



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

# Gatineau Park Master Plan Review

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

Canada

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# Gatineau Park Master Plan Review

## Public Consultation Report

### *Introduction*

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is renewing its long-term plan for the development, use and management of Gatineau Park, the Capital's conservation park. During this process, the public is invited to participate by way of a comprehensive and diverse consultation process. In addition to public input, Indigenous groups, partners, elected officials, a public advisory committee and interest groups are also engaged in the review process. The following provides an overview of the input received for Phase 1 of the review and the consultation approaches for the remaining three phases of the review. As each phase is completed, input will be added to this consultation report.

### *Project Overview*

Gatineau Park is an area of approximately 361 square kilometres of forests, water bodies and open landscapes within close proximity to the large urban population of the National Capital Region. Offering a variety of year-round recreational opportunities, including hiking, skiing, camping and swimming, the Park is a destination for more than 600,000 people who make more than 2.6 million visits per year. The Park is also home to many unique and diversified ecosystems, providing habitat for over 5,000 species, including some that are not found anywhere else in the region. There are approximately 150 federally and provincially designated species at risk that have been identified within the Park.

As part of its planning process, the NCC reviews its master plans every 10 years, on a 50-year horizon. The Gatineau Park Master Plan has been in place for 12 years. An update will bring the plan in line with the recently completed Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067, as well as the numerous supporting plans and studies completed for Gatineau Park since the last review. The new plan will provide high level, strategic direction for conserving, managing and enhancing the natural and recreational resources within the Park. This work will take the Park forward in the 21st century.

## Consultation Overview

The Gatineau Park Master Plan review is divided into four phases, each of which will include a public consultation component. The project schedule extends from September 2017 until the winter of 2019. The public consultation program will include the elements indicated in the graphic below:



The following consultation objectives were identified for Phase 1:

- Initiate the discussion on the key components to be considered in planning the Park's future, including the fundamental elements of the vision.
- Survey the Public Advisory Committee (PAC) members and the general public on the key topics and issues, in order to define and understand the current situation.
- Inform PAC members and the general public on the consultation process.
- Present the 2005 master plan's key achievements to date.

The following consultation objectives were identified for Phase 2:

- Work with PAC members to develop the Gatineau Park Master Plan vision, planning goals and strategic directions.
- Mobilize public involvement to assist in developing the Gatineau Park Master Plan vision, planning goals and strategic directions.

The consultation objectives for Phase 3 are as follows:

- Share the vision, planning principles and strategic directions with the PAC and the public.
- Refine the planning concept and zoning (land use designations) with the PAC, and determine permitted uses and guidelines in each zone.
- Present the planning concept and land use designations to the general public, and collect public feedback on these components, as well as the permitted uses and guidelines.
- Present specific policy proposals for public comment.

The consultation objective for Phase 4 is the following:

- Validate final draft and collect participant comments in preparation for the presentation of the final plan to the NCC Board of Directors.

## ***Key Groups***

### **Public Advisory Committee**

The PAC, formed on October 12, 2017, meets regularly throughout the process to be an important sounding board and to share in-depth information. It is composed of a balanced representation of various areas of interest for the Park, including the environment, heritage, recreation, residents and business. For the full list of members, see Appendix A.

### **General Public**

Canadians across the country and in Canada's Capital Region will be invited to participate in the consultation process through e-vites sent to addresses in our database, an online advertising campaign and social media messages.

### **Indigenous communities**

The Algonquin First Nation communities of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg are engaged in the review process through a separate and distinct dialogue. This process will also include the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan.

### **Elected Officials**

Meetings with local elected officials at the municipal, provincial and federal levels will be held at each phase.

### **Regional Experts and Partners**

Meetings will be held with interest groups (education and environment); municipal staff (Ville de Gatineau, City of Ottawa, as well as the Chelsea, La Pêche and Pontiac municipalities); provincial staff (Ministère des Transports, de la Mobilité durable et de l'Électrification des transports du Québec; Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec; Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques du Québec); and regional staff (MRC des Collines, Société de transport de l'Outaouais and Transcollines).

## **Phase 1: Consultation Report, October/November 2017**

### ***Consultation Activities—Phase 1***

#### **PAC Meeting and Workshop**

Date and time: October 12, 2017, 6 pm to 8 pm

Location: Gatineau Park Visitor Centre

Format: Workshop

Participation: 15 members

#### **Public Consultations**

##### *Ottawa*

Date and time: October 19, 2017, 6 pm to 8 pm

Location: Delta Ottawa

Format: Workshop

Participation: 120 participants

##### *Gatineau*

Date and time: November 1, 2017, 6 pm to 8 pm

Location: Crown Plaza Gatineau

Format: Workshop

Participation: 60 participants

*Online consultation*

Date: October 19 to November 14, 2017

Format: Open-ended survey

Participation: 1,152 survey responses

**Indigenous Communities**

Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg (October 2017, March 2018)

Algonquins of Pikwakanagan (November 2017)

**Regional Experts and Partners**

Date and time: December 11, 2017, 6 pm to 8 pm

Location: Gatineau Park Visitor Centre

Format: Presentation and discussion

Participation: 13

**Local Elected Officials**

Date and time: December 14, 2017, 6 pm to 8 pm

Location: Gatineau Park Visitor's Centre

Format: Presentation and discussion

Participation: 8 participants

Notes from this meeting can be found in Appendix C.

***Invitations and Promotion***

The public consultation was promoted on the NCC's website and on social media. Live tweets were published during both workshops in Ottawa and Gatineau. In addition, digital advertisements were placed in the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Le Droit* prior to the workshops. Promoted posts and Facebook ads, as well as Google AdWords were also used to promote the events.

An email invitation was sent to contacts in Public Affairs Division's distribution lists (over 5,000 addresses), which include the following stakeholders:

- Residents' associations
- Interest groups
- Individuals

A media invitation was sent the week of October 16, 2017.

## ***Consultation Highlights***

In the online survey and during the public consultation workshops, participants were asked to answer three questions related to the following:

- The existing conditions, issues and opportunities
- Imagining Gatineau Park in 50 years
- Visioning block for Gatineau Park in the next 50 years

The following is a high-level summary of the input received through the online survey, the in-person consultations, the public advisory committee, meetings with local elected officials and discussions with regional groups.

### **What we heard**

- That the Park continues to be a place that conserves nature
- That development be limited inside and around the Park
- That access to the Park be improved and that vehicle traffic within the Park be reduced
- That there is an educational role offered within the Park
- That the Park be a place anyone may access and enjoy
- That a balance be sought between sustainability and recreational use
- That the Park should be protected through legal mechanisms

## ***Consultation Results***

### **Existing Conditions, Issues and Opportunities**

***Question 1: In your opinion, what are the most important opportunities for Gatineau Park, as well as the most important issues that need to be addressed?***

When the public was asked what are the most important opportunities and issues for Gatineau Park, the most common idea that was identified was that Gatineau Park and the wildlife in the Park should be protected and conserved, and that

development inside and around the Park be limited. A number of respondents also expressed the importance of finding a balance between sustainability and use.

When the responses were analyzed, it became apparent that the most frequently raised issue (25 percent of online responses, 13 percent of in-person responses) was that the Park and its wildlife should be conserved for the future.

This theme was present in other related responses, such as the following:

- limiting development in and around the Park (15 percent of responses);
- finding a balance between sustainability and use (13 percent of responses); and
- limiting or reducing vehicle traffic in the Park (13 percent of responses).

Theme	Sample comment
<b>Conserve the Park and wildlife</b>	<p>“We need a plan that protects the Park for the wildlife that lives there, and preserves it for future generations, like my children.”</p> <p>“Please protect this precious nature reserve. The greatest opportunity is for the NCC to ensure that ecosystems and biodiversity remain intact.”</p> <p>“Connect wildlife to appropriate biospheres outside the Park.”</p>
<b>Limit development</b>	<p>“It should not be overdeveloped. Its most precious asset is to provide a real escape from the city that is just next door. The natural setting and opportunity to hike or cross-country ski are wonderful, and should not be encroached upon.”</p> <p>“Keep Gatineau Park as natural as possible, with no hotels, restaurants or commercial enterprises within its boundaries.”</p>
<b>Find a balance between sustainability and use</b>	<p>“Take advantage of the natural beauty access without letting it become overrun with humans ruining ecosystems.”</p> <p>“Encouraging responsible and respectful use of a unique resource for a large number of urban dwellers in Ottawa/Gatineau, who rely on access to the Park for mental/physical/spiritual health.”</p> <p>“The development of the Park has to be</p>

	sustainable, yet still include and be supportive of all the different activities that happen in the Park.”
<b>Limit or reduce vehicle traffic</b>	“Limiting vehicular traffic to allow for safe cycling.”
	“I would like to see a shuttle that would allow people to leave their cars behind.”
	“To be a park without motorized access except by bus or other public transportation.”

Another common theme was linked to recreational use and increasing or improving the use of the Park for recreational purposes, primarily around trail use. These included responses such as the following:

- increase the number of biking trails (7 percent of responses);
- increase the number of trails in general (6 percent of responses);
- maintain trails (5 percent of responses).

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sample comment</b>
<b>Increase the number of biking trails</b>	<p>“Engaging the mountain bike community and expanding access to trails. Partnering with the mountain bike community to make trails sustainable.”</p> <p>“More, and more sustainable mountain bike trails. The number of users is only increasing, which can lead to conflict with other users, and overuse of certain trails.”</p> <p>“I truly believe that Gatineau Park should support mountain biking with more singletrack trails that are focused on beginner and intermediate users. Not experts!”</p>
<b>Increase the number of trails in general</b>	<p>“Expand access to west end of park, perhaps with trails to encourage more hiking, cross-country skiing and cycling. Another entrance point with parking and trail access would help.”</p> <p>“Expand trail network to include unofficial trails that already exist. These trails could add more trail running and hiking options in summer and more walking/snowshoeing</p>

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options in winter.”

“The Park is an amazing piece of nature and one of the best parts of the region. We need to keep it maintained, but increase the trail system.”

### **Maintain trails**

“Outdoor recreational pursuits such as hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, paddling, swimming should be the priorities. Maintenance of facilities and trails for these activities should be of primary importance.”

“Communicate to people who will be using the trails or bike paths to pick up litter or garbage they may find as they hike/bike or run on them.”

“Keep grooming trails for both skate and classic skiing in the winter.”

## **Imagining Gatineau Park in 2067**

### ***Question 2: What do you want Gatineau Park to be like in 2067 (in 50 years)?***

When asked what they would want the Park to be like 50 years from now, participants shared their thoughts on conservation and environmental impacts, as well as on the protection of nature. A number of respondents also expressed wanting to see fewer or no vehicles in the Park. Conversely, other participants stressed the importance of increasing access to the Park.

For instance, the theme of conservation and environmental impact was frequently raised, and included ideas that Gatineau Park should be the following:

- a place that conserves and preserves nature (16 percent of responses);
- a place with fewer or no vehicles, or no gas-powered vehicles (11 percent of responses);
- a place with no commercialization or infrastructure development (8 percent of responses);
- cleaner and greener (6 percent of responses).

Theme	Sample comment
<p><b>A place that conserves nature</b></p>	<p>“As natural as possible. A haven for wildlife, native plants, hikers, cross-country skiers, swimmers and nature photographers.”</p> <p>“A near-pristine environment where my descendants can admire and enjoy the natural flora and fauna of the Laurentian forest.”</p> <p>“I would like it to be preserved for our future generations, like it is today, that's the most important thing.”</p>
<p><b>A place with fewer or no vehicles or no gas-powered vehicles</b></p>	<p>“Similar to today, with perhaps more limitations on use of personal motorized vehicles on the parkways (e.g. Fall Rhapsody).”</p> <p>“Less car-dependent. More nature.”</p> <p>“Infused with green technology (i.e. electric or fuel cell buses bring people into the Park, rather than have cars run rampant — especially in autumn!).”</p>
<p><b>A place with no commercialization or infrastructure development</b></p>	<p>“A conservation area with the same real estate as we have it today for our children and children's kids and so on. Do not transform the Park into a housing area. That would be such a shame.”</p> <p>“Minimal development (i.e. no more private residences), and any development to be visitor-focused and with minimal impact on the ecosystems in the Park.”</p> <p>“A protected haven for the enjoyment of the Capital Region's inhabitants. No encroachment on the area through development.”</p>
<p><b>Cleaner and greener</b></p>	<p>“I would like Gatineau Park to be greener than it is now. I would like ecological preservation to underline every decision made about new Park initiatives.”</p> <p>“Open green space, much as it is today, only cleaner.”</p> <p>“Greener and more healthy trees.”</p>

Another common theme was related to recreational use, with respondents mentioning that they would like to see Gatineau Park as follows:

- with more or improved trails (9 percent of responses);
- a place for cycling and mountain biking (9 percent of responses);
- a place for recreational activities in general (9 percent of responses);
- a place for skiing (8 percent of responses).

Theme	Sample comment
<b>More or improved trails</b>	<p>“A park with a much more extensive trail system for use year-round, more amenities (e.g. cabins/yurts for day use and overnight reservations), programming (e.g. guided tours; intro to camping/snowshoeing for new Canadians and children) and that is accessible for those without vehicles (e.g. public transportation to the visitor centre, parking lots).”</p> <p>“Expanded mountain biking and hiking trail network.”</p> <p>“Largely similar to what it is now, though I’d love to see more trail development in the north west section of the Park, by La Pêche Lake, and more trail development.”</p>
<b>A place for cycling and mountain biking</b>	<p>“I want Gatineau Park to be a place for cyclists first and cars second. It should be a place where people come to ride bikes and enjoy the Park and not just drive around and go home. In 2067, it is a parkway toll road with seasonal passes for cars!”</p> <p>“The same as it is now with more access to mountain biking.”</p> <p>“A network of singletrack MTB/hiking trails allowing connecting the north and south of the park (re-open no. 10?). A dedicated trailhead for mountain biking in the north and south of the park (Camp Fortune, P19?).”</p>
<b>A place for recreational activities in general</b>	<p>“To be a year-round recreational destination, while preserving the natural environment.”</p> <p>“An area of relatively unspoiled nature in</p>

which people can practise non-motorized recreational activities.”

“A place that supports recreational users, because it recognizes the value and attachment these users have to the success of the Park. Other than a few conservationists, no one cares about or supports a park they can't use.”

### **A place for skiing**

“Services of the Park will evolve due to changing weather. Ways to support the skiing will need to be developed to keep this service.”

“I won't be here then, but I want my great grandchildren to be able to enjoy nature as I have - the xc skiing, the open woods and many nature trails.”

“Natural, physically and economically accessible, low-tech, quiet, non-commercial with maintained and protected hiking, cross-country skiing / snowshoeing, trails.”

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Finally, another common theme related to access and people’s ability to access the Park. Some people simply mentioned that they wanted the Park to be a place that anyone could access (10 percent of responses) and a place that can be accessed by improved transit or mass transportation options (7 percent of responses).

## Visioning Blocks for Gatineau Park in the Next 50 Years

### Question 3: What three words would you like to see in the vision?

Through the workshop discussions and survey that took place over the fall of 2017, participants were asked to suggest words that, for them, represent the future of the Park over the next 50 years. The words or concepts that were raised most frequently are listed below.



### Gatineau Park is important to me because... (poster)

At the workshops, a large poster was set up in the middle of the room. Participants were asked to write their thoughts on a post-it and place it on the poster. Their responses about why Gatineau Park was important to them were as follows:

- opportunities for recreation (36 responses);
- the ability to experience nature (10 responses);
- the Park's close proximity to respondents (10 responses);
- the importance of habitat conservation (10 responses); and
- access to the Park (8 responses).

Other responses included the Park's beauty, the role of conservation, opportunities for education, and the Park's role in heritage.

## Other Comments (Online Survey)

*Question 4: Please provide any additional comments that you would like to share.*

The following summarizes additional commentary provided by respondents who filled out the online survey.

- A number of respondents stated that Gatineau Park makes a significant contribution to the quality of life in Canada's Capital Region. These respondents stressed how important it is to keep and maintain this green space.
- Several respondents shared their concern regarding the pressure exerted by developers on the periphery of the Park, and requested that these kinds of commercial activities be limited. Many mentioned the pressure caused by urban expansion.
- Many respondents argued that Gatineau Park should become a national park with protected status and legislative protection.
- For many respondents, Gatineau Park's vision must include a component related to conservation and respect for the environment. Respondents similarly stressed the importance of striking a balance between ecological protection and accessibility for all users.
- A number of respondents suggested that motorized vehicles be limited and that shuttle services within the Park be more accessible. Others suggested that user fees be implemented in order to limit motor vehicle traffic and increase funds for the Park.
- Many respondents recommend singletrack trails for mountain biking, and requested better-built trails.
- Respondents made a number of suggestions pertaining to the improvement of amenities (including better signage and better information on the NCC's website) and services for families and other users.

## *Integration of Results*

The public input received during “Phase 1: Existing Conditions and Thoughts on the Park’s Future” will help to inform the preliminary vision statement, principles, goals and the strategic directions drafted in the subsequent phases of the plan.

## *Next Steps*

- Development of a preliminary vision statement
- Drafting of the strategic directions

Consultations in “Phase 2: Vision, Goals and Strategic Directions” will include the activities listed below.

• Public Advisory Committee meeting	April 18, 2018
• Gatineau Park Master Plan forum	April 25, 2018
• Public consultation workshops in Ottawa, Gatineau, Chelsea, Pontiac and La Pêche	April 30 to May 10, 2018
• Online survey	April 30 to May 15, 2018
• Meeting with Gatineau Park commercial tenants	May 2018
• Meeting with regional public agencies	May 2018

## *Appendix A: PAC Members*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Community of interest</b>
<b>Sandra Beaubien</b>	Recreation
<b>Jacques Dumont</b>	Recreation
<b>Janet Campbell</b>	Recreation
<b>Benoit Delage</b>	Sustainable development
<b>Nik Lopoukhine</b>	Park management expert
<b>Stephen Woodley</b>	Environmental expert
<b>Katharine Fletcher</b>	Writer and historian
<b>Gershon Rother</b>	Local resident and Park volunteer
<b>Michel Prévost</b>	Historian
<b>Sylvie Turcotte</b>	Local resident
<b>Tom Young</b>	Local resident
<b>Joanne Hamilton</b>	Local resident
<b>André Groulx</b>	Regional tourism
<b>Chris Chapman</b>	Recreation industry
<b>Sophie Routhier Leblanc</b>	Student
<b>To be determined</b>	Indigenous representative
<b>Bob Brown</b>	Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility
<b>Barry McMahon</b>	Advisory Committee on Universal Accessibility

## **Gatineau Park Master Plan Review**

October/November 2017

### **Introduction**

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is renewing its long-term plan for the development, use and management of Gatineau Park, the Capital’s conservation park. As part of its planning process, the NCC reviews its master plan for Gatineau Park every 10 years, on a 50-year horizon.

With a vast array of ecosystems that are home to over 5,000 species, including 150 species at risk, a variety of heritage sites and cultural landscapes, and offering many outdoor recreation activities throughout the year, Gatineau Park is a unique place that attracts some 2.6 million visits a year.

Moreover, following the direction set in the Plan for Canada’s Capital, 2017–2067, Gatineau Park will be of even greater national value as a substantial natural reserve located within minutes of the Capital’s urban core.

For more information about Gatineau Park and this planning process, you can view the public consultation panels [here](#) and visit the NCC’s website [here](#).

We would like to hear your thoughts about the future of Gatineau Park. Complete our online survey from October 19 to November 14, 2017.

### **Existing Conditions, Issues and Opportunities**

In your opinion, what are the most important issues and opportunities for Gatineau Park that need to be addressed in the future? (500 characters maximum)

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### **Imagining Gatineau Park in 50 years**

What do you want Gatineau Park to be like in 2067 (50 years)?

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## **Visioning Blocks for Gatineau Park in the Next 50 Years**

What three words would you like to see in the vision?

### **Other comments**

Please provide any additional comments that you would like to share.

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Please provide the first three characters of your postal code: \_ \_ \_

Thank you for completing this survey. Please note that your answers will be confidential.

## **Appendix C – Elected Officials Meeting Notes**

Gatineau Park Master Plan

Meeting with elected officials from the National Capital Region

Thursday, December 14, 2017, 4 :00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### **Participants**

**Carol Green**  
**Gilles Chagnon**  
**Zachary Dayler, Ms. McKenna’s Office**  
**Isabelle N. Miron**  
**William Amos**  
**Mike Duggan**  
**Alexandre Séguin,**  
**For Maude Marquis-Bissonnette**

### **NCC Staff**

**Mark Kristmanson**  
**Lucie Bureau**  
**Christie Spence**  
**Cédric Williams**  
**Kelly McRae**  
**Hugues Charron**

This is an important opportunity to review the 2005 Plan considering that conditions have changed since it was first written. The following items require examination: the relevance of amending legislation to better protect the Park; the growing development pressures confronting the Park and the resulting stress on ecological corridors. Elected officials were asked about their perceptions of the issues and to offer ideas for implementation.

### **Comments made during discussions**

Give priority to conservation.

Let the entire region benefit from the Park’s economic potential by developing the La Pêche and Pontiac municipalities.

Find solutions to limit the impact of traffic in the Village of Old Chelsea.

Incorporate universal access into the plan and use the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* as a model.

Protect adjacent greenspace, like the Boucher forest.

Consider the public transit needs of the Ville de Gatineau in the west part of the city and the possibility of widening Boulevard des Allumetières.

Limit the impact of parking by park users on residential neighbourhoods.

Improve the transition between green spaces and urban neighbourhoods.

Make the interface with the environment more flexible (see plan Hollow Glen to Chelsea corridor plan).

Take advantage of federal grants to adapt infrastructure to climate change (repair Meech Lake Road).

Include construction guidelines that potentially align with those developed by the Municipality of Chelsea.

Find a way to manage residential development in the Park using various urban planning tools.

Consider amending the *National Capital Act* to improve Park management tools.

Improve access to the Park.

Charge variable rates at parking lots to encourage people to use the entire Park.

Examine the possibility of developing directional signage applications.

Find a way to create harmony between the existing residences and the Park environment.