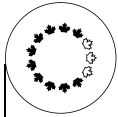


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NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
 COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

No.	2025-P265
To	Board of Directors
Date	2025-April-10

For INFORMATION

Subject/Title

The National Capital Core Area Plan – Status Update

Summary

- The National Capital Core Area Plan (Core Area Plan) is the NCC's leading land-use and design policy document for the most important federal sites at the centre of the National Capital.
- The current plan for the Core Area was approved in 2005. Its vision, policy and project horizon extend until 2025. The Plan is thus being updated to reflect new conditions and trends, and the completion of several initiatives identified in the 2005 Plan.
- The Core Area covers an area of 12 km² in downtown Ottawa and Gatineau and spans across the Ottawa River. The Core Area contains the highest concentration of federal lands and functions in the NCR.
- The updated Core Area Plan has a planning horizon of approximately 20 years. It thus envisions the future of the Core Area at mid-century.

Risk Summary

- The final phase of public consultations may be affected by a federal election.
- Implementation of the plan may be constrained by the changing priorities of the NCC and its partners over time. These challenges can be mitigated by continued engagement and collaboration as key projects are proposed and realized.

Recommendation

N/A

Submitted by:

Alain Miguelez, Vice-President, Capital Planning

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1. Strategic Priorities

- National Capital Act – NCC mandate; plan for and assist in the development, conservation, and improvement of the National Capital Region, in accordance with its national significance, and maintaining its character and nature as the “seat of the Government in Canada”.
- National Capital Commission (NCC) Corporate Plan 2023-2024 to 2027-2028
 - Strategic Direction #2
 - Ensure a picturesque and natural National Capital Region, through conserving and enhancing natural assets, cultural landscapes, and built heritage under the NCC’s stewardship.
 - Strategic Direction #3
 - Contribute to a thriving, connected, and sustainable National Capital Region that inspires Canadians, through the planning, development, and improvement of the NCC’s assets.
 - Priority #2
 - Plan, rehabilitate, and revitalize key assets and transportation networks in the national capital region.
 - Priority #4
 - Demonstrate national leadership in achieving an environmentally sustainable and climate- resilient national capital region.
- Plan for Canada’s Capital, 2017-2067 (PFCC, 2017) Goals for the Capital: Inclusive and Meaningful, Picturesque and Natural, Thriving and Connected; 15 of 17 Milestone projects.

2. Authority

National Capital Act, Sections 10, 11, and 12.

3. Context

The Core Area serves as the heart of the National Capital Region (NCR), located along the shores of the Ottawa River. This study area spans municipalities across two provinces, each governed by its own administration and priorities. It is also home to the highest concentration of federal lands and functions in the NCR.

Since the 2005 plan, significant changes in the urban context, the National Capital Commission’s (NCC) mandate, and government priorities have reshaped the landscape. Key factors include post-pandemic recovery, evolving trends such as climate change, Indigenous reconciliation, security concerns, universal accessibility, and the incorporation of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus). In response to these shifts, the 2025 Core Area Plan establishes a forward-thinking vision and strategic guidelines for federal lands in the Core Area.

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Currently, several transformative initiatives from federal, municipal, and private sectors are actively reshaping the Core. These include projects like the Public Lands for Homes Plan, Zibi, Lebreton Flats, Kìwekì Point, the joint Ottawa Public Library/Library and Archives Canada, the Energy Services Acquisition Program (ESAP), STO tramway, Wellington Street, Jacques-Cartier Park/Alexandra Bridge revitalization, and the Long-Term Vision and Plan for the Parliamentary Precinct (LTVP). The updated plan will offer guidance on programming and commemorations to reflect the 2013 transfer of responsibilities from NCC to Canadian Heritage (PCH).

Major Project Milestones

- The SOR for the plan was first presented to the Executive Management Committee in September 2020.
- The Plan was presented to the Board of Directors at the 2022 Fall Strategic Retreat.
- In November 2022 the project was first presented to ACPDR. This presentation included the opportunities created by the plan's revision, as well as contextual and theme-specific possibilities, along with decisive initiatives (current, imminent and prospective) in the core area.
- The second presentation to ACPDR occurred in May 2023 where the preliminary strategic framework for the plan update was shared. This included vision, guiding principles, themes.
- The third presentation to ACPDR occurred in March 2024 and covered emerging concepts and key objectives.
- The fourth presentation to ACPDR occurred in December 2024 and covered the refined concepts, themes and sector recommendations.

NCC Planning Framework

The plan update is anchored in the vision and policies of the Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017-2067 (PFCC, 2017). It will reinforce the three main goals (1. Inclusive and Meaningful; 2. Picturesque and Natural; 3. Thriving and Connected) and provide further direction on the integration and realization of 15 out of 17 of the PFCC's Milestone Projects.

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The 2025 Core Area Plan is further complemented by thematic plans and guidelines that have been developed in recent years. These include the Capital Illumination Plan (2017), Capital Pathway Strategic Plan (2020), NCC Forest Strategy (2021), Sustainable Development Strategy (2023) and Capital Design Guidelines (2023).

4. Options Analysis / NCC Staff Analysis

Plan Structure

This submission summarizes the content and structure of the plan, which includes the following elements:

1. Vision
2. Place and Setting
3. Themes
4. Concepts
5. Sectors

Concept

The concept is the cornerstone of the Core Area Plan and provides the main spatial parameters and criteria. It depicts how the federal realm throughout the Core Area will be organized, interconnected and constructed, in synergy with the various decisions and forces shaping the rest of NCR. It consists of 5 key layers: Capital Open Space, Capital Fabric, Capital Streetscape, Capital Destination and Capital Waterfront. Each layer's purpose and intent are supported by a set of features and policies, providing contextual guidance and reference through the plan for existing and future features.

Sectors

The plan provides key recommendations for 11 geographic sectors. The sectors provide tangible, site-specific guidance, combining pending and approved plans and key future recommendations. Together these will provide a baseline future design intent.

In June 2025, we will be seeking board approval of the Core Area plan's vision, themes, concepts and sector recommendations, as well as delegated authority to further develop demonstration plans and detailed policies to visualise and communicate the approved intent for each sector. Further stakeholder coordination and implementation strategies will be pursued to clarify priorities, roles, and criteria for specific initiatives identified in the plan.

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5. Financial Details

The plan has been developed by NCC staff with a budget of \$172,000 including all public consultations activities and technical support studies over the last three years. There is no budget for implementation of any of the plan's proposals.

6. Opportunities and Expected Results

The plan represents a significant opportunity for the NCC to influence progressive planning and design directions for the built and natural environments within the core area of the National Capital Region. This plan update will provide an important opportunity to consider and direct evolving planning scenarios and respond to and align with external plans and policies from federal and municipal partners, when appropriate, for the Capital.

The plan takes a design-led approach that will:

- Affirm first-principles and legacy planning concepts from past plans.
- Assess existing, pending and approved - plans and initiatives, and identify areas that need alignment, update or are lacking a direction.
- Utilize visual concepts, intentions and design scenarios of the sectors and special study areas, and to understand existing, pending, and future timeframes. A spatial strategy approach will provide a framework to emphasize mobility, built form, open space, and animation considerations. The policies will provide directions to support the desired outcomes.
- Clearly express desired outcomes but be flexible in terms of approach.
- Use the leadership, partnership, and support approach of the 2005 plan to develop implementation and investment strategies and define roles and responsibilities of partners and stakeholders.

7. Alignment with Government and NCC Policies

The plan is consistent with the NCC Corporate Plan, which in turn aligns with Government Policies and priorities. The planning process includes engagement with Indigenous Peoples, opportunities for public consultation and routine collaboration with stakeholders. It includes a focus on sustainability and climate resiliency. It seeks to reinforce universal accessibility and provide safe and healthy places for residents and visitors to experience the capital.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment will be conducted for the plan. An NCC Sustainable Development and Environmental Services colleague is a member of the working team to participate and advise on the plan update.

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NCC plans in effect will be harmonized within the new plan (i.e., Plan for Canada’s Capital, Capital Illumination Plan, Sustainable Development Strategy, LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan, Real Property Optimization Strategy etc.).

8. Risks and Mitigation Measures

To voluntarily align with the [Cabinet Directive on Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessments](#), the NCC conducted Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessment (SEEA) for the Core Area Plan. The purpose of the SEEA is to ensure NCC executive and Board members are informed about the potential environmental and economic impacts of the plan and their mitigation measures. Minimal impacts on climate and biodiversity are anticipated as a direct result of this plan. However, the current and projected impacts of climate change in the National Capital Region could influence the implementation of this plan. Projected climate impacts include flooding, extreme heat and heatwaves and exposure to extreme weather events, which could damage infrastructure and impact programming and operations. These impacts were taken into account during the development of the plan.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measure
The final phase of public consultation may be affected by a federal election.	Medium-high	Moderate	Move online public consultation on the final draft of the plan to a later date.
Implementation of the plan may be constrained by the changing priorities of the NCC and partners over time.	Low-Medium	Moderate	<p>A transparent story map approach provided early access to emerging content for review and discussion. Tailored engagement events were used to build relationships with key partners/stakeholders.</p> <p>Continued collaboration and relationship building will be essential for successful long-term plan implementation.</p>

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9. Public Engagement and Communications

Vision, Principles and Strategic Directions:

Stakeholder Consultation	Spring/Summer 2023
Public Consultation (in person)	Summer/Fall 2023
Public Consultation (online)	Fall 2023
Public Advisory Committee	Fall 2023

Concepts, Themes and Sectors:

Public Advisory Committee	Spring 2024
In person Consultation (in person)	Winter 2024
Public Consultation (online)	Winter 2024
Stakeholder Consultation	Spring 2025

Draft Plan:

Indigenous Engagement	Spring 2025
Public Consultations (online)	Spring 2025

10. Next Steps

Board Approval – June 20, 2025

11. List of Appendices

- Appendix A – Story Map
- Appendix B – Excerpts of Minutes of ACPDR meetings

12. Authors of the Submission

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