



# PENNY thompson

Candidate

City Councillor - Rideau-Rockcliffe

## **We need a better plan for Beechwood.**

Beechwood is our traditional main street. Beechwood services six neighbourhoods; New Edinburgh, Lindenlea, Rockcliffe Park, Manor Park, Cardinal Glen and Vanier. It is an important street and we need to get right. How will Beechwood become an age-friendly, accessible, safe street that is responsibly developed?

Traffic safety and street design are issues on Beechwood. Currently the street does not feel safe nor inviting - for family-owned businesses, for residents or for shoppers. We need to redesign Beechwood, starting with community consultations open to all interested parties.

A strong voice and champion is needed, but most importantly, it needs to be led by someone who is willing to listen to residents and who lives in the area. While there has been consultation in the past, I believe we need to revisit the issue.

The approach to Beechwood has been piecemeal and situational thus far, creating a hodgepodge of merging bike, bus and car lanes that creates congestion and makes everyone feel unsafe. Beechwood's current design forces buses to cut across bike lanes to pick-up passengers, while the walkability of the street is challenging for all but the most adventurous of pedestrians! It is also not accessible or age-friendly, it is no secret that from Hemlock to McKay there is almost no place for someone to sit, rest or relax.

These frustrations are not limited to pedestrians, but are shared by transit users as well. With recent revelations in local news, we all know that harder questions need to be asked about the state of our public transit. However, the current focus on the LRT should not come at the expense of our local routes along Beechwood. We need buses that are reliable and not overcrowded. When public transit no longer makes sense, we all suffer, and it is our most vulnerable populations that are often hit the hardest.

[PennyThompson@rogers.com](mailto:PennyThompson@rogers.com) | 613-851-9623

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Challenging the current design and model will require a paradigm shift. We designed our roads, our communities and our cities predominantly for the single vehicle commuter, but times have changed. Cars will always be a consideration in street design, but now we need a vision that includes a variety of vehicular and active transportation options. It's a Smart City approach.

As more residents are seeking alternative and active modes of transportation, it is our responsibility to have a vision for that future. Implementing smart and safe bike routes that are connected throughout the city, sidewalks that are walkable and accessible to all, and public transportation which is efficient, safe and affordable.

A thoughtful and well-implemented design will make local businesses more accessible to not only residents, but people passing through our neighbourhood. When local businesses are supported, we all benefit.

With a new vision and management, Beechwood will be renewed as a traditional main street. We will effectively deal with the current congestion with a focus on traffic calming, bus routes, and accessibility. We will support our local businesses through smart and family-friendly design. We will make Beechwood better, together.

**Yours in service,**

**Penny Thompson**  
*Candidate for City Councillor,  
Rideau-Rockcliffe*

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