

DRAFT

NCC's Review of Parkway Policy and Capital Urban Lands Master Plan Perspectives of the Old Ottawa East Community Association

Overview:

Given the impact of the NCC's lands and parkways on the community of Old Ottawa East, one of the four communities constituting "Rideau Island," between the Rideau River and Rideau Canal in central Ottawa, the OOECA welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the National Capital Commission's related reviews of its parkway policy and the Capital Urban Lands Master Plan

OOE's western boundary is Colonel By Drive with its adjacent lands and the eastern boundary is the Rideau River, with NCC lands on the opposite side of the River. Colonel By Drive runs along OOE for about two kilometres between the "stone steps" (Riverdale-Echo – opposite Pig Island) and just north of Concord (where the canal makes its final turn to the iconic Parliament/Chateau Laurier view).

Parkway Policy Review:

These "wonderful anachronisms," as they are described in the review's summary, are very important to OOE residents, given Colonel By Drive is an essential route for residents' active and motorized transportation; many also use Queen Elizabeth Drive. The canal parkways are a vital part of the green and blue landscape of the community. However, the community has seen the two parkways increasingly dominated by motorized traffic, particularly commuters, making it difficult, unsafe and unpleasant to use the linear parks alongside.

OOECA's recommendations for the parkway review are:

1. **Safe Crossings:** For decades, the community has lobbied for safe pedestrian crossings of the parkways and, although there are plans for safe crossings at Colonel By and Clegg and at Queen Elizabeth and Fifth, there are several other locations that also need improved crossings. The steady stream of traffic at peak periods makes it hard for a fully mobile person to cross and virtually impossible for those with disabilities. This serious impediment to accessibility and lack of "permeability" needs further consideration. The NCC was able to quickly construct a safe pedestrian crossing of Colonel By at Hartwell Locks and similar crossings should be built at a number of other locations along the canal parkways.

2. **Safe Cycling and Walking:** Much of the pathway along Colonel By Drive is too narrow, particularly between Clegg and the “stone steps.” The consequence is that cyclists are in serious conflict with pedestrians in this stretch. The fundamental reason for this is the constrained space between the canal wall and the retaining wall on the east side of CBD. The NCC should take two actions to resolve this: create dedicated bike lanes on the parkway itself so that fast road bikes use the roadway rather than the pathway, and cantilever a pathway widening off the canal walls when their inevitable reconstruction takes place. This cantilevered pathway extension / creation has worked well across from the convention centre and also along the Ottawa River on the Quebec side near the Alexandria Bridge.

3. **Support for Fifth-Clegg Canal Footbridge:** OOE appreciates the NCC’s support for the proposed footbridge over the Rideau Canal at Fifth and Clegg; however, we would recommend that the NCC seek means of providing financial assistance as well, given how the footbridge would enhance the use of the parkways and their pathways.

4. **Landscaping Plan for Colonel By Drive:** Despite CBD being a critical part of the key ceremonial route for those entering Ottawa from the airport, there has been little concerted effort to improve the landscaping of the OOE section of CBD. Following the 1998 ice storm there was some tree replacement and the addition of a number of other trees in the narrow boulevard between the pathway and the parkway, but the planting seems to have been random. Little has been done in terms of appropriate landscaping of the NCC’s land between Echo Drive and Colonel By Drive. The study material speaks of “Residents cutting vegetation for views to the canal,” suggesting this has an adverse impact on the visual experience of others, but in many cases residents are simply trying to clean up unplanted thickets. Similarly, the NCC has allowed certain sections of OOE’s portion of CBD to be dominated by invasives, particularly Norway maples. The OOE recommends the creation – with community consultation – of a vegetation management plan for the lands adjacent to CBD.

Urban Lands Master Plan:

The NCC’s urban lands – with their “green-blue” flavour – make Ottawa so much more beautiful, sustainable and lovely, than if there were just a city government. The primary NCC urban lands in OOE are those along the Rideau Canal; however, the community is also interested in the Commission’s lands along the west side of the Rideau River, given their proximity and wild beauty. OOECA’s specific recommendations are:

1. **Trading to Acquire Western Shore of Rideau River:** The city and institutions own the western shorelands of the Rideau River. We would recommend that the NCC investigate acquiring these lands in exchange for less “green-blue” lands such as those near Hurdman LRT station. The NCC’s acquisition of the western shoreline of the Rideau would complement well its ownership of the eastern side and would be supportive of the NCC’s vision. Through Sustainable Living Ottawa East (SLOE), the community has worked hard to create the Rideau River Nature Trail, focusing on preserving the unique natural ecosystem. Adversely, the city is intent on creating a hard-surfaced multi-use pathway along this section. The community strongly supports active transportation but is concerned that the hard-surfaced pathway will be injurious to the riverine ecology. Furthermore, the NCC’s interests align more closely with the community’s perspectives on the river edge lands than do the city’s.
2. **Support of River Footbridge:** Although the Fifth-Clegg Canal Footbridge is, according to current plans, at least six years away from construction, there is also a sound case for creation of a simple footbridge across the Rideau River from the eastern foot of Clegg Street to the NCC pathway on the eastern side of the Rideau River. This footbridge would provide a key connection between the NCC’s canal and river pathways.

NCC's Background Material

<http://www.ncc-ccn.gc.ca/sites/default/files/pubs/e05.0-2013-p43e-parkways-policy-review.pdf>

The Parkway Network

The Parkway network plays a key role in the Capital. It is more than a transportation network. It serves many other purposes. The specific planning orientation for the Parkways is as follows:

Consider the parkways first and foremost as a linear network with a primarily recreational vocation and providing access to Capital sites, not as extensions of the municipal and regional road networks. This planning orientation is accompanied by the following guidelines:

- Accommodate modes of transport and accompanying infrastructure that do not negatively impact the parkways' valued components (as determined through visual and landscape analyses), taking the landscape's carrying capacity into account;**
- Encourage the permeability and accessibility to the parkways and adjacent shorelines by active transportation means and ensure the safety and efficiency of the requisite intersections;**
- Preserve the smooth-flowing nature of the parkway experience while ensuring the calm flow of traffic;**
- Limit roadway connections to the parkway network as much as possible while providing access to activity sites and major facilities that are of key significance to the Capital.**

Preparing the Capital Urban Lands Master Plan

The NCC's goal is to make Canada's Capital Region a welcoming place that provides opportunities for contact with nature and presents a model of sustainable urban planning. In keeping with this objective, decisions about the use and development of urban lands will emphasize environmental sensitivity, sustainability and proposed projects that stand out as exceptional examples.

View of Parliament Hill from Major's Hill Park

Maps and Publications

[Draft Report 1 - Capital Urban Lands Master Plan Chapters 1-3 and appendices](#) (10.95 MB)

[Map: Urban Lands Overview](#) (1.51 MB)

[View 7 more](#)

A master plan is being developed for the [Capital's urban lands](#). The plan aims to define a vision, strategic directions, guidelines and development proposals that enhance the experience and unique living environment of Canada's Capital.

The master plan will be the first plan that applies to all urban lands in the Capital. In support of the NCC's mission, the master plan will be both strategic and operational, and will guide the following:

- development, conservation and improvements in the Capital
- NCC and federal government decisions related to the development and management of the Capital's urban lands.

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The new Capital Urban Lands Master Plan will incorporate other plans that have already been developed, such as the [Leamy Lake Park Sector Plan](#) (1997), Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan (2005) and Confederation Heights Sector Plan (2000). These plans will be revised during the development of the sector plans.

Take Part in the Master Plan!

Throughout the development of the master plan, federal, provincial and municipal partners, and the general public can voice their opinion and provide their suggestions.

Project Phases

There are two phases in the preparation of the Capital Urban Lands Master Plan.

Phase 1: Analysis

- A comprehensive descriptive assessment of the Capital's urban lands (completed).
- A strategic and operational analysis of the issues and opportunities.

An online consultation conducted during this phase also helped to establish an overall sense of how urban lands are being used.

Phase 2: Planning

- Development of a strategic framework: vision statement, roles, objectives and concept plan (completed)
- Major land use designations (summer 2013 to fall 2014)
- Detailed plan and sector plans (winter 2014 to winter 2015)

A review of the parkway policy will be undertaken in tandem with the development of the Capital Urban Lands Master Plan (summer 2013 to winter 2014).

The Capital Urban Lands Master Plan will be in line with the main strategic statements contained in the Plan for Canada's Capital — Horizon 2067.

QUEEN ELIZABETH DRIVEWAY

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD: 1899

ISSUES

- Transformation + intensification + redevelopment;
- Appropriation of Public Realm by private developers/developments
- Changing architecture and landscape
- Pedestrian crossing issues (5th Avenue, Commissioner's Park, Hartwell Locks)
- Limited flexibility for roadway modification

VALUED COMPONENTS

- The natural landscape : broad vegetated setback along the Rideau Canal ; floral character
- Cultural landscape and views on the Canal
- Residential zone nearby, with significant front yard setbacks with mature trees
- Bike pathway adjacent to the Canal
- Decorative light fixtures
- Night ambience of the driveway (light reflecting on water, open spaces and mature trees)
- Pedestrian and cycling bridge linking pathways on Queen Elizabeth and Colonel By Drives
- Pedestrian and cycling access to the Ottawa River shorelines

- The first of its kind, the "Crown jewel" of the network
- Good modern architecture, with medium sized houses
- Significant Cultural Landscape (part of the Rideau Canal World Heritage Site)
- Few traffic accidents
- Closed for specific events (e.g: Ottawa Race Weekend Itinerary)

Clearly defined Cultural Landscape with Heritage Value – Part of the Rideau Canal Corridor

Zoning: O1 – Park and Open Space Zone

Environmental Site Assessment (ESA): Phase 2 on the entire parkway corridor

MAJOR TREND – TRAFFIC FLOW (bidirectional data/24h - 2010) : intense (≥12000), medium (12000 – 6000) or light (<6000)
10979 (Medium)

PARKWAY NATURE

Preston St to Bank St: Manicured Natural

Bank St –to Laurier Av: Mixed-Urban

COLONEL BY DRIVE

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD: 1920 - 1967

ISSUES

- Traffic: speed, volume, collisions
- Pedestrian crossings (unregulated)
- Residents cutting vegetation for views to the Canal : impact on visual experience on the Driveway

VALUED COMPONENTS

- Heritage landscape comprised of the Rideau Canal and vegetation (a large tract of mature trees); topography, rock wall and staircases to get to level of Echo Drive
- Residential zone adjacent to the corridor with some entrances on the driveway;
- Access to the Canal banks
- View of Parliament (before Laurier Avenue)
- Proximity of the pathway to the Canal all the length of the Driveway ;

- Public art opportunity

Designed Cultural Landscape – Component of the Rideau Canal Corridor Cultural Landscape (CL)

Zoning: O1 – Park and Open Space Zone

ESA Phase 2&3 on the segment between Bronson and Rideau

TRAFFIC FLOW (bidirectional data/24h - 2010) : 19700 (INTENSE)

PARKWAY NATURE

Hog's Back Rd –to Bank St : Manicured Natural;

Bank St to Laurier Av: Mixed-Urban;

Laurier Av to Rideau St: Urban