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# Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

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Chair: Ms. Ruby Sahota





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• (1200)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone.

First off, I just want to make sure that everybody is okay with a request by the presenters to present for a more extended time than normal. A 30-minute presentation is what they have proposed.

Is everyone okay with getting the full presentation? There have been briefs submitted to everybody.

Yes, Mr. Richards.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** I guess the only qualifier I'd add is that if there are more questions, obviously there won't be a lot of time to—

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Blake Richards:** We're in a one-hour meeting as it is.

If members decide that they have more questions, would they would be willing to come back?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Blake Richards:** I talked briefly with them earlier, and they indicated they'd have no trouble accommodating the committee.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Mr. Blake Richards:** As long as that's the case, I don't see any trouble with that.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Now that you've mentioned the timing, Mr. Richards, is it everyone's preference to still end the meeting at one o'clock today, the regularly scheduled time, or to extend it a little bit further?

What would you like, just so we have an idea?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Moncton—Riverview—Dieppe, Lib.):** Personally, it doesn't matter. We can extend the meeting.

To Mr. Richards' point, I would very much appreciate having the full presentation. Being a new PROC member, I didn't get the benefit of hearing the presentations in 2019, so I would certainly appreciate having a full presentation.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Does anyone have an issue with going beyond the one o'clock hour, so we know how many questions we can get in today?

Yes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Thérien (La Prairie, BQ):** I apologize, but I have to leave at 1:00 p.m., unfortunately.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I guess that as long as any members have to be somewhere else, we'll end at the regular one o'clock time.

All right, then, let's hear from the presenters.

Welcome to our committee, and thank you for coming in. We're really excited about this renovation, and we look forward to hearing what you have to say.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Patrice (Deputy Clerk, Administration, House of Commons):** Good morning, Madam Chair and committee members.

[*English*]

I am Michel Patrice, your deputy clerk, administration.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to be here today to provide an update on the Centre Block rehabilitation program and other projects as part of the long term vision and plan for the Parliamentary Precinct.

With me today is Stéphan Aubé, chief information officer, and Susan Kulba, director general and executive architect of the Real Property Directorate.

[*English*]

Also with us is my colleague, Benoit Morin, from the Library of Parliament, who will introduce himself and his colleague.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Benoit Morin (Senior Director, Public Education Programs, Library of Parliament):** Good afternoon.

[*English*]

I'm here with Kali Prostebby, and we are both from the public education program team at the Library of Parliament.

In the context of today's presentation, the library's mandate is to provide visitor services on behalf of Parliament, meaning on behalf of the House of Commons and the Senate. When we say visitor services, we mean providing guided tours, retail services and supporting exhibits and publications that can be found onsite.

We're here today to address any questions you may have about the future of visitor services in the context of the Centre Block project, including the visitor welcome centre.

Thank you.

**Mr. Michel Patrice:** Finally, I would like to introduce to you Mr. Rob Wright, assistant deputy minister at PSPC.

I will say that having lived through the opening of the West Block challenges together, our working relationship has never been better.

Rob.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Rob Wright (Assistant Deputy Minister, Science and Parliamentary Infrastructure Branch, Department of Public Works and Government Services):** Thank you, Mr. Patrice.

Good morning, Madam Chair and committee members.

I am accompanied today by Duncan Retson, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, and Jennifer Garrett, director general responsible for the Centre Block program at Public Services and Procurement Canada.

We have been asked today to provide an update on the long-term vision and plan with a focus on the Centre Block program and Block 2 redevelopment. As Mr. Patrice indicated, we will be making a presentation together. In addition to providing an update, we will discuss the options that have been developed to support decision-making on critical aspects of the project, such as the House and Visitor Welcome Centre. This informative presentation will cover a number of important topics. If the committee wishes to take a break to discuss them, we would be very pleased to do so at any time.

Let me begin by saying that we are very pleased to be here today to continue our collaboration with parliamentarians. This is very important to ensure that our efforts meet the needs of parliamentarians and a 21st century Parliament in Canada. On that note, allow me to offer the committee any follow-up that committee members find useful or relevant.

On this slide, you can see the long-term vision and plan, or LTVP, for the Parliamentary Precinct in action. The LTVP was first established in 2001, and was then revised in 2006, and is currently being updated a second time. The LTVP is essentially a joint planning framework developed with parliamentary administration to respond to three critical factors.

- (1205)

[*English*]

The first one is the aging and deteriorated buildings. Core buildings throughout the precinct—well over 100 years old, in an unfor-giving climate and never having had major conservation work—were severely deteriorated and at risk of failure.

Second, the buildings did not provide enough space. For example, when Parliament first opened over 150 years ago, there were 181 members of Parliament. Now there are 338, and that number is projected to continue to grow, to 400 and beyond.

Third, the buildings didn't support a modern Parliament. These heritage buildings require significant modernization to meet new and evolving needs.

Compared with a century or more ago, Parliament faced a markedly different security reality. It also increasingly engaged citizens using modern broadcasting and video conferencing capabilities, and Parliament needed a more accessible and family-friendly environment. The precinct simply didn't support a modern parliamentary democracy in a changing world.

This joint planning framework is critical to ensuring that our collective efforts meet the needs of Parliament and parliamentarians. What is required to support a modern Parliament is, however, an evolving requirement. Security, accessibility and sustainability needs, for example, have changed significantly just over the past decade and continue to evolve. Getting the balance right between restoration and modernization in these projects is one of the key challenges we face.

The long time scale it takes to implement these massive and complex projects, and the life cycles of the investments, which run upwards of 60 to 100 years, mean that it is critical to think in the long term and ensure the decisions are resilient and enduring.

Over the past decade plus, significant progress has been made in addressing these core challenges and in implementing this long-range plan. Over this period, the LTVP has guided the implementation of a complex series of interdependent projects—many of the largest projects are highlighted in blue on the slide—that have restored and modernized many important heritage assets, assets that were deteriorated, underutilized or sitting vacant, such as the Sir John A. Macdonald and Wellington buildings and the Senate of Canada building, as well as the West Block, of course, one of the three original Parliament Buildings, and the beautiful Library of Parliament.

Importantly, the successful completion of this sequence of projects enabled the historic transition of Parliament out of Centre Block, the iconic home of Parliament, just over one year ago. This transition has allowed us to launch its restoration and modernization.

[*Translation*]

Our presentation today will provide an update of the Centre Block project and will review some of the key elements and options for the operation of Centre Block once restored. It will be important to ensure that we achieve the optimal balance between restoring what is perhaps Canada's most important heritage building and ensuring that it meets the future needs of Parliament and parliamentarians.

While Centre Block is a critical milestone, it is not the end of the LTVP. Indeed, other important buildings are facing significant levels of deterioration and need to be modernized, including the Confederation Building and East Block.

- (1210)

[English]

Now that we have made it to the Centre Block, we can begin to look forward in our planning to re consolidating parliamentary operations, with the objective of creating a fully integrated and modern campus for Parliament. Ensuring that the revitalized precinct is a consolidated and modern campus for Parliament means a shift from a building-by-building approach.

Taking a more holistic approach will enable us collectively to think through how everything fits together and works in a more integrated manner, including reimagining and redeveloping the adjacent heritage assets on the three city blocks facing Parliament Hill to meet current and future needs; rethinking the movement of people and goods within the precinct; creating a fully digital Parliament; ensuring that the precinct is fully aligned with growing priorities such as sustainability and accessibility; and, reimagining approaches to security to make them more layered while making the campus even more welcoming to visitors.

[Translation]

In this way, we are ensuring that the parliamentary campus will be flexible and resilient so that it can truly meet the changing needs of Parliament over the next few centuries and beyond. The redevelopment of Block 2 is truly the launch of the parliamentary complex strategy that has been approved by Parliament and the government.

[English]

**Mr. Michel Patrice:** The governance for the parliamentary precinct projects involves many players:

[Translation]

the legislative branch, namely, the Senate and the House of Commons, which are responsible for determining their requirements; the executive branch, which are responsible for project delivery and budget; and other stakeholders, including the Department of Canadian Heritage, the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa.

[English]

The parliamentary administration is the lead for engagement with parliamentarians. It is our responsibility to ensure that members are appropriately engaged to allow for effective decision-making as it relates to defining requirements for the precinct, your workplace for the next 60 to 100 years.

Building on lessons learned from completed projects, PSPC and parliamentary administration are co-located in an integrated project management office with the design and construction management firms to support the efficient delivery of the program. Historically, the board has been the decision-maker for the LTVP and related projects.

[Translation]

During the last Parliament, for example, a working group appointed by the board was formed. This group was to assist the board in making decisions.

[English]

Going forward, a presentation will be made at the next board meeting with a view to obtain direction on an efficient governance model that would satisfy and recognize the need for parliamentarians' involvement in determining the requirements of the House of Commons.

**Ms. Jennifer Garrett (Director General, Centre Block Program, Science and Parliamentary Infrastructure Branch, Department of Public Works and Government Services):** Good afternoon.

I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made, on several fronts, since our last appearance at PROC in the spring of 2019. At that time, we were working on three key priorities. We were completing a series of enabling projects to support parliamentary operations during the rehabilitation program and preparing for substantive construction on the Centre Block and and visitor welcome centre phase two. We were executing a comprehensive assessment program to better understand the buildings' condition and de-risk the project. Finally, and most importantly, we were working with parliamentary partners, including the House of Commons administration, on their parliamentary functional program requirements to support the schematic design process.

Today, the program remains on track, and several key milestones have been accomplished. Enabling projects are largely complete, allowing the construction manager the ability to commence construction activities in support of both the rehabilitation of the Centre Block and construction of phase two of the visitor welcome centre.

The assessment program is also now complete. The results of this program will be outlined later in this briefing and have been integrated into the ongoing schematic design process. The program has provided valuable information and enabled the team to safely commence demolition and abatement on floors four through six of the Centre Block, as well as start removal of underground infrastructure within the footprint of the phase two visitor welcome centre, initiating the excavation process.

In terms of functional program and schematic design, we have advanced a functional program in collaboration with the administration of the House of Commons and launched the schematic design process. We are now at the point where input of parliamentarians is critical to supporting key decisions in order to finalize the schematic design and determine a substantive cost, scope and schedule.

The rehabilitation of the Centre Block endeavours to provide modern accommodations to support parliamentary operations while retaining core heritage elements of the building.

This slide provides a summary of key parliamentary functions as they pertain to the House of Commons in the Centre Block at its time of closure. I would like to highlight the following. The capacity of the House of Commons' chamber of 338 with paired seating has already been compromised. The back rows of the chamber require rows of five to achieve those requirements. There are three existing committee rooms and approximately 5,400 square metres of space for members' offices. With regard to the visitor program, there is a small footprint within the Centre Block to support guided tours, but at the time of closure, there was no visitor experience program.

The program will modernize operations within Centre Block, but these types of heritage buildings always prove technically challenging to modernize, and the House of Commons chamber will be the most challenging decision that the project faces. We will go through in some detail, later in the presentation, how to restore and modernize this high-heritage chamber for an evolving parliament in which the number of MPs will continue to increase with time.

The Centre Block program itself faces the same challenges as other buildings within the long-term vision and plan. It has space challenges; it needs to be modernized. We will go through these challenges of the Centre Block. The visual that you see depicted on this slide illustrates how phase two of the visitor welcome centre will connect the West Block, East Block and Centre Block into one integrated parliamentary facility.

The scope of the Centre Block rehabilitation is twofold. Firstly, we will rehabilitate and modernize the Centre Block so that it can support parliamentary operations well into the 21st century. We will construct phase two of the visitor welcome centre, which will do the following: It will establish a modern security screen outside the Centre Block building footprint; provide additional parliamentary support space; connect the triad of Centre Block, East Block and West Block, as previously mentioned, allowing for the movement of goods and people seamlessly throughout the complex; and it will enhance parliamentary outreach by providing a curated parliamentary experience for visitors to supplement the current tour capability.

- (1215)

A huge aspect of reducing risk on a large-scale heritage program like this rehabilitation is to find out as much as possible about the building and to have that information influence the design process and downstream construction activities. Based upon lessons learned and a best practices approach, the assessment program for this rehabilitation has been the most comprehensive undertaken in the precinct to date.

In summary, we have completed over 100 field surveys in support of the mechanical and electrical, environmental, as well as heritage elements of the building. We have done 900 openings to better understand the structure and designated substances, and to determine where the pathways are for mechanical and electrical systems. We have done over 2,000 inspections of the masonry, roof, and structural, mechanical and electrical systems. We have undertaken 10,000 tests and samples to completely understand the designated substances profile of the building. We have recorded over 20,000 heritage assets in complete room-by-room assessments, from chan-

deliers to plaster to frescoes to floorboards. This program was launched in 2018, before the relocation of parliamentary operations from the Centre Block to the West Block, but given their invasive nature, the program increased momentum and was completed once the Centre Block was emptied post-December 2018. This program is now at an end. Its findings have already been incorporated into the design process that is under way.

This image gives you some photos, obviously just snapshots, of the kinds of activities and fieldwork undertaken as part of the broad range of this assessment program. It ranged from detailed heritage and architecture assessments to environmental and geotechnical on the exterior of the building. I'd be happy to point out a couple of the images. The green and red images on the side are thermal imaging of the building. We're trying to baseline and determine the heat loss so that when we implement the modernization program we can baseline against the environmental conditions of the building.

For those of you who are interested in historical and archeological findings, the paper at the bottom is an orders of the day paper from Tuesday, April 6, 1920. That was found in the ceiling of the government lobby in the Centre Block. We find all sorts of interesting things in the ceiling. I won't comment on that.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Jennifer Garrett:** The assessment program provides a deep understanding of the discrete elements of the building condition. It has reduced program risk by enabling the project team to gain critical information that is guiding both design and construction strategies. I won't take you through the plethora of information around this program, but maybe I can take you through the key takeaways or highlights that we've gleaned from executing this program. There are both positives and negatives.

On the positive side, we now have a very comprehensive understanding of every heritage element in the building, which will help us develop a robust heritage restoration strategy. We have determined that the underlying structural steel is in better condition than expected in many areas, which will create efficiencies during the structural reinforcement process. We know where all the underground infrastructure is, and the associated site conditions. We have cleared the site for digging from an archeology perspective. We know the type and location of designated substances so that we can develop a comprehensive abatement strategy. All are positive things, because they are things we can address through the course of the design and construction program.

The one negative aspect of the program, and it's not an insignificant technical challenge, is that we were hoping to find room above the ceiling and behind the walls to run such modern services as heating, IT and electrical. Quite honestly, there is very little space to run these services in the ceilings and behind those walls. Although this is a significant technical challenge, we will take innovative approaches to implementing this type of infrastructure into the building. We are already working on this. For example, with the support of the House of Commons and in close collaboration with ITPMO and our designer, the team has shifted away from a traditional horizontal infrastructure solution to a vertical one that will ultimately save space in the building.

- (1220)

In previous slides, we have outlined some of the technical challenges to modernizing the Centre Block. The team will continue to focus on resolving those technical constraints in a manner that will balance restoration and modernization in a way that prioritizes core parliamentary functions such as parliamentary offices and committee rooms. But the building modernization is only one aspect of the Centre Block rehabilitation. As previously indicated, we have also been working with the administrations of the parliamentary partners on their parliamentary functional programs. As previously also stated, we are now at the point in the planning where parliamentary input and direction is required to complete schematic design for both the Centre Block and the next phase of the visitor welcome centre.

Key decisions surrounding the Centre Block include the design approach for the size and configuration of the House of Commons chamber, including public galleries and lobbies, as well as the space and location of parliamentary offices and committee rooms.

From a visitor welcome perspective, the design approach for the size and operational functionality of the next phase of the visitor welcome centre and as well the location and configuration of entry points for business and public access to that visitor welcome centre, which will ultimately lead to an integrated parliamentary complex, must be taken.

At this point I'm going to pass the presentation over to my colleague Susan Kulba, from the House of Commons, to take you through the chamber.

- (1225)

**Ms. Susan Kulba (Director General, Real Property, Real Property Services, House of Commons):** The House of Commons chamber is one of the most significant spaces within the Centre Block. It's where Parliament resides and works. It holds symbolic and traditional significance to parliamentarians and to Canada. It's one of the most recognized heritage spaces within the building.

The House team has been working with PSPC and their expert design consultants over the summer and during the election break, doing our homework on the Centre Block, notably with regard to the chamber, the galleries, and the lobbies, so that we could be well prepared to start a conversation with parliamentarians on the decisions that will be required with respect to these spaces.

As reported the last time we presented at PROC, the Centre Block chamber requires change. We need to consider the long-term

use and investment and focus on the kind of changes and how to do them.

We started with the basic information on the existing chamber, the Fair Representation Act, and the feedback that we have received to date from parliamentarians.

After the opening of the West Block, we met with former members of PROC and we talked to them about their experiences and lessons learned in the West Block. As well, we started to seek some informal input on the Centre Block. We also collected other feedback from parliamentarians in their experience on the West Block and will be using that information as lessons learned moving forward with this project.

We've noted a few common trends from members' feedback so far. One of the most common is that the lobbies are extremely tight in both the Centre Block and West Block, and would not be sufficient for growth. The lobby's proximity to the chamber is vital. The acoustics in the West Block are good. MPs appreciate the paired desks, and the chamber in the West Block feels larger. The five-seater flip chairs in the Centre Block are not well liked. It's very disruptive to pass in front of other members to access seats. The West Block's natural light is well appreciated. It is appreciated that the galleries are being pulled back, but there is a decrease in seating in the gallery, which is not ideal. More private meeting spaces are desirable in close proximity to the lobbies, and circulation is a very important factor on how MPs work in the building.

In doing our homework, we have considered the Fair Representation Act that came into effect in 2015. It indicates that the number of members will grow with time and refers to the Statistics Canada census demographic projections as a source of information for the growth in the number of MPs. If we consider a 100-year life cycle for the rehabilitation of the Centre Block and extrapolate from there, the average would put us at 460 MPs in just under 50 years from now. By the time we return to Centre Block, the projections would put the growth of MPs that we should plan for in the range of 350 to 370 MPs.

Knowing that growth will need to be accommodated for future parliaments, there are a number of considerations to help achieve that. We could change the furniture and the layout. We started to see that when we added the 30 MPs in 2015. There are a number of ways that could be done. We could adjust the procedures and the operations to be more flexible to deal with the growth over time and/or we can increase the size of the chamber.

These considerations emphasize the tension between space, functionality, accessibility and heritage. Key decisions regarding the chamber are required early in the project, during the schematic design phase, so that direction will serve in the structural design that comes first.

We will also need to consider meeting current building code for life safety, look at universal accessibility, and implement technology through the chamber, galleries and lobbies. The current spaces in the Centre Block are insufficient and do not meet the full functional requirements for many of these elements. There are major accessibility limitations in the galleries, as you know, and 338 seats rely on the five-seaters.

There will need to be interventions to the heritage fabric of these spaces to accommodate many of the requirements and make the spaces fully functional for Parliament. What will be important is how we do that. We need to do this in an appropriate manner, respectful and complementary to the original Pearson design, while building a new lasting layer of heritage relevant to our time in the building and in the history of Parliament. We need parliamentarians' input to accomplish this very successfully.

Given the challenge of addressing these issues, we undertook studies of the chamber with all of the basic information so that we would be well prepared to engage with parliamentarians on these issues. We studied many options working from bottom up as to what we need and from top down as to what we can fit.

- (1230)

The options that you see before you are the three options that sifted to the top. They are examples of things that can be done to address the needs.

Option one retains the existing footprint of the chamber and the lobbies. The lobbies would extend down one floor and be over two floors. This would require a new approach to seating, layout and furniture. There would be some accessibility improvements but a reduction of gallery capacity. This option would also allow us to not impact the exterior of the building.

In option two, you see an expanded footprint of the lobbies, retaining the footprint of the chamber. This would accommodate a range of 376 to 420 MPs. This would meet the needs of the larger lobby on one level. It would still be dependent on new furniture and seating layout. There would be some accessibility improvement, but the gallery capacity would still not be as great as it is today. Also, there would be an impact to the exterior of the building, on the west side.

The third option for consideration is an expanded footprint for both the chamber and the lobbies. It would require careful consideration of the heritage intervention and the cost implications. It retains the traditional seating layout of the paired desks, and we could reuse the heritage furniture. The lobbies would be on a single floor, and there could be significant improvements to accessibility, especially in the gallery.

On the next slide, we see the same three options in renderings showing a sectional cut-through of the building—a vertical cut. The renderings are not all equal, because the design is not yet done. They are just concepts and ideas of the size and the space we would be looking at.

In option one, you see the existing chamber and, in yellow, the two-storey gallery, where you would have minimal functions adjacent to the chamber and other functions on the level below.

In option two, you see the existing footprint of the chamber, with the expanded lobbies. They are shown as boxes here, just to be used as ideas. The design is really dependent on the input that we are going to see.

In option three, you see an outline of an expanded chamber and expanded lobbies, with no design done. It's hard to compare apples with apples here. Another thing we see on this slide is a heatmap and some suggested criteria for how to make decisions about the chamber and what the most important priorities are. We will be seeking input from parliamentarians on the priorities for those criteria and how to assess them.

That is essentially the homework we've been working on over the last period of time, so that we can start having informed conversations.

Thank you.

**Ms. Jennifer Garrett:** Now, moving on to phase two of the visitor welcome centre, the concept of a below-grade visitor welcome centre has been around since at least 1976, and it has been supported by multiple governments, parliamentary committees, and been ingrained in the long-term vision and plan with a focus on security. This facility will also provide expanded business support for parliamentary operations and provide an enhanced visitor experience, and also connect the triad of Centre Block, West Block and East Block.

Similar to the chamber options outlined by my colleague Susan from the House of Commons, three options that are scalable and conform at various levels to parliamentary functional requirements have been developed to support a decision-making process, and will be adjusted based on feedback from parliamentarians. As previously stated, the two key decisions surrounding the visitor welcome centre are the size and the entry. I'm going to take you through the size options.

The site plans on the left of the slide you now see, going from top to bottom graphically, represent the visitor welcome centre size option.

Option one, the smallest option of approximately 5,800 square metres in size, provides a new screening point of entry, connects the triad, and provides some new parliamentary support. It limits the Library of Parliament's visitor experience to tour support only.

Option two, the medium-sized option, is approximately 13,500 square metres in size. In addition to the capabilities mentioned in option one, this option provides for increased parliamentary functions, including new committee rooms for the Senate, and provides a space for a curated alternate visitor experience in addition to the public tours.



Option three, the largest of the three options, is approximately 16,600 square metres in size and continues to enhance all the aforementioned parliamentary functions, and provides for an expanded alternative visitor experience. The right side of this slide depicts the various entry intervention points into the front lawn. In the case of the small and medium-sized visitor welcome centres, the entry point is located at the Vaux wall, and has little impact on the great lawn. In the case of the large visitor welcome centre, the entry point projects further into the great lawn.

I'll now pass the presentation to my colleague Susan who will take you through the specifics of entry options.

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Could I interrupt for a moment to get an idea about how much longer you think the presentation might take? It looks like we still have half the deck to do.

**Mr. Michel Patrice:** That's right, and I think it's going a bit longer than we ourselves expected.

If I could make a suggestion. Maybe we could complete this portion of the deck quickly in summary fashion. I know that Public Works has a deck to present on block two that could be done at a subsequent meeting, so maybe if you give us a few minutes to complete this deck, and then we could open...

**The Chair:** Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** No.

**The Chair:** Okay.

I'll hear from you, Mr. Tochor, first.

**Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Let's hear the whole thing and bring everyone back another time, so we have full understanding of...

**The Chair:** That's exactly what I was—

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC):** It's good information to have.

**Mr. Corey Tochor:** This is a massive project.

**The Chair:** The reason I pause right now is that I wanted to get a feel for the room. The clerk and I were discussing this because it does seem it's going a little longer. We could let the presentation continue for the duration of this meeting. We could then do the tour on Thursday that we have scheduled, which may give rise to other questions once we're in the building. Then we have Tuesday's meeting when we have a steering committee scheduled right now, and that could be postponed to another day and we could just have a full meeting of questions at that point, if everyone's available. We could try to work that out. Does that seem reasonable?

Mr. Gerretsen.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I think that's reasonable if the witnesses can commit to coming back for that, because I have a number of questions already, and I just want to...

**The Chair:** Yes. Next Tuesday is the 25th. Are you okay—

**Mr. Michel Patrice:** We are committing.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you, and thank you to all the witnesses. It's been very informative, so I'll let you carry on. I think we're learning a lot.

**Ms. Susan Kulba:** Thank you.

This image shows the Hill. The existing buildings are in blue, and the potential outline of the underground visitor welcome centre is in yellow. All those little circles represent the variety of entrances at the surface in the building.

The focus of moving toward a visitor welcome centre is to provide an efficient and secure entry for parliamentarians, visitors and business visitors. Essentially, the Centre Block will retain those surface entrances, so members will still enter in the members' entrances that lead into the foyer. The Speaker will still enter in the Speaker's entrance. The ceremonial activities will still happen at the front door under the Peace Tower, and accredited staff and parliamentarians can use that entrance as well.

What's really changing is the visitor and the business entrance into the building, as they will be moved out from Centre Block into the visitor welcome centre.

Again, we've done our homework and looked at the variety of possibilities on how to approach the visitor entrance to the Hill. What we are debating at this point are three options. The first two options are separating the business and public entrance into three separate entrances: one for the House business, one for the Senate business.... The first option is putting that public entry out at the south wall of what would be the visitor welcome centre, whereas the second option is pushing it back closer to the Vaux wall to be less disruptive to the front lawn.

What we're favouring at this point is a consolidated entry, for various operational reasons. However, we need to engage with parliamentarians to understand your view on the public entrance and how you meet and greet your constituents in that facility before we can come to any determination. We look at have those discussions in a more granular way with parliamentarians before deciding on an option that would go forward for further development.

• (1240)

**Mr. Michel Patrice:** I will not go through the list of the key decisions in relation to the Centre Block program, but I will provide you with a sense of the many components and requirements that must be decided.

We will be happy to answer questions and welcome any comments you might have on items on that list, or others that you don't see on that list but would like to have included.

[*Translation*]

For example, the original plans called for House of Commons committee rooms in phase 2 of the Visitor Welcome Centre. The administration has reviewed this need and will inform the committee that there is no need for additional House of Commons committee rooms in the Visitor Welcome Centre.

This gives you an idea of how our analysis of the project and actual needs have evolved, and we will make recommendations to the committee.

As you can see, it's a fairly exhaustive list. We may have overlooked some of your concerns.

[English]

All comments are welcome. Thank you.

Rob.

[Translation]

**Mr. Rob Wright:** Thank you, Mr. Patrice.

[English]

The program is advancing well, and to underline one of the take-aways from the presentation, engagement with parliamentarians on a number of key decisions is required to continue this progress. Given that the Centre Block serves all of Parliament, it will also be critical to ensure that decisions are based on input from both Houses.

We are ready to engage in any way that Parliament would find helpful and productive to provide additional information to support informed decision-making.

I will now shift the focus onto block two.

[Translation]

As we noted at the beginning of the presentation, the transition to a parliamentary campus strategy and the redevelopment of the three blocks across from Parliament are central to the long-term vision and plan. The architectural design competition for block 2 is the launch of this strategy.

[English]

These three city blocks were expropriated in 1973 for the future needs of Parliament. They contain 26 buildings, with a range of heritage designations, as well as having two prime places for future development, located on what is called block two. This is directly across from the Peace Tower.

While the LTVP has restored and modernized some of the key and largest buildings in this area, the vast majority of these buildings are approaching 100 years in age; and without having any major work done on them, several are now underutilized or empty. Many of these buildings have small, narrow floor plates. As individual facilities, they would provide very limited opportunities for adaptive reuse. When thought of on a block-by-block basis, there are many opportunities to reimagine these individual buildings into modern, flexible, complexes, conserving their heritage character while making them more functional, accessible and sustainable.

• (1245)

[Translation]

The restoration and modernization of these buildings, block by block, will achieve many objectives at the same time.

[English]

First, restoring and modernizing the three city blocks facing Parliament Hill, and which form the heart of Sparks Street, will provide a significant benefit to the core of Canada's capital.

Second, it will enable us to empty and restore critical parliamentary buildings that also require restoration and modernization work, such as the Confederation Building and East Block.

Last, it will enable, in the future, Parliament to be consolidated into a cohesive and modern campus. The buildings highlighted in yellow on the slide form the core of the envisioned work.

Block two is chosen as the launch of the campus strategy for three main reasons. One, it has the most pressing needs in the here and now. Two, it provides the most redevelopment potential to serve Parliament. And three, it is a prime location. It provides immediate adjacency to Parliament buildings on the Hill.

Moving forward with the holistic block approach, rather than building by building, has many benefits, including creating a cohesive, overarching design, as well as providing the opportunity to shift away from these limited-use individual facilities to creating a flexible, interconnected complex. This block approach also provides cost and schedule benefits.

[Translation]

Work on block 2 includes the construction of two new buildings on either side of 100 Wellington Street, a space for Indigenous peoples, and will be done through an independent process.

[English]

While the Valour Building won't receive a major overhaul, it will get a modern skin, aligned with the overall design vision for the block. The Victoria Building will be included in the overall design, but its restoration and modernization will need to wait until new space is created so that it can be emptied for its work to proceed. The redevelopment of five adjacent buildings—the Fisher, Bate, Birks, Marshall, and Canada's Four Corners buildings—will transform these inefficient and small facilities into a large, flexible space.

The heritage character of block two will be preserved and the commercial retail space on Sparks Streets will be transformed into modern storefronts, supporting the revitalization of this important area.

[Translation]

We believe that an architectural competition is entirely appropriate, given the problems we are facing with regard to Block 2. In addition, such a large site presents many design challenges, including the possibility of mixing new construction with heritage buildings. The goal is to ensure that the best architects reinvent this important site into a world-class development that adds value to Parliament and the National Capital, and contributes to the revitalization of Sparks Street.

[English]

The objective is not to get a final, detailed design that will be implemented; a flexible approach is being used. The objective is to select the best firm for the job based on a well-advanced concept design. This design can then continue to be further matured through engagement with parliamentarians to meet your needs.

[Translation]

We worked with the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, the School of Architecture of the Université de Montréal and [phase eins], which is based in Germany and is a world leader in the organization of architectural competitions.

The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada will oversee the competition. It will be responsible for selecting a high caliber jury to review a two-stage submission process to recommend a shortlist of designs and select the winners.

[English]

The proposed jury will consist of three categories: architects, both Canadian and international; generalists, having indigenous participation as well as representatives from Canadian academia and civil society to help ensure that a broader perspective is brought to the review of design visions; and given that this represents a significant addition to the parliamentary precinct, parliamentary participation is also proposed for the jury. Parliamentary participation could take many different forms, and feedback from you and other parliamentarians will be critical.

The jury will be fully supported by technical experts. Membership in the jury would be an important function, and involvement will spread over a one-year period, up to June 2021. It's anticipated that participation would take about 10 days of work.

The final jury report will be shared with parliamentarians and Canadians.

• (1250)

[Translation]

There are five main stages in the process.

[English]

Step one was launched on January 20. This was an advance notice that a competition was going to be launched. The intent was really to allow the industry to get ready, and there has been a lot of interest to this point.

Step two is the launch of the request for qualifications. Based on the submissions, a maximum of 12 respondents will be invited to the competition. At this time the jury members—the architectural and general juror segments—would also be announced.

Step three would be the first stage of the competition. Each competitor will submit a design concept, and based on the jury's assessment, up to six design concepts would proceed to the second stage.

The fourth step is the second and final stage of the competition. Each remaining competitor will submit an advanced design concept. Based on the jury's assessment, the winner—or competition laureate—will be recommended to the minister of public services

and procurement. The final step will be to negotiate a contract with the winner.

[Translation]

The entire process is expected to take approximately 16 months from the launch of the request for qualifications. Construction is expected to begin approximately two years after the selection of the architect, in other words, in summer 2023.

[English]

In conclusion, on this slide you can see that, as with the Centre Block and the visitor welcome centre, there are also a number of considerations with this work, beginning with how Parliament and parliamentarians would like to participate in the design competition, and whether parliamentarians would like to participate in any way. We believe this is an important point in the long-term vision and plan, and it presents an opportunity for parliamentarians to get engaged on shaping the future of your precinct together.

[Translation]

Thank you very much for your attention, Madam Chair and committee members. We are ready to answer your questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you to all the witnesses for the wonderful presentation, and I think it's a lot for everyone to digest.

Since we've decided that we're going to hold a separate meeting for questions, I just want to bring up a few reminders for the committee.

First of all, I want to remind everyone that we have the informal meeting with MP Harmon from the U.K. at 9:30 on Feb 20 in this room 125-B. There were also invitations sent out from the British high commissioner for a reception, and I believe everybody received those. It's up to you to respond; it's not an official committee thing, but I just wanted to highlight that it was sent out and that there's a reception on Wednesday evening for that.

When it comes to the tour of Centre Block on Thursday, there are a few people who haven't responded back with the shoe sizes that are required. The clerk will come to you and find out about that. There's also an issue about the number of participants we can have in that tour. We've been informed that the group can't be too big and can't accommodate everyone having a staff member come along. I just wanted to find out from the committee how to resolve this issue. We have space for all of the members, the analysts, the translators, the clerk and maybe a few more additional people, but not too many more.

Are there any ideas what we could do?

Yes.

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor:** I'm not available for the tour this week because I have another committee I have to attend, but I am wondering if, for those of us who cannot attend, a staff member could attend on our behalf.

• (1255)

**The Chair:** I believe you and I think another member can't attend on Thursday.

Monsieur Therrien?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** I won't be able to be here on Thursday. It's impossible.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Would you like your staff to attend on your behalf?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** No, it's okay. I'm working with my staff right now.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We can definitely accommodate that for you.

Yes, Mr. Gerretsen?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I'm just curious what, for lack of a better expression, the rules of engagement are on the tour. Are we allowed to document and discuss what we've seen? Are we allowed to take pictures and that kind of stuff?

**Mr. Rob Wright:** I don't see any restrictions mapped out. This is meant to be an opening engagement with parliamentarians.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Maybe if we suggested that one staff person from each.... I don't know how many you have...but what about one staff person from each of the political parties?

**The Chair:** There was a suggestion that was made that perhaps the staff of the steering committee could come. That would essentially be one member from each party.

Maybe the witnesses can help us decide. What is the maximum cap that you would be able to accommodate on this tour, so that we could figure this out?

**Mr. Rob Wright:** Usually for these types of tours, up to 30 is quite manageable. When you start to extend beyond that, it becomes difficult to manage, and there are some health and safety considerations to take into account. We're not deep into construction at this point, but there are still some considerations to keep in mind.

**The Chair:** My understanding originally was that it was a lot smaller than that, about 20. I think with 30 we might be able to accommodate a lot more, so we'll circulate an email and figure that out. Thirty might not be a problem at all, because right now with the committee members, even with the two absences, the analysts, the clerk and the translators, we have about 15, and then if we were to have the staff, I think we could...potentially our group would be 30. We would keep it within that cap, so we'll figure that out.

Is 30 okay?

**Mr. Rob Wright:** We can make that work.

**The Chair:** Okay, perfect.

I believe that's it for today.

Is everyone okay with adjourning for today?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.







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