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# Board of Internal Economy

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• (1105)

[Translation]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia (Speaker of the House of Commons):** Good morning.

Welcome to this first meeting of the Board of Internal Economy. Obviously, this is our first meeting since the election. It is also my first time chairing the board. I know that several members have been on the board before, so they have much more experience than I do. I will count on them to help me out as we go forward.

[English]

I'd like to welcome our new board members.

[Translation]

They are Ms. Kayabaga, Mr. Warkentin and Mr. Perron.

I also want to welcome back to the board Mr. Gerretsen and Mr. MacKinnon.

[English]

Before we proceed, I'd like to confirm the appointments of our two spokespersons, one from the government and one from the official opposition.

Who are they?

• (1774592310)

**Eric Janse (Clerk of the House of Commons):** We're seeking names, one from the government side and one from the opposition side.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. MacKinnon will be the spokesperson for the government side.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Yes.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** And for the opposition?

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (House Leader of the Official Opposition):** I'd like to nominate my colleague, Mr. Warkentin.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Perfect, that's settled.

Let's now proceed to our agenda. The first item is business arising from previous meetings. There are a good number of documents in this section of your briefing books based on decisions taken and information shared since the last BOIE meeting several months ago. I'd like to draw your attention to two documents in particular.

First, there is a letter concerning membership for the SIAO. What does that stand for?

**Eric Janse:** It stands for strategic internal assessment of operations.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Thank you.

The letter concerns membership for the SIAO subcommittee and the long-term vision and plan working group.

For parties that have not yet done so, please confirm your members for these groups as quickly as possible. While the SIAO subcommittee will only meet in the fall, the LTVP working group will be meeting on June 20.

Second, I would like to raise the letter from Mr. Davies concerning resources for the NDP caucus. I understand that there have been some discussions on the matter. Would anyone like to speak to it? No? Okay.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Could somebody maybe just summarize the ask, to get the conversation going?

**Eric Janse:** I followed up with Mr. Davies as to his letter, and he indicated to me that he had spoken to each of the House leaders. He was not seeking to appear before the BOIE; he would not have a submission. He said that he had spoken to the House leaders regarding his proposal and that he left it in your hands. I'm not privy to what he was proposing.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. MacKinnon, please go ahead.

[Translation]

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** We, on our side, are certainly open to discussing a temporary solution to the situation. I'm not sure whether the discussions are far enough along for us to have a debate, but I do think the matter is still something the board needs to discuss.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Do some of you wish to talk more about it with Mr. Davies?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** For our part, we remain open to discussing the matter.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** As of now, nothing has been settled and there isn't anything to report.

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** No. I don't think we have a formal proposal to adopt anything today, even if there was consensus. There have been discussions and we're open to considering it, but I don't think we're in a position to adopt something as a board today.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Okay.

Go ahead, Monsieur Perron.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron (Whip of the Bloc Québécois):** On our side, we have started looking at permanent changes that could be made in order to deal with this kind of situation, but I don't think we're in a position to propose something this morning. We are still waiting for some answers. The situation in the future could look a lot different from the situation we have now.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** We'll wait, then, until you have a proposal for us to debate.

I would like to report to the board, pursuant to subsection 52.1(2) of the Parliament of Canada Act, that my predecessor as Speaker provided the required certifications on behalf of the board during the dissolution period for the Governor General to issue a special warrant for the payment of House of Commons expenditures. This information was shared with board members in letters dated March 24 and April 16.

As I understand it, that brings us to the second item on the agenda.

[English]

We will now discuss the LTVP working group. We'll have an update.

Our presenters from the House of Commons are Tom Kmiec, chair of the working group on the LTVP and the Centre Block rehabilitation, and Benoit Dicaire, chief information officer. From Public Services and Procurement Canada, we have Jennifer Garrett, assistant deputy minister.

The floor is yours.

**Tom Kmiec (Chair, Working Group on the LTVP and the Centre Block Rehabilitation, House of Commons):** Thank you, Speaker.

I have a statement to read out, so bear with me while I go through it. I'm also new to this committee.

As the new chair of the LTVP working group, I would like to begin by thanking Chris d'Entremont for his leadership and contributions during his tenure as chair.

I'm here today to update the board on the progress of the Centre Block rehabilitation project and the work of the working group since we last provided an update on May 2, 2024. There have been regular meetings to review detailed information on several topics under the LTVP, and we are seeking the board's consideration and approval on two of those items today. This will keep the approval process for key decisions in line with the project schedule.

In that regard, we are seeking the board's endorsement on the following key items.

The first is for the board to endorse the House of Commons' long-term requirements reflected in the 2024 update to the long-term vision and plan, and confirm that the proposed guiding principles

and framework support the House of Commons' requirements for the parliamentary precinct and campus.

The second is an endorsement of a dedicated space in the Centre Block fourth floor central courtyard infill to be used as an indigenous cultural ceremony space.

[Translation]

The original long-term vision and plan, the LTVP, was developed and approved in 2001, and last updated in 2006. The LTVP is a framework for the rehabilitation and modernization of Canada's parliamentary precinct campus. The LTVP is delivered by Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, in partnership with the parliamentary partners.

Several of the primary objectives of the 2006 LTVP will soon have been completed, and the rehabilitation of Centre Block is well under way.

In 2017, PSPC was directed to update the 2006 version of the LTVP with an overarching goal of transforming the current precinct into an integrated campus for Parliament. The culmination of these efforts is reflected in the 2024 LTVP, which provides the direction to guide changes now and over the next 50-year planning horizon.

The 2024 LTVP also provides the flexibility to react to new opportunities and unforeseen situations. It aims to coordinate individual projects within the larger campus context, while also allowing for interpretation and evolution.

The working group has reviewed the guiding principles and key frameworks in the plan, and their feedback has been incorporated. The working group is satisfied that the proposed updated version of the LTVP takes into consideration members' need to be supported in their work on the parliamentary precinct campus. A copy of the final document was included as part of your briefing material for today's meeting.

The LTVP update also addresses key operational requirements, including parking. The working group reviewed the parking framework, and recognized its importance in maintaining safe, efficient and accessible parliamentary operations. The plan outlines that a minimum of 123 surface parking spaces must be maintained in close proximity to the Centre Block to support operations. It also emphasizes that parking design must consider evolving needs such as increased member numbers, security and accessibility—including compliance with the Accessible Canada Act.

● (1774592315)

We are therefore asking the Board of Internal Economy to endorse that the House of Commons requirements are reflected in the 2024 update to the LTVP, and that the proposed guiding principles and frameworks support the House of Commons requirements in the parliamentary precinct and campus.

[English]

At the last LTVP update that my predecessor had provided to the board, you had asked that the working group reconsider the use and naming of the dedicated shared space on the fourth floor of the central courtyard infill in Centre Block. The board did grant approval for building design to progress in support of such a space but felt further discussion was needed regarding its name and future use.

The working group took note of the status update and recommends that the proposed space on level 4 of the Hall of Honour infill be dedicated to indigenous ceremonial activities. The working group further recommends that we return to the board closer to the Centre Block completion with a recommendation for an endorsement of an official name for the space.

In conclusion, I would note that the working group has been actively engaged in discussions and consultations on Centre Block chamber seating options. This key decision is complex. Seating options need to remain within the heritage footprint while accommodating future members. The decision presents a substantial challenge that will require changes to how we function in the chamber today. All party caucuses have been consulted and have begun testing real-life mock-ups to inform development. Once viable options are available, the board will be engaged.

[Translation]

Planning is also under way for a meeting with Senate colleagues to discuss a potential single-phase rehabilitation of the Confederation Building.

The working group remains confident that the long-term needs and operational requirements of parliamentarians are being thoroughly addressed across all LTVP programs. To maintain strong engagement and direct input from parliamentarians, the House officers, in consultation with their party leadership, will be asked to designate caucus representatives for the LTVP working group.

The working group's proposed forward agendas for the fall/winter 2025-26 sessions are included in your BOIE meeting materials. A June meeting of the working group is scheduled.

The people beside me would be happy to take your questions.

Thank you.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Thank you, Mr. Kmiec.

Go ahead, Mr. MacKinnon.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Kmiec. Welcome to the working group. Anyone who has been part of the group can tell you that we have a lot of work ahead of us, as you can see. We appreciate all the hard work the people at PSPC and others are doing on this. As I understand it, we're going to have to make or review numerous decisions in the next few months. This is a very important project.

At this point, we wholeheartedly support the work under way and endorse the initiatives you just described. We look forward to continuing this work with you.

[English]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Scheer, go ahead.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** I know that there was a fair bit of discussion in the fall on parking spaces close to Centre Block; you've highlighted that. It looks like you're preserving that, but then I see in other areas that there's going to be a significant reduction in parking spaces.

Is that correct?

**Jennifer Garrett (Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Services and Procurement Canada):** I'll provide a little context to the answer.

The strategic plan that you're being asked to approve today prioritizes parliamentary operations, and security is a key factor in ensuring that parking, among other things, is provided to parliamentarians so that operations can continue. In that vein, I can confirm that we were able to secure the 123 spaces. That is embedded in the long-term vision and plan.

At the same time, Parliament Hill is a place that welcomes visitors. Millions of visitors come to see this national historic site. Our intention is to continuously protect parliamentary operations. There are a lot of moving files on the Hill. It does not mean there will not be impacts to parking over time.

For example, we have on the books the completion of a material handling facility in support of parliamentary operations. That kind of footprint will have an impact on parking on the Hill. The exact number of parking spaces is to be determined. It is not known at this time, but rest assured that we work very closely with the parliamentary administrations to maximize parking, and to privilege parliamentary operations and parliamentarians' parking. At the same time, we continue to move the program forward, which is essential to support broader parliamentary operations.

We believe we've protected parking prioritization within the plan. We just have to keep working together with the parliamentary administrations to minimize parking impacts as the long-term vision and plan and associated projects roll out.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Is that a yes?

**Jennifer Garrett:** We'll do our best to maintain parking. I cannot promise the board that there will not be reductions to parking, but those reductions would be sacrificed at the full endorsement of Parliament and the parliamentary administrations, and in accordance with delivery of program requirements that support parliamentary operations.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** In fairness, though, it's not that you can't commit to parking not being reduced; it's that you're planning on reducing a great number of spaces. If I look at the pictures that you have on page 123, all the parking spaces behind Confed and Justice are going to be turned into green spaces. That's in one of the diagrams here.

**Jennifer Garrett:** We are planning to balance green space. Confed is an active parliamentary building, and it is in the location where Confederation will go under rehabilitation.

As an example, it is the worst-performing building in the portfolio and requires rehabilitation in the mid-2030s time frame. The parking spaces adjacent to it will have to go down as part of a rehabilitation program for a lay-down area to support the rehabilitation of that building. The future material handling site is also in that proximity.

I promise you that we are not going to prioritize green spaces over parking spaces, but what we may have to prioritize, in collaboration with you and with your endorsement, is a realignment and potential reduction of parking on the Hill in support of project delivery to revitalize your campus.

• (1774592320)

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** I'm looking at page 73. I know this is probably an artist's concept, but this would be a massive reduction in parking spaces just for green space. I also note that on page 72, between "2024 and the early 2030s, PSPC forecast approximately 1,500 parking spaces—more than 50% of the required supply for Parliament—will be relocated".

Now it's one thing if you're going to be doing construction, so you need parking spaces to park heavy equipment, but it's another thing if you're planning on permanently converting existing parking for other uses. It says "relocated". I'm not aware of any plans to build extra parking capacity. What does "relocated" mean?

How do you square that with what you just said about how you're not going to purposefully reduce parking in the document you provided? It's forecasting a 50% reduction. That's pretty substantial, especially as we've added seats in the last two redistributions and will likely do so again in the next one.

**Jennifer Garrett:** I'll go backwards to go forwards.

The total parking requirement there supports not just parliamentarians but also the parliamentary administrations. At the end of the day, we will not sacrifice any parking spaces to support green space because parliamentary operations are primordial in our planning. I cannot promise you, sir, that we will not have to impact Parliament. We do project a reduction in parking, but it will be in support of executing the long-term vision and plan, in support of delivering capital project delivery.

For example, we cannot deliver the Confed rehabilitation, which is not much needed in a future prioritized project for us, without likely impacting the adjacent parking lot. We have mechanisms and we're constantly checking the market. If we cannot provide enough parking on the Hill...and obviously the parking on the Hill would be privileged towards parliamentarians over the administration. We do think that we're going to be able to provide parking spaces on the Hill for all those parliamentarians who need it. We may have to

push some of the administration parking off the Hill. We already have demonstrated experience in doing that. We have parking arrangements off the Hill, and we would lease or provide those accommodations in as close proximity as we can.

That's the best answer I can provide right now. If, at the end of the day, Parliament doesn't want to proceed with some aspects of the modernization because parking is more important, we're happy to look at that with you, but the execution of the long-term vision and plan is fully coordinated with the parliamentary administrations and done under the guidance of the parliamentary working group and this committee.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** I'd like to take another couple of cracks at this.

I take your point. We've all seen what happens. If you're rehabilitating Confed, scaffolding goes up and big cranes get parked. That makes sense, but to me that would be temporary, and once Confed is finished, those pieces of equipment and support structures would be removed and that parking would become available again. Are you planning on constructing new buildings in places where there is existing parking?

**Jennifer Garrett:** The only new building that is planned right now on the north side of Wellington—in other words, on Parliament Hill—other than the rehabilitation programs, is the future material handling node. It is sort of to the west, in behind the Confed building. We don't know the actual lay-down of that, but it could have an impact on numbers of parking spaces ultimately. It is the only planned building under the long-term vision and plan on the Hill right now.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** That should be the only thing that would remove parking spaces?

**Jennifer Garrett:** Over the long term, yes.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Where does the 50% of existing supply go for one building?

**Jennifer Garrett:** The long-term vision and plan has been a multidecade undertaking. The construction of Canada's Parliament welcome centre and the Centre Block, as well as the launch of block two, were the pinnacles of the last update, but we're not finished with the modernization of parliamentary operations. The future state of putting in campus infrastructure with things like tunnels and material handling, and completing the rehabilitations of core assets like Confederation and the East Block, will take more than a decade and cover the timeline that is covered in this update. It is really those construction efforts and that modernization effort that we believe, over the course of the short to medium term—and I'm couching "medium term" as the 10-year time frame—will be the parking impact.

● (1774592325)

[Translation]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Go ahead, Mr. Perron.

**Yves Perron:** Good morning.

Welcome, Mr. Chair, to the Board of Internal Economy. This is my first time on the board as well, and I'm very glad to be here.

I want to start by recognizing the fine work that has been accomplished by the working group. When you read the material closely, it's clear that the work has been planned out carefully and earnestly. Also, the overall direction seems to me to be very well-thought-out and on good footing, so "well done", I say, to the working group.

At this stage, we are pretty comfortable, on our side, endorsing the advancement of the work and overall direction.

I'm glad to hear you say that the indigenous room will be a dedicated space for indigenous people, as agreed to by the working group on two occasions. We are in total agreement on that.

Now, you and Mr. Scheer had a lengthy discussion about parking, so I want to make sure I understood everything. It is important that parliamentarians and their staff be able to come to the Hill at any hour and park their vehicle. Please correct me if I misunderstood what you said, but I gather that parking could be reconfigured in a decade or so. In that case, alternative spots would be planned. On the whole, the provision of 123 surface parking spaces in close proximity to Centre Block is secure for now. If it turned out that spaces had to be removed, they would not disappear but would be relocated. Did I understand that correctly?

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** The floor is yours, Ms. Garrett.

[English]

**Jennifer Garrett:** Yes. If I may, you've absolutely got the right message.

On the 123 spaces, there's been a lot of coordination with the National Capital Commission. We expect that the 123 will be adjacent to Centre Block upon reopening, and we don't expect any future impact to that. We expect that to be a long-term situation, and any displacement of parking to support execution of the program is a temporary measure. We will adjust it accordingly and work with the parliamentary administrations to mitigate the impact. It will be relocated back to the extent that we can, based on the footprints that land at the end of the day with those new projects.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** That's great. Thank you very much for clarifying that.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Gerretsen, you have the floor.

[English]

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen (Chief Government Whip):** Thank you, Speaker

I have a question that came to me when I was listening to the exchange with Mr. Scheer. What currently is the ratio of parliamentary parking versus administrative parking on the Hill? Is it fifty-fifty or sixty-forty?

**Jennifer Garrett:** I could get you an actual number and bring it back, but if I just look at the number of parliamentarians we have today and the number of senators—and not all those senators have offices on the Hill—you're looking at somewhere in the range of 450 if we were to provide parking on the Hill for parliamentarians. There's almost triple that in terms of spaces allocated on the Hill. The ratio of administrative parking to parliamentary parking is probably about two-thirds to one-third.

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen:** I am impressed in the interest in parking on the Hill from the member from Saskatchewan. As somebody who is only an hour and a half away, I genuinely appreciate Mr. Scheer's passion for protecting parking on the Hill.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** The war on the car needs to end.

[Translation]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Does anyone else have anything to add on this topic?

If I understand correctly, we have two....

Just a minute, I think Mr. Scheer would like to say something.

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** I have a few more questions.

On page 110, it says that vehicular circulation on Wellington Street must be reassessed. Are we being asked to endorse as a board or as a Parliament a car-free Wellington Street? We've already seen what the City of Ottawa has done with bike lanes, which have completely turned Wellington Street into a parking lot. Maybe that's the answer: We can all park on Wellington Street. It's basically a parking lot between 3 and 5:30 with the bike lanes that they've put on there.

I know that in previous discussions there have been ideas floated. I think we've even received some correspondence from the City of Ottawa at various times, proposing things like blocking off Wellington entirely to vehicular traffic in front of the Hill.

Are we being asked to endorse that here?

● (1774592330)

[Translation]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Ms. Garrett or Mr. Dicaire, can you answer that question?

[English]

**Benoit Dicaire (Chief Information Officer, House of Commons):** Maybe I'll start and then Jennifer can complete my answer.

Sir, I just want to reassure you that Parliament has been advocating very much for any changes that would happen to Wellington Street to be coordinated with us and exposed through the working group and through the board. As you know, there are many stakeholders in this equation: not just PSPC, but friends at the National Capital Commission.

There sometimes seems to be a misalignment between the different plans that target these areas. This continues to be a source of concern for the administration on our side, and we're working extensively with our partners at PSPC to try to address some of those misalignments to ensure, again, that as the plan is built right now, it prioritizes parliamentary operations and security over other plans such as the NCC core area plan and these other plans that might have a misalignment with those target objectives on our side.

Jennifer, maybe you want to answer.

**Jennifer Garrett:** To answer directly, no, you're not being asked to approve a closure of Wellington today as part of this plan. Having said that, one of the key drivers of the current plan that you are being asked to approve is the fact that security is a key focus of it. That is one of the big changes.

The other thing that has changed, which is key in terms of where the long-term vision and plan is heading, is with the growth of Parliament under the Fair Representation Act and with the capital program that's ongoing, whether it be block two redevelopment or the Centre Block redevelopment. About 50% of parliamentarians, when those projects come back online, will be located south of Wellington. Essentially, Wellington will be right in the centre of what is becoming a parliamentary campus.

To that end, we are very focused on making sure that parliamentarians are safe and secure. I think it is fair to say that, from an executive branch perspective, PSPC has been in negotiations with the City of Ottawa to potentially acquire Wellington in the three city blocks that are adjacent to Parliament. It would, in our view, create an enhanced security posture for Parliament. Those negotiations remain ongoing, and the plan is flexible one way or the other. Whether or not the street is acquired, we will ensure the campus is secure and those parliamentarians working on the other side of Wellington remain secure. For example, the tunnels plan that's envisioned is a mitigating measure.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Is it the stated purpose of PSPC to acquire Wellington Street? Are they in an exploratory phase or is it an actual objective that the government is trying to pursue?

**Jennifer Garrett:** We're in explorations with the City of Ottawa and we keep the parliamentary administrations well informed of those explorations.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Perron, please go ahead.

[Translation]

**Yves Perron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to say something on the same topic, Ms. Garrett and Mr. Dicaire.

I think enhancing security on Wellington Street is a very good idea, if only to prevent the difficulties that members have had when travelling between their office and Parliament. Just recently, mem-

bers of my party told me that, on their walk to their office, they once again saw alternative media representatives that were fairly aggressive. It came close to physical aggression.

I would like that to be reflected in the record. It is music to my ears to hear you say this morning that you are working to enhance security for members on the Hill. I am not opposed to the idea of tunnels. To be honest, I read that section carefully and found it interesting. On the other hand, forcing members to use tunnels at certain times would be unfortunate. If we can reach an agreement with the City of Ottawa to maintain security and calm on the parliamentary precinct, our party would certainly be in favour of that. I wanted to make that point.

• (1774592335)

[English]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Go ahead, Mr. Warkentin.

**Chris Warkentin (Chief Opposition Whip):** Thank you.

On page 119 of the backgrounder, we have a sentence that says, "Based on the engagements to date, the design of open spaces should seek to avoid colonial references." What does that mean?

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** That is for Ms. Garrett, I imagine, or Mr. Dicaire.

**Jennifer Garrett:** Sir, are you referring to the actual update? I'm not tracking the reference. I don't have a backgrounder. I just have the actual strategy.

**Chris Warkentin:** Yes. It's the update, the draft.

**Jennifer Garrett:** Okay. It's the actual draft.

Could you repeat your question, sir?

**Chris Warkentin:** Yes.

It says that there will be an effort to "seek to avoid colonial references" with regard to the "open spaces". Is that code for removing statues or architecture?

**Jennifer Garrett:** Absolutely not; it's not our reference at all.

I would be remiss if I weren't transparent with the committee that the Queen Elizabeth equestrian statue that was temporarily relocated to the area adjacent to the Governor General's residence, and the "Famous Five" statue—I apologize if I have the official name incorrect—presently outside the Senate of Canada building, have been very popular in their present locations. We are exploring potential opportunities to leave them where they are because of the interest they have had in their new locations. It would also be a minor cost saving to us, but that's not the driver.

We intend to have a fulsome commemorations plan with statues. There is a plan under the landscape plan we delivered last February to bring all statues, including those two, if they are to be relocated, back into their locations, as well as for additional spaces for future commemorations.

**Chris Warkentin:** We've established what this does not mean. What does it mean?



**Jennifer Garrett:** Parliament Hill rests on Algonquin territory. Part of our approach to reconciliation and where we are in terms of a modern Parliament is to try to tell stories from all Canadians, all representations. It's just a reflection that tries to represent a broader view and diversity of potential opportunities for the Hill.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Scheer, go ahead please.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Can you give an example of something that would qualify as a colonial reference?

**Jennifer Garrett:** I honestly would hesitate.

I hesitate to identify what would be representative of a colonial reference, because it depends on the perspective of the individual who is bringing the proposal to the table, but obviously, if we look at indigenous peoples, they would see some of the work we've done on the Hill or some of the statuary, potentially.... I am not indigenous, right? I feel very uncomfortable speaking to it, but I would think that they might think some of the statuary or sculptural programs that we have might be colonial in nature, or they also might see that they might not be represented. I truly do not want to speak for them.

[Translation]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Okay.

Over to Mr. Perron.

**Yves Perron:** As a former history teacher, I would like to answer Mr. Scheer's question.

Mr. Scheer, I will give you a very simple example of a colonial reference, and I hope it will be clear enough. Old history books were written in such a way to say, for instance, that Jacques Cartier discovered America, which is not true, because America existed before that. It is all a question of the way the information is presented. They should have said that Jacques Cartier arrived in a certain year and met the indigenous peoples who were already here.

Ms. Garrett, correct me if I am wrong, but it is all a question of how the information is presented, without erasing history. I raised my hand to speak because I want to make sure that we do not decide to erase sections of history. Rather, the key is that history must be presented in a way that respects all the nations that currently occupy Canadian territory, in 2025, including Quebec and the other provinces. So the information has to be presented in a way that is not offensive to the first nations and that does not represent them as in any way inferior. That has often been a problem in the past. This has been recognized now though. I think the reconciliation process and the space set aside for indigenous cultural ceremonies reflect that awareness.

I would like Ms. Garrett to reassure me that I have understood correctly, that history will not be erased and that monuments will not disappear. In some cases, though, perhaps we will have to change the descriptive plaque on a monument. That can be done, although I don't have any specific examples for you.

• (1774592340)

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** You may answer, Ms. Garrett.

[English]

**Jennifer Garrett:** That is absolutely the situation. It's more about augmenting our history. If we were going to reinterpret an interpretation—and this is where I will rely on House of Commons administrative colleagues—it would not be in the actual PSPC purview to do that. If there are sculptural elements up on the Hill, in the interior of the building, as an example, the curators and the parliamentary administrations would be responsible for any reinterpretation.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Go ahead, Mr. Warkentin.

**Chris Warkentin:** I think I'm more confused than ever on the issue now, because you made it very clear that there would be no removal of any statuary, and then you went on to say that this was to describe an opportunity to respond to those who might be offended by statuary. I'm probably more confused than I was when I first read this.

It's included that, as it's written, "the design of open spaces should seek to avoid colonial references". That's not to say that we would have additional plaques. That's to say that we would avoid having any reference at all. Maybe this is the wrong text, but that's what it says.

**Jennifer Garrett:** I apologize if I'm not being clear. I'm going to try one more time to be extremely clear to convey my message.

I do not believe the text is wrong.

I'll step back and say that all of Parliament Hill, including the iconic Centre Block building, tells a story on its own. The building is beloved to us, to Canada. The commemorations on it, the sculptures in it and all the ancillary buildings make and are part of and key to Canada's history and story to date.

As we move forward as a nation, one of the ideas that we're trying to instill is that we are a democracy that is filled with Canadians from various backgrounds. People who are indigenous or from other places all make up Canada. Part of the role that we're trying to play—totally under the authority of the parliamentary administrations in Parliament—is to try to tell Canada's story in this place. The good news is that the building, the landscape, will provide those opportunities to tell those stories. Parliament will have full approval authority on what those stories are. It is within their purview to identify the themes and the storylines associated with them. One of the principles that we have been working on together is to find things that bring Canadians together, not things that separate us.

When we talk about where we're headed on the Hill.... For example, I'll give you the design approach that we're taking for the narrative for the new Parliament welcome centre. It is really a design thematic that when Canadians come to visit, they will see themselves connected to this, regardless of where they're from in this country or what their backgrounds are. The goal that we see for the designs that we're pursuing and the decorative framework that comes with them—which, again, is done in collaboration and under the purview of Parliament—is under that context. It is simply that; it's no more.

• (1774592345)

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Gerretsen, please go ahead.

**Hon. Mark Gerretsen:** Very quickly, I would just say that, in the spirit of this discussion, I think of Bellevue House in Kingston. Bellevue House was one of Sir John A. Macdonald's homes. I grew up going there. Throughout elementary school, we would go to Bellevue House and learn about the history of Sir John A. Macdonald, the creation of Canada, etc.

About five or six years ago—I think it was under the purview of PSPC—Bellevue House was completely modernized because, quite frankly, it was very old and needed to be. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to update the history in terms of the presentation of the history, not in terms of changing history. An incredibly good job was done by—I hesitate to say PSPC—the federal government in collaboration with indigenous communities to tell a fuller story of what happened in our country's history, Sir John A.'s role in that and indigenous communities' role in that rather than tell a story that started 175 years ago. It's a story that started much earlier than that.

Here's a shameless plug for visiting Kingston, but if you ever have the opportunity to visit and want to see a great way that the story has been presented in terms of what the indigenous contribution was to Kingston in conjunction with the good, the bad and the ugly of Sir John A. Macdonald, I would encourage everybody to see that. The reopening of it was well received by historians and indigenous peoples, and it is one of the showcases in the city of Kingston that tells that history of Canada.

If you're able to present in any way like was done there, I think that it would be quite successful.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Scheer, please go ahead.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** You mentioned that the statue of the late Queen Elizabeth II, the equestrian statue, is very popular where it is now. How do you measure that? How do you measure that against how popular it was when it was on the precinct?

I have a supplementary question: Who owns that? Is that owned by the Parliament of Canada? Is it owned by Canadian Heritage or by the Department of Public Works and Government Services?

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Ms. Garrett.

**Jennifer Garrett:** We're taking our feedback from the Governor General and the National Capital Commission. The former governor general actually requested that the statue remain, given the popularity it had with people and the feedback they were getting from visitors to their site. It seemed to be the appropriate home for it. We're taking our cue from that.

We've revalidated that with the current administration of the Governor General. There are efforts under way to do the appropriate check-ins to see if this is something that should be undertaken. Should we return the statue to the Hill or should it stay where it is? That was done in consultation with the working group. We did a check-in before we initiated those engagements.

I'd have to come back to you, sir, on who owns the statue. I've been very focused on the approval process to make this happen. What I can tell you is that the approval of Buckingham Palace was

required to relocate the statue to its temporary location, and the approval of Buckingham Palace would be required to return it back to the Hill. We could come back to you on that.

PCH has a big role in commemorations on the Hill, but the statues are owned by various parties, so I'd have to come back to you on who owns that particular statue, and I'd be happy to do so.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Would it be possible to send a note to the committee answering these questions with the historical context? It's very fascinating.

[Translation]

If there is nothing further, we will now turn to the dual task before us. First we must approve the 2024 long-term vision and plan for the parliamentary precinct.

Are we agreed on what has been said about the LTVP?

• (1774592350)

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Before I make a decision on this, I would like some assurances that because of the ambiguity around some of the terms that were used, it might mean....

My colleague from Kingston brought up a very specific example that he hoped would inspire this long-term vision planning. With Bellevue House, there's quite a lot of controversy around those changes and some of the characterizations of John A. Macdonald that were certainly not a unifying presentation of our first Prime Minister.

My question is whether there will be future opportunities for this board to weigh in as things get finalized. I understand there's a lot of spending required for this plan. We don't want to hold that up and increase costs for things that we all agree on, like hard assets and the refurbishment of buildings, but when it comes to things like the number of parking spaces and exactly what "avoiding colonial references" might mean, will this board have opportunities to weigh in before plaques get installed and parking spaces get torn up?

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** My understanding is that those discussions would go through the subcommittee and then come back to the board.

[Translation]

It seems we have a consensus to approve the 2024 long-term vision and plan.

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Would there be agreement to include some kind of message back to the various stakeholders working on this that a planned or, at least, a stated possibility of a reduction in parking spaces by 50% has raised serious concerns and is not something that we would like to see happen by accident?

[Translation]

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** I think it is reasonable to include that in the record.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Our second task is to approve the creation of a space for indigenous cultural ceremonies. Are we agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Let us now move on to the third item on the agenda: updates to the acceptable use of information technology resources policy.

I will hand it over to Mr. Dicaire.

[English]

**Benoit Dicaire:** Good morning, everyone.

I'm here today to seek your approval for updates to the acceptable use of information technology resources policy. In addition, I'm seeking your support in our efforts to increase adoption rates in cybersecurity and foreign interference training for members and their staff.

The current policy was endorsed by the board in 2014. It applies to everyone using the provided House of Commons accounts and associated technology resources. The policy is based on the principle that House IT resources are used in a professional, ethical and lawful manner. Its objective sets the direction for proper use of House technology resources by all House-provided account holders and sets clear standards for users to follow while contributing to safeguarding the House's confidential information, maintaining data integrity and bolstering the overall cybersecurity posture in support of parliamentary operations.

[Translation]

Drafted in 2014, our policy has been an important tool for protecting the organization and its users up until now. Since it was adopted, however, various things have changed, requiring us to update it to reflect the current context. In particular, our technological environment has changed a great deal. Further, the cyber-threat landscape has radically changed as regards foreign interference and social media. In addition, the advent of artificial intelligence has changed our working methods. The Board of Internal Economy has also made decisions on high-risk travel under ParlVoyage. Finally, we have established new policies, such as the information management policy for the House Administration, and we have developed new information security classification standards. The proposed update of the policy reflects the current context.

The process for managing cases of non-compliance remains unchanged in this new version.

● (1774592355)

[English]

As for our training requests, the threat landscape is constantly evolving, and so are the ways we need to protect ourselves and the House to ensure we stay ahead of emerging threats and foreign in-

terference efforts and maintain a secure environment in support of parliamentary operations.

It is critical that, in partnership with my colleague the Sergeant-at-Arms and our teams, we get your support as members of the board to increase our adoption rate for this type of training, which is currently elective for members and their staff. Our objective remains that members and their staff complete, at least once per Parliament, our cyber and foreign interference training curriculum.

[Translation]

That concludes my presentation. I will be pleased to respond to your questions and concerns.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Thank you.

Are there any questions? It seems not.

That being the case, is it approved?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** We will now move on to the fourth item on the agenda, the Report to Canadians 2025.

Since we spent a lot of time discussing the second agenda item, and rightly so, I suggest we contact the members of the Board of Internal Economy individually to see whether there is consensus on item 4, the Report to Canadians 2025, and item 7, the conclusion of collective bargaining with the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada. That would be an option to save a bit of time rather than discussing it now, unless anyone wishes to explore it further right now.

Are we agreed?

Are you agreeable to that, Mr. Perron?

**Yves Perron:** That's fine, I'm not opposed to going that route. That said, I'm not sure if all Board members have reviewed these two agenda items, but I don't think they are very controversial. The Report to Canadians 2025, in particular, is very general. As to the conclusion of collective bargaining with the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, I am pleased to see that an agreement was reached before the collective agreement expired. We do not see that often. Hats off to those who worked on that.

I would therefore be willing to approve those two items now, if the other Board members are also willing to do so.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** You make a good point.

Are the Board members willing to approve items 4 and 7?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** We can now move on to the fifth agenda item, the 2024–2025 annual financial report and the approval of budget carry-forward to 2025–2026.

Go ahead, Mr. St George.

**Paul St George (Chief Financial Officer, House of Commons):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today I am presenting the annual financial report of the House of Commons for the year that ended on March 31, 2025. It includes the financial statements audited by KPMG. In addition, I am asking the Board to authorize the carry forward of the operating budget.

With regard to the financial statements and results, the total budget is \$757.9 million. That includes approved authorizations totalling \$665.1 million, and the adjustment to legislative authorities and services received free of charge.

As of March 31, total expenditures were \$740.4 million, leaving a surplus of \$17.5 million. That is primarily the result of lower expenses than planned in the approved members' budget. In addition, expenditures were lower during prorogation.

The administration was therefore able to absorb part of the cost of certain initiatives approved by the Board for which no outside funding had been allocated.

● (1774592400)

[English]

As part of the standard financial process, and with the board's approval, the House carries forward up to 5% of the voted main estimates. For 2024-25 the maximum level amount would be \$22.4 million. As the surplus of \$17.5 million is below this threshold, we are seeking to maximize the carryforward to ensure that we can fully fund initiatives that are important to members and essential to supporting their work.

The carryforward will first be allocated to the budgets of members and House officers as per the MAS. The remainder amount would be allocated to the House administration. The main carryforward amount will be used for initiatives that support members and House operations, such as client experience and operational excellence initiatives, including My Financials, the new expense management system for members; constituency office technology life-cycling; compliance initiatives, such as accessibility; and various other SIAO strategic initiatives.

There is a gap of \$4.9 million between the surplus of \$17.5 million and the maximum allowable amount of \$22.4 million. This amount is also necessary to enable progress on several priority initiatives that directly support members. Some examples of these initiatives are the committee witness program, talent management system, legal filing systems and a modernization of publications and text production life-cycling. Moving forward with these projects is essential to strengthen the core operations, improve service delivery and meet the evolving needs of members and the institution.

It is worth noting that the House also had pressures of \$9.4 million in 2024-25, which were unfunded costs for previously approved board initiatives, such as the economic increases as well as the transformation of parliamentary proceedings. If this administration had external funding for these initiatives, the total surplus would have exceeded the \$22.4 million that we're requesting as part of the submission.

The carryforward mechanism is not limited to the surplus only. The process provides flexibility to fund other initiatives and/or pressures, and we have both. The House also has precedent for this approach. Back in 2019-20, despite a surplus of \$11.3 million, the board approved a full carryforward of \$17.5 million.

In light of this, the administration is seeking the board's approval to carry forward the full \$22.4 million in the House supplementary estimates for 2025-26.

I will now ask Mr. Newman, KPMG audit partner, to present their audit findings.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. Newman.

**Andrew Newman (Audit Partner and Office Manager, KPMG):** Thank you for this opportunity to present our audit opinion on the 2025 financial statements and provide a brief summary of the conduct of our audit.

I would like to introduce my colleague Jonathan Généreux, audit senior manager for the audit.

The chief financial officer has presented the 2025 financial statements, which management has prepared using public sector accounting standards. Public sector accounting standards are used by all governments in Canada and are issued by the Public Sector Accounting Board, upon which I served as a member and vice-chair for 12 years ending in 2020.

KPMG was appointed through a competitive process as the independent auditor of the House of Commons for a five-year period beginning in 2024. Our role as your independent auditors is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether these financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement.

The 2025 financial statement audit began with the development of the audit plan, which was based on multiple discussions with management and the clerk. Our year-end audit was executed in accordance with that plan. During our audit, we received full participation from your House administration: All of our questions were answered, all the required supporting documentation was received and all issues were satisfactorily resolved.

We have completed our audit and issued our audit opinion on June 4, in our independent auditor's report. That opinion states that the "financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the [House of Commons] as at March 31, 2025, and its results of operations, its [accumulated surplus], and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards."

This is the third straight year that the audited financial statements were published in early June. I want to commend House administration for implementing the ongoing financial reporting process received to achieve this date. I also thank the board for scheduling this presentation prior to the summer recess during what is a very busy legislative agenda.

• (1774592405)

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Thank you, Mr. Newman, for your presentation.

Are there any questions or comments before I ask for approval of the proposed budget carryforward?

Mr. Scheer, go ahead.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Thanks very much.

On page 49 of the report, you have a couple of items listed under the \$15.1 million to the House administration. One of them is \$2.4 million for strategic initiatives. Another one is \$2 million for client experience and operational excellence.

Can you just give us a bit of an explanation of both of those items?

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Mr. St George, go ahead.

**Paul St George:** What we had included is part of what I mentioned in my speech: a committee witness program, talent management, the legal filing and modernization of public systems. However, we also included in there funds to support the SIAO, which is really targeted to provide flexibility to the organization as it goes through the reviews of the organizational structure, the resource allocation, etc.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** The strategic review was aimed at, as I recall, having a bit of a deeper dive into some of the growth in various departments in House admin. Is it going to cost \$2.4 million to find efficiencies?

**Paul St George:** As you go through a strategic internal assessment of operations, within there you're going to have consultants to help do the work, but essentially, when the results return to us, there may be costs in terms of executing that plan to the organization, and those have been built in there as a contingency.

**Hon. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Are there any other questions?

Do we have consent to approve the proposed budget carryforward to fiscal year 2025-26?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

It's standard practice for the board to have a brief in camera discussion with the external auditors regarding the year-end statements. I therefore propose that we now move in camera without the House administration's officials.

[Translation]

We will take a short break to move in camera.

I would therefore ask administration staff to leave the room or disconnect from Zoom. Once we have finished, the participants will be invited to come back.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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