



THE OTTAWA HOSPITAL (OTTAWA)

—PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM IN SUPPORT OF THE
REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OTTAWA HOSPITAL'S CIVIC CAMPUS—

The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) has ambitious plans to rebuild its Civic Campus and create a world-leading health care facility. In November 2014, the federal government announced that it would lease a 60-acre parcel of land to TOH for the purposes of building the new campus. What should have been regarded as a good news story instead caught many stakeholders and community groups by surprise as the land in question was part of the Central Experimental Farm. The announcement generated negative coverage and public sentiment for the project. In early 2016, the newly elected federal government reviewed the land transfer and subsequently implemented a new process to review land options for the Campus.

TOH retained PACE to develop and execute a stakeholder and community engagement program to help it regain public trust in its Campus initiative and to establish the conditions required to initiate productive community discussions about TOH's capital expansion needs. We began the process by mapping out the broad range of stakeholders that stood to be impacted or affected by the new campus, and conducted interviews with key individuals or groups. What we heard was that at its foundation, the engagement program needed to be rooted in integrity, underpinned by principles of openness and transparency, and offer meaningful opportunities for everyone interested in providing input that could truly inform and influence the final outcomes of the Campus initiative.

The strategy was to shift the public discourse from process to vision, with a view to building support for 21st century health care in the National Capital Region. This involved developing clear and convincing messaging to portray TOH's vision and to frame it as an opportunity of a lifetime that needed community support to become reality. The end goal was to regain community acceptance for the initiative, and provide the new government with the social licence to transfer federal land to a provincial body.

The project's challenging history was overcome by directly addressing public concerns for the hospital's land needs, allowing TOH to build up a rapport of trust at the community level, which then would be converted to community support. The program concluded with an announcement in December 2016 of a new 50-acre parcel of land in the city core, supported by elected representatives from all three levels of government. The CBC reported the new Civic Campus as one of the "5 biggest City of Ottawa stories of 2016."