

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

# Review of the Capital Pathway Strategic Plan

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT  
JUNE 26 TO JULY 16, 2018

Canada

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## I. Project description

### A. Background

The NCC is engaged in the process of renewing the strategic plan entitled *Pathway Network for Canada's Capital Region (2006)*. The purpose of the revised plan will be to provide a framework for future planning and the day-to-day management of the Capital Pathway.

### B. Plan objectives

The main planning objectives of the new Capital Pathway Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Renew the vision.
- Set strategic directions and priorities for the next 10 years.
- Provide management tools.
- Harmonize NCC and municipal planning, where possible.

The new strategic plan will address various topics, including pathway design, new linkage opportunities, user safety, signage and amenities.

### C. Planning process

The plan renewal will take place in four phases.

- Phase 1: Assessment, research and analysis of existing conditions (summer–fall 2017)
- **Phase 2: Review of vision and strategic directions (winter–spring 2018) — CURRENT PHASE**
- Phase 3: Drafting of the new strategic plan (summer 2018–winter 2019)
- Phase 4: Approval of the final plan (summer 2019)

## II. Public consultation process

### A. Overview

As part of Phase 2 of the project, a first round of in-person public consultations was held in February 2018, followed by an online consultation launched in June 2018. The objectives of the second round of consultations in June 2018—those on which the present report is based—are detailed below.

#### Objectives

- Evaluate the public's reception to the proposed big ideas, vision statement and strategic directions.

**a. Date and time**

June 26 to July 16, 2018

**b. Format**

Online survey

**B. Invitation and promotion**

An email invitation was sent using the Public Affairs Division's distribution lists, which include the following stakeholders:

- Interest groups, user groups and environmental groups
- Residents' associations
- Individuals

Messages were also posted on social media (Facebook and Twitter) soliciting the participation of all interested members of the public, and web advertisement was purchased on Facebook and Google Adwords.

**C. Participants**

**a. Online**

A total of 1,255 complete surveys were submitted.

**D. Consultation procedure and tools**

**a. Survey design**

The online survey consisted of three parts. In the first, respondents were presented with 10 big ideas for the Capital Pathway that had emerged from the previous round of public consultations and the consultations with key stakeholders. They were then asked to select up to four of the 10 that they thought were the most important.

In the second, respondents were invited to read the proposed vision statement for the Capital Pathway for 2030, and were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the vision on a five-point Likert scale (very dissatisfied; dissatisfied; neutral; satisfied; very satisfied).

In the last part of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to review the four proposed strategic directions for achieving that vision, and, in the same fashion as in the previous section, rate their level of satisfaction with each of the four directions. The

order of the big ideas and strategic directions was randomized to avoid bias. Respondents were also provided with opportunities to comment on the ideas, vision and strategic directions.

### **III. Public consultation highlights**

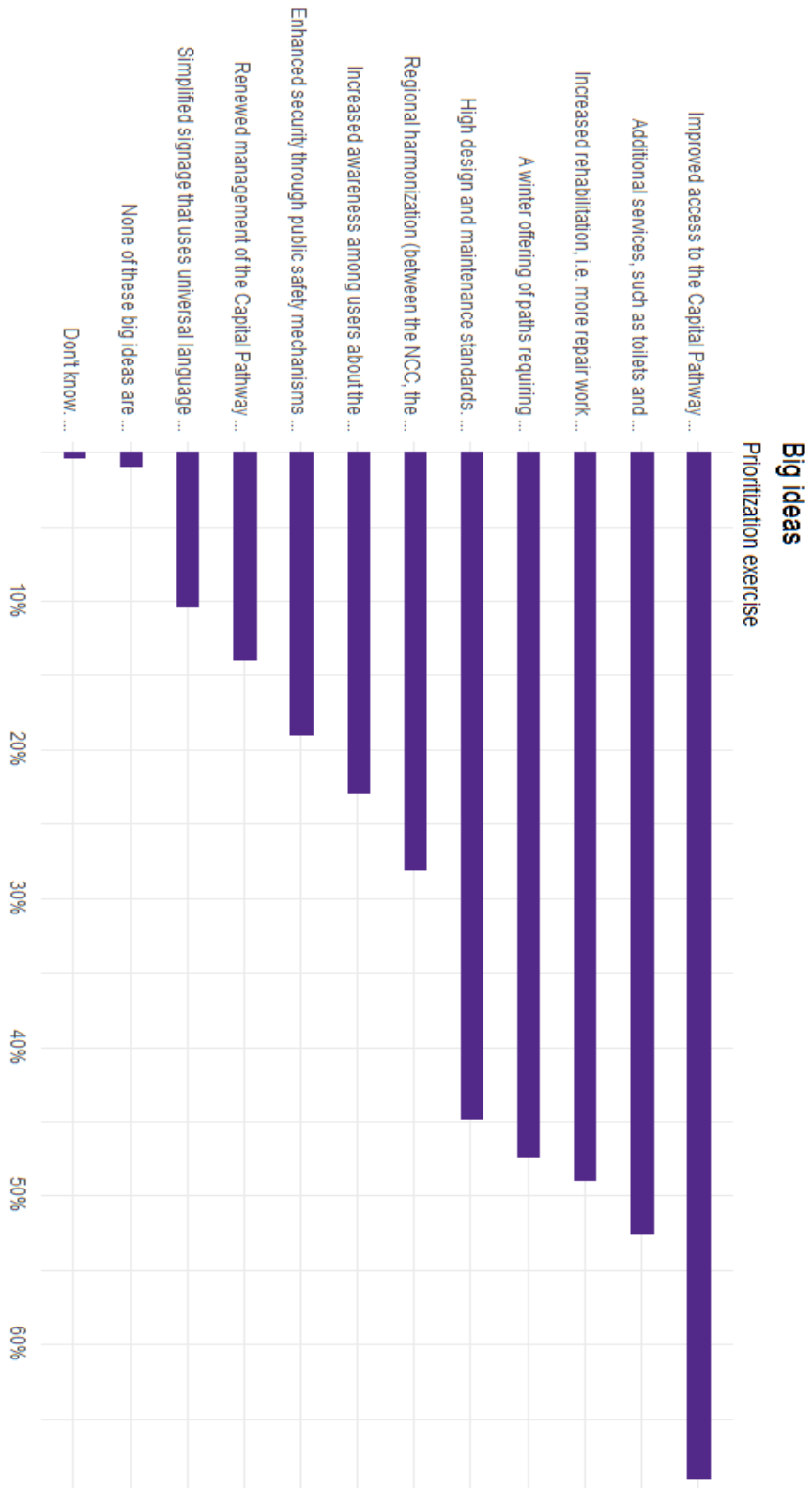
- The five big ideas that the largest share of respondents identified as most important are as follows:
  1. Improved access to the Capital Pathway by adding connections. (69%)
  2. Additional services, such as toilets and drinking fountains, or even bicycle repair stations. (53%)
  3. Increased rehabilitation (i.e. more repair work on the entire network). (49%)
  4. A winter offering of paths requiring various types of maintenance and located in various places in the Capital. (47%)
  5. High design and maintenance standards. (45%)
- Satisfaction with the vision statement and strategic directions was high overall. A total of 72% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the vision statement, while an average of 75% of respondents said that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the four directions.
- The most frequently occurring feedback in open-text responses touched on solutions for safety issues, support for winter activities and pathway integration, design and lighting preferences, and the manner in which the plan's contents were framed for public consumption.

### **IV. Analysis of results and main comments received**

#### **A. Big ideas**

When asked to select up to four of the 10 big ideas that they considered to be the most important, 69% of respondents included adding connections along the pathway among their choices, ahead of additional services (53%), increased rehabilitation (49%) and winter paths (47%). See Figure 1, below, for the full distribution of responses.

Figure 1



## Comments

When prompted to put forward any big ideas for the Capital Pathway that were not included among the 10, a large number of respondents expressed a desire to have the pathway twinned or widened in high-traffic areas. In addition to these comments, a number of other respondents highlighted dangerous behaviours among pathway users, and put forward various means of curbing them. These included more stringent enforcement of rules, bans on certain modes of transport, lower speed limits and better signage.

With safety still in mind, several respondents suggested that the improvement of nighttime lighting along the Capital Pathway also be included in the plan. Others emphasized various design features to improve safety and usability, including paving more areas of the Capital Pathway and raising cycling facilities to the level of sidewalks.

Some requested that more be done to signal the existence of certain segments of the Capital Pathway, and to make it easier for users to determine how best to connect between discontinuous segments (e.g. from Alexandra Bridge to the pathway segment behind Parliament Hill). Others voiced their support for the creation of more connections between existing pathway segments.

A number of respondents voiced their support for various measures that would facilitate winter usage of the Capital Pathway. Chief among these is snow plowing, to permit winter cycling, and grooming snow to permit winter activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Several respondents expressed an interest in seeing more amenities and dedicated social or scenic spaces made available at various junctures along the Capital Pathway. Suggestions in this vein included cafés and snack bars, picnic table areas, outdoor terraces, areas for quiet contemplation and pop-up food vendors.

The following table presents some examples of comments pertaining to frequently mentioned themes.

Topic	Sample comment
Separation and widening	For higher-speed bicyclists along major commuter routes, e.g., Sir John A. Macdonald Pathway (major route to Gatineau Park for cyclists): either widen the trail and have clear designated “high-speed bike lane” or separated/parallel paths for these users.

Separate bike and walking lanes.

Separation of bicycles and pedestrians. Cyclists use the pathways for commuting and ruin the experience for walkers and even those who want to ride slowly and enjoy the experience.

**Lighting and design**

Better lighting on paths at night.

Increase the lighting on the paths, which would increase safety!

Make the bike/pedestrian pathway (Ottawa River, etc.) glow-in-the-dark paint so it can be used at night. As well as better lighting along the pathway for late-night summer bikes.

**Awareness and signage**

Better signage for detours or where to go when the pathway ends...

Make it easier to find and use. The connections between various pathways (whoever owns them) need to be better. If you don't know how to get on the path behind Major's Hill Park, you won't get on — ever.

**Connections**

100% connectivity within existing network. (e.g. truncated eastern Rideau River path at Montreal Road bridge — should pass under bridge; and Stanley Avenue — should connect to path at New Edinburgh field house).

Improve connections between pathways and road bike lanes (so, for example, getting from Rideau path, onto Sussex, past the gallery and down to the locks). There are places here and there where bike lanes end and the only safe place is the sidewalk. Or, around roundabouts



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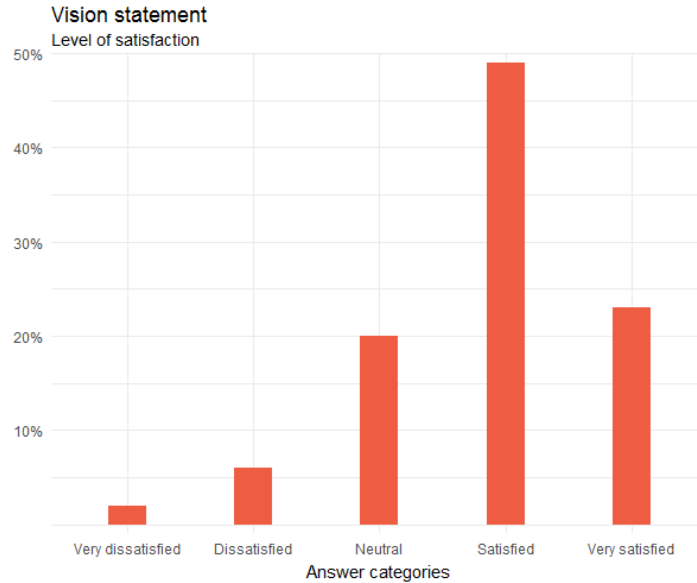
	<p>where the bike lane ends and cars merge. So, overall, better linkages, so bikes are never mixed with cars. Thank you.</p>
<b>Services and amenities</b>	<p>Seasonal/temporary leasable units for farm produce/markets, shops, cafés, restaurants and bars.</p> <p>Un aménagement qui favorise le dynamisme et une multitude d'activités aux abords des sentiers, par ex. des terrasses, espaces pour se reposer autre que des banc, des espaces de contemplation, des commerces ambulants, espaces interactifs. Ces éléments feraient en sorte que les sentiers ne seraient pas seulement des voies de circulation, mais des destinations en soit.</p>
<b>Winter usage</b>	<p>Plow the paths in the winter.</p> <p>Better winter maintenance re: X-C trails, including multi-use trails that account for skate skiers, classic X-C, dog walkers and snowshoers. Ensure that winter trails are not interrupted by roads, private maintenance (e.g. using salt) and schools for continuous connections/use.</p> <p>Mettre l'emphasis sur le déblayage de certaines pistes cyclables importantes, en plus des sentiers.</p>

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## B. Vision statement

Satisfaction with the vision statement was very high, with 72% of respondents indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with it, as opposed to only 6% who said they were dissatisfied, and 2% who said they were very dissatisfied (*see Figure 2, below*).

Figure 2



**Comments**

A number of respondents suggested that the vision statement frame the pathway less as a recreational or touristic space and more as a functional one that highlights commuting, safety and the practicalities of travel.

Some felt that referring to the “heart” of the Capital was too restrictive and downtown-centred, and urged its removal. Others worried that the use of the word “all” might leave room to include motorized vehicles, which they oppose. Several respondents suggested that “year-round” be added to the statement.

Some respondents did not find the vision statement to be relatable, and wondered what it might actually entail in practice. Many of these respondents thought that the statement would benefit from plainer and more straightforward language.

The following table presents some examples of comments pertaining to frequently mentioned themes.

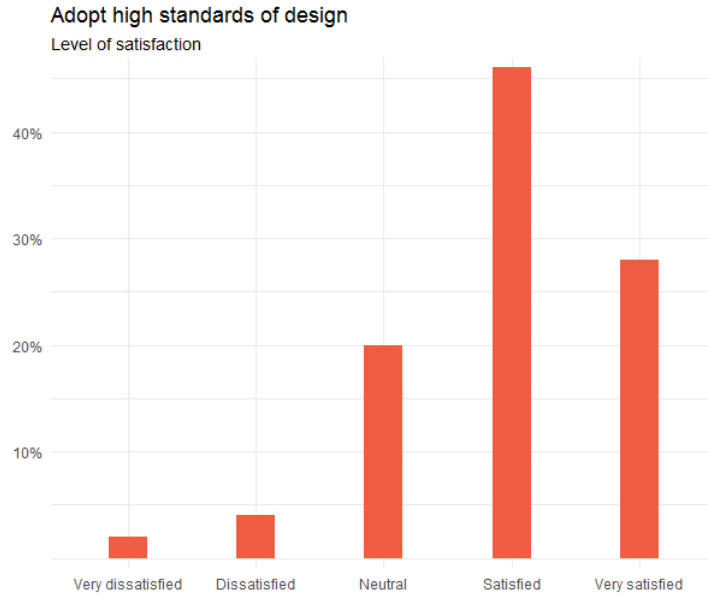
Topic	Sample comment
Functional space	This statement sounds lovely but the pathways offer more than just “experiences.” They are also functional connections from home to work to downtown, and the vision statement

	<p>should reflect that.</p> <p>This statement overlooks the important commuter function of the paths.</p> <p>The vision statement should state that the network is for people to get from A to B safely.</p>
<p><b>Terms</b></p>	<p>How do you define “the heart”? I agree with the statement, but would like to see more trails added in the NCR.</p> <p>Should include more area than the heart ... I would take the word “heart” out.</p> <p>“all can enjoy” is too broad if it includes motorcycles, electric bikes and other forms of vehicular traffic.</p>
<p><b>Language</b></p>	<p>You could claim that the vision statement is presently being met, as it is written in emotional, subjective language. “Exemplary,” “invigorating,” “inspiring,” “the heart” and “magnificent” are not readily defined or measurable.</p> <p>While I understand that a vision statement must be high level, this is really so generalized it says little.</p>

**C. Strategic directions**

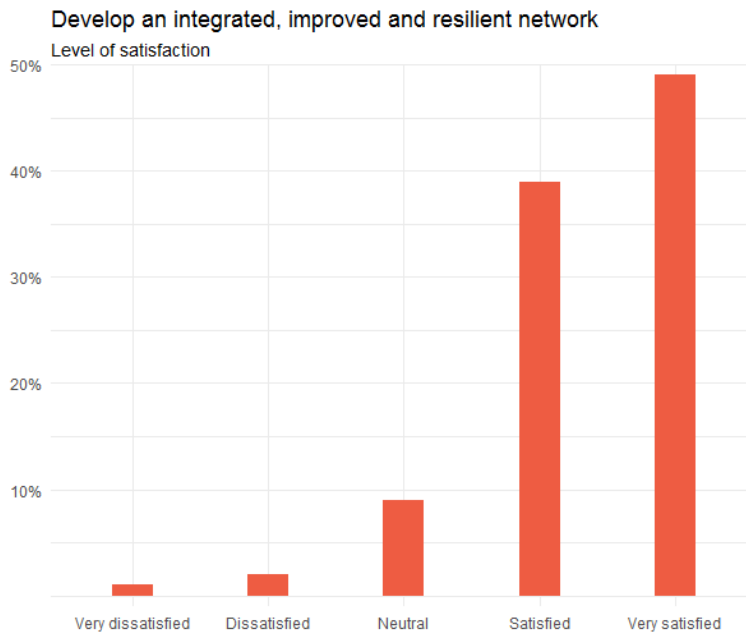
Satisfaction with the proposed strategic directions was very high overall, with an average of 75% of respondents indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the four directions, as opposed to an average of 6% who said that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

**Figure 3**



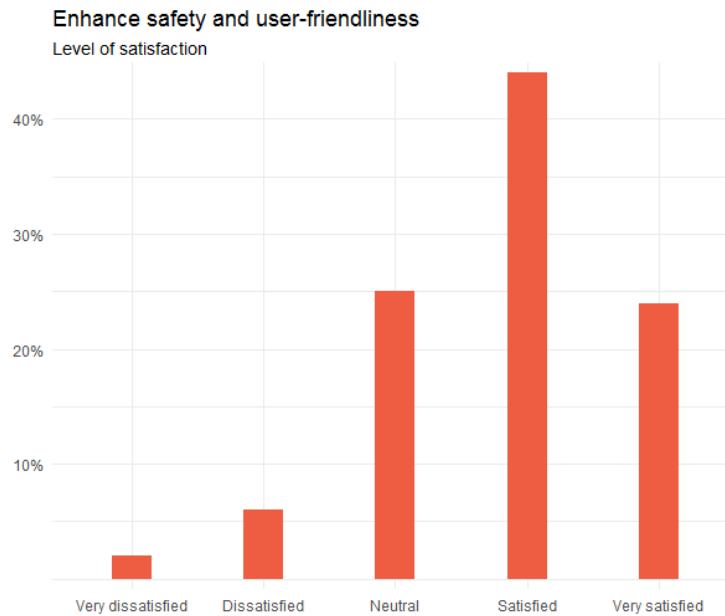
The first strategic direction, “Adopt high standards of design,” garnered satisfied or very satisfied responses from 74% of respondents, as opposed to 6% who said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (see Figure 3, above).

**Figure 4**



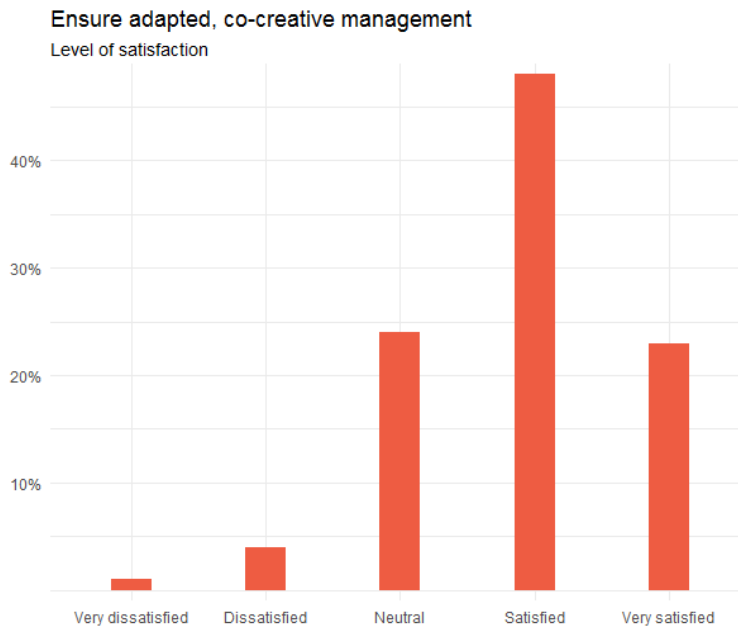
The level of satisfaction was highest for the second direction, “Develop an integrated, improved and resilient network,” with 88% of respondents indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied, as opposed to only 3% who said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (see Figure 4, above).

**Figure 5**



When asked to rate the third direction, “Enhance safety and user-friendliness,” 68% of respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied, while 8% said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (see Figure 5, above).

**Figure 6**



Seventy-one percent of respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the fourth direction, “Ensure adapted, co-creative management,” as opposed to 5% who said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (see Figure 6, above).

### **Comments**

A number of respondents again inquired about the separation of cyclists and pedestrians and/or widening of the Capital Pathway, asking where it would fit into the proposed renewal of the strategic plan. Some strongly encouraged more enforcement of pathway rules, while others expressed skepticism of this approach. Several respondents specifically encouraged the NCC to instead take a design-based approach to issues like safety.

Respondents also expressed support for the building of connections between discontinuous segments of the Capital Pathway, and for improved maintenance of the infrastructure.

A number of respondents again expressed their support for the facilitation of winter activities on the Capital Pathway, particularly with regard to maintenance for winter commuting.

Several respondents commented on the language used to describe the proposed strategic directions. These respondents felt that the language was too vague and

buzzword-heavy to convey the meaning of the directions and their practical implications.

The following table presents some examples of comments pertaining to frequently mentioned themes.

Topic	Sample comment
<b>Separation and widening</b>	<p>Signage won't make any difference to people using the path. Cyclists will still go faster than 20 km/h. Pedestrians will still stand right in the middle of the paths when admiring scenery etc. The most effective thing would be separation.</p> <p>Where does separation of cyclists and pedestrians fit in? I think this issue/action should be better highlighted.</p> <p>Monitoring of the pathways will not be necessary with robust design. Conflicts are "designed into" infrastructure. Design infrastructure that removes these undesirable interactions, such as separate walking and cycling paths, and people will not need "babysitting."</p>
<b>Winter</b>	<p>Needs to prioritize winter maintenance and year-round use of all trails, including connections to NCC pathways.</p> <p>Focus on making the pathway more usable in winter months, especially on commuter routes.</p> <p>Winter grooming (SJAM) should occur more widely to get people outside close to their residences.</p>
<b>Connections</b>	<p>I really like the idea of expanding use with increasing connections and winter maintenance and lighting.</p> <p>Things like more connections and better maintenance and winter clearing would be</p>

helpful.

Interconnection is critical. Too often you finish one path with no indication of how to progress, often involving exposure on busy roads.

**Maintenance**

I think that the strategic plan needs to speak about maintenance explicitly. I am surprised by the extent to which the pathways on either side of the canal have been left in disrepair.

Two priorities: maintenance of existing network and safety monitoring and enforcement.

**Language**

I found some of the language unnecessarily bureaucratic.

The concepts are good but use more plain language. You're writing for your target audience, the people of Ottawa–Gatineau and Canada. It's written like you're submitting a project to an MBA prof circa 2004.

The language used in the strategic directions is ridiculously bureaucratic, full of buzzwords and jargon that no one outside the NCC would understand and is therefore very unclear. I really have no clue what a lot of it means. I would much prefer plainer language.



## V. Integration of results

The results of the online survey will help shape the content of the draft plan, to be developed in the coming months. The following is of particular note.

- The prioritization exercise with respect to the 10 big ideas provides critical insight in terms of the importance that the public assigns to various interventions. Providing new connections to the Capital Pathway was the most frequent top choice among respondents, which indicates this is an important element to address in the plan. Providing additional services, increasing rehabilitation efforts, providing additional winter use opportunities, and ensuring high standards of design and maintenance were also identified as important priorities to be addressed.
- The vision statement and strategic directions will be adapted on the basis of the feedback received.
- The draft plan will clarify what is meant by the broad and inclusive concept of “experience” used in the vision statement.
- Ideas that were put forward by survey respondents will be integrated into different sections of the draft plan.
- The separation and widening of pathways came up frequently in public comments. This will be a topic that will be of particular importance in the plan.

## VI. Next steps

The next step in the planning process consists of developing the draft plan, which will be subject to another round of online public consultation.



## VII. Appendix 1: Survey

Welcome to the Capital Pathway survey!

The NCC is continuing the renewal of the Capital Pathway Strategic Plan to establish a planning framework for the day-to-day management and future of the pathway. Subsequent to the public consultations conducted in February 2018 and the series of stakeholder meetings held last winter and spring, we have outlined the basis of the future strategic plan. We are thus again requesting your input as we advance our work.

Please take a few minutes to give us your opinion about the major ideas gathered during the last consultations, and on the vision statement and strategic directions we have developed based on the feedback we received.

Your priorities

We would like to know how important the following 10 big ideas are to you. They reflect the needs and interests expressed by the members of the public and stakeholders who took part in the consultation workshops, and emerged from their discussion of potential actions that would address their concerns.

Please select up to four big ideas that you believe are the most important from among the following options:

1. Regional harmonization (between the NCC, the municipalities and other partners), which includes standardizing the rules and signage.
2. Improved access to the Capital Pathway by adding connections.
3. Simplified signage that uses universal language and is tailored to today's needs and trends.
4. Additional services, such as toilets and drinking fountains, or even bicycle repair stations.
5. A winter offering of paths requiring various types of maintenance and located in various places in the Capital.
6. Enhanced security through public safety mechanisms and increased monitoring on the pathway.
7. Increased awareness among users about the rules to follow on the Capital Pathway.
8. High design and maintenance standards.
9. Increased rehabilitation, i.e., more repair work on the entire network.
10. Renewed management of the Capital Pathway based on modernization of methods and regional harmonization.
11. None of these big ideas are important to me.
12. Don't know.

If you have a big idea to suggest that is not listed above, please share it with us in the box below.

How do you see the Capital Pathway in 2030?

It is important to establish a vision for the Capital Pathway in order to guide decision making and the content of the new plan. The vision expresses, in an inspiring and concise way, the desired future state of the Capital Pathway over a 10-year horizon.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following vision statement:

Vision for 2030

An exemplary pathway network where all can enjoy invigorating and inspiring experiences in the heart of magnificent Capital landscapes.

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

If you have any comments about the vision statement, please share them with us in the box below.

Adopt high standards of design

This strategic direction pertains to the review of the NCC's design and maintenance standards (e.g. pathway design, lighting, etc.), the search for innovative practices in various areas, and the development of reference manuals.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with this strategic direction.

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

Develop an integrated, improved and resilient network

This strategic direction pertains to building priority connections and pathway segments that are more resilient to extreme weather events (e.g. flooding), and to the study and provision of new services (e.g. drinking fountains and toilets, and winter maintenance operations)

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with this strategic direction.

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

Enhance safety and user-friendliness

This strategic direction pertains to more effective communication of the code of conduct on the Capital Pathway, the updating of regulations, the establishment of public safety mechanisms (ex. location markers) and increased monitoring of the pathways.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with this strategic direction.

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

Ensure adapted, co-creative management

This strategic direction encompasses the updating and modernizing of the NCC's management tools (e.g. mapping) and establishing greater synergy with regional partners (municipalities, community organizations, etc.), including by co-creating projects and common solutions to common challenges.

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with this strategic direction.

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

If you have any comments about the strategic directions, please provide them in the box below.

The following questions are entirely optional. Your answers will be used only for analytical purposes.

What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other

What is your age group?

1. Under 18
2. 18-24
3. 25-34
4. 35-44
5. 45-54
6. 55-64
7. 65+

Which of the following activities do you engage in on the Capital Pathway? (Select all that apply.)

1. Cycling
2. Walking
3. Jogging/running
4. Inline skating
5. Using motorized mobility aids
6. Other
7. None of these activities

What are the first three digits of your postal code?