

## There's a stat for that. Open data comes to Ottawa

The Ontario Liberals opened the doors to transparency talks in Ottawa Tuesday afternoon.

The new Open Government project, announced in October, is the Liberals' plan to release large amounts of data to the public. The University of Ottawa was the latest stop in a series of province-wide roundtable discussions.

The raw data ranges from available parking in a city to top baby names and marriage registrations. There's a catalogue of 172 data sets available online now and the public will be able to vote on which set they want to access next.

"The experience of other governments is they pick whatever's the least controversial and the easiest," said John Milloy, the Minister of Government Services. "We're going to go a different route and we're going to start with what's the most valuable to researchers, to the private sector and to journalists."

Jeannette Hatherill, the



Ottawans talk transparency and open data in a roundtable chat at the U of O, Tuesday.

LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO

scholarly communications librarian at Ottawa University, attended Tuesday's talks because she's in the business of providing information.

"We're no longer in an era of information scarcity — we have too much of it," she said. "So my job ... is to figure out how to help our researchers or our students manage this information overload."

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## Orleans. New subdivision could hike LRT ridership



An artist's rendering of a future LRT station. CONTRIBUTED

A new subdivision in Orleans could usher in a slew of transit riders, according to a transportation consultant.

Ron Jack, the vice-president of engineering firm Delcan — hired by the subdivision developer Minto — said he estimates about 45 per cent of the future residents at 850 Champlain St. will use the planned Light Rail Transit (LRT) system.

Jack used his ridership statistics to pitch the project to Ottawa's planning committee meeting Tuesday morning. The planned subdivision includes 472 residential units — in apartment buildings — and eight leaseable office buildings to be built over 20 years.

Lise Picknell, who lives on the street, said she was worried about the traffic flow with the new subdivision.

"It's actually very dangerous to back up right now," she said.

While Orleans Coun. Bob Monette praised the developers for being flexible, he said he would have preferred to see a proposal that brought in more employment opportunities for the district.

"Is this the best proposal? No," said Monette, but added that Orleans has to "move forward."

This project is part of the Orleans Town Centre and it has an employment target of 3,000 jobs, according to the project's draft proposal.

Peter Hume, the chair of the planning committee, said this project is the first subdivision draft proposal since 2007.

The project will go to city council for review.

LUCY SCHOLEY/METRO



A worker installs solar panels on one of Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-op's rooftop solar panel projects. COURTESY GUILLAUME BOUCHARD

# For education's sake, let the sunshine in!

**Solar energy.** Deal between high school and energy co-op means revenue and teaching tool

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Students at Samuel-Genest Catholic High School will learn firsthand what it takes to create electricity when the Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-op (OREC) installs a series of solar panels on the rooftop of the school.

Science teacher Josée Batista can't wait to start using the renewable energy system in her classes — especially the electricity portion of her Grade 9 class.

"There is a lot of talk about

electricity consumption, how do we produce electricity, renewable energy, non-renewable energy and students will be able to use this data, because there will be monitors in the hallway," said Batista.

"I am for sure going to be using the data."

The school agreed to rent the roof to OREC for \$7,500 a year for the next 20 years, but more than the money is the educational opportunity students at the school will be offered.

Batista said she expects the rooftop project to engage the students in understanding what kind of impact they can have on energy consumption.

"I think it's important for them to know that it is not easy producing electricity, but we depend on it a lot," Batista said. "But there are ways of reducing our consumption by raising aware-

ness and making them realize that a 45-minute shower is not the idea."

OREC operations manager Janice Ashworth said the system will produce 91,500-kilowatt-hours per year. That's enough energy to power a small community street for a year.

Ashworth said the project will generate about \$65,000 of revenue every year and the energy created will go directly to powering the community surrounding the school.

"For us, it's a perfect marriage as well, because a good chunk of our mandate and our motivation to create this cooperative was to provide that awareness opportunity to engage people in Ottawa in their renewable energy future," said Ashworth, adding that OREC has six other solar rooftop projects across the city.

### OREC events

- **Samuel-Genest Solar Project Launch.** All are invited to learn about, and become involved in, the 75kW solar project being installed on the roof of the school. Jan. 16, 7-8:30 p.m., 704 Carsons Rd, Samuel-Genest School, Library

- **Powering Up Against Climate Change.** At this event you will hear from graduates of Al Gore's Climate Change Reality Course; meet OREC members, hear how to join Ottawa's clean energy movement; and enjoy a bowl of homemade harvest soup. Jan. 23, 7-9 p.m., HUB Ottawa, 71 Bank St, 6th Floor