



Ottawa taxpayers paying to destroy a cathedral

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OTTAWA --(June 19) -- A coalition trying to prevent a massive commercial complex from being built on the islands near the historic Chaudière Falls says the third annual "It Is Sacred" walk will also protest the granting of municipal tax dollars to the developer.

"This is like Ottawa residents paying millions of dollars to destroy a cathedral," says Algonquin Elder Jane Chartrand, who will be among the leaders of the June 22nd procession from Victoria Island to Parliament Hill. "For thousands of years, Akikodjiwan has been a sacred gathering place for Indigenous peoples. The overwhelming number of Algonquin people in the Ottawa River watershed are opposed to this plan."

Windmill Development Group/Dream plans to construct a \$1.2 billion collection of condos, offices, and commercial space on the 15 hectares of land on Chaudière and Albert Islands. On June 13th, 2018, Ottawa city council voted to grant \$60 million to the developers of the so-called Zibi project, to be primarily used for site cleanup due to soil contamination, the legacy of previous industrial occupants.

"It's incredible to see some of the same civic leaders who applauded Grandfather William Commanda's vision for Akikodjiwan as an Indigenous cultural heritage site now throwing their support behind what amounts to a desecration of it," says Algonquin Elder Albert Dumont. "Breaking promises seems to be a historic habit of Canadian politicians. This proposal violates the federal government's pledge to advance Reconciliation, and its endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

Participants in "**Spirituality is Unity: Walk for our Sacred Site, Akikodjiwan**" will gather at the Booth St. entrance to Victoria Island on Friday, June 22nd at 10 a.m. and begin their procession at 10:30 a.m. to the lawn in front of the Peace Tower (Parliament Hill) for a program of speeches and ceremony at 12 p.m. noon.

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