

NCC
CCN

National Capital Commission 2018 Stakeholders Study

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ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

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Background and objectives

The NCC is a Crown corporation created by Parliament in 1959, dedicated to building a great capital for all Canadians, one that is a dynamic and inspiring source of pride. The NCC fulfils its unique mandate by setting the long-term planning direction for federal lands, being the principal steward of nationally significant public places, and being a creative partner to key stakeholders in the region through its commitment to excellence in both the development of properties and the conservation of heritage sites.

In carrying out its mandate as the main federal urban planner, and as the largest landowner in the region, the NCC works collaboratively with the public and with key stakeholders at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. Close cooperation and consultation leads to sensitive and appropriate decisions about the use of federal lands, based on sustainability, concern for the environment, and operational best practices. The NCC is committed to fostering a climate of trust within all of the constituencies with which it works and whom it serves.

The NCC wished to conduct a study to assess its relationships with key stakeholders, allowing the organization to better understand stakeholders' familiarity with its mandate, perceptions of how well they believe it carries out its objectives, and to obtain any recommendations for improvements to communications and services.

Environics recommended a qualitative approach to gathering insights from these key stakeholders, due to their very senior levels and the unique nature of their relationships with the NCC. The opportunity for obtaining valuable and deep insights from this population was the chief benefit of such an approach. While this report does include some quantitative measures of responses, the richness of insight provided by the qualitative comments is the main focus of this report.

Methodology overview

- This report presents the results of 53 in-depth interviews conducted with NCC stakeholders from July 9 to September 26, 2018. The interviews captured the views of 57 people from 54 organizations.
- The NCC provided Environics with a list of stakeholders, the type of organization they represent, and contact e-mails. The NCC initially broadcasted a letter from Chair Marc Seaman, explaining the project and soliciting cooperation. Environics then contacted the stakeholders by e-mail to set up interview appointments. All interviews were conducted by telephone, by senior researchers at Environics, in the official language of choice of the respondent.
- The individuals included in the research cover a broad range of types: elected officials or their representatives and senior bureaucrats at the municipal and federal levels; professionals, including planning, architecture and design; CEOs, presidents and directors of for-profit and not-for-profit entities; high profile civic leaders; tenants; special event organizers; and representatives of First Nations and community groups.
- To facilitate understanding of the experiences of different types of stakeholders, in this report respondents have been classified into three broad groups:
 - Academic, community groups and First Nations (universities/colleges, community associations, First Nations groups, special interest groups) – n=11
 - Professional and commercial interests (federal land users & design permits, community and regional economic development organizations, tenants, planners and architects, land permit users) – n=29
 - Community leaders and influencers (civic leaders, municipal and government representatives, politicians, media) – n=13

Role of the NCC in the capital

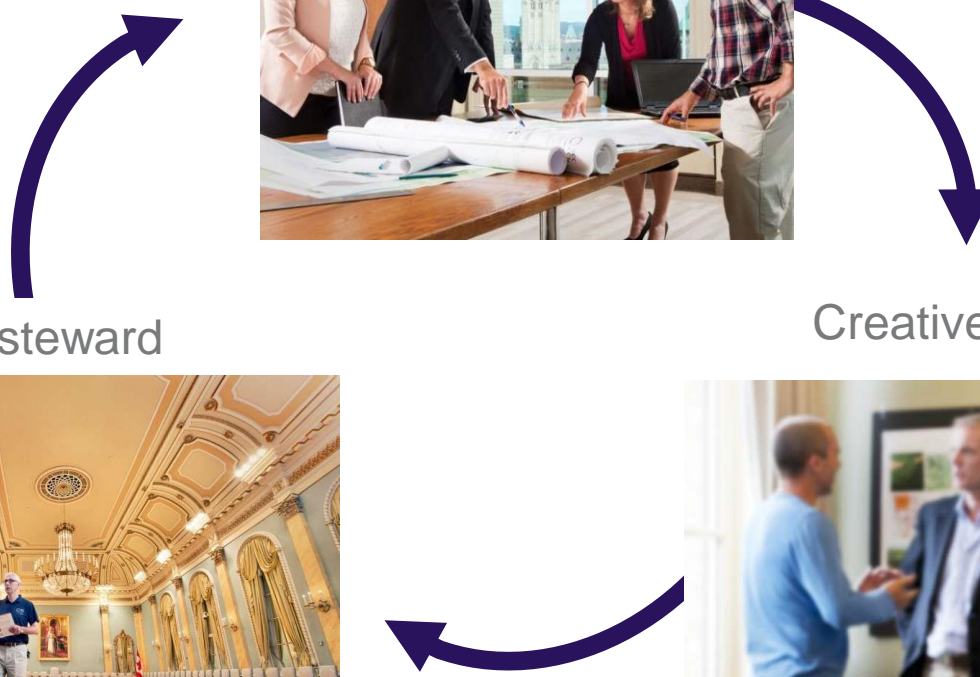
Long-term planner



Principal steward



Creative partner



Executive summary

Many NCC stakeholders report positive perceptions and productive interactions with the organization, although most do not have a thorough understanding of its core mandates or areas of responsibility. The NCC is best known as a steward of the environment and a maintainer or overseer of federal lands and property, and about a quarter spontaneously mention a planning mandate, but few cite specifics about what it does, especially anything outside of their own areas of interest or expertise. Similarly, a number indicate they are familiar with the NCC's high level management but not specifics about how the organization functions. A lack of familiarity with the NCC's operations may be fostering the impression the organization is opaque or even adversarial. Several stakeholders point to recent improvements in senior management's attitudes to partnership and transparency, relative to the past.

The research also suggests many stakeholders perceive a duality within the NCC. While long-term planning is considered essential, the NCC's other two roles lead to a possibly contradictory position regarding public assets: protection (principal steward) versus access (creative partner). Some stakeholders point out differences between the NCC's governmental/regulatory side and its role as a forward-looking, business-oriented strategic collaborator. In its position as a government agency, undertaking public relations to increase brand awareness might be considered a waste of money by some – but in its role as a partner to regional businesses, others feel increased publicity and exposure for its work would be beneficial and desirable.

A number of stakeholders suggest disparity between the openness and vision of senior management (planning and partnership), and the way work is carried out by staff further down the line (stewardship). This may indicate staff are not sufficiently empowered to change existing, formalized internal processes, which may be necessary to allow new ideas and practices to be implemented. A few stakeholders acknowledge the NCC has a large portfolio of responsibilities as well as funding challenges, which can hamper timely completion of tasks. A small number feel the national board structure can be problematic at times, with people without specific expertise or not directly invested in life in the Capital region making decisions that regional residents must then deal with every day. For some, the NCC has a reputation as being overly bureaucratic.

Key findings of this research are highlighted below.

Impressions of and familiarity with the NCC

- Three in four stakeholders have a positive overall impression of the NCC, one in ten are negative, and a small number were unable to summarize.
- Three in five are somewhat familiar with how the NCC operates; one in five claim to be very familiar and a similar proportion are not familiar.
- A majority of stakeholders (6 in 10) feel the NCC is at least somewhat known for its work in the capital region; many share the view that the NCC is better known within the region than outside it, and several mention the organization is known but not what it does. Some feel the NCC should not be trying to increase awareness of itself, while others make suggestions about improving communications and outreach.
- Of the individual top-of-mind terms used to describe the NCC, just under two in five are neutral or simply descriptive (e.g. “lands,” “oversight,” “planning,” “federal,” “gatekeeper”). Three in ten are positive (e.g. “essential,” “enhancement,” “visionary,” “valuable”) and one in three are negative to some extent (e.g. “problematic,” “difficult,” “bureaucratic” and “inconsistent.”) The top-of-mind word most commonly used by stakeholders to describe the NCC is “bureaucratic.”
- Around one-third change their word to describe the NCC following the discussion; around half of those who change give a word in a more positive direction than their original word.
- Key stakeholders have a range of relationships with the NCC, from frequent to rare contact, usually regarding specific projects. A number also mentioned their exposure to the NCC as residents of the region.

Executive summary – key findings (continued)

Awareness of mandate and responsibilities

- The most mentioned main responsibilities of the NCC tend to be general and reflective of the broad descriptions of the NCC's mandates cited in the invitation e-mail sent to potential respondents by Marc Seaman: that of being responsible for maintenance/preservation and management, federal land use, and planning/vision. Fewer mention specific responsibilities, such as being a landlord, Gatineau Park, the Greenbelt, official residences, or recreational pathways.
- A small number make incorrect mentions, including former responsibilities, such as Winterlude, or being responsible for all parks or federal lands.

Impressions of NCC's performance and contributions

- The important NCC contributions most cited by stakeholders are preservation of green spaces, stewardship of federal land use, creating a beautiful capital region, and providing planning/vision. Academic, community group and First Nations stakeholders are most likely to mention environmental stewardship; professional and commercial stakeholders are most likely to mention federal land use; and community leaders and influencers are most likely to mention maintenance, preservation and management of properties in general terms.
- Most stakeholders agree the NCC is a good value-add partner, often citing expertise. Those who do not think it is a good partner mention bureaucracy and red tape.
- Most agree the NCC moves forward on key projects, although a few qualify this as some projects, not all.

Future priorities and improvements

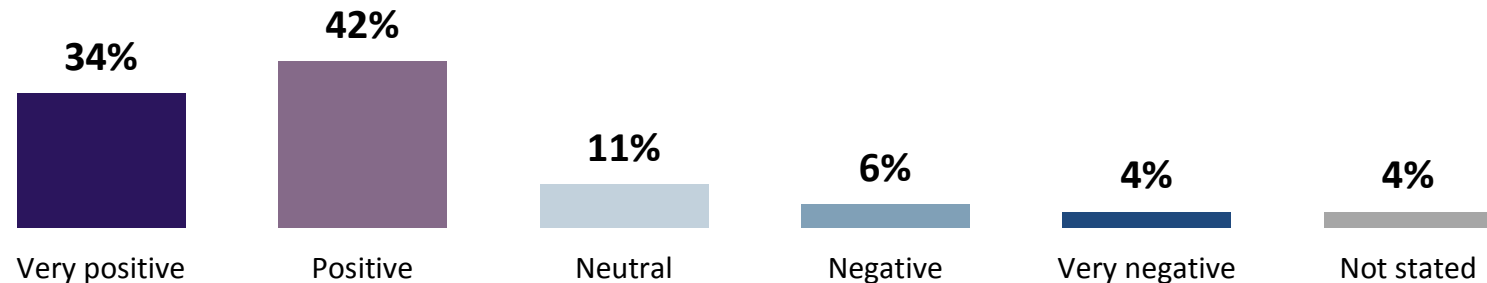
- Stakeholders are most likely to say the NCC should spend the next three to five years concentrating on protecting the environment, rivers and green spaces, followed by improving communication, partnerships and engagement. These two areas are the first or second priorities of all three stakeholder types.
- Other priorities include improving access to public assets in general, LeBreton Flats, and continuing to plan and envision the capital.
- The most mentioned areas for improvement are to engage in more communications and outreach, reducing red tape; improving collaboration, seeking increased funding, more transparency and more efficiency/faster turnaround times for approvals and input.



Impressions of and familiarity with the NCC

Overall impression of the NCC

Most stakeholders have a positive impression of the NCC overall



- Three in four stakeholders have a positive impression of the NCC; one-third are very positive about it. Inasmuch as stakeholder impressions can be compared to those of the general public in previous studies, stakeholders are more likely than the public to be positive to some degree and less likely to be neutral.
- Similar proportions of all three stakeholder types have a positive impression of the NCC.
- Impressions are similar by stakeholder location (Ottawa or Gatineau).
- In a general way, impression appears linked to the level of familiarity with how the NCC operates, with less positive impressions being expressed by those admitting to lower levels of familiarity.

Q3 In general terms, do you have a positive or negative impression of the NCC?

Reasons for impression of the NCC

Reasons for having positive impressions vary, but several mention the NCC is open to collaboration. Negative comments reflect a belief the NCC has a rigid, bureaucratic approach

Positive

- “Have learned a lot of what they do and what they want to do and see opportunities for collaboration.”*
- “The mind set now is very positive, collaborative, looking for solutions that work for everyone. Was much more prescriptive, regulatory, one sided.”*
- “I find them flexible, accommodating, open to new ideas. Seem anxious to be helpful. Don’t always insist on things only ever being done same as in past. Encourage and draw attention to availability of properties for future use”*
- “Improved their public consultations over the past few years, much more active and that has benefited everybody.”*
- “Capital is impressive and beautiful.”*
- “Used to be “NO, we are not doing that.” Now much more open to being helpful and cooperative.”*

Neutral/Mixed

- “They are very professional and competent but they are a bit disconnected from the regional players like us.”*
- “They have a good attitude and I have great personal relationships with people there but they have a totally different concept of time than we do.”*
- “Some of their issues are structural – (the) NCC mandate often pushes up against others.... Struggle between vision and ability to make things happen in a reasonable timeframe. Structurally, the NCC ability to implement a vision constantly conflicts with the City of Ottawa.”*

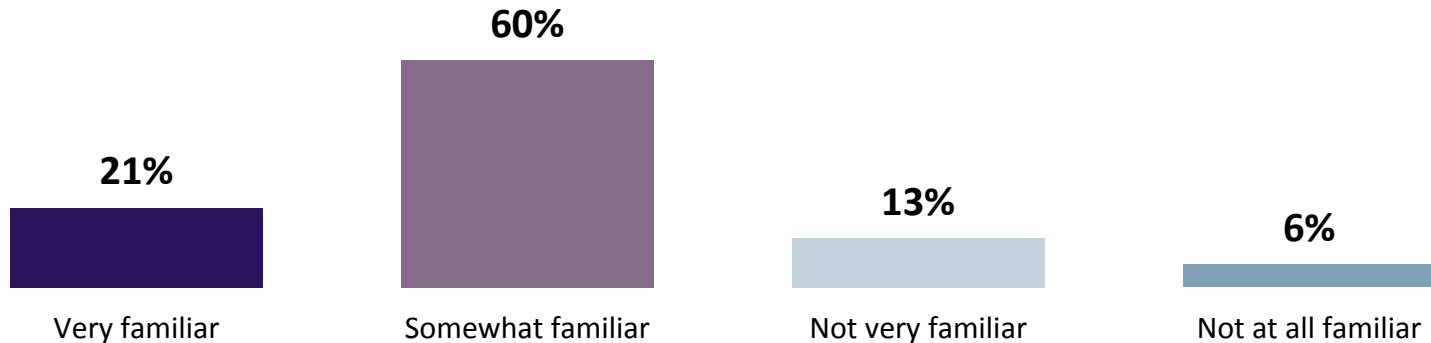
Negative

- “There are some good people there, but I have to sneak around and talk to them clandestinely. Very secretive organization and they have very rigid processes.”*
- “They mainly create barriers to projects. They are very rigid and bureaucratic and insist on everything being done to the letter of the law whether it makes sense or not.”*
- “They have a money grab mentality now.”*
- “It is not the people at the NCC, it is the amount of paperwork.”*
- “Doing nothing is the path of least resistance. Doing anything is a risk.”*

Q3 In general terms, do you have a positive or negative impression of the NCC? Why do you say that?

Familiarity with how the NCC operates

Most key stakeholders believe they are somewhat familiar with how the NCC operates; few claim to be very familiar



- A plurality of six in ten stakeholders say they are somewhat familiar with the NCC; two in ten say they are very familiar with it. To the extent a comparison can be made to general studies of residents of the region, stakeholders are considerably more likely to express some level of familiarity.
- Professional and commercial interest stakeholders are the most likely to say they are at least somewhat familiar with how the NCC operates; academic, community groups and First Nations stakeholders are the most likely to say they are not very or at all familiar.

Q4 How familiar would you say you are with how the NCC operates?

Reasons given for level of familiarity with the NCC

Some stakeholders clarify they are familiar with the functions of the NCC with which they deal most often, or have more knowledge of front-facing activities than “inner workings”

Very familiar

“Very familiar in context of professional interaction with them. Generally familiar with how they operate more broadly – receiving funds from government, spending on both sides (of the river)”

“Personally I am very ... but many of my colleagues do not understand how the NCC works or what the processes are.”

“Understand NCC from governance perspective, how decisions are made. But not at organizational staff level, in terms of organizational hierarchy or functioning.”

“I have been the lead (NCC contact) at my last two positions because I know how to operate with them.”

Somewhat familiar

“I have read their 100 year plan, am a fan of events.”

“Was very familiar; less so now. Blend of management, politics and independent.”

“Less experience with their day to day ops than I do with their approvals and planning functions. But I know they do more than that.”

“You can’t take on the NCC and not be fairly familiar with them.”

“Like most companies except board reports to Minister of Heritage. Federally appointed group.”

“More familiar with respect to how they operate with the public than internally.”

“I am very familiar with what they do that affects me in Gatineau. I am not so familiar with their internal workings.”

Not very/at all familiar

“A limited understanding – they seem to have their fingers in so many pots.”

“My relationship has been with the real estate people. Aware of some properties they are renting, renovating, etc.”

“Don’t have intimate knowledge of inner workings.”

“Not familiar with objectives and plans coming from the top. Deal with people responsible for the land contracts.”

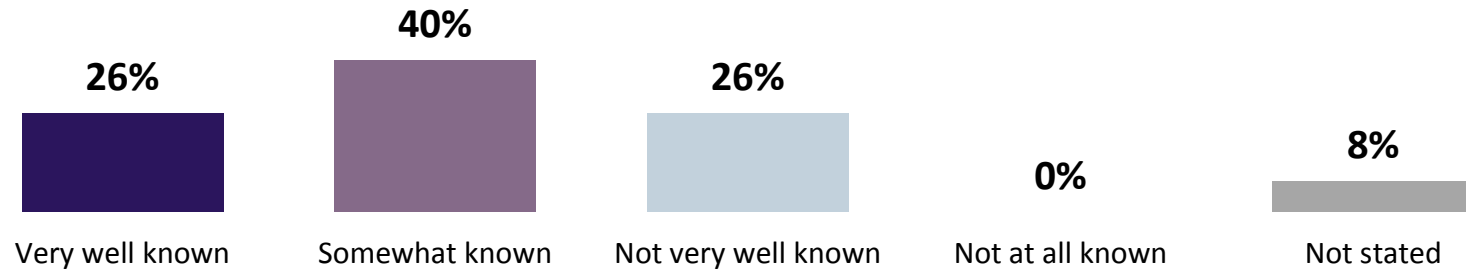
“Ottawa is a unique place (with a) tremendous amount of bureaucracy that NCC is caught up in even if I’m not.”

“I know nothing about how they function internally.”

Q4 How familiar would you say you are with how the NCC operates?

How well known is the NCC?

Most feel the NCC is at least somewhat known for its work



- One-quarter of stakeholders feel the NCC is very well known for its work in the National Capital region; four in ten say it is somewhat known. Stakeholders sometimes qualified their response by stating NCC is best known locally, and that people outside the region would have very little awareness of the organization.
- Academic, community groups and First Nations stakeholders are the least likely to think the NCC is *very* well known, but overall results are similar by stakeholder type. Community leaders and influencers are somewhat less likely than other stakeholder types to think the NCC *should* become better known.
- Assessments of how well known the NCC is correlate in a general way to how familiar stakeholders are with the NCC personally, and how positive they are about the organization overall.

Q6 How well known would you say the NCC is in general for its work in the National Capital Region?

Stakeholder reasons for assessment of awareness of NCC's work

**Stakeholders feel the NCC itself is known – at least in CCR –
but that the public is not familiar with its core activities**

NCC is known/mixed awareness

I think the NCC is well known, but most people don't know what it actually does.

People proximate to their assets know them.

Most people know about the Greenbelt, Gatineau Park. General public not as aware of role of NCC in managing federal lands and what role they have in approval process that would affect projects the City is trying to put forward.

They are known for the recreational things they do like the Rideau Canal, Winterlude, Greenbelt and Gatineau Park. They are not so well known for other things.

Well known to the citizens of Ottawa, and then as you head outward there is a rapidly diminishing understanding of what the NCC is and does.

Everyone knows their parks and recreational facilities.

Public consultations are well attended, (they get) media attention. People know who they are. Well known in town.

Not well known

Most people have no idea that the NCC is so important to all the trails and natural areas in the city.

They may be intentionally low profile since they have no political role.

...most people probably think the Government of Canada is doing a lot of things that the NCC is actually responsible for

Don't think the public is aware of the NCC.

Q6 How well known would you say the NCC is in general for its work in the National Capital Region?

What the NCC could do to become better known for its work

Several stakeholders make suggestions for improving the NCC's visibility, and see a need for better exposure for reputation/license to operate

...these days traditional advertising doesn't work, (you) have to have an effective social media presence to be heard among audiences, especially youth.

More proactive, more media events to show what they are doing. The urban labs are great, but small and preaching to the choir.

They need to get their partners in the community to do more to inform the public that they are partnering with the NCC.

Having the mayors inside is good, if it ran itself more like City Hall and was more transparent then that would be good.

Be a little bit more cooperative with the public and the city, work more closely with the mayor on some files.

There is an unfounded sense that things could happen faster if the NCC was not "in the way." If they could figure out a way to change that mindset - local politicians tend to blame the NCC for things.

Having their logos more prominent around assets (trails, etc.). Speaking up about what they do, general promotion. Not sure people know the website is there or what you would talk to the NCC about. ... You hear about what they no longer do in the paper, but not what they are accomplishing with the remaining mandate.

Public open houses downtown at NCC headquarters get the usual people – community associations, urban planners. Do town halls close to where the project is happening.

I will see Mayor Watson on average 2 or 3 times a week and if I need to speak to him I can. Those type of opportunities with NCC senior folks never happen. When they do come out it's usually to give a speech and they are often "cordoned off," not accessible.

Q6b What could the NCC do to become better known for its work?

If the NCC *should* become better known

It became apparent not all stakeholders feel the NCC should put effort into becoming better known, either because it is already known or because it does not need to be

Do they want more profile? They don't have to run for election and they are already known in the NCR... . They have a challenge in Quebec because CCN is the exact same name the Quebec government uses for the similar organization that manages Quebec City.

Do not need to become better known; they already have a very high profile.

They don't need to. They manage resources. Don't put a lot of resources into public knowledge when their target is developers. They should not be spending public money to promote themselves to the general public.

Don't think there is a gap or deficiency. Wouldn't say to spend a lot of money on self promotion, just do job well.

They shouldn't be a big PR machine. (It's) not their job to put out ads and pat themselves on the back. Their job is to manage lands and buildings in the capital and for the most part they do a good job.

They are not going to generate much of a profile unless it's a negative one, and I don't think it would be appropriate for them to have a higher profile, better to chug along in relatively anonymity.

Not sure if they need to be better known than they are.

Don't waste money on their reputation, fix the paths instead.

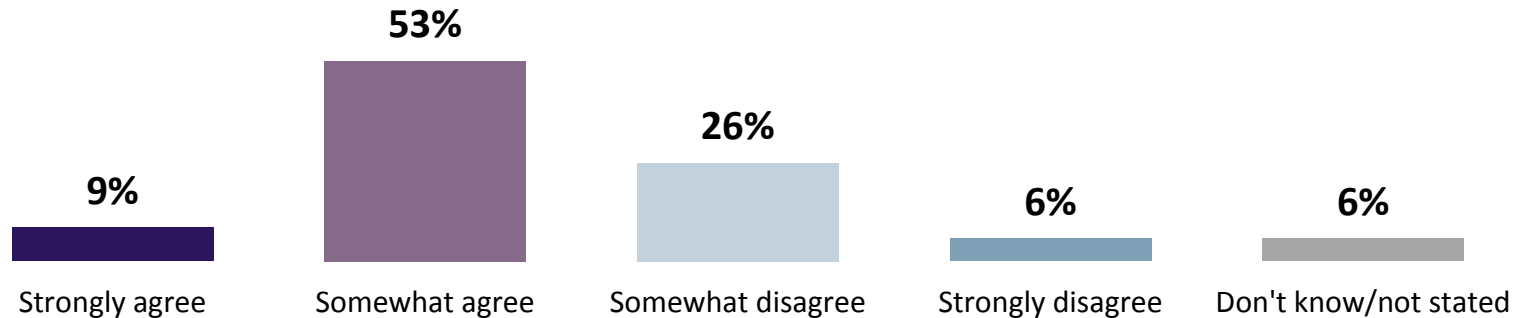
Work on the image as opposed to broader exposure.

They are not elected and they should let elected officials get the publicity. They should stay in the background.

Q6b What could the NCC do to become better known for its work?

Agreement that the NCC is open and transparent

The majority of stakeholders agree that the NCC is open and transparent in its dealings



- Over six in ten agree to some extent the NCC is open and transparent, one-third disagree (somewhat or strongly) and six percent did not say.
- Overall agreement that the NCC is open and transparent is higher among stakeholders representing academia, community groups and First Nations.

Q9 Do you agree or disagree the NCC is open and transparent?

Reasons for feeling the NCC is open/transparent

Stakeholders generally think the NCC is now open to collaboration, at least to some extent, but may be less convinced it is always transparent

They are very open with us but with regard to being transparent "you don't know what you don't know."

Looking at now, they are as open and transparent as any bureaucratic organization, with the caveat that sometimes they don't articulate their positions very well.

There is a responsibility on the part of people to engage, but for those who want to find out then they are open. Board meetings are public, AGMs, etc. all out there for people to go look at if they want.

Good balance. Sometimes you can be "too transparent"... and have the press after you all the time. Can be better to keep a low profile and stay in the shadows.

They are getting more transparent. They are more open than they have been, but it's a process. They are more open than they have ever been. But I have always had good dealings with them.

They do have a lot of public consultations that the general public is invited to and that is good. It would be good if they consulted with stakeholders more.

Generally where they have had to do something controversial, they have been open about what they are going to do, given notice... unlike some other governments which might just take action without public info or consultation.

They are open and transparent with me. They have been responsive, quick, transparent with us... offer resolution really quickly.

Going back years, they operated with less of an open policy. That has changed in the last 5 to 10 years, but the perception hasn't caught up yet.

Q9b Why do you say that?

Reasons for feeling the NCC *is not* open/transparent

Some stakeholders feel the NCC needs to work on being more transparent, either throughout the organization or on specific projects

They are a very secretive organization.

Perception (of lack of transparency) is holding them back, but I'm not sure if perception is real or not. If you talk to most people, (they) probably perceive them as not transparent.

There is very little understanding of how they function and how decisions are made.

I don't think they are fully transparent, but don't think they need to be (transparent) about business dealings.

They are open but NOT transparent. I see private documents as part of my job but for the most part how they work and their processes are very opaque and hidden.

The perfect example is LeBreton. It is very well known to insiders, but public consultation was very weak, not informed what was happening... and this is a major project for the city.

They've opened up meetings. Included municipal representation ex-officio appointments of mayors. More communicative on most projects except LeBreton – still too secretive. Understand commercial confidentiality but would like to see more openness.

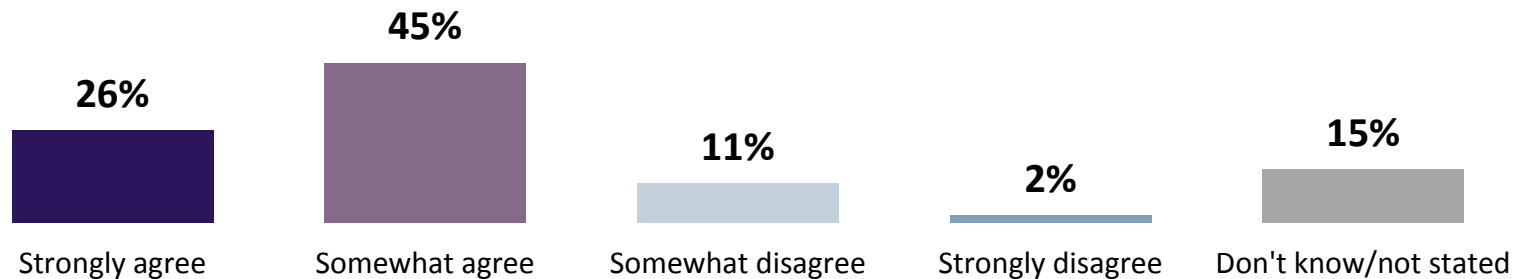
The board meetings are very transparent, NCC (is) transparent at the senior level. As you move down into the operations, there seems to be less transparency about what goes on.

They respond to a lot of political pressure behind the scenes and it's all hidden and no one knows about it. They may make a pretense to being open by having consultations but is it all for show?

Q9b Why do you say that?

If NCC does a good job in consulting and engaging the public

Most agree the NCC does a good job of consulting with the public on plans and programs



- Seven in ten stakeholders at least somewhat agree the NCC is doing a good job of consulting with the public. Around one in seven disagree to some extent, and a similar proportion say they do not know.
- Agreement is marginally higher among community leader and influencer stakeholders; all three stakeholder types have notable proportions who were not able to respond.

Q10 Do you agree/feel the NCC does a good job in consulting and engaging the public for their feedback on plans and programs?

If NCC does a good job in consulting and engaging the public

While a number feel the NCC does a good job on consulting on projects, it is not always obvious whether input is taken into account in final decisions

Good job

"I think they do a basically good job. Probably could do a better job, but they get the importance of consultation and opportunity for input and that translates into buy-in."

"They do a very good job. Spent lots of time and effort on consultation."

"Work doing to bring chiefs from all over province to local – time consuming and doing an outstanding job."

"They are always doing consultations and they often do them in Gatineau too."

"My impression is they do a good job, based on media and comments from people in my field."

"They are really good in the sense that they push organizations requesting permits to get feedback/collaboration from the community."

Mixed

"They put a lot of effort into it - not sure how productive it is."

"They seem to hold lots of meetings and consultations but it's never clear if they actually take any of what they hear into consideration."

"At some of the consultations they seemed to be on the defensive and others they do a good job."

"Material put out to the public is too complicated... and for a lot of people, just a bit too much."

"With the general public, they do a reasonably good job. We have issues (with them) because of the ... issue. They have to create more awareness (internally). There is an educational process going on. But they are becoming more astute."

Bad job

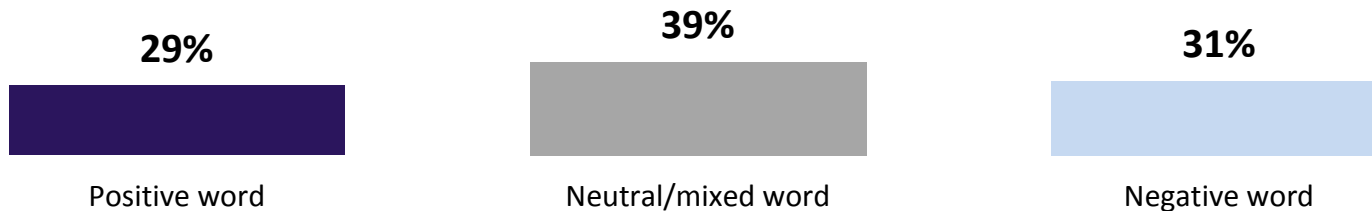
"They are very dogmatic and often have already made up their mind before they go through the show of meeting with us. They want our opinions as long as they all fit in a small shoe box of what we are allowed to discuss."

"They never asked us what we need, it was always directive rather than consultative."

Q10 Do you agree/feel the NCC does a good job in consulting and engaging the public for their feedback on plans and programs?

One word to describe the NCC (pre-discussion)

While many words used to describe the NCC are positive, several stakeholders chose the word “bureaucratic” to describe it



- When asked at the start of the interview to think of one word to describe the NCC, a plurality give a neutral word (39%) and other stakeholders are about equally likely to mention a positive (29%), or negative (31%) word. Academic, community group and First Nations stakeholders are somewhat more likely to cite a positive word than are other stakeholder types.
- The most commonly heard word to describe the NCC was “bureaucratic.” Related words: Big Brother, omnipotent, difficult, opaque.
- A number cite clearly positive top-of-mind words: stewards, evolving, engaged, thorough, valuable, essential, visionary, ambitious.
- Some cited words indicating they perceive the NCC as a duality: schizophrenic, potential+disappointment, inconsistent, siloed.

Q1 When you think of the NCC, what ONE WORD would you use to describe the organization?

One word to describe the NCC (pre-discussion)

Proportions of stakeholders citing a word that is...

Positive
(n=16 – 29%*)

Engaged
Enhancement
Essential
Evolving
Greenspace
Nature
Pride
Stewards
Thorough
Valuable
Visionary

Neutral/Mixed
(n=19 – 39%*)

Ambitious
Canada
Capital
Concierge
Custodian
Development
Federal
Gatekeeper
Image
Lands
National
Opaque
Ottawa
Oversight
Planning
Potential + disappointment
Regulatory

Negative
(n=16 – 31%*)

Big Brother
Bureaucratic
Difficult
Inconsistent
Omnipotent
Problematic
Schizophrenic
Siloed

*percentaged on
those providing a
response (n=51)

Q1 When you think of the NCC, what ONE WORD would you use to describe the organization?

One word to describe the NCC (pre-discussion)

Some elaborated on their choice of word to describe the NCC;
the comments are a microcosm of themes that emerged in the discussions

Positive

I see them as not just holding land and deciding on use of that land but a group that looks at fostering national identity and national pride.

Providing very valuable service and under-rated in the public mind.

Far more respectful than they used to be, both with partners and the land they have.

Gatekeeper to federal assets - parklands, waterways, processional gateways to the capital, the environment

Neutral/Mixed

They are a business and a politically correct government department all rolled into one

Even when (there is) agreement at the senior level, (it) takes time to trickle down to get that direction effected.

...a lot of secrecy in projects the NCC is involved in. Maybe necessary some times, maybe not always though.

Planning of the capital

Negative

Regardless of decision at senior level or compromises made, we find those understandings are then reversed. Some sort of bureaucratic inertia in terms of second guessing and don't have a universal vision...

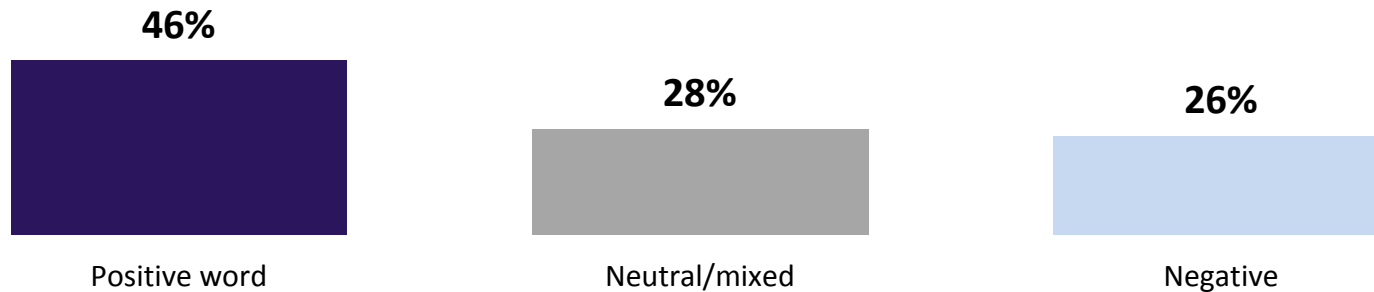
Bureaucratic, slow moving, do a lot of nice things for the city when they get around to it.

They have challenges. I appreciate their mandate at a high level, but they can be counterproductive.

Q1 When you think of the NCC, what ONE WORD would you use to describe the organization?

One word to describe the NCC (post discussion)

One-third of stakeholders chose to change their word to describe the NCC after the discussion



- Most stakeholders chose not to change their word to describe the NCC after the discussion. However, about one-third (n=17) did change their word, and in about half of these cases there was a change in direction: from negative to neutral (n=1), neutral to positive (n=6), and in two cases, negative to positive. None changed from positive to negative or neutral. In the end, over four in ten cited a positive word, over one-quarter gave a neutral term, and one-quarter mentioned something negative.
- The top word to describe the NCC remained “bureaucratic,” but “stewardship” gained traction.

Q14 Now we have had the chance to talk about the NCC for a while, if I asked you again what ONE WORD you would use to describe them, what would you say?

One word to describe the NCC (post-discussion)

Proportions of stakeholders citing a word that is...

Positive (n=23 – 46%*)	Neutral/Mixed (n=13 – 28%*)	Negative (n=14 – 26%*)
<i>Collaborative</i>	<i>Ambitious</i>	<i>Bureaucratic</i>
<i>Competent</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>Difficult</i>
<i>Engaged</i>	<i>Complex</i>	<i>Inconsistent</i>
<i>Essential</i>	<i>Concierge</i>	<i>Outdated</i>
<i>Evolving</i>	<i>Custodian</i>	<i>Overprotective</i>
<i>Guardian</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Schizophrenic</i>
<i>Heritage</i>	<i>Gatekeeper</i>	
<i>Important</i>	<i>Image</i>	
<i>Legacy</i>	<i>Opaque</i>	
<i>Needed</i>	<i>Oversight</i>	
<i>Outdoors</i>	<i>Planner</i>	
<i>Pride</i>	<i>Potential + disappointment</i>	
<i>Quality</i>	<i>Regulatory</i>	
<i>Responsible</i>		
<i>Stewardship</i>		
<i>Vision</i>		
<i>Visionary</i>		

*percentaged on those providing a response (n=50)

Q14 Now we have had the chance to talk about the NCC for a while, if I asked you again what ONE WORD you would use to describe them, what would you say?

**Stakeholders indicate a range of interaction quality and frequency;
a number report noticing improvements at “the top” of the NCC recently**

Staff engaged and responsive.

We have ongoing interactions with the NCC... Number of touchpoints. Ongoing and a regular interaction.

Love 'em and hate 'em. Tenants for quite a long period of time

Minimal direct interactions. I know that by all accounts they can be extremely rigid, devoid of common sense.

It hasn't flowed right through the organization, but at the senior level very open and collaborative

...they could be a little high and mighty. Now much more interactive, easier to deal with...

Many interactions, planning activities and announcements and negotiating about the use of spaces

NCC is a new organization compared to 10 years ago. Now proactive and seeing what is there in the land rather than "let's shove another parkway through it."

Much of those interactions are based on personalities and ability to get along with individuals. For the most part pretty good.

Frequent interactions, a lot more frequent now than in the past. NCC is reaching out a lot more and we are engaging more than we used to.

Seen people make huge efforts, with public service handcuffs and treated as punching bag by the media.

Instead of being able to proceed on what they think is best option, they have to go through the bureaucratic process and consider internal and external considerations. Cumbersome and frustrating and that's why I admire the folks at NCC who get things done.

Q2 Please briefly describe your relationship or interactions with the NCC. How often do you interact with them in your current role?



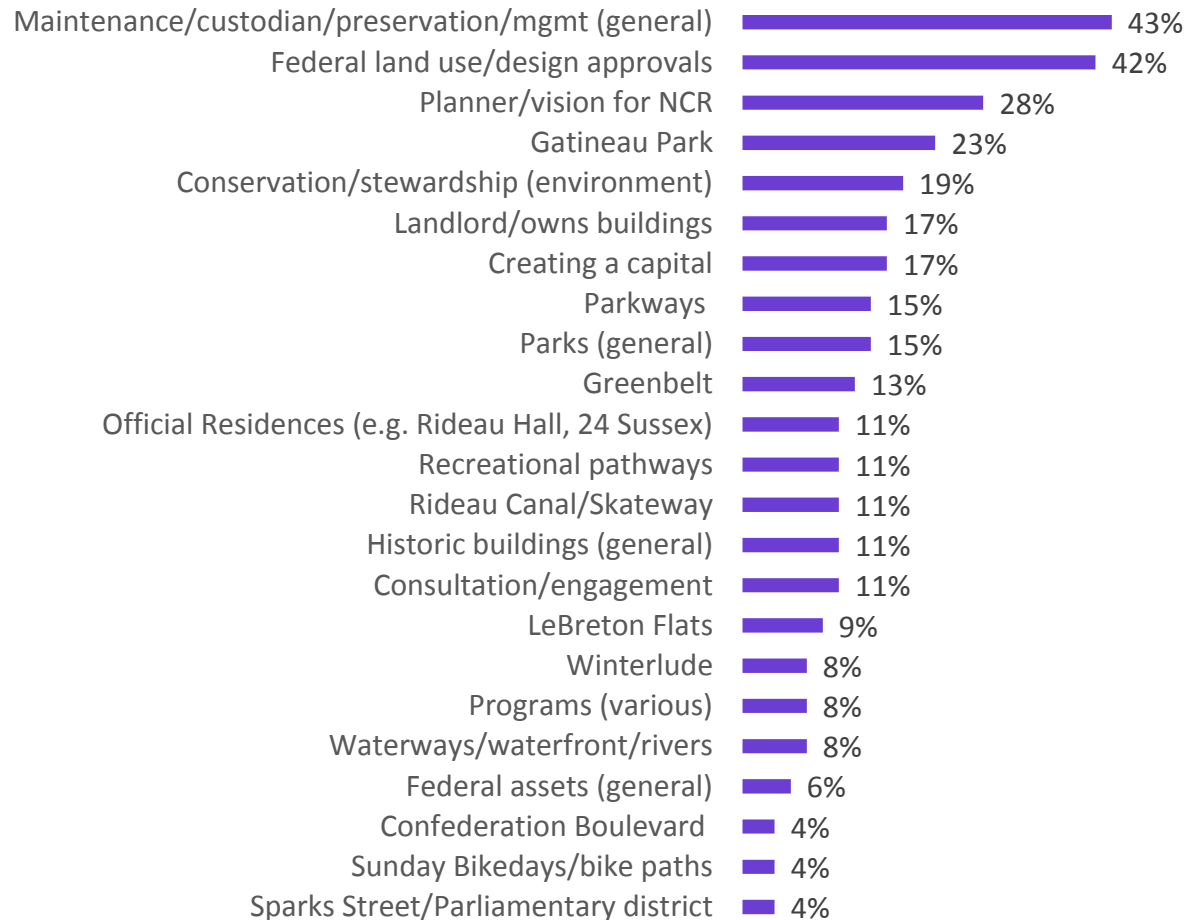
Awareness of mandate and responsibilities

A number of stakeholders cite generalities about the NCC's responsibilities, rather than specifics; some indicate a broader jurisdiction than is the case

- Stakeholders tend to describe the NCC's responsibilities in broad terms, echoing themes mentioned in the invitation e-mail sent to them by Marc Seaman (terms included in the email were "long-term planner of federal lands," "steward of heritage," "mandate to build a world-class capital that is a source of pride"). Many mentioned either its role in maintaining or preserving its holdings in the region, or its role in federal land use. Somewhat fewer specified the NCC's functions as a planner or in environmental conservation, or creating a capital.
- The most often cited specific responsibility of the NCC is Gatineau Park, followed by the parkways, Greenbelt and official residences.
- A few stakeholders gave inaccurate or incorrect responses. A few mentioned the Rideau Canal without specifying the Skateway. A couple thought the NCC is responsible for all parks in the area, and one thought it is responsible for all federal property. A few mention older responsibilities like Winterlude.
- Stakeholders who indicate they have greater familiarity with the NCC are the most likely to correctly cite its responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the NCC - top mentions

Top-of-mind, stakeholders are most likely to mention the NCC's roles as a custodian, in federal land use, or as a planner/visionary for the region



Q5 Briefly, what are some of the NCC's main responsibilities?

Top mentioned NCC roles – by stakeholder type

Academic, community groups and First Nations

- Maintenance/custodian/preservation/management (general)
- Federal land use/design approvals
- Gatineau Park
- Greenbelt

Professional and commercial interests

- Maintenance/custodian/preservation/management (general)
- Federal land use/design approvals
- Landlord/owns buildings
- Conservation/stewardship (environment)

Community leaders and influencers

- Federal land use/design approvals
- Planner/vision for NCR
- Maintenance/custodian/preservation/management (general)
- Gatineau Park
- Rideau Canal/skateway

Responsibilities of the NCC (continued)

Stakeholders usually mentioned the NCC's responsibilities in broad terms.

To protect Canada's resources here in the region. Natural, indigenous, social and economic.

To see that works that are happening on federal lands are reflecting the planning principles and requirements.

Responsible for bringing federal \$ to the table and trying to create a vision for the Capital that reflects Canada rather than a short term vision.

Making a great capital for all Canadians while still respecting the rights of those of us who live here.

To create a national capital feel, if you will. For citizens, tourists, etc., a culture and experience in the Capital to be enjoyed.

They are very good at the planning part, but less so re keeping up with the needs of official residences; question if other departments would already have that expertise in-house.

Responsible for all lands within the region.

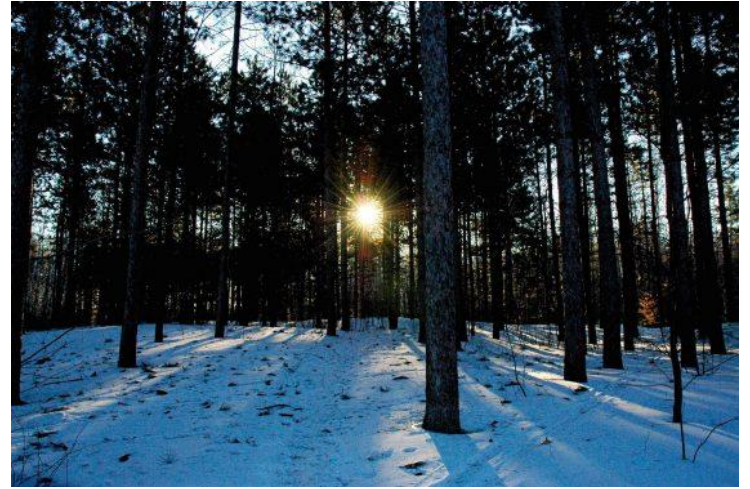
Overarching – managing federal lands.

Bring the long term planning element to the region. A holistic view to support a long-term national capital vision.

Management of national capital lands, future development and planning. Parks, locks, big brownfield list of properties for future development.

Protecting land across the country and making sure that land is used within the values of the country.

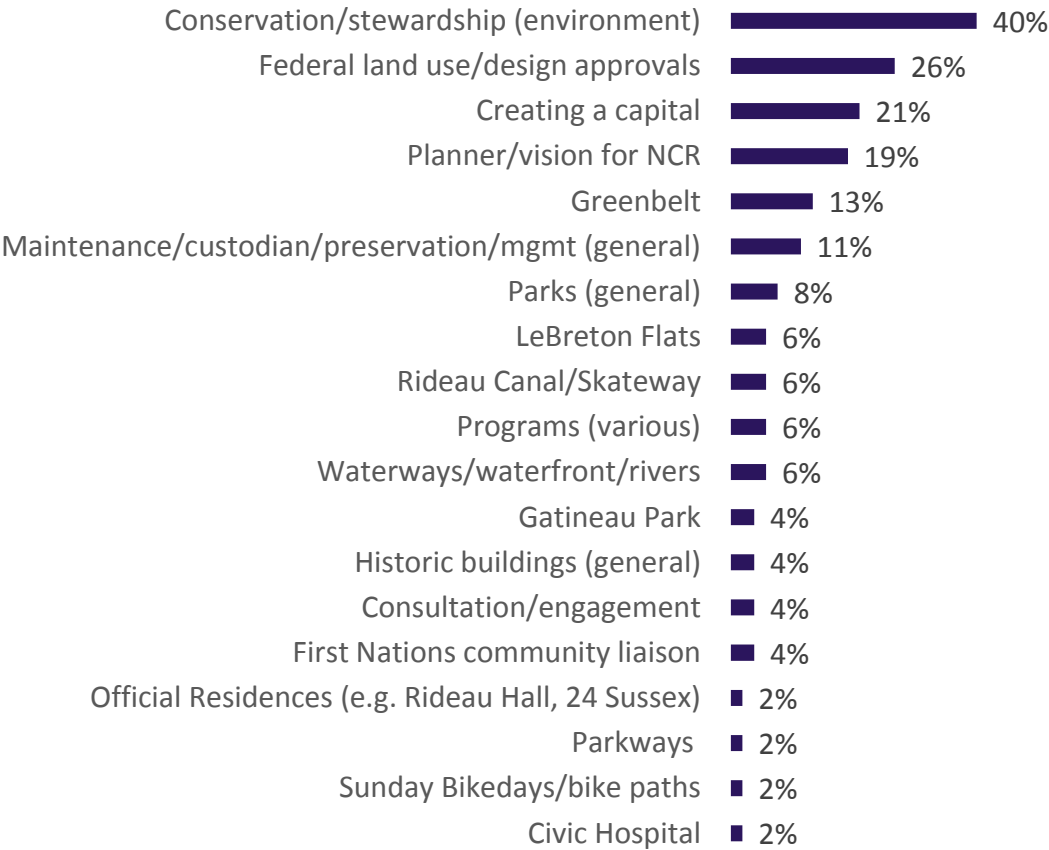
Q5 Briefly, what are some of the NCC's main responsibilities?



Impressions of NCC's performance and contributions

Most important contribution the NCC is making to CCR

The important NCC contributions most cited by stakeholders are preservation of green spaces, stewardship of federal land use, creating a beautiful capital region, and providing planning/vision



Q7 In your opinion, what is the most important contribution the NCC is making to Canada’s Capital Region?

Five top mentioned important NCC contributions – by stakeholder type

Academic, community groups and First Nations

- Conservation/stewardship (environment)
- Federal land use/design approvals
- Creating a capital
- Waterways/waterfront/rivers
- Planner/vision for NCC

Professional and commercial interests

- Federal land use/design approvals
- Creating a capital
- Conservation/stewardship (environment)
- Planner/vision for NCR
- Greenbelt

Community leaders and influencers

- Maintenance/custodian/preservation/management (general)
- Federal land use/design approvals
- Planner/vision for NCR
- Greenbelt
- Gatineau Park

Q7 In your opinion, what is the most important contribution the NCC is making to Canada's Capital Region?

Most important contribution the NCC is making to CCR

Many stakeholders mention preservation or planning the Capital as the NCC's strong suits and most important areas of ongoing focus. A few suggested there is a delicate balance between conservation and making assets available for public use

Preservation of buildings, lands, etc. preserved and open and accessible to citizens, tourists, for all to enjoy.

Reaching out and working with community partners.

Maintaining the coherent capital for the country to be proud of. Doesn't allow a bunch of stuff to pop up all over the place.

In city-building projects like the Civic Hospital, LeBreton Flats. Also their pillar on nature and beauty and work with aboriginal communities.

They are ensuring that the planning of the lands and cityscape, and designs and engaging (the) public, is helping build the city – doing a good job – not a city that's piecemeal and spread. Actually planned and fits with landscape.

Preserving the natural beauty and heritage of the NCR.

*Their biggest contribution **should be** to be an agent of innovation and change to promote our capital... but they don't do that; they end up being a roadblock to innovation.*

Maintaining and conserving green spaces.

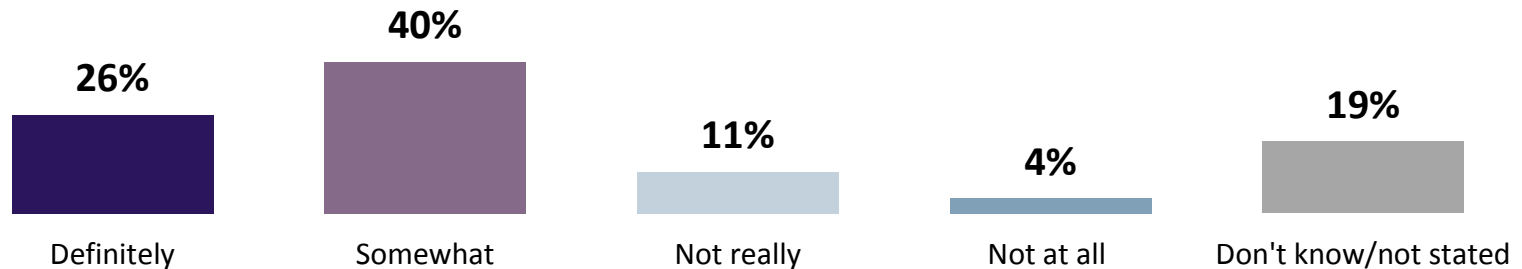
1) preservation/conservation; 2) integration of the two provinces, both sides of river. NCC requires us to think trans-provincially which is good for people to lift out of their provincialism

...they think... in the best interest of the Capital, with a big wide lens on it.

Q7 In your opinion, what is the most important contribution the NCC is making to Canada's Capital Region?

Is the NCC a good value-added partner and collaborator?

The majority feel the NCC is a good value-add partner to some degree



- Three in five stakeholders feel the NCC is a good value-add partner to some degree, but one in five is unable to provide an assessment on this.
- That the NCC is a good value-add partner is marginally higher among community leaders and influencers; the other two stakeholder types are no more likely to say it is *not* a good partner, but are more likely to provide no opinion.

Q8 To what extent is the NCC a good value-added partner and collaborator with other organizations in the region?
PROMPT IF NEEDED: What about with your own organization, is the NCC a value-added partner and collaborator?

Reasons why stakeholders feel the way they do about the NCC's partnership

**Those who find the NCC to be good partners cite expertise;
those who feel they are not good partners often mention red tape**

Good partner

NCC knows what it is good at, (they are) not operators, so they brought someone in to operate.

They have technical resources we don't and they are willing to do it. Finding them to be very good partners now.

Good job of creating a mandate that is as apolitical as possible; allows for long-term planning versus next election cycle.

Mixed

Their board is expert on environment, design, etc.. They can add value in terms of things we may not have thought of. But they are not accountable for the budget side of projects and timelines... the process can set you back three months.

If you engage them in a proactive way, get into them early with development ideas and what is going on, then they are helpful and get on board. If you contact them late, then you end up fighting a giant bureaucratic machine and that becomes your impression.

They used to use the "royal we" a lot and didn't bother consulting with local groups, but now they are much better at this. At the same time, since they have no money they are not in a position to put their money where their mouth is!

Not a good partner

The reason they are not more so is... bureaucracy or political meddling. Not enough cohesion between NCC objectives and the City and other stakeholders.

They have been an obstacle, not a value add.

When dealing with senior officials, a lot more collaboration. As we get more at working staff level – there tends to be less collaboration or it tends to be more siloed, where perspectives depend on the areas they represent and difficult to get a unified position.

Q8 To what extent is the NCC a good value-added partner and collaborator with other organizations in the region?
PROMPT IF NEEDED: What about with your own organization, is the NCC a value-added partner and collaborator?

If collaboration has led to positive results

Many stakeholders feel their collaboration with the NCC has had positive results, but some complain of interference or red tape

Yes – positive results

Especially with appointment of new CEO and especially new chair. They are business friendly and better understand the private sector dynamic.

Absolutely, very positive. Now there are not a lot of tangible results (yet). But heading in that direction.

Trending positively, the interactions we are having are at the staff level and have been very positive and proactive and good vision for what we are trying to do

Some of the staff are really good at leveraging resources.

Mixed

They face a challenge because they have to represent the national interest and not just the regional interest and they have no money.

Need to strike some kind of balance, who has (design) priority. The review process takes long. Respect it, but frustrating.

No – negative results

No. They make things long and painful. Feedback is discouraged; some developers won't deal with them anymore. (Organization) related a story about how they consulted the NCC regarding a minor change, the NCC gave minimal feedback and then took credit for the whole project.

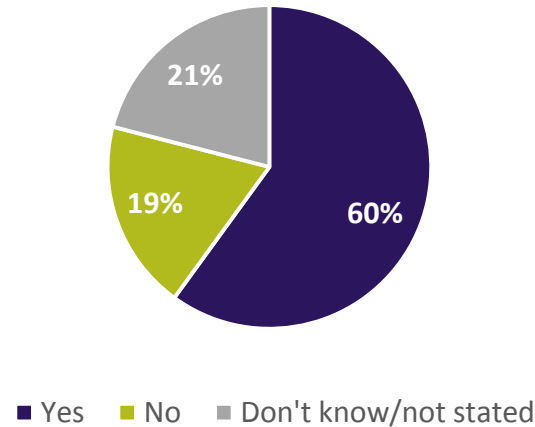
No, they just stall things and get everything gummed up

NCC is a bureaucratic machine that often seeks to avoid decisions that might upset someone else later. They seem to put up roadblocks, costly requirements, that make proponents withdraw. But for some partners there seem to be ways around the process, where staff help route your project in ways that make sense.

Q8b Has this collaboration led to positive results?

Is the NCC moving key projects forward across the NCR?

Three in five agree the NCC is moving key projects forward



- The majority of stakeholders feel the NCC is moving key projects forward. A couple qualified their response by saying the NCC moves some projects forward but not all. At least one did not feel it was the NCC's role to be moving projects forward, as they are not normally the lead. One in five are unable to say.
- As with being a good value-add partner, believing the NCC is moving forward with key projects is somewhat higher among community leaders and influencers. The other two stakeholder types are not more likely to disagree, but more likely not to provide an opinion.

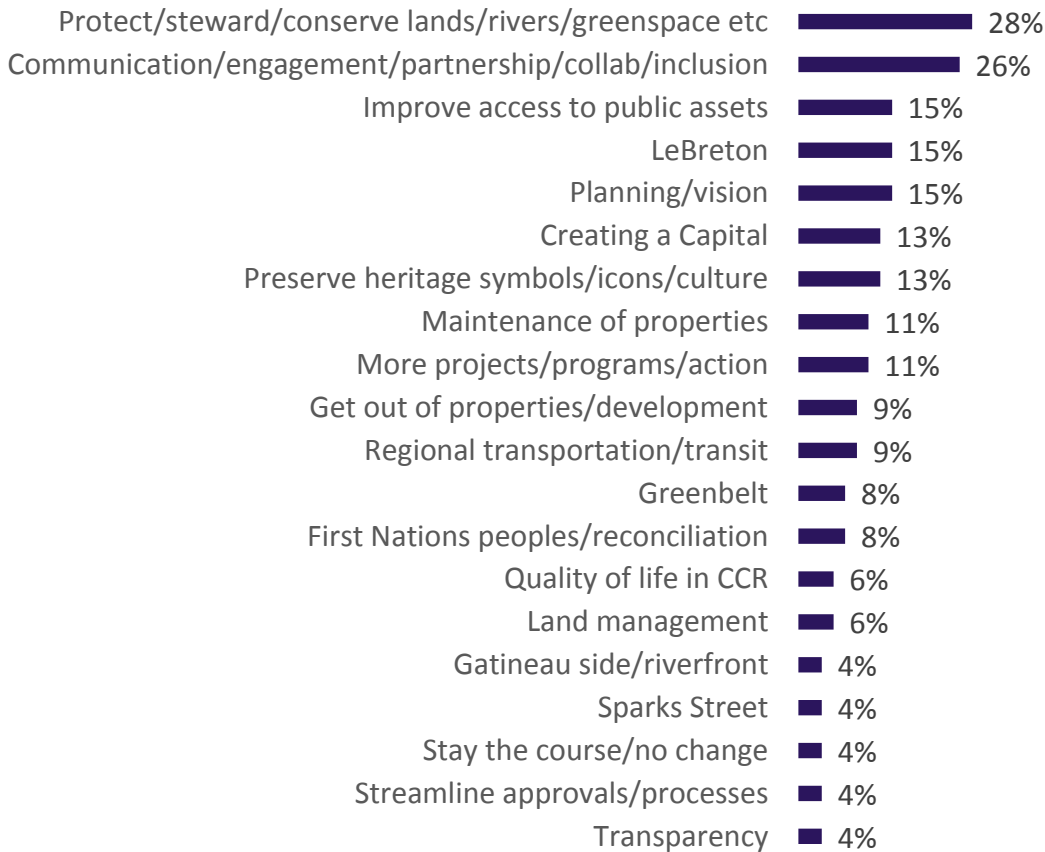
Q11 Do you agree the NCC is moving key projects forward across the NCR? PROMPT IF NEEDED: Do you have any examples of projects the NCC is moving forward/completing?



Future priorities and improvements

NCC priorities for the next 3-5 years – top mentions

Stakeholders are most likely to make some mention of protecting the environment, rivers and green spaces as the NCC’s main priority for the next few years, followed by communication and engagement



Q12 In your opinion, what should be the NCC’s priorities or areas of focus over the next three to five years?

Top mentioned NCC priorities – by stakeholder type

Academic, community groups and First Nations	Professional and commercial interests	Community leaders and influencers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication/engagement/partnership/collaboration/inclusion Protect/steward/conserv outdoors/lands/rivers/greenspace/environment/parks LeBreton First Nations peoples/reconciliation Planning/vision Land management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect/steward/conserv outdoors/lands/rivers/greenspace/environment/parks Communication/engagement/partnership/collaboration/inclusion Improve access to public assets Get out of properties/development Creating a capital Preserve heritage symbols/icons/culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication/engagement/partnership/collaboration/inclusion Protect/steward/conserv outdoors/lands/rivers/greenspace/environment/parks Improve access to public assets Planning/vision Facilitate regional transportation/transit

Q12 In your opinion, what should be the NCC’s priorities or areas of focus over the next three to five years?

NCC priorities for the next 3-5 years

Protect/steward/conserv outdoors/lands/rivers/ greenspace/environment/ parks

"Rehabilitation of land that may not be accessible."

"The environment – there are lot of issues that are being worked on with regard to environmental sustainability, and think NCC is mapping out a strategy."

"Protecting public access to the Ottawa river. I think there is going to be a lot of development pressure and we don't want to have a Toronto Harbourfront situation where the condos block the waterfront."

"Conservation is an important issue and the NCC does some good work there and there is more to be done."

"Making sure that we strike a good balance between preservation of heritage and preservation of green space."

Communication/engagement/ partnership/collaboration/ inclusion

"Working collaboratively with City to have a unified vision for how we want to grow the city."

"Continue to plan developments and collaborate with cities like Ottawa and Gatineau..."

"The current CEO has been doing a good job of identifying areas of interest; keep doing that. Keep communicating."

"Need to continue enhancing how they are seen in the public and (by) governments."

"Put information in lay terms for the general public. Make the website more user friendly - it is very cold. Plans are good, communication is bad."

"...ongoing communications to come up with a go-forward plan."

"Continue to build on marketing themselves as the custodian for all Canadians in Ottawa."

Improve access to public assets

"There is a huge interest in public use of NCC property – bike paths, skiing, etc. – huge implications in terms of getting people here. Maintain public land for public use."

"Do things that improve quality of life. Allow their assets to be used. In other cases don't let assets be a hindrance to things that are happening."

"Maintain a sense of public access (to the Ottawa River), where it feels and looks like public space."

"There is a kind of balance between wanting to protect the beauty and symbolism of the capital at all costs... then there is the flip side of having people interact with the areas, have some fun... finding the right balance between interaction and feeling part of the space..."

Q12 In your opinion, what should be the NCC's priorities or areas of focus over the next three to five years?

NCC priorities for the next 3-5 years (continued)

LeBreton

"LeBreton Flats is the priority..."

"Has to be LeBreton. Nothing could be more important than getting that right."

"#1: LeBreton – huge, huge, project."

"LeBreton Flats and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples."

Planning/vision

"I think the focus should be more on five and ten year plans than 50 and 100 year plans. They need to get involved in city building as well as custodian services."

"They should continue to plan a 21st century national capital city that could aspire to be one of most beautiful and nice to live in and visit in world."

Creating a Capital

"Anything they can do to make the region a more attractive place for visitors, introduce new experiences people can have, maintain the beauty of the region."

"The maintenance of the Capital's beauty and livability."

"Working collaboratively with City to have a unified vision for how we want to grow the city..."

Preserving heritage symbols/icons/culture

"Continued stewardship of the properties they control directly or indirectly. Maintaining or enhancing their assets."

"The preservation of Ottawa's icons, enabling them to expand as required."

"The Parliamentary precinct is another priority – make sure all that money is well spent."

Maintenance of properties

"Take care of 24 Sussex, GG residence."

"Official residences and some other properties need repairs, capital replacement... need to respond to the AG report."

"Some of the buildings are not accessible, and once they are up for renovation they will be made universally accessible."

More projects/programs/action

"Would like to see more execution of projects - enabling pedestrian bridges, enhancing park space,..."

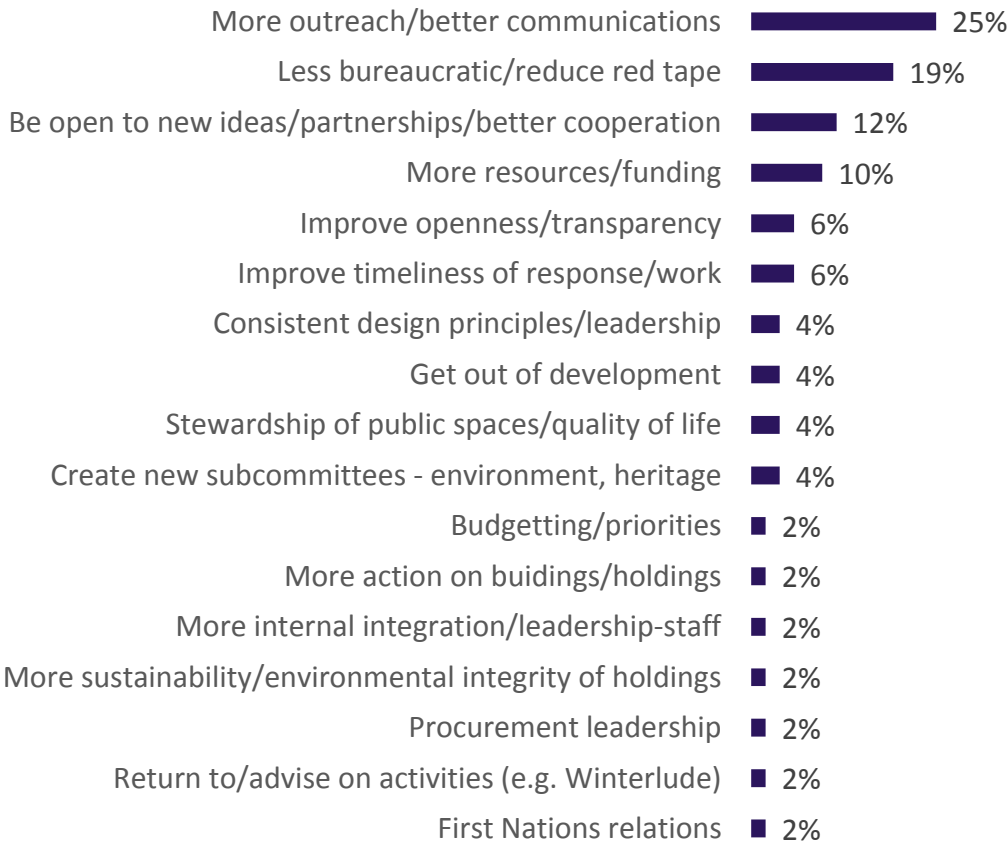
"Let's get the canal doing something other than a few weeks in the winter. Working on the projects to get shovels in the ground. Move things along."

"They have made good gains in engaging with the public, so now time to manifest that into meaningful progress that the public will see."

Q12 In your opinion, what should be the NCC's priorities or areas of focus over the next three to five years?

How could the NCC improve?

As with recent public opinion studies, a number of stakeholders suggest the NCC engage in more communications and outreach and reducing red tape; stakeholders also cite improving collaboration, increasing funding, more transparency and faster turnaround times



Q13 What could NCC be doing differently to improve?

Positive

I think that staff have to be given recognition. They are the ones that are really beginning to respond to what communities are saying.

...they are very nice to deal with and seem to really love their work.

Very pleased with the change of culture at the top. Mark K and Marc S have been positive. Commend them on the work they have done so far and encourage them to continue encouraging change through the organization.

I am very glad they are there... The parts of the city I like most are maintained or enabled by the NCC.

It's early work in progress in repairing what has been someone else's reputation (i.e., previous leadership), but think they are doing a good job.

I find they are earnest, sincere organization that strives to engage stakeholders. Recognize value of shared common information, common understanding and ideally buy-in, so they seem to me to be proactive at engaging with stakeholders who have a legitimate expectation of being involved in any NCC processes.

Compared to other municipalities, City of Ottawa's challenge is that we have another level of government interaction (federal) – anything we can do to be in sync with that is something that residents will benefit from.

I think they are well managed, true governance under new leadership, Marc Seaman. Positive view, consistent over my years in Ottawa. Their policy and governance work, doing good job.

They are a really exciting body/group, such an unthought-of addition to the city. I am excited - would like to see great things

Anyone who I have worked with at the NCC has been very competent, knowledgeable, good experience and good skills. Impressed with the staff, and their skills.

A lot of people don't know the extent of the NCCs holdings... I particularly value their contributions to the region.

Q15 Is there anything else you would like to add? Was there anything you expected might be covered in this interview that was not?

Other comments (continued)

Neutral/negative

They need to give the Gatineau Chamber of Commerce more of a seat at the table when they do their consultations and make long term plans.

(On the aboriginal title issue) NCC have really got to see if they can work out some positive agreements, so we can gain consensus (and) things can move forwards.

NCC is moving in a positive direction, but is often detrimental to itself. Over-bureaucratic, stiff to change or accommodation. Continuing culture change with regards to flexibility and being adaptable to changing situations.

NCC seems to have an awful high turnover rate, develop a relationship with someone and then they are gone and you start over...

They can prevent (organizations) from meeting targets; they can lose jobs and negatively impact the economy.

I think the NCC could do a better job defending themselves; they are seen as being super-mired in bureaucracy (which they are sometimes). Need to be more nimble, flexible, and responsive.

As an example of transparency – will there be a report on the results that participants will get to see?

I think they need to really look at their policies with respect to not-for-profit events that have huge economic impact on the region... finding more obstacles being put in our way as opposed to looking at working with the event to make it bigger and better and keep it alive.

...they are one more layer of bureaucracy that developers need to go through in the NCR and that this causes delays. They need to find ways of making criteria more uniform across Ottawa, Gatineau and the NCC.

Don't feel guilty for spending federal money because it benefits the local community.

Commercializing some of the assets a little more would add to the capital... too much focus on being pristine, rather than making it commercial... maybe because they are more of a government department than a partner with business...

Q15 Is there anything else you would like to add? Was there anything you expected might be covered in this interview that was not?

Appendix: Discussion guide

NCC Stakeholders Research – Interview Guide FINAL

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Date: _____
Interviewer: _____
Interview number: _____

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ from Environics, and I am calling to conduct our scheduled interview.

As you know, we are conducting interviews with stakeholders about the National Capital Commission. We would like you to share your personal thoughts and experiences.

The interview will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, depending on your responses.

Your responses will not be linked to your name or organization.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Familiarity and Impressions of NCC

I'd like to start by talking a bit about your own personal views regarding the NCC.

1. When you think of the NCC, what ONE WORD would you use to describe the organization?

2. Please briefly describe your relationship or interactions with the NCC. How often do you interact with them in your current role?

3. In general terms, do you have a positive or negative impression of the NCC?

Very Positive Positive Neutral Negative Very negative

Why do you say that?

4. How familiar would you say you are with how the NCC operates?

Very Somewhat Not very Not at all

5. Briefly, what are some of the NCC's main responsibilities?

Confederation Boulevard
Conservation/stewardship of the environment
Federal land use and design approvals
Gatineau Park
Greenbelt
Landlord - residential, commercial and agriculture properties
LeBreton Flats
Official Residences (e.g. Rideau Hall, Prime Minister's Residence)
Parkways
Planner of the NCR
Recreational pathways
Rideau Canal Skateway
Sunday Bikedays
Other mentions:

6. How well known would you say the NCC is in general for its work in the National Capital Region?
PROMPT IF NEEDED

Very well known Somewhat known Not very well known Not at all known

What could the NCC do to become better known for its work?

Contributions

7. In your opinion, what is the most important contribution the NCC is making to Canada's Capital Region?

8. To what extent is the NCC a good value-added partner and collaborator with other organizations in the region?

Definitely Somewhat Not really Not at all

PROMPT IF NEEDED: What about with your own organization, is the NCC a value-added partner and collaborator?

Has this collaboration led to positive results?

9. Do you agree or disagree the NCC is *open and transparent*?

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Why do you say that?

10. Do you agree/feel the NCC does a good job in consulting and engaging the public for their feedback on plans and programs?

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

11. Do you agree the NCC is moving key projects forward across the NCR?

PROMPT IF NEEDED: Do you have any examples of projects the NCC is moving forward/completing?

Future priorities

12. In your opinion, what should be the NCC's priorities or areas of focus over the next three to five years?

13. What could NCC be doing differently to improve?

14. Now we have had the chance to talk about the NCC for a while, if I asked you again what ONE WORD you would use to describe them, what would you say?

15. Is there anything else you would like to add? Was there anything you expected might be covered in this interview that was not?

On behalf of the NCC, thank you for taking the time to speak with me.

RECORD:

D1 Gender

- 01 - Male
- 02 - Female

D2 Language of interview

- 01 - English
- 02 – French

D3. Location of respondent/organization

- 01 – Ottawa (Ontario side of Capital Region)
- 02 – Gatineau (Quebec side of Capital Region)



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