facilities within or near the communities they serve. This could include municipal properties, shared facilities, recreation space within larger developments and partnerships that make effective use of existing buildings. I would bring organizations and City staff together early to identify their space requirements, assess available options and explore interim arrangements where needed. The goal should be lasting, affordable access for participants, with transparent decisions and responsible use of public resources.
Brian Innes (Ward 15)	As councillor, I will support OGC to have a suitable local facility. With the city is kicking the OGC out of its Westboro location more than 2000 Kitchissippi families will soon have to spend many more hours in their cars to get to gymnastics. Sadly, several families I spoke to this week candidly admitted that driving to an industrial park may be too much to fit in, and some children may not have the option anymore. My experience collaborating with multiple levels of government and bringing people to the table to find solutions will guide my efforts to support OGC. In Kitchissippi, we have significant federal government developments and major private and municipal projects underway. As councillor, I will use the convening power of the office to bring people together and support OGC's effort to continue providing affordable and high-quality recreation to our population.
Joanne Chianello (Ward 15)	The candidate engaged with OGC with additional questions but did not provide responses to the three questions submitted.
Xavier Commerford (Ward 15)	Absolutely. The city does not presently do enough to explore shared spaces, mixed use development, or funding opportunities (like corporate sponsorships) to deliver recreation spaces close to residents, ideally within a 15-minute walk. We can’t stick with the crumbling, unreliable spaces that are the current status quo.

Farah Gulzar (Ward 17)	Yes. I support the City working collaboratively with established non-profit organizations such as OGC to explore realistic long-term solutions. This should include examining suitable municipal properties, co-location opportunities, partnerships and other options that could allow community organizations to remain reasonably close to the families they serve. While I cannot commit to a particular property or funding arrangement without reviewing the financial, legal and planning considerations, I would support bringing the relevant City departments and community partners together to identify practical options before OGC's current lease ends in June 2027.
Dillon Anderson (Ward 14)	Yes, absolutely. Established non-profit sport organizations as the Ottawa Gymnastics Centreâ€"provide invaluable physical literacy and community programming that the City could never replicate alone. I strongly support working collaboratively with the City, community organizations, school boards, and regional partners to explore creative solutions, including co-location opportunities within municipal properties, shared-use agreements, and leveraging municipal surplus lands or partnership models to secure stable, long-term facilities within or near the communities they serve.
Michael Tay (Ward 14)	**Yes.** I would support working with the City, community organizations and other partners to explore realistic options for organizations such as OGC. That could include looking at available municipal space, partnerships, co-location opportunities, schools or other community facilities, where appropriate. I have seen many community groups struggle simply to find affordable space to operate, whether for sport, recreation, dance or other activities. The City cannot necessarily solve every facility challenge on its own, but I believe it can be a better partner in helping established organizations navigate available options and bring the right partners together.
Robert Dekker (Ward 14)	Yes.

Nicholas Gollé (Ward 14)	Yes, absolutely. I support working with the City, community organizations and other partners to explore municipal properties, co-location opportunities, partnerships and other potential solutions. I would want to understand the specific requirements and constraints facing an organization before deciding which options are viable. In the case of the Ottawa Gymnastics Centre, I recognize that the specialized space requirements, affordability concerns and approaching lease expiration make finding an alternative particularly challenging.
Spencer Radford (Ward 7)	Absolutely. I was previously the president of the Kiwanis Club in Kanata-Stittsville, where we opened up a youth centre for grades 7-12. Without partnerships from the councillor, school board, and other local groups, we would not have been able to have it as successful as it is today. There are many groups in all different kinds of communities that serve the public, and actually fair bit of overlap between different organizations that can have partnerships doing what no one group can do alone. I would support bringing those groups together, exploring available city properties and shared spaces, to see what we can create together.

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Question 3: Zoning and Land Use

What is your position on ensuring that Ottawa's zoning and planning framework allows realistic opportunities for non-profit sport and indoor recreation facilities to locate in appropriate commercial and employment areas, particularly where existing buildings could be suitable for these uses?

Subhir Uppal (Ward 15)	I support a zoning and planning framework that gives non-profit sport and indoor recreation organizations realistic opportunities to find suitable space in appropriate commercial and employment areas. Where existing buildings can safely accommodate these activities, the City should make it easier to adapt and reuse them. I would work with City planning staff and recreation organizations to identify unnecessary barriers and support clear, practical approval pathways, while considering accessibility, transit access, traffic, parking and compatibility with surrounding uses. Planning for growth should include the recreation facilities our communities need, alongside housing and employment.
Brian Innes (Ward 15)	I believe the city should facilitate OGC finding a facility that meets its needs, including necessary zoning amendments. As councillor, I will support zoning changes that help OGC bring a benefit to the community.
Joanne Chianello (Ward 15)	The candidate engaged with OGC with additional questions but did not provide responses to the three questions submitted.
Xavier Commerford (Ward 15)	I'm proud to have been a participant in the city's zoning reform discussions last year. I said at the time that, "when these changes let you build a homeless shelter next to someone's house, why can't you build a pharmacy, or a yoga studio?" The future is mixed use. The future is walking down a flight of stairs from your office, or apartment, to play your favorite sports; not walking across town in a freezing blizzard. We must renew, reinvent, reuse, and recycle spaces that already exist - whenever possible.

Farah Gulzar (Ward 17)	I support reviewing Ottawa's zoning and planning framework to ensure that legitimate non-profit sport and indoor recreation facilities have realistic opportunities to operate in appropriate commercial and employment areas, particularly where existing buildings can safely and practically accommodate these uses. Planning rules should protect important land-use objectives while also being flexible enough to recognize the needs of community-serving organizations. Where unnecessary regulatory barriers prevent suitable existing spaces from being used for recreation, I believe the City should examine those barriers and determine whether reasonable solutions are available. Community sport is an investment in healthier children, stronger families and stronger neighbourhoods. Organizations that have served Ottawa residents for generations deserve meaningful engagement from the City when facing major facility challenges.
Dillon Anderson (Ward 14)	Yes. Ottawa€™s planning and zoning framework is often too rigid, creating unnecessary hurdles for non-profit sport and indoor recreation operators looking for suitable homes. We must modernize our zoning bylaws to provide realistic, flexible opportunities for non-profit recreation and indoor sport facilities to locate within appropriate commercial, mixed-use, and employment areas. Permitting these uses in existing, adaptable commercial buildingsâ€"especially those with good transit accessâ€"removes red tape, preserves community sports infrastructure, and breathes new life into underutilized commercial spaces.
Michael Tay (Ward 14)	I support ensuring that Ottawa's zoning and planning rules provide realistic opportunities for non-profit sport and recreation organizations to operate in appropriate locations. Where an existing commercial, institutional or employment building can safely accommodate a recreation use, I believe we should avoid unnecessary barriers and look for practical solutions. We need a city where community organizations can find space to grow rather than feeling that they have to leave central Ottawa because suitable facilities are unavailable or unaffordable.

Robert Dekker (Ward 14)	I do not have a position at this time. If elected as Councillor I will be happy to have these discussions
Nicholas Gollé (Ward 14)	I support ensuring that Ottawa's zoning and planning framework provides realistic opportunities for non-profit sport and recreation facilities to operate in appropriate locations. More broadly, I believe that mixed-use neighbourhoods are an important part of creating vibrant, accessible communities. Having residential, commercial, recreational and cultural spaces close together gives people more opportunities to participate in their communities without needing to travel long distances. I would like to see our planning framework encourage this kind of neighbourhood development rather than unnecessarily separating different uses. Where existing buildings could accommodate recreational facilities, I would support examining whether zoning or other municipal requirements are creating unnecessary barriers, while still considering compatibility with surrounding uses.
Spencer Radford (Ward 7)	100% we need to make sure zoning allows for this. While I haven't looked at the survey myself, a resident I was speaking to mentioned that in the city provided survey regarding 15 minute neighbourhoods, a survey that took quite a bit of time to do, he hadn't found a question that specifically mentioned sports fields or gyms. That's not a true 15 minute neighbourhood. It's our duty to residents to make sure that they have somewhere they can go that is close by. I would join the search with local groups to find locations such as those existing buildings that might not be active, so that we always try to have an option available for sports and recreation, as well as making sure zoning permits the type of usage we need.