



## Urban Design Challenge 2023

### Student Ideas Competition for the National Capital Region

Repairing the Urban Fabric to Create a More Vibrant Capital Core Area

#### 1.0 Overview

##### Introduction

Urban planning and design have the potential to dramatically transform our collective surroundings, influencing and enabling the way we use public spaces. The Urban Design Challenge is a competition that invites students from across the country to come up with design concepts for sites in the National Capital Region (the region).

The competition is open to students enrolled in an accredited educational institution in Canada. The NCC encourages students to form interdisciplinary teams to consider all aspects of urban planning, site design, architecture, Indigenous planning, and landscape design.

#### Challenge overview



This year's competition will focus on repairing and re-stitching the urban fabric in the Core Area of the region. It will address vacant and under-utilized street lots where improvements from an urban design perspective can enhance the public experience.

Students are challenged to propose innovative planning and design ideas for the Sussex Drive Corridor, extending from the National Gallery of Canada to the grounds of Rideau Hall (Ottawa, Ontario).

For complete information on the challenge, [click here](#).

#### 2.0 Context

##### Role of the National Capital Commission

The [National Capital Commission](#) (NCC) is the federal Crown corporation dedicated to ensuring that Canada's Capital is a dynamic and inspiring source of pride for all Canadians, and a legacy for generations to come. The NCC is responsible for the long-term planning of the NCR and is the approval authority for federal lands and buildings. In addition to its planning and approval roles, the NCC is also the steward and manager of many important properties throughout the Capital, including historic buildings and places, public spaces, parks, squares, parkways, shorelines and green spaces.

##### Capital planning

At the pinnacle of the Capital Planning Framework stands the Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067 ([see section 6.0 for more information](#)) This plan lays out a blueprint for the

evolution of federal lands in the NCR over a 50-year horizon; it is the NCC's pre-eminent planning document. The Capital Planning Framework also includes sector plans, which further refine the themes, goals, policies and strategies for geographic areas within the NCR. Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan guides decision making and informs future planning initiatives for the heart of the capital region ([see section 6.0 for more information](#)).

### 3.0 Study Area

#### About the Sussex Drive Corridor

The study area is in the heart of the NCR – the downtown cores of Ottawa and Gatineau – known as the Core Area. Sussex Drive extends from Rideau Street to the Official Residence of the Governor General of Canada, Rideau Hall. The area features many national symbolic institutions, cultural landscapes, commemorations, and public open spaces, including the National Gallery of Canada, the Global Centre for Pluralism, the Royal Canadian Mint, the Ottawa Rowing Club, Earnscliffe, the National Research Council of Canada, the Commonwealth Air Force Memorial, Green Island, the Fraser School House, McTaggart's Wall, Rideau Falls and Park, the International Peace Garden, and 50 Sussex, home of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

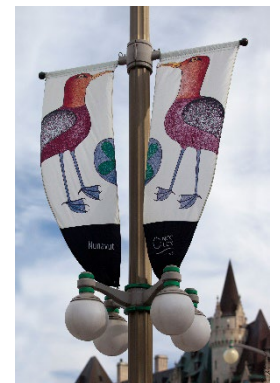
A major initiative is underway to redevelop Kiweki Point (formerly known as Nepean Point), the public space next to the National Gallery of Canada, and to establish it as a key Capital destination. Building on this momentum, the NCC is seeking new ideas for the adjacent segment of the Sussex Corridor, bound by the National Gallery of Canada, the Ottawa River, 50 Sussex, and MacKay Street ([see Figure 1](#)). Connecting these destinations will be essential for the development of public access from downtown to Sussex North.



**Figure 1: Study Area**

#### About Confederation Boulevard

Sussex Drive is an important segment of [Confederation Boulevard](#), the Capital's ceremonial discovery route which encircles portions of downtown Ottawa and Gatineau. This is the route that foreign dignitaries take for processions and state visits. Forming a 7.5-kilometre loop, Confederation Boulevard includes several symbolically important streets along federal lands and passing national landmarks. This ceremonial route is characterized by broad tree-lined walkways, distinctive street furniture, a row of tall lampposts, each bearing a bronze maple leaf at the top, and several lookouts and viewpoints.



The Ottawa and Rideau rivers and Rideau Falls contribute significantly to the area's character and are reminders of the region's water-based heritage. The NCC is interested in increasing the public's access to and enjoyment of the waterways through increased animation. There are significant topographical differences between the waterways and Sussex Drive, which present challenges to increasing public access and taking full advantage of the river shoreline. Additionally, preserving and enhancing the picturesque wild escarpment of the Ottawa River remains important.

Over the coming years, the NCC will update the Core Area Sector Plan to guide the development of the federal lands in the Core Area, including the Sussex Corridor. The Urban Design Challenge presents an opportunity to contribute to the Plan through the exploration of interventions that reintegrate a finer grained urban fabric into the study area, while creating vibrant destinations through thoughtful placemaking.

### A change in focus

Like many major North American cities, mid-20th century growth and modernist planning principles resulted in the demolition of finer grain development in favour of monolithic buildings on large blocks ([see Figure 2](#)). As a result, land use in the area today is predominantly federal offices, institutional buildings, and embassies. Many of the federal uses in the area preclude public access due to their security needs. These conditions have created a pedestrian environment that feels distant from its surrounding context. The NCC is interested in exploring opportunities for better integration of the federal institutions and assets in this area, as well as the reintroduction of finer grained development in order to add vibrancy, create a more pleasing pedestrian experience, and create a stronger visitor destination. The incomplete pathway network and long walking distances are additional challenges to be resolved through the design of this corridor.

#### CAPITAL CORE AREA PLAN REVIEW | RÉVISION DU PLAN DU CŒUR DE LA CAPITALE

Sussex Corridor Area Figure-Ground: 1948 versus 2022

Forme urbaine du corridor Sussex: 1948 contre 2022



**Figure 2: Changes to the built form, roads, railways, and the shoreline between 1948 and 2022**

### THE CHALLENGE

What should be done in the Sussex Corridor to repair the urban fabric and create a more vibrant Capital Core Area?

#### Proposals should:

- Increase the vitality of Confederation Boulevard and adjoining federal lands, and enhance their relationship to the adjacent municipal fabric
- Create new opportunities for the public to access and enjoy waterfront lands that will animate the area year-round, during the day and evening
- Connect existing public spaces overlooking the Ottawa River with a continuous multi-use promenade
- Create attractive and vibrant places for people of all ages and abilities
- Protect and enhance important views



- Showcase design concepts that reflect Indigenous design principles
- Consider opportunities for engagement in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion practices (i.e., Universal Accessibility, multiculturalism and Indigenous engagement)

## 4.0 Contest details

### 4.1 Jury and Evaluation Criteria

A jury of interdisciplinary planning, design and site management professionals will review the submissions and select competition winners. A winning submission will provide bold design concepts that consider the following:

- site context
- leading sustainability elements
- Indigenous engagement and design principles
- environmental and ecological features
- public access and four-season use
- tourism and recreational opportunities
- current master plans and policies
- integration with current transit and multimodal systems
- opportunities for additional active mobility
- universal accessibility

### 4.2 Schedule

December 6, 2022	Competition launches
January 26, 2023	Last day for registration
February 21, 2023	Last day to send questions
February 28, 2023	Information session
March 28, 2023	Submissions due
March 30 to April 20, 2023	Jury consideration
April 24-25, 2023	Winners will be contacted
May 24, 2023	Awards presentation in the Capital



### 4.3 Awards

The winning project team will receive the first-place award of \$750 and a trip to Ottawa, Canada's Capital. The second-place award is \$500 for the runner-up team.

The jury may determine honourable mention awards as well. There are no monetary prizes associated with these awards.

The winning team will be invited to present their ideas at a special awards presentation session of the NCC's Capital Urbanism Lab on **May 24, 2023**. Travel and accommodation expenses for the winning team will be covered (see details that follow under Terms of Reference, Eligibility, to learn about the rules).

## 5.0 Contest details

### Eligibility

The competition is open to any students who are currently enrolled in a design-focused program at an accredited educational institution in Canada. The maximum number of participants per team is three.

The NCC encourages students to form interdisciplinary teams. Proposals should consider aspects of urban planning, architecture, site design, inclusive public access, Indigenous engagement and design principles, landscape architecture and design, and transportation planning. A diverse team of complementary skills is likely to result in a more successful submission.

## Registration

There is no registration fee to participate in the Urban Design Challenge. However, participants are required to register to receive a team number that ensures anonymity of the submissions throughout the evaluation process. One registration is required per project submitted.

Participants may register on the competition website: [ncc-ccn.gc.ca/2023-challenge](http://ncc-ccn.gc.ca/2023-challenge). By registering, participants agree to all [competition terms and conditions](#). Registration will remain open until **January 26, 2023**.

## Questions and answers

Questions regarding the competition will be accepted until **February 21, 2023**. Questions should be emailed to: [andrew.sacret@ncc-ccn.ca](mailto:andrew.sacret@ncc-ccn.ca) or [hilary.koum-Njoh@ncc-ccn.ca](mailto:hilary.koum-Njoh@ncc-ccn.ca). All emails sent should include “**Student Competition**” in the subject line. Answers to all questions will be posted on the competition website: [ncc-ccn.gc.ca/2023-challenge](http://ncc-ccn.gc.ca/2023-challenge).

## FAQs

1. Is there a budget that our proposals should work within? If there is not an exact budget, should the project be idealistic or realistic?

There is no specific budget. Plans should definitely be aspirational, but keep in mind that proposals must also be feasible.

2. If there is interest in some small to medium-sized infrastructure, what level of detail would be best for architectural elements?

We are interested in infrastructure that reflects the objectives of the various plans that are relevant to your chosen site.

Regarding the level of detail, we want conceptual drawings, not construction drawings, for architectural elements. You may provide information in plan, elevations, sections and pedestrian eye-level views.

## Submissions

Submissions may be prepared in either of Canada’s two official languages (English and French). Competition submissions are due no later than **11:59 pm Daylight Saving Time on March 28, 2023**. All submissions will be made via the NCC’s FTP site; further details will be provided to participants after registration. No hard copies of materials will be accepted.

The Urban Design Challenge is an anonymous competition. No names or identifying symbols of participants shall appear on submitted material or in filenames.

### Submissions should consist of the following elements:

- Up to two 60.96-cm x 91.44-cm (24-in. x 36-in.) boards in PDF format. The filenames should include the registration number (e. g. “Board\_12345”). All drawings and architectural scales should be expressed in metric.
- A written statement not exceeding 500 words explaining the ideas. The file should be in .txt or Word format. The filename should include the registration number (e. g. “Written\_12345”).
- A document with contact information for the participating individual/team. The document should include the project title, participant name(s) and email address for primary contact. The filename should include the registration number (e. g. “ID\_12345”). The sources of any third-party material incorporated in the entry must also be included.

## Rules and regulations

For complete rules and regulations, [click here](#).

## Ownership and copyright

Each participant shall retain ownership of the copyright associated with the entries submitted.

By submitting an entry, each participant grants the NCC a non-exclusive perpetual licence to use, reproduce, publish, modify, incorporate into other work, distribute and promote, in whole or in part, the materials submitted by the participant for any non-commercial or commercial purpose, in any format whatsoever, including print, digital publication, audio, video and all other media (whether now known or later developed), in any form, without territorial limits and without attribution.

## Warranties

By submitting an entry, participants warrant that their entry is original. See the design contest rules and regulations for further information.

## 6.0 Resources and references

### General

- [National Capital Commission. The Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067.](#)
- [National Capital Commission. Sustainable Development Strategy, 2018–2023.](#)
- [Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan.](#)
- [Capital Illumination Plan, 2017-2027.](#)
- [Capital Pathway Strategic Plan.](#)
- [National Capital Commission, Canada's Capital Views Protection, November 2007.](#) Protecting the Visual Integrity and Symbolic Primacy of Our National Symbols.

