



NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

# Annual Public Meeting

SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

SUMMARY REPORT

Canada



## I. Description

### Context

As part of government-wide efforts to increase accountability and transparency, over the past 14 years, the NCC has organized an annual public meeting with the Board of Directors.

The format of the meeting has been adapted to ensure greater interaction between Board members and the public. In the context of the NCC's strategic planning exercise, the meeting included a brief presentation by the Chair and the CEO on the year in review, as well as priority projects for the year to come. This was followed by a question period and a workshop. Board members, the Executive Management Committee and an NCC moderator were seated at tables with members of the public, who were asked to provide feedback and ideas on the current year's priorities. Each table covered the same list of priorities.

### Objectives

The objectives of the assembly were as follows:

- Provide the public with an overview of the NCC's accomplishments of the past year.
- Provide the public with an outline of the priorities for the year to come.
- Offer the public an opportunity to provide input on the corporate priorities and have a meaningful dialogue with Board members.
- Provide the Board with an opportunity to learn from the public and take their views into account as part of the NCC's planning and decision-making processes.
- Enhance the public's awareness and understanding of the NCC's mandate.
- Enhance public outreach by inviting the media.

## II. Process

### Overview

Date: Monday, September 11, 2017

Time: 7 pm to 9 pm

Location: NCC Urbanism Lab, Room 201, 40 Elgin Street, Ottawa

## Assembly proceedings

- Introduction by Luc Fournier, Director, Public Affairs (5 minutes)
- Presentation by the Chair, Mark Seaman: Strategic directions and governance (10 minutes)
- Presentation by the CEO, Dr. Mark Kristmanson: Year in review, priority projects (15 minutes)
- Public question and comment period (30 minutes)
- Workshop on corporate priorities (40 minutes): Participants were invited to seat themselves at one of many tables where a representative of the Board, a member of the Executive Management Committee, and a moderator from the NCC hosted a discussion on NCC priorities in the year ahead.
- Plenary (15 minutes): Each table summarized the top three ideas that they discussed.

## Invitations and promotion

- An invitation was sent by email to the following:
  - the Public Affairs distribution list (members of the public and interest groups)
  - elected officials
- The media were invited to participate.
- The workshop was advertised in local newspapers (*Ottawa Citizen, Le Droit*).
- Facebook and Twitter messages promoted the annual public meeting.

## Participants

### Speakers

- Marc Seaman, Chair, NCC
- Dr. Mark Kristmanson, CEO, NCC

### Guests

- Members of the public
- Members of the media

### NCC Board members attending

- Victor Brunette
- Brian Coburn
- Aditya Jha
- Dr. Mark Kristmanson

- Carol Loughrey
- Lisa MacDonald
- Michael Pankiw
- Bob Plamondon
- Denys Rivard
- Kay Stanley
- Basil Stewart

### **NCC Executive Management Committee attending**

- Daniel Champagne
- Mark Dehler
- Catherine Ella
- Jayne Hinchliff-Milne
- Michel Houle
- Gary Lacey
- Anne Ménard
- Natalie Page

### Summary of public questions and comments:

The NCC presentations and public question and comment period are available to view on the NCC's [YouTube channel](#). Here is a summary of the public's questions and comments:

#### **1. *Gilbert Bouffard, Pathway safety:***

- Discussed the importance of enforcing safety on the pathways and a need for education. Concern regarding speeding on the pathway and on Nokia Sunday Bike Days. There is a need for more rules, education and action to ensure safety on the pathways.
- Response (Dr. Kristmanson): He indicated that it was a good observation. With hundreds of kilometres of pathways and 9 conservation officers, coverage is limited. It's a self-policing and education issue. He discussed our aging infrastructure for which NCC is hoping to get help from the government. NCC is also moving forward with the renewal of the Capital Pathway Strategic Plan. The municipalities of Ottawa and Gatineau are involved in the development of this plan. Also, NCC has signed two agreements with Vélo-Services and the City of Ottawa to patrol the pathways. NCC also holds about a dozen pathway blitzes to encourage awareness. There is densification in the urban core and this is putting more pressure on the pathways. NCC teams are working on designs for

pathways that will be resilient to flooding and also able to handle the greater capacity.

## **2. Klaus Kohler, *Gatineau Park Master Plan and Greenbelt Master Plan:***

- There are incredible assets thanks to the National Capital Commission with the Greenbelt and Gatineau Park. With that come responsibilities and risks, such as invasive species like the emerald ash borer and others, such as the Asian long-horn beetle. He wondered whether the Master Plans address these kinds of risks and if there is identification of what can be done.
- Response (Dr. Kristmanson): Invasive species are a main preoccupation for the NCC. He noted that our sustainability strategy will be aligned with the government's new legislation. That will give NCC a window on invasive species that we don't have right now in policy and this will help. For the Gatineau Park Master Plan renewal it is a big issue. He encouraged him to participate in the public consultations that will be coming up in the fall. The emerald ash borer has been an unforeseen hit on NCC's budget and resources. Also, having a thoughtful approach to environmental conservation in the capital can only contribute to meeting the NCC's carbon goals. NCC will see the effects of these invasive species across its portfolios, and we may not yet understand the many effects.

## **3. Matt Whur, *Land transfer to the city:***

- Identified issues with the public consultation process regarding three projects: LRT phase 2 stormwater management pond, the Connaught Park proposed fly-over and the Ottawa Hospital.
- Response (Dr. Kristmanson): Thanked Mr. Whur for his comments. Regarding the stormwater pond, he indicated that it is a city of Ottawa project. They are leading and are responsible for the consultation. He encouraged him to keep up the discussion with the city. NCC staff reviewed the project with regards to the policies and expressed some level of comfort with the design of the pond. He reiterated the importance of consultation, listening and engaging, for the NCC. He could not speak to the specific issues on the light rail. With regards to the Ottawa Hospital, the file is finished. He noted that the Sir John Carling site was the second ranked choice by the evaluation committee.

#### **4. David Jeanes:**

- Spoke to the importance of renewal and rejuvenation for heritage resources, specifically regarding Nepean Point and 24 Sussex Drive. These two places have wonderful views of the Ottawa River and landmarks from the Ottawa River as well. He indicated that 24 Sussex Drive is the poster child for deferred maintenance and would like to know soon what will be done there. Hoping that there be some kind of public access involved for 24 Sussex, like Rideau Hall. Nepean Point was a jewel and he is looking forward to the rejuvenation. Both of those projects are important for residents and visitors.
- Response (Dr. Kristmanson): Indicated that for Nepean Point, competing design teams would come in early October and that there would be a public showing in the Urbanism Lab. All comments would be given to the jury. He specified that there is a modest budget for the project and that we hope the vision will exceed our plans. The area will be improved in a phased approach with a vision that it becomes the lively place that it was. He emphasized that 24 Sussex Drive is indeed a poster child for deferred maintenance, while also indicating that the other official residences are in good condition thanks to an excellent team. He was glad that Mr. Jeans echoed NCC's views of the importance of the heritage significance of the property and that there be some kind of public access, if possible.

#### **5. Jean Lepage, Cross-country ski trails:**

- Spoke about his pride in the capital and the changes that have occurred. Wanted to thank the NCC and the City of Ottawa for cross-country skiing facilities. Discussed the SJAM trail grooming. Hoping for a similar program from Greens Creek to Trim Road.
- Response (Dr. Kristmanson): He noted that we have had some amazing volunteers and are happy to support them. NCC is looking forward to an eastern front on the trail.

#### **6. John Cox, Collaboration with federal departments:**

- In 1962, was the Senior Planner for the National Capital Commission. Wonders why the expertise of the federal government

is not utilised in the planning process? He contributed to the design of the Airport Parkway.

- Response (Dr. Kristmanson): He explained that it was very interesting to hear early planning experiences at the NCC. He indicated that we have an NCC alumni association. There is a pretty high level of collaboration with other government departments and universities at the staff level on many projects, including scientific research.

### III. Workshop and Plenary

The documentation provided to participants for the workshops and plenary session consisted of the following.

#### **Strategic Directions**

For the 2017–2018 to 2021–2022 planning period, three strategic directions will guide the NCC as it delivers its agenda to continue to build a dynamic, sustainable, inspiring and thriving Capital Region.

- Plan, develop and improve the NCC's assets such that they inspire Canadians with a lively, distinctive and sustainable National Capital Region.
- Conserve and celebrate natural assets, cultural landscapes and built heritage of national interest under the NCC's stewardship.
- Strengthen relations with the community, all orders of government and Indigenous peoples in order to foster a cohesive and thriving National Capital Region.

#### **Priorities**

To realize these strategic directions, the NCC will concentrate its efforts on six priorities over the planning period. These priorities represent the continuation of many important efforts undertaken by the NCC over the past few years to inspire excellence, and to transform and build lasting contributions to Canada's Capital Region.

1. Facilitate and support LeBreton Flats and the islands in becoming a signature destination of national significance.
2. Offer public access and new connections for Canadians to discover the shorelines and waterways.
3. Modernize the NCC's planning framework, and renew the long-term plan for Gatineau Park.
4. Create lasting legacies to serve as sources of pride for Canadians, including the official residences of Canada
5. Be a value-added partner in support of Canada's Capital Region.
6. Demonstrate corporate excellence such that the NCC is recognized as an exemplary federal Crown corporation and steward of federal lands and assets.

## Questions used during the workshop

- What do you like about the current strategic directions and priorities? What would you change?
- Should other strategic directions or priorities be added? Why?
- What questions do you think the Board should be addressing during its upcoming strategic retreat?
- How can the NCC better communicate and engage with residents, stakeholders, interest groups and community associations?
- What is the NCC doing well?
- What can the NCC improve?

## Summary of comments made at the different tables

### Table 1

Three priorities

1. The NCC needs to take greater account of maintenance in its planning.
2. The NCC needs to keep bringing the City of Ottawa and Ville de Gatineau together, particularly on transportation projects.
3. The NCC should keep up its public outreach and maintain a strong presence on social media.

### Table 2

Three priorities

1. The NCC needs to improve communications about its planning process, and use its website better.
2. The NCC should improve its risk assessment process for environmental issues.
3. The NCC should improve access to shorelines from its multi-use pathway network.

### **Table 3**

#### Three priorities

1. The NCC should secure partnerships and cost-sharing agreements in order to accomplish plans put forward to celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial.
2. The NCC should emphasize the importance of Indigenous participation in its plans and projects.
3. The NCC should improve communications and public outreach, especially with neighbourhood associations, using such means as social media and monthly newsletters.

### **Table 4**

#### Three priorities

1. The NCC should present more opportunities for the public to provide meaningful feedback on its plans and projects.
2. The NCC needs to better address the Capital Replacement Plan in order to make timely and efficient use of infrastructure funds.
3. The NCC should accelerate the development of LeBreton Flats and the aesthetic transformation of waterways.

### **Table 5**

#### Three priorities

1. The NCC should address the fact that the Ottawa River Pathway is too crowded, and should designate dedicated biking lanes that would allow cyclists easy access to businesses such as shopping malls.
2. The NCC needs to better define what it means by modernizing the planning framework.
3. The NCC should ensure that there are good parking facilities for bicycles, and that these are integrated with the LRT.

## **Table 6**

Three priorities

1. The NCC should place a greater emphasis on sustainable infrastructure.
2. The NCC should focus on its strategic directions, and determine which projects have sufficient funding to move forward, and which do not.
3. The NCC and the National Capital Region should reflect the nation, and should find ways to sustain the impetus built during the celebrations of Canada's sesquicentennial.

## **Table 7**

Two priorities

1. The NCC should put more emphasis on regional transport and multi-use pathways.
2. The NCC should ensure that safety is a priority in all discussions on multi-use pathways.

## **Other feedback**

1. *What do you like about the current strategic directions and priorities? What would you change?*
  - Improve access to the waterfront and develop waterways.
  - Speed up the development of LeBreton Flats.
  - Include defined maintenance issues in budget plans, and take these into account when allocating funds for new projects.
  - Engage the public in more meaningful ways.
  - Improve safety along pathways.
2. *Should other strategic directions or priorities be added? Why?*
  - Invasive species
  - Capital replacement strategy, capital campaign or something using partnerships.
  - Risk assessment on climate change: infrastructure, invasive species, forest cover.
  - Assessment of trees
  - Noise pollution
  - More and better collaboration with the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau.

- Look at private-sector assets on NCC lands (e.g. train tracks near Kanata).
  - Transportation
  - Work toward regaining the budget that the NCC used to have, and explore opportunities to work and share costs with other departments.
  - Explore long-term options for MosaiCanada.
  - More programming with the Algonquins on Victoria Island.
  - Sustainable public transit
3. *What questions do you think the Board should be addressing during its upcoming strategic retreat?*
- Trains and transportation
  - Divestiture of certain assets and responsibilities.
  - The NCC as sober second thought.
  - Partnerships with other departments and organizations.
  - Shoreline issues
  - Greenbelt pathways
  - Excellence in management
  - Maintenance
  - Whether or not there are roads and bridges that can be turned over to the city.
  - Ticks
  - Use technology to better monitor pathways.
  - Sustainable public transit
  - What does modernizing the planning framework mean for the NCC?
4. *How can the NCC better communicate and engage with residents, stakeholders, interest groups and community associations?*
- More regular communication
  - Longer regular announcements
  - Facebook/Twitter
  - More posts
  - Annual feedback forum
  - Monthly messages

- Get more people on the mailing list engaged with ongoing projects.
- Get the right people.
- Know who is talking to whom.
- Report on successes, as well as failures.

5. *What is the NCC doing well?*

- Lighting
- Urbanism Lab — Expert speakers
- Public consultations
- Boardwalks
- Informative emails
- Bringing together board members.

6. *What can the NCC improve?*

- More outreach outside the National Capital Region.
- Communication
- Completion of the Greenbelt parkway.
- Cycle paths to go to shopping malls.
- Free museums
- Being a sober second thought.
- Faster turnarounds
- Better and timelier updates on projects.
- Work more closely with news media.
- Improve the NCC's website.
- Develop better engagement strategies to attract more members of the public.
- Ensure that Indigenous peoples are active participants in the planning and implementation of the LeBreton Flats and Victoria Island plans.
- Capitalize on the success of 2017, and request more funds.
- Consider the national trust mandate for UK historic/significant properties as a potential model for sustaining the built environment.
- Dissociate maintenance and renovation of historic properties from the government of the day.

- Ensure that there are good parking facilities for bicycles in all development projects, and allow bicycles on the LRT.

## VI. Next Steps

Feedback received through the workshops was discussed as part of the strategic planning sessions held with the NCC Board of Directors in the fall of 2017.