



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT
NOVEMBER 2021 TO JUNE 2024

Canada

Table of Contents

Background	3
About the study sector	3
About the project.....	3
Public engagement process.....	4
Phase 3 activities	5
Public advisory group presentation.....	5
Online consultation	5
What we heard	6
Key highlights by theme	6
Environment.....	6
Access and connectivity	6
Culture and heritage.....	7
Experiences.....	7
Highlights of each area	8
Sector A.....	8
Sector B.....	9
Sector C.....	10
Next steps.....	10
Appendix 1: Public Advisory Committee	11
Appendix 2: Promotional Strategy	12

Background

About the study sector

As the principal steward of federal lands in the National Capital Region, one of the National Capital Commission's (NCC) priorities is to facilitate public access to the Capital's waterfronts. The Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan study covers a 13-km stretch of federal lands along the south shore of the Ottawa River, designated as a Canadian Heritage River. The park comprises 600 hectares of land and includes the banks of the Ottawa River, the parkway, multi-use pathways, and a variety of public and private recreational spaces. From west to east, the area extends from Rideau Hall at Princess Avenue to the terminus of the parkway at St. Joseph Boulevard.

Offering a variety of landscapes, from farmers' fields to limestone cliffs, this area is enjoyed by people as a place to appreciate nature, connect to some of the Ottawa River's most scenic views, and have access to water in the heart of the city.

About the project

The Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan acts as a framework for the area's planning, management and use of the land for the next 30 to 50 years. The NCC aspires to celebrate the environment, heritage and culture of the site, support safe and inclusive access to the Ottawa River, and provide year-round recreational activities. This plan reimagines the future of NCC waterfront lands and aims to make improvements in areas that no longer meet public needs and aspirations.

In spring 2024, the NCC completed a third and final round of public consultations. The goal of the three consultation phases was to involve members of the public throughout the planning process by allowing them to play an important role in the development of the plan's framework.

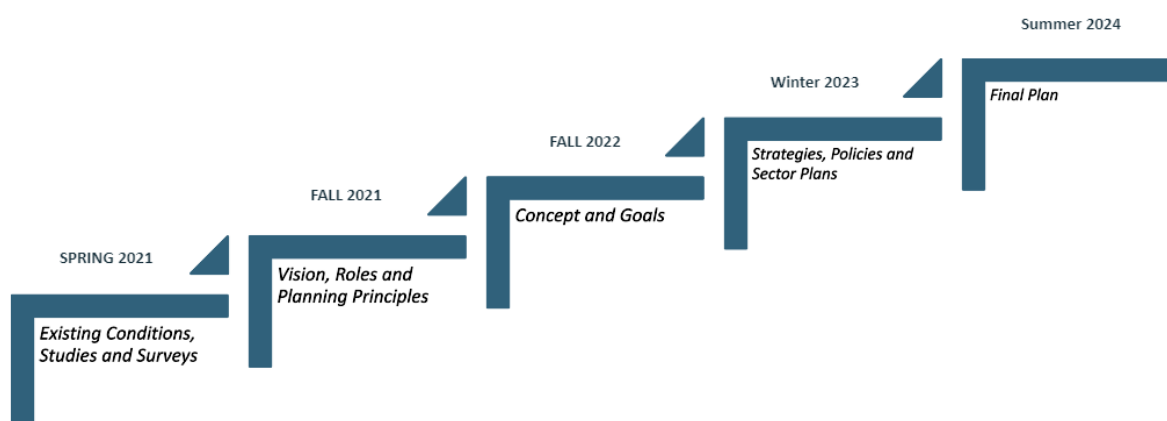


Figure 1: Main phases of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan design process

Public engagement process

Since the beginning of the plan development process in 2021, several consultation activities have been carried out with the public and stakeholders. The following is a brief summary of these activities.

Phase 1: 2021–2022

Public advisory committee meeting

November 2021



9 participants

Online public survey

December 2021



523 respondents
293 surveys completed

Online public meeting

February 2022



7 participants

Link to the [Phase 1 Public Consultation Report](#)

Phase 2: 2022–2023

Public advisory committee meeting

December 2022



22 participants

Technical advisory committee meeting

December 2022



8 participants

Public open house

February 2023



84 participants

Online public survey

January–February 2023



472 surveys completed

Link to the [Phase 2 Public Consultation Report](#)

Phase 3: 2024

Public advisory committee meeting

May 2024



7 participants

Online public consultation

May–June 2024



414 comments
281 unique respondents

During phase 3, the final round of public consultations, the advisory committee and members of the public were invited to comment one last time on the key aspects of the plan, suggest ways to improve readability, and add anything that might have been overlooked.

The public was invited to read the final draft of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan and share their comments through the PlaceSpeak public consultation platform or by emailing the NCC Public Affairs team.

Phase 3 activities

Public advisory group presentation

Date: April 3, 2024

Location: Online via MS Teams

Participants:

Seven representatives from the following groups:

- Rockcliffe Park Residents Association
- Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
- Ottawa New Edinburgh Club
- Manor Park Community Association
- Rothwell Heights Property Owners Association
- Société franco-ontarienne du patrimoine et de l'histoire d'Orléans
- Ottawa Riverkeeper

Format:

- Presentation of the 90% draft of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan and changes made since the last public advisory committee meeting.
- Question and discussion session.

Online consultation

Date: May 23 to June 6, 2024

Platform: NCC PlaceSpeak platform

Participants:

281 unique respondents for a total of 414 comments

- 326 comments on PlaceSpeak
- 88 comments received via email

Format:

- Three open-ended questions seeking respondents' opinions and suggestions on the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan.

Question 1:

Do you agree with the recommendations for the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan? Please explain why or why not.

Question 2:

Do you have suggestions for how the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan could be improved? Please add any suggestions you may have.

Question 3:

Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan?

What we heard

A majority of the respondents supported the overall idea of the plan, especially regarding the goals for protecting the environment and improving access to the park, shoreline and river. Despite this, some participants mentioned that they would have liked more details, or a better understanding of the investments needed to implement the plan. Questions were raised specifically about the Pine Hill, Acacia-Hillsdale and Mile Circle areas.

Key highlights by theme

Environment

- Most of the comments received reflected a shared desire to respect and enhance the park's natural environment. However, some respondents felt that the plan should prioritize the natural environment in place and minimize human intervention.
- About 15 comments indicated that respondents were hoping that more trees would be planted; one person suggested planting more trees along the parkway to expand the existing wooded areas.
- Some of the respondents offered unique suggestions, such as planting wildflowers to replace the grass in order to help pollinators and save on maintenance, or converting the existing parkway into bike paths, or even into public transitway or tramway routes.

Access and connectivity

- Most respondents welcomed the idea of improving access to the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Parkway, and about 20 people proposed shuttle services to access the park or more frequent municipal bus services to downtown Ottawa. About 15 respondents felt reducing the speed of cars on the parkway was a good suggestion, while about

10 thought that it might increase congestion. A much smaller number of respondents suggested permanently closing off the parkway to vehicles or creating a one-way parkway.

- Several respondents suggested adding crossings to safely access the parkway's trails from the residential side. They highlighted a specific need for crossings at the parkway intersections from Birch Avenue, Aviation Parkway/Blasdell Avenue and Buena Vista Road.
- About 20 respondents stressed the need to keep cyclists and walkers on separate trails or to maintain a paved shoulder on the parkway (particularly in the vicinity of the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum) for cyclists who want to go fast or who want more direct access to downtown for work.
- A few of the respondents wanted to see modifications to the intersection of Sir George-Étienne Cartier Parkway and Aviation Parkway, such as a roundabout to slow traffic and improve the public's safety and experience .
- Some concerns were shared regarding the expansion of new or existing parking lots, which are seen as potentially encroaching on green spaces. Some respondents suggested working with local institutions to maximize the use of their parking lots before building new ones, while other respondents pointed to the need to increase the number of parking spaces, especially for people with reduced mobility or at busy locations like the NCC River House.

Culture and heritage

- Four respondents wanted to honour the history of First Nations by highlighting their history through stories and artwork. More specifically, one person felt it was important to commemorate First Nations portage sites and routes.

Experiences

- A few respondents mentioned that they would like more toilets and trash cans along the bike path. They also mentioned that they would like to see other amenities, such as benches, water fountains and artwork.
- A few respondents suggested developing more spaces for swimming, tennis and ATVs, and creating dog beaches and public fishing docks.
- One respondent suggested creating more recreational opportunities by supporting existing providers and making space for group gatherings.

Project team responses:

The plan aims to guide how we plan, manage and use the park. It establishes policies to guide future actions to make the park a great place for everyone to enjoy. The feedback we received has given us excellent ideas to on how to improve the park even further. These suggestions will help us in the next stage in managing the park and implementing new projects.

Highlights of each area

Sector A

- **Pine Hill:** A majority of the respondents expressed concerns about the proposed changes, which they felt could alter the natural appearance of the park and its function as an off-leash dog park. The idea of a lookout elicited feedback from respondents, with more than half of them concerned about tree preservation and questioning building this type of infrastructure.
- **Rockcliffe Park:** Some respondents suggested possible improvements such as repairing the pavilion, adding retail offerings to benefit from existing amenities, and improving ease of access to the park with connecting trails. One person also suggested allowing automobile traffic up to the parking lot only and closing off the rest of the road, as they already do in winter.
- **Acacia-Hillsdale:** About 60 respondents expressed concerns about the enhancement of the park and wanted more details regarding the possible replacement of the current Ottawa New Edinburgh Club (ONEC) buildings and tennis courts. They also wanted the association to be consulted before any project is carried out and to be recognized as an integral part of the community. Some respondents mentioned the need to preserve the natural charm and character of the existing facilities and expressed concerns about the environmental impact that more parking spaces would have.
- **Mile Circle:** Several respondents stressed the importance of preserving this space as a natural oasis and about 15 people questioned the idea of formalizing a pollinator garden that could disrupt the natural habitat of the existing pollinators. Commentors in this section preferred to see minimal changes to the area and instead suggested designing natural, self-sustaining developments that would require less maintenance.

Project team responses:

- **Pine Hill:** The plan will focus its recommendations on making the site's entrance points more accessible and better marked. With the presence of species at risk on the site, the plan will recommend looking for ways to formalize the pathways to keep people and dogs away from sensitive areas. Trees will be preserved, and minor possible alterations like tree pruning to improve the view may be considered.
- **Rockcliffe Park:** The plan aims to improve connections to the site and explore opportunities to look at how the site can best be used to serve the public's needs while respecting its heritage.
- **Acacia-Hillsdale:** Facilities will need upgrades over the next 50 plus years, either due to normal deterioration or increased demand for their use. The plan recognizes this and provides guidance for when these eventualities will occur. The NCC will involve the public and community associations when these types of projects are proposed for the site's redevelopment.

- **Mile Circle:** The existing pollinator project (located north of the parkway at parking lot P27) is an initiative being run by the University of Ottawa in partnership with the NCC. The experts in this subject area are seeking to improve and expand pollinator habitats, not disrupt them, and have the knowledge and expertise to implement new pollinator fields without damage to the local ecosystem or intrusion to the adjacent residential area.

Sector B

- **Rockcliffe Yacht Club:** Respondents who commented in this section expressed some concerns about the suggested location of the winding walking path, which is on steep terrain and starts at an intersection where vehicles, seaplanes and boats pass regularly between the docks and warehouses. The addition of a launching area for non-motorized boats at the end of the trail was also called into question. They felt that the area chosen would be too dangerous for the public due to the river's strong current and the proximity of the Rockcliffe Yacht Club dock, which is used by motorboats and seaplanes from the Rockcliffe Airport. Instead, a suggestion was made to move the trail and the boat launch area further to the east, where Airport-Marina Road turns toward the Rockcliffe Flying Club.
- **Blair Road boat launch:** Most of the respondents who provided feedback on this section of the plan are supportive of improvements to the Blair Road boat launch facilities and are enthusiastic about the idea of developing amenities for food concessions, watercraft rentals, and safe access areas for swimming. However, two people mentioned that they preferred fewer amenities to maintain the natural appearance of the shoreline, and one person wished for the launch to be accessible only by non-motorized watercraft.
- **Intersection of the trail leading to the Blair Road boat launch ramp:** Several respondents noted the importance of improving signage or the layout of multi-use pathways to ensure safety for people cycling or walking past the Blair Road boat launch and for vehicles exiting that have a limited view.

Project team responses:

- **Rockcliffe Yacht Club:** Exact locations for proposals like the switchback pathway or the non-motorized boat launch area have not yet been determined. If these proposals were to proceed, further studies, including land surveys and water current measurements, would be needed.
- **Blair Road boat launch:** If those proposals were to proceed, water and toilet facilities would be provided, and other studied facilities would have to stay minimal, given that the site is not serviced.
- **Intersection of the pathway leading to the boat launch:** It is recognized that there is insufficient wayfinding to and throughout the park. One of the plan's policies is to

develop a coordinated wayfinding system to guide travel, ensuring intuitive connections to key nodes, the pathways and the parkway.

Sector C

- **P7 interpretation area:** Some respondents who commented in this section questioned the relevance of choosing this area to host an interpretation area and instead proposed a space closer to the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum, for several reasons: better access and visibility, and a larger shared parking with the Museum.
- **Green's Creek:** Opinions were divided. In fact, half of the respondents who commented on this section, were in favour of the proposal of a pedestrian crossing over Green's Creek or would like to see even more trails, while the other half hoped that the area would remain natural, without any human footprint.
- **East Lookout:** There was some concern about the environment and the respondents wanted more details about a possible pedestrian bridge over the mouth of Green's Creek and the addition of a wooden boardwalk along the river.

Project team responses:

- **P7 interpretation area:** The comments received were noted and will be taken into consideration before any of the conceptual ideas presented in the plan proceed.
- **Green's Creek:** It is a common challenge for land use planners to balance different needs and perspectives when developing policies and plans. In this situation, improving access for active mobility in the park was balanced against proposing a project within an environmentally significant area.
- **East Lookout:** The proposed ideas of a bridge and boardwalk are conceptual and, should the project proceed, their design and precise location will be subject to the federal *Impact Assessment Act*.

Next steps

Feedback gathered was reviewed by the project team and will inform the revisions and finalization of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan.

The Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan will be presented for Board approval in fall 2024. The next steps in the plan development process will be to identify and study the implementation of potential projects, which will involve further public and stakeholder input before implementation.

Appendix 1: Public Advisory Committee

The public advisory committee was created to regularly and officially engage the community regarding the creation of the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan. The main goal of this committee is to offer counsel and direction. It is comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise and a shared passion for the future of the park.

Member	Organization/Interest group
Jane Brammer	Rothwell Heights Property Owners Association
Katherine Forster	Manor Park Community Association
Nicole Fortier	Société franco-ontarienne du patrimoine et de l'histoire d'Orléans
Ian Gadbois	Ski Heritage East
Meghan Hanlon	Ottawa New Edinburgh Club
Matthew Henderson	Rockcliffe Park Residents Association
Paul Johanis	Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
Heather Matthews	New Edinburgh Community Alliance
John Murray	Rockcliffe Yacht Club (*former member)
Laura Reinsborough	Ottawa Riverkeeper

Appendix 2: Promotional Strategy

The promotional campaign achieved outstanding dissemination results. It reached more people in the National Capital Region than any other consultation in the past three years.

Internet

- Project webpage [Sir George-Etienne Cartier Park Plan - National Capital Commission \(ccn-ncc.gc.ca\)](http://ccn-ncc.gc.ca)
- Public consultation page <https://www.placespeak.com/en/topic/6689-sir-george-etienne-cartier-park-plan/#/overview>

Media coverage

- CityNews: [NCC in final round of public consultation for park by Ottawa River \(citynews.ca\)](http://citynews.ca)
- Rothwell Heights: [Have your say on the NCC's Plan for Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park!](#)

Newsletters

- May 23, 2024: Invitational newsletter – Public engagement dynamic list
- May 23, 2024: Invitational newsletter – NCC static list

	Emails sent	Emails opened (adjusted)	Unique emails opened	% of emails opened	Clicks	Unique clicks	% clicks
Dynamic list	3,354	2,714	1,787	54%	395	247	6.14%
Static list	204	777	124	61%	420	57	18.63%

Digital ads

Google campaign: May 23 to June 1				
	Impressions	Unique user	Clicks	CTR %
English	160,499	29,396	1,187	0.74%
French	196,337	17,024	862	0.44%

LinkedIn campaign: May 29 to June 5				
	Impressions	Engagement	Clicks	CTR %
English	46,742	0.49%	167	0.36%
French	11,007	0.32%	24	0.22%