



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Nepean Point

CONSULTATION REPORT
JUNE 2014

Canada

Workshop: Nepean Point

I – Project description

Objective:

With the renewal of Nepean Point, the National Capital Commission (NCC) presented a project to develop a site of national significance that:

- Encourages walking and the discovery of scenic views of the Capital's national heritage;
- Respects universal access standards and ensures safety on the site;
- Creates an inviting entrance to encourage visitors to discover the park and the Capital;
- Gives the park a unique character, that is of national significance;
- Makes use of the interpretation potential of the Capital's symbols;
- Favours sustainable development (refines the vegetation cover; contributes to biodiversity; manages storm water; LED lighting); and
- Provides links to a future bridge connecting Nepean Point to Major's Hill Park and a future bridge connecting Nepean Point to Lady Grey Drive.

II – Consultation process

Overview:

Date and location:

June 19, 2014, from 7 pm to 9:30 pm, NCC Headquarters: Capital Urbanism Lab, 40 Elgin Street, 5th Floor

Consultation objective:

Develop a vision and design elements for Nepean Point with stakeholder groups and members of the public.



Consultation process and materials:

In a workshop format, five groups of six participants completed a questionnaire, following a short presentation by an NCC project team member. Participants then drew their suggestions directly on the site maps. A plenary then allowed each table to present the results of their discussion.

Invitations and promotion:

- The workshop was promoted through the following methods¹.
 - Email invitation to the Public Affairs database
 - Media invitation
 - Website event
 - Facebook ads and messages
 - Twitter messages
 - Advertisements (Ottawa Citizen, Le Droit)

Participants:

30 participants

- Interest groups (Ottawa Rowing Centre, Heritage Ottawa, Ottawa Rowing Club)
- Community associations (Lowertown Community Association)
- Carleton University, Department of History
- Other stakeholders: Antaeus Workshops, Imara, Algonquin College, Carnival of Cultures
- Federal and municipal partners (Department of Canadian Heritage, National Gallery of Canada)

¹ First Nations groups are engaged through ongoing dialogue and a separate engagement process.

III – Consultation highlights

Workshop participants indicated that they would like to see a space that:

- Improves public access to the site and provides greenspace and can be available for a variety of uses;
- Respects universal access standards;
- Improves pedestrian connections between the main elements of the site and related sites;
- Resonates with past uses of the land, giving Samuel de Champlain and Algonquin history a place of importance;
- Is esthetically pleasing, combining public art and interactive elements;
- Has usable areas for public gatherings;
- Enhances observations points to discover panoramic views;
- Maximizes the interpretation potential in order to showcase the site history; and
- Is illuminated at night.



IV – Workshop drawings:

Five tables highlighted their ideas for this space and drew their own designs.

Table 1:



Table 2:

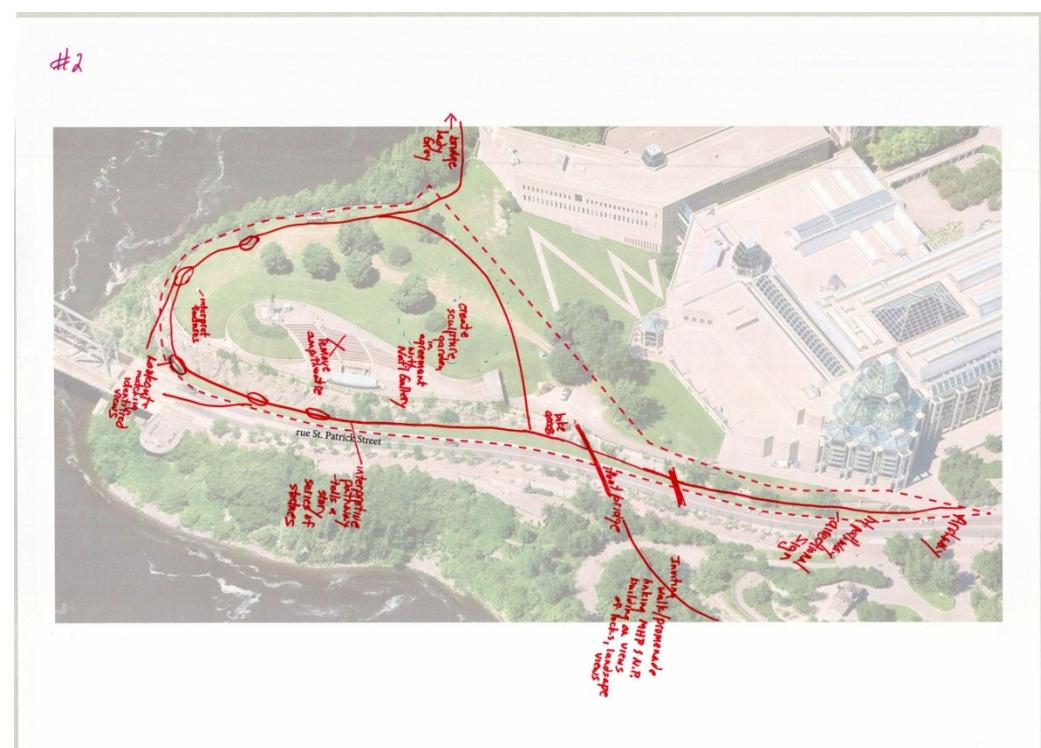


Table 3:



Table 4:

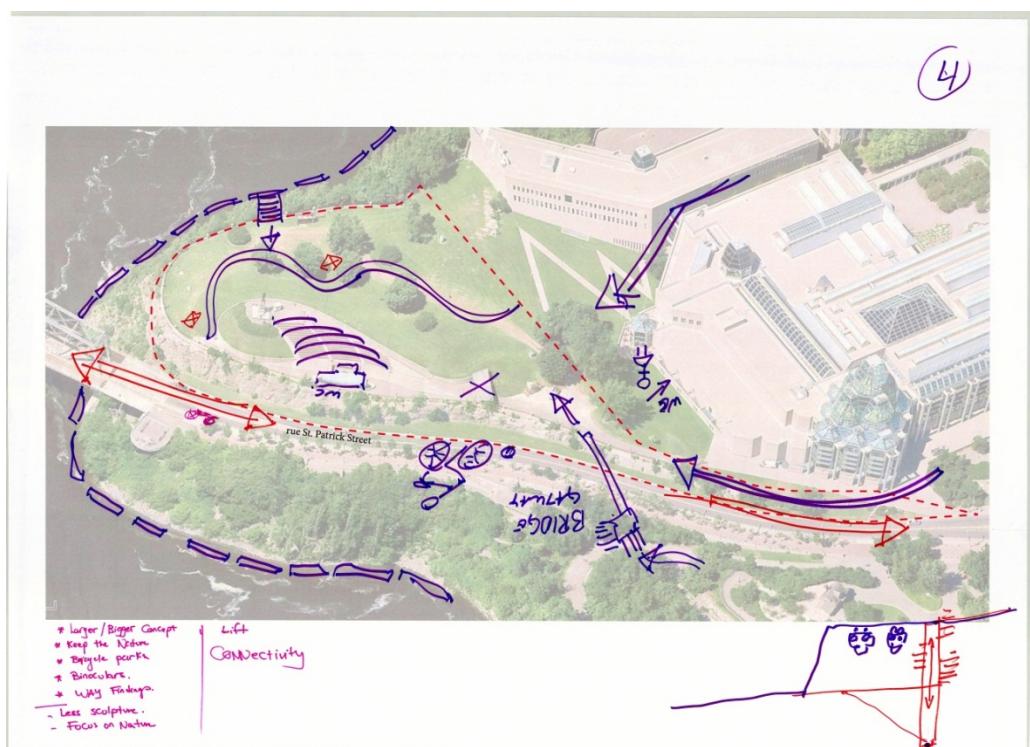
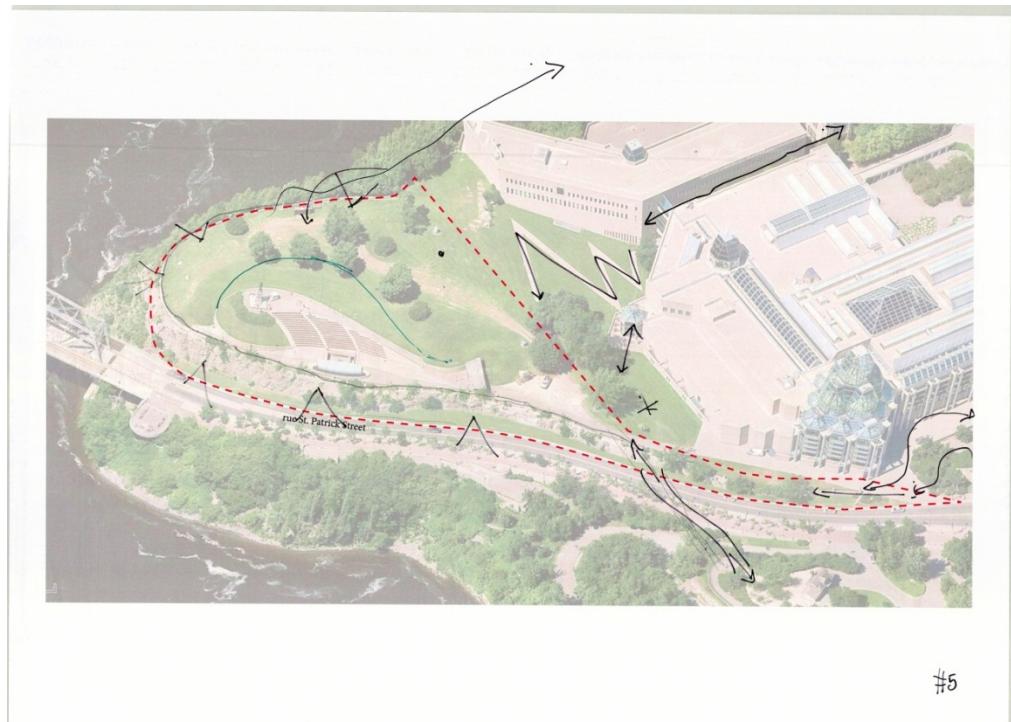


Table 5:



V – Feedback:

The following feedback was received during the plenary and in the questionnaire that was completed by each table.

Vision:

1. What is your vision for the future of Nepean Point? What would you like to see on this site?

Participants indicated that they envision:

- Viewpoints as a key element
- A destination that highlights the history of the Capital and tells the story of the site
- A space that connects with other adjacent areas, with walking circuits and clear linkages
- Representation for the Algonquin First Nation
- Interactive public art
- A focus on the waterfront and water-based activities

- Clear way finding and signage
- A revitalized auditorium and public spaces, such as a garden or café
- A unified theme that brings together the various elements present on the site
- A space that is welcoming year-round
- A place to hold medium-scale cultural events

2. What do you think the focus should be? Arts, heritage or recreation?

In order of importance, here are the themes that were most mentioned by participants:

- A balance between arts and heritage/history
- Connectivity
- Natural landscape
- Waterfront views
- Recreation
- Events and nature
- A space for viewing the fireworks on Canada Day (moving the launch area to the river)



3. Do you think the role of the sculpture garden should be reinforced? If yes, what type of treatment would you see?

Here are some of the comments that were provided regarding the sculpture garden:

- People should be informed about it, either through paper or technological means
- NCC should partner with the museum to increase the sculpture garden's visibility
- Think of the number and size or height of the sculptures, accessibility and ephemeral installations
- Keep the views and increase the site's visibility
- Limit the sculptures to the current number

4. What do you think of the proposed interpretation themes? Are there others that should be included?

Participants indicated their favorite themes and made other suggestions for possible interpretation themes:

- The “Fathers of Confederation”, “Samuel de Champlain” and “The Algonquins” are the preferred themes
- There could be an interpretive trail on the “History of Canada”
- Algonquin history should be expressed
- Focus on what happened at this site and keep it simple
- Capital building
- Views and architecture
- Think of what is happening in other spaces in the Capital
- Explore the high vantage point of Samuel de Champlain to tell a story

Design:

5. Which do you feel is preferable in this location? A lower, gentler slope or a raised lookout? Why?

- All groups wanted to keep the concept of the lookout and build in accessibility
- Ensure the statue is elevated or at the same level it is now

6. Would you rather see sinuous shapes or more angular shapes in the landscape architectural treatment of the site? Why?

Many suggestions were made for the types of shapes to include in the landscape design, with a preference for sinuous and organic shapes:

- More sinuous, rather than angular shapes in the design
- Spiral
- Classical “grande-allée” type of treatment for the statue
- Organic shapes that mirror nature, that are relaxing
- One group suggested keeping the tension between the angular and sinuous shapes

7. Would you prefer that the statue of Samuel de Champlain be positioned at a height that would allow direct access to it, or should it occupy a raised position overlooking the site? Should there be a promenade inviting visitors to approach the lookout?

- Keep the statue at an elevated height, raise it if need be
- Ensure connections to the pathways
- A promenade should enhance the spectacular views of the site
- People should be able to get close to the statue, perhaps with a platform

8. How important is it to you to improve pedestrian links to/crossings at the site?

- Extremely important
- Support for the idea of a bridge between Nepean Point and Major's Hill Park and another to Lady Grey Drive
- Has to be improved, since the site is invisible from Sussex Drive and from St. Patrick Street
- Way finding and signage should be created

Other comments received:

Several other comments were received with the following observations:

- Make it a performance space again, with programming for smaller scale music and theatre events
- Improved pedestrian crossing point on St. Patrick
- Ensure the site is illuminated and accessible at night
- Make it an enjoyable space to relax, with amenities for gatherings or relaxation (yoga, reading, meditation)

VI – NCC Feedback:

Feedback from the public allowed the NCC to develop a coherent vision for this area, which is to build multi-use recreational pathways connecting cultural institutions, the existing pathway network and green spaces, in order to create a continuous promenade from the Rideau Canal to Rideau Falls Park.

This project will be subject to a design competition. Comments gathered through this public consultation contributed to the development of the design guidelines.

VII - Next Steps

The project schedule is as follows:

- **Phase I, Winter 2017:** Design Competition, Request for Qualifications
- **Phase II, Summer 2017:** Design Competition, Request for Proposals
- **Phase III, Fall 2017:** Design Proposals received from competitors
- **2018:** Detailed design development
- **Fall 2019-2020:** Start of site work (provisional timeline)