



# NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

## National Capital Core Area Plan Summary: Public Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

### PARTICIPANTS

#### National Capital Commission:

- Madeleine Gomery, Advisor, Public and Community Relations (moderator)
- Andrew Sacret, Chief, Planning and Design (co-chair)
- Patrick Bunting, Senior Planner, Urban Design (speaker)
- Francois Pirart, Senior Planner, Transportation (speaker)
- Fabrice Beniey, Senior Planner (observer)
- Émilie Girard-Ruel, Director, Public and Corporate Affairs (observer)
- Cédric Williams, Manager, Public Consultations (observer)

#### Hill & Knowlton:

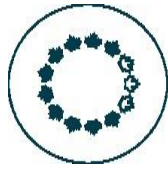
- Melina Kokkinos, Senior Consultant, Public Participation (tech/logistics and minutes)

#### Public Advisory Committee (PAC) members – present:

- Sylvie Bigras, President, Lowertown Community Association
- Daniel Cayley-Daoust, President, Association des résidents de l'Île de Hull
- Lee Dunbar, Interim Executive Director / Director, Research and Communications, Ottawa Festivals
- Jerry Fiori, Chair, Ottawa Disability Coalition
- Karen Green, Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition
- David Jeanes, Director, Transport Action Canada
- Janet Luloff, Co-Chair (Transportation Committee), Council on Aging of Ottawa
- Sarah Mackenzie, Executive Director, Ottawa Museum Network
- Kevin McHale, Executive Director, Sparks Street BIA
- Andrew Peck, Executive Director, Downtown Rideau BIA
- Laura Reinsborough, Riverkeeper and CEO, Ottawa Riverkeeper
- Katherine Spencer-Ross, President, Heritage Ottawa
- Olivier Viger Beaudin, Sustainable Mobility Consultant, MOBI-O
- Alice Irene Whittaker, Executive Director, Ecology Ottawa

#### PAC members – regrets/absent:

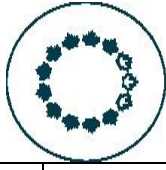
- Catherine Callary, Vice-President, Destination Development, Ottawa Tourism
- Annie-Pier Caron Daviault, Vision Centre-Ville
- Andrew Peck, Executive Director, Downtown Rideau BIA



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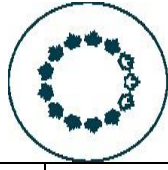
**DISCUSSION**

#	Member	Question/comment	NCC Response
<b>Clarifying questions</b>			
1	J. Luloff	Can you confirm that given the project timeline, we should submit our input as soon as possible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are continuing to work towards a January 2025 deadline to finalize the plan.</li> <li>We want to be sure to give everyone an opportunity to provide their input so we can take it into account as we build the plan.</li> <li>We would recommend raising items as proactively as possible: please do not hesitate to represent your perspective, organization and personal interests.</li> </ul>
2	L. Reinsborough	Can you clarify the map on slide 27 (Capital Realm)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The map on the left is the boundary of the core area.</li> <li>The buildings shown in maroon are key areas of federal interest; the NCC has primary responsibility for those buildings and lands.</li> </ul>
3	L. Reinsborough	How will engagement by groups like ours be considered and weighted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We expect groups to provide feedback based on their various regions and themes of interest, which we expect to play out geographically to some extent (e.g. some community associations may wish to deep dive into their own neighbourhoods).</li> <li>Feedback will be considered by regrouping the various inputs and analyzing where there is consensus, alignment, or diverging perspectives.</li> </ul>
4	L. Reinsborough	This will be challenging with Indigenous groups. I would be curious to hear more updates on the Indigenous engagement process as this exercise progresses, as well as gather more information about what you are learning as you weigh and analyze feedback.	
5	G. Fiori	I want to see how you deal with the Rideau Canal under this plan (although most of it is not located in the core area). I'm uncertain how to think of the relationship of the whole canal to the core area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Capital Pathway Strategic Plan is the main document including the multi-use pathways bordering the canal, and some of the challenges of the sector were addressed through that planning tool.</li> <li>There is also a cultural landscape study being done in partnership between Parks Canada, the NCC and the City of Ottawa that considers the canal's many roles (practical, recreational, cultural), and</li> </ul>



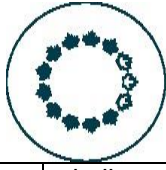
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			<p>which will also feed into the Core Area Plan and future discussions about the canal and pathways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The core area is being considered in connection to its surroundings, not just as an isolated geographic area, so access by or along the canal is an important way of looking at it.</li> </ul>
6	<b>K. McHale</b>	<p>Ensure that when we are creating these spaces, we do not forget about the local population. Spaces may be good/nice for tourists, but if we do not create spaces locals want to use on a daily or weekly basis, the plan could be a failure. Chicago has possibly over-commercialized its river space, but you can sit there for hours people-watching, and that space used to be an industrial waterway. I would like to see more of this type of language incorporated into the plan documentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have had a few conversations with the Board of Directors where we have talked about that.</li> <li>It's important to consider the town/crown dividing line, and the places where that line should maybe blur; there seems to be support for some amount of blurring.</li> </ul>
7	<b>K. Green</b>	<p>Since this is a core piece of Indigenous land, there's probably a lot of specific engagement that Indigenous peoples should be included in. Has this been considered/done?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have an Indigenous Engagement team at the NCC and they are working closely with the project team on engagement with Algonquin communities.</li> <li>Indigenous engagement is a separate process from the broader public engagement process.</li> <li>We appreciate your perspective in your role at the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition as well, to incorporate Indigenous views as part of this process. We can keep you updated on how this develops.</li> </ul>
8	<b>D. Jeanes</b>	<p>Is the NCC's transportation planning team functional and ongoing, and is it already working directly with the STO and OC Transpo on the proposed Gatineau LRT and the Confederation Boulevard loop? Can you provide more information about that?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have members of the Transportation Planning team integrated within the National Capital Core Area Plan project team, working on the components related to the Confederation Boulevard Design Guidelines.</li> <li>There is also a transit office at the NCC, which is separate but complementary to the Long-Range Transportation Planning team, which was mandated by the federal government to help with the coordination of interprovincial mobility. That team has been established, but no official funding announcement has been made yet; it will grow once funding is announced.</li> <li>We are working closely with the STO, OC Transpo, and the City of Ottawa and Ville de Gatineau on complex transportation projects, to better structure the integration of our work and analysis.</li> </ul>



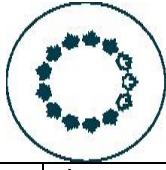
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<p><b>Discussion #1: When you think of the core area of the National Capital Region in 2023, what locations, landmarks and feelings come to mind?</b></p>			
9	S. Bigras	I think this is an appropriate introductory question, but I would add: "Why does it make you feel the way you feel? What brings you joy in the core area?" The "why" is more important than the "what."	
10	J. Luloff	You cover things like locations, landmarks and feelings, but it may be worthwhile to add the word "challenges" (e.g. accessibility for an aging population) to draw out what challenges there could be in accessing the core area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those are great points, thank you.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion #2: What major changes and challenges do you think will be most important for the core area of the National Capital Region by 2050?</b></p>			
11	A.I. Whittaker	Major challenges include extreme weather events (flooding, heat, etc.) and related major changes involve preparing for those challenges (e.g. green infrastructure, prioritization of nature). Making sure that nature is at the heart of these changes and preparing in any way possible for the extreme weather.	
12	S. Bigras	The Lowertown Community Association is working on several initiatives that are relevant to the Core Area Plan. You all know we have some serious issues in the area, and we are very much working on the social service side. Everything we are doing here to place-make, beautify and open to the river will be for naught if nobody wants to visit that area.	
13	S. Bigras	We do feel really good about some of the conversations, meetings and next steps we have been promoting with the City of Ottawa, social service providers and Ottawa Public Health, etc. We have a housing-first approach. We are very aggressive in identifying it. The vulnerable people are the ones who suffer the most and the system we have in place is killing them. Providers are overwhelmed and the community is suffering. For people who live and raise their families in the community, it touches us very closely. Important for the NCC to recognize that	



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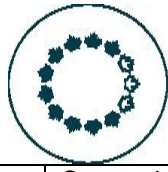
		challenge and to understand that it needs to be a partner with us.	
14	<b>K. McHale</b>	In the past few decades, the federal government's security requirements for the Parliamentary Precinct have changed, and not all of those changes are good. Safety is important, but it can't result in closing off public space. The challenge of finding that balance needs to be part of the internal discussion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's a need to balance security with vibrancy and access.</li> </ul>
15	<b>J. Fiori</b>	There are some major equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility issues where a lot of people can't afford to go downtown, are afraid to go downtown and don't have the financial capacity to participate in festivals and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent observations, thank you.</li> </ul>
16	<b>J. Fiori</b>	You talked about the core area's role in our democracy; there must be a place for protestors to come through and speak to Parliament and do it in a proper way. This is a major and concerning problem highlighted by the occupation in 2022. Through that occupation, it was the most vulnerable people that were suffering the most. I want to make sure we address those issues as we go through these discussions.	
17	<b>J. Luloff</b>	When we talk about major challenges, I wonder whether you are asking what kinds of challenges there will be for meeting the plan, or what kinds of issues need to be addressed? For example, is an aging population a "challenge" or an "issue"? It's semantics, but it's important when you are doing broad consultations. Depending on what kind of input you want to get back, that kind of wording is important. If you're looking for the major issues that will need to be addressed in the Plan, I would recommend you rephrase a bit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will reflect on that.</li> </ul>
18	<b>K. Spencer-Ross</b>	Working with the City of Ottawa is a challenge but also a major opportunity. I'm not sure the National Capital Core Area Plan is going to be effective if there is not a good relationship with the City of Ottawa.	
19	<b>K. Spencer-Ross</b>	We need to explore more adaptive reuse of buildings, structures and sites within the core area. Everything doesn't have to be kept exactly the way it is. We used to talk about	



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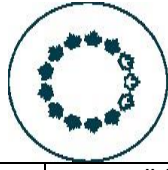
		the greenest building as being the building that still exists. Now we could shift the conversation to the greenest building being the building that has been adapted to its current use. The Senate Building is a great example of a building that has benefited from adaptive reuse in recent years.	
20	L. Reinsborough	I'm so glad to hear extreme weather events as a challenge. How does this reflect on people's experiences of this core area? Heat is a major example of this. Where are there opportunities to build in cooling stations and public access to drinking water? There are opportunities to partner with the City on infrastructure that better supports residents.	
21	L. Reinsborough	There is also the issue of shoreline development and how we approach any infrastructure changes to our shoreline. With flooding, we need to expect major fluctuations, even outside of extreme weather; the river is inherently dynamic. But this will be exacerbated by climate change. The NCC has made developments to how it fortifies the shorelines, but the best solution is when shorelines are naturalized, because it allows for built-in abilities for the shoreline to absorb or retain flood water. I think that that general guiding principle around how we develop shorelines will make a big difference.	
22	L. Reinsborough	We're about as close to 2050 as we are to the year 2000. We are not that far away from 2050, but the climate change projections are dramatic between now and then. This needs to be understood with the real weight of what it carries. Whatever can be done to naturalize and build in that resilience and push that beyond what we think is going to happen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That was very eloquently expressed.</li> <li>• What you are saying is not lost on us; we recognize the importance of addressing climate change in this plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Discussion #3: What major opportunities do you think will be most important for the core area of the National Capital Region by 2050? What does the ideal core area look like? What should be prioritized? What supporting actions are needed to help us get there?</b></p>			
23	J. Fiori	The biggest open area right now is LeBreton. Everyone is talking about putting the new hockey rink there, which is a major opportunity, but is it what we want down there, or is there something better?	
24	A.I. Whittaker	The ideal core area is lush with nature, green roofs, shade, etc., but also dense.	





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25	<b>A.I. Whittaker</b>	Supporting actions: bringing youth and kids into the process, integrating them in the conversation.	We had some good interactions with younger people during our pop-up kiosks in September and October, but we are looking for ways to expand this outreach and make it more youth oriented.
26	<b>S. Bigras</b>	I would want to know what gets people excited about the National Capital Core Area Plan. But primary elements like shade and drinking water also need to be part of this ideal future.	
27	<b>S. Bigras</b>	My ideal future sees the entire Lowertown community (ByWard Market, Lowertown, Rideau Street) incorporated into the look and feel of the plan. This can be facilitated by asking people to pinpoint the reasons they feel the way they do in core area spaces (e.g. Sussex Courtyards). If you're in a beautiful piazza in Europe and you go a block away, the feel of the area remains. This is a question of creating a whole space instead of parcelling off a lot of small spaces. We would love to see the history and heritage of Lowertown spread into a larger space. We would love to partner with the NCC on greenery, a lighting plan, benches, etc., to help building a breathtaking community.	
28	<b>K. McHale</b>	To layer on that, in an ideal future, the levels of government involved have a more seamless and less adversarial relationship than we've seen at times. Most visitors and residents don't see the distinctions between different levels of government – they just want to see everyone working together in pursuit of common goals.	
29	<b>K. McHale</b>	Opportunity in this plan for flexibility in design and the creation of a downtown network. You have a concerted design effort amongst all the partners involved.	
30	<b>K. McHale</b>	Don't let the public features (e.g. water fountains) disappear.	
31	<b>D. Cayley-Daoust</b>	It is especially important to hear from residents who use the downtown areas.	
32	<b>D. Cayley-Daoust</b>	Brewery Creek is a critical opportunity that has not been developed up to now. Other important ideas are the interprovincial transit loop (we have to get cars out of the downtown as much as possible) and	

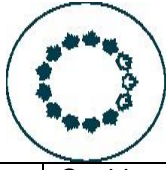


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		accessibility of public spaces. Downtown Gatineau is an older area that is still of interest but has not been properly exploited and has been abandoned and neglected.	
33	<b>D. Cayley-Daoust</b>	An important factor is the use of some heritage buildings, such as the monastery near Jacques-Cartier Park. Under-utilizing these spaces is unfortunate because they are beautiful spaces. It's expensive to rent – these spaces should be accessible. Culture and social services have to be emphasized. Certain opportunities may hard to take advantage of due to the current conditions of the spaces. But they are in the core area. For us, it's about cost, accessibility and sustainable mobility.	
34	<b>S. Bigras</b>	We also have found that we have lost business diversity [in the ByWard Market] because rents have gotten so high (e.g. House of Cheese). What can the NCC do to take a position on that?	
35	<b>O. Viger Beaudin</b>	I have a specific comment for the first French question: I think that the term " <i>opportunités</i> " is more relevant than " <i>occasions</i> ," especially as it relates to the previous issues of changes, challenges and opportunities.	
36	<b>J. Luloff</b>	Most of us are going to want to share these discussion questions internally within our organizations. Is there a deadline for getting back with additional feedback?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have a survey on our PlaceSpeak platform open for feedback until December 22, but we will continue to consult in two subsequent phases of consultations on the project; but there is no wrong time to send us your feedback.</li> </ul>
37	<b>J. Luloff</b>	<p>Priorities: making sure the plan will be appropriate to residents as well as tourists. It's a huge challenge to reach and integrate all the different types of residents, from families to seniors. Streamlining transportation to and from and within the core area for all those different groups is going to be key. Transportation can create barriers.</p> <p>We also need public awareness (e.g. signage or information campaigns) to help with the plan's success. Giving information to the public is vital.</p>	

**Next Steps**





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38	J. Luloff	Could you re-circulate those two pieces (workshop and survey information)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yes, absolutely. We are also going to be circulating some posters after this meeting that you can distribute.</li><li>• This meeting has given us some insights to reshape the questions a bit for the public workshops next week and anticipate some of the things the public will bring to our attention.</li><li>• We welcome official positions, letters and participation from your organizations and from other organizations. These will be considered as part of this engagement exercise.</li><li>• Please feel free to participate in the survey and in the workshops either on behalf of your organizations or as a private citizen.</li><li>• Please let us know if you are interested in co-chairing these sessions (there will be two more; one in spring 2024 and one in autumn 2024).</li></ul>
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**Follow ups:**

- NCC to prepare and distribute meeting notes (*done*).
- PAC members to nominate or self-nominate a co-chair.