



Urban Design Challenge 2024

Student Ideas Competition for the National Capital Region

Reimagining the LeBreton Flats Park District

1.0 Challenge overview

Students, this is your moment to shine! Unleash your creativity and share your visionary ideas for the Park District of LeBreton Flats. Located 1.5 km from Parliament Hill in the western downtown core of Canada's capital city, this 10-hectare site stretches from the Bayview LRT Station in the west to Nepean Inlet and the aqueduct in the east.

This is your chance to propose innovative planning and design ideas for the LeBreton Flats Parks District and inspire future consultation efforts for these parklands. Learn more about the 2024 Urban Design Challenge [here](#).

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

Capital planning

The Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067, serves as the cornerstone of the Capital planning framework. It outlines a half-century roadmap for the development and evolution of federal lands in the National Capital Region. This framework also includes sector-specific plans that elaborate on thematic areas, policy objectives and targeted strategies. See Milestone 12: Development of LeBreton Flats and the Island Sites for more information.

In April 2021, the NCC approved the LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan (MCP). The plan guides development of the 29-hectare area over the next 20 to 30 years into a capital destination and a zero-carbon complete community, offering a mix of uses, including residential, office and commercial buildings, and supported by a network of parks and open spaces in four distinct districts: the Flats District, the Aqueduct District, the Albert District, and the Park District. The implementation of the MCP is shaped by the following guiding principles: enhance the capital experience, build community, create connections, value nature, foster sustainability and innovation, honour the past and make it happen.

Please refer to the [Master Concept Plan](#) for more information. Currently, the NCC is reviewing the National Capital Core Area Plan, which includes LeBreton Flats and the Park District within its study area. The new core area plan will cast the LeBreton MCP area within the wider context of the core while supporting the MCP's more specific principles and guidelines. For more information on the National Capital Core Area Plan, please consult the [project webpage](#).

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.



Study Area: LeBreton Flats Park District

3.0 Study area

History of LeBreton Flats

As far back as 9,000 years ago, the Algonquin Nation lived throughout the region and LeBreton Flats was part of a network of travel routes that stretched through eastern North America. It was first surveyed in 1794 and purchased by John LeBreton in 1820. For the next 150 years, it became an established working-class community due to its proximity to the timber trade and hydroelectric power generation from the Ottawa River. In 1900, the Hull-Ottawa fire swept through Ottawa, severely damaging LeBreton Flats, but in the following years, the residential and industrial neighbourhood was rebuilt.

On April 18, 1962, thousands of residents of LeBreton Flats learned that they would lose their homes. At the time, it was supported by the Gréber Plan (the Plan for the National Capital, 1950) and said to be necessary to address the deteriorating buildings and polluting industry. Much of LeBreton Flats was cleared with the intent to construct a federal office campus; however, that plan was never realized. In subsequent years, efforts were undertaken to determine a suitable future for this important site. In the 1970s, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation planned the area for housing and one demonstration project was constructed south of Albert Street.

In 1989, the NCC, the former Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, and the City of Ottawa launched a new joint planning process. This process led to a land agreement that consolidated land ownership under the NCC and culminated in the 1997 LeBreton Flats Master Plan. Other progress at LeBreton Flats during this time included the realignment of the Ottawa River Parkway (recently renamed the Kichi Zībī Mīkan), the construction of the Canadian War Museum, and the

construction of residential buildings at LeBreton Flats east of Booth Street.

In 2014, motivated to enhance the attractiveness of the Capital and bring civic life back to LeBreton Flats, the NCC launched a competitive process seeking a development proposal for the entire site. With the cancellation of that process in 2019, following a breakdown in the business partnership of the proponent, the NCC chose to lead a new approach that would establish a comprehensive vision for LeBreton Flats based on public input, with a goal of re-establishing the area as a capital destination and vibrant community. That new vision finds its expression in the renewed LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan (2021)



Study Area: LeBreton Flats Park District

About the LeBreton Flats Park District

Located at the heart of the National Capital Region, the LeBreton Flats Park District holds immense potential as a central public space. The district is enriched by its proximity to waterways, cultural landmarks and public transit.

This year's challenge aims to bring fresh design perspectives to this unique area, building upon its importance to the Algonquin people, historical significance and future potential.

Comprised of three interconnected parks, the Park District showcases diverse urban greenspace experiences. The Capital Park, strategically anchored near Bayview Station, serves as a multifunctional event space. The Active Park offers recreational amenities, including playgrounds and sports courts, while the Urban Playground near the Pimisi LRT station caters to accessible and engaging urban activities. This urban design challenge emphasizes the preservation and enhancement of natural spaces within the Park District. Additionally, it focuses on providing seamless urban access to nature and the Capital Pathway network for residents and visitors.

Nepean Inlet is LeBreton's direct connection to the Ottawa River. By enhancing riverfront connections and leveraging Nepean Inlet, the challenge seeks to create links to the Ottawa River and nearby recreational areas, elevating the district's urban appeal. It is celebrated here as a node supporting recreation on and off the water.



Bird's eye view: LeBreton Flats Park District

Central to this design challenge is the development of a substantial outdoor event space at the heart of the Park District. This venue holds great potential for hosting diverse urban events, festivals, performances and celebrations, and enhancing the vibrancy and urban character of the district while creating vibrant destinations through thoughtful placemaking.

Existing conditions

The study area is originally part of the Ottawa River's Nepean Bay. It is a former municipal landfill site with significant environmental assessment and geotechnical conditions. As a result, the site presents many challenges for development. To make the area safe for more active public use, it is anticipated that a soil cap will need to be added in the Capital Park and Active Park areas, which could result in the removal of trees.



Panoramic view: LeBreton Flats Park District

THE CHALLENGE

What is your vision for the LeBreton Flats Park District?

Proposals should:

- ensure that the public realm enables smooth flows through the site, with a particular focus on the east-west destination experience through the site;
- consider access to the site, specifically the two pedestrian bridges that bring people into the parklands;
- consider the best options for the design of a park in close proximity to the four-lane parkway adjacent to the site (e.g. safety, noise, large events);
- embed accessible four-season considerations and opportunities in all public spaces, during the day and evening;
- find balance between active and passive spaces in parks, streets and plazas;
- create attractive and vibrant places for people of all ages and abilities;
- identify, protect and enhance important views, including those of Parliament Hill;
- highlight and value natural features of the area and work with existing topography to minimize cut and fill;
- showcase design concepts that reflect the MCP vision and guiding principles;
- demonstrate how the project would include Algonquin perspectives; and
- consider opportunities for engagement related to diversity, equity and inclusion practices (i.e. universal accessibility, multiculturalism and Indigenous engagement).

4.0 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 23, 2024**. Travel and accommodation expenses for the winning team will be covered (see competition terms and conditions to learn about the [rules and regulations](#)).

5.0 Contest details

Eligibility

The competition is open to 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/2024-challenge.

By registering, participants agree to all [competition terms and conditions](#). Registration will remain open until **Friday, January 26, 2024**.

Schedule

December 7, 2023	Competition launches
January 26, 2024	Last day for registration
February 16, 2024	Last day to send questions
February 28, 2024	Information session
March 28, 2024	Submissions due
April 8 to 19, 2024	Jury consideration
April 24-25, 2024	Winners will be contacted
May 23, 2024	Awards presentation in the Capital



Winter skiing: LeBreton Flats Park

Questions and answers

Questions about the competition will be accepted until Wednesday, February 16, 2024. Questions should be emailed to: kelly.mcrae@ncc-ccn.ca or public.affairs@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/2024-challenge.

Regarding the level of detail: We want conceptual drawings, not construction drawings, for architectural elements. You may provide information in the plan, elevations, sections and pedestrian eye-level views. See the most frequently asked questions under [FAQs](#).

Submissions

Submissions may be prepared in either of Canada's two official languages (English or French). Competition submissions are due no later than **11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time on Thursday, March 28, 2024**. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.

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



LRT train: LeBreton Flats Park

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.

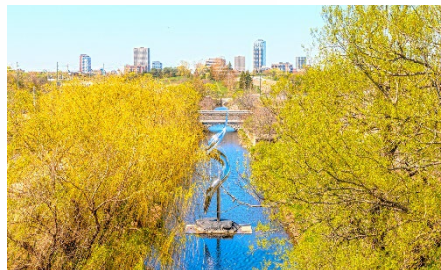
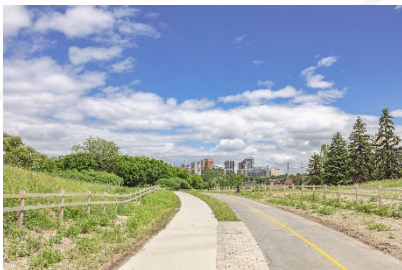
2. If there is interest in some small to medium-sized infrastructure, what level of detail would be best for architectural elements?

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.

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 and created solely by them. See the design contest rules and regulations for further information.

Rules and regulations

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

6.0 Resources and references

General

- [National Capital Commission. The Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067.](#)
- [Capital Urban Lands Plan](#)
- [Canada's Capital Core Area Sector Plan](#)
- [Ottawa River South Shore Riverfront Park Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan \(2021\)](#)
- [Building LeBreton](#)
- [Capital Pathway Strategic Plan \(2021\)](#)
- [LeBreton Flats pathway](#)
- [National Capital Commission. Sustainable Development Strategy, 2018–2023.](#)
- [Capital Illumination Plan, 2017-2027](#)
- [Capital Design Guidelines](#)
- [Policy on planning practice and reconciliation](#)

