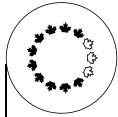


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NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION  
 COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

<b>No.</b>	2025-P265
<b>To</b>	Board of Directors
<b>Date</b>	2025-06-19

**For** DECISION

**Subject/Title**

The National Capital Core Area Plan

**Summary**

- The National Capital Core Area Plan (Core Area Plan) serves as the National Capital Commission’s (NCC) principal land-use and design policy document for the most important federal sites within the heart of the National Capital.
- In April 2025, a progress report was presented to the Board of Directors for information.
- Volume I of the Plan is submitted for final approval following the completion of policy drafting, document production, coordination with various stakeholders, a final phase of public consultation and engagement with Algonquin elders.
- Sector 1 (Central Ottawa) Demonstration Plan and Policies from Volume II is also submitted for final approval .
- The Core Area spans approximately 12 km<sup>2</sup>, encompassing downtown Ottawa and Gatineau, and extending across the Ottawa River. This area hosts the highest concentration of federal lands and governmental functions within the National Capital Region.
- The revised Core Area Plan establishes a planning horizon of approximately 20 years, presenting a long-term vision for the future of the Core Area towards the mid 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Risk Summary**

- Implementation of the plan may be constrained by the changing priorities of the NCC and it’s partners over time. These challenges can be mitigated by continued engagement and relationship building.

**Recommendation**

That the Board of Directors approve the National Capital Core Area Plan (Volume I) and the Sector 1 (Central Ottawa) Demonstration Plan and Policies to be included in Volume II.

**Submitted by:**

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Alain Miguelez  
 Vice President, Capital Planning Branch

## 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”
- The strategic priorities listed below are taken from the 2025-2026 to 2029-2030 Corporate Plan which was approved by the NCC’s Board of Directors in January 2025. This corporate plan will be reviewed by the Minister for submission to the Treasury Board in Fall 2025.
  - Priority 1: Rehabilitate and revitalize the NCC’s key built and natural assets in the national capital region in a manner that demonstrates sound stewardship of public funds, and delivers results for Canadians.
  - Priority 2: Work with federal partners to accelerate housing development on NCC underutilized lands and streamline the federal land use, design, and transaction approval (FLUDTA) process for projects that support the implementation of Canada’s Housing Plan.
  - Priority 3: Plan, implement and optimize transportation networks and infrastructure in the National Capital Region, in collaboration with all levels of government and partners.
  - 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; and 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 two 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 approval of the 2005 plan, significant changes in the urban context, the NCC mandate, and government priorities have reshaped the landscape. Key factors include

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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.

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, Kiweki 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 replacement, 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 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 the vision, guiding principles, and 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.
- A progress update was presented to the Board of Directors in April 2025 for information prior to presenting the final plan for decision in June 2025.

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### 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.

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

The plan is divided into two parts.

- Volume I is comprised overarching vision, themes and concept as detailed below (Appendix A).
- Volume II will include demonstration plans and detailed policies for the 11 sectors and a supporting implementation strategy spanning the Core Area (Appendix B).

The present submission seeks NCC Board of Directors' approval for Volume I and the Demonstration Plan and Policies for Sector 1, which will be included in Volume II. Upon approval, the Capital Planning branch will undertake the finalization of the remaining detailed plans and policies of Volume II and submit them for Board approval, anticipated by mid-2026. If required, additional internal and external engagement may be conducted, including with EMC and ACPDR.

Volume I includes the following:

- *Vision* presents the long-term vision for the Capital core area through to mid-century, underpinned by five guiding principles.
- *Place and Setting* explores the layered history and evolution of the core area, including its cultural landscapes, built heritage and planning legacies. It identifies character defining features and foundational concepts to be carried forward in the plan.

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- *Themes* present key objectives organized under six overarching categories. These themes reflect the broad and unique functions of a National Capital and apply across the entire core area as a whole; they serve as aspirational guiding statements, to frame decision-making and future intent.
- *Concepts* translate the vision into a spatial framework and structuring land-use policies. It introduces three big moves that will drive the most impactful changes for the future. It further defines feature-based policies organized around five distinct concept layers, each providing qualitative criteria to guide future projects and interventions.
- *Sectors* provide key recommendations for eleven geographic areas within the core area (further detail provided in Volume II).
- *Plan Administration* outlines the adoption, authorities and processes to administer the plan, such as federal approval requirements, review and amendment of the plan.

Volume II will include the following:

- *Demonstration Plans* present geographic plans and policies for each sector that serve to illustrate and visualize the intended outcome. These serve as baseline scenarios for project planning and evaluation.
  - Sector 1 (Central Ottawa) Demonstration Plan and Policies is included for approval given the significance of the federal sites and functions in this area. It shows the level of detail and format envisioned for each remaining sector. (Appendix B).
- *Implementation Strategy* describes the roles, responsibilities and partnerships required to implement the plan as well as short-, medium- and long-term priorities. It also presents monitoring and evaluation targets to measure the success of the plan over time.

## 5. Financial Details

NCC staff has developed the plan to date with a budget of \$172,000. The planning work was conducted in-house, and the budget was allocated to public consultation, outreach and awareness, and editing and translation. No budget is assigned for the implementation of any of the plan's proposals. Such proposals will follow the appropriate path to become formal NCC projects through mechanisms including Multi-Year Capital Plan (MYCP) prioritization, Real Estate and Development processes for establishing development structures, partnerships or land leases, or any other corporate process leading to implementation.

## 6. Opportunities and Expected Results

The plan represents a significant opportunity for the NCC to establish proactive and bold 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:

- Affirms legacy planning concepts from past plans.
- Assesses existing, pending and approved - plans and initiatives, and identifies areas that need alignment, update or are lacking direction.
- Utilizes visual concepts, intentions and design scenarios of the sectors and special study areas to inform 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 expresses desired outcomes but is flexible in terms of approach.
- Uses 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, healthy and inviting places for residents and visitors to experience the Capital.

A Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessment was conducted for the plan (Appendix C). A member of the NCC Sustainable Development and Environmental Services team consulted the Core Area Plan project team on the development of the plan and completed the environmental assessment report.

Other NCC plans in effect will be harmonized within the new plan. These include the Plan for Canada's Capital, Ottawa River North Shore Parklands Plan, Capital Illumination Plan, Sustainable Development Strategy, LeBreton Flats Master Concept Plan, NCC Lands for Homes Program and others.

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## 8. Risks and Mitigation Measures

To voluntarily align with the [Cabinet Directive on Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessments](#), the NCC conducted a 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
Implementation of the plan may be constrained by the changing priorities of the NCC and partners over time.	Medium	Moderate	Continued collaboration and relationship building will be essential for successful long-term plan implementation, including targeted collaboration and consultation with stakeholders in the development of demonstration plans and sector policies.  The NCC should use the plan to guide how it structures and funds future capital projects. All branches should refer to this plan to make sure their projects align with its vision, concepts, and policies.

## 9. Public Engagement and Communications

### Phase 1 - Preliminary Planning

**April to August 2023**

- Technical-level engagement with partner agencies and municipal governments

### Phase 2 - Vision, Principles and Strategic Directions

**June to December 2023**

- Public Advisory Committee
- 8 key informant interviews with community associations and BIAs
- 2 online and in-person public workshops
- 4 pop-up kiosks
- 1 public survey
- 1 survey and 3 online meetings held as part of NCC Accessibility Plan consultations

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**Phase 3 - Concepts, Themes and Sectors** **May 2024 to March 2025**

- Members of the public and stakeholders were asked for feedback on the themes, concept and sectors that framed the recommendations of the plan
- Online public and in-person workshops

**Phase 4 - Draft Plan** **May 2025**

- Indigenous engagement with the Algonquin Nation
- Online feedback on the 90% Draft Plan
- The overall consultation report is at Appendix D

**Phase 5 - Ongoing** **June 2025-2026**

- Targeted dialogue and engagement with Algonquin Communities, partner agencies, community and business associations during the finalization of Volume II

**10. Next Steps**

- Volume II
  - Remaining Sector Plans (S2 – S11)
  - Implementation Strategy

**11. List of Appendices**

- Appendix A – National Capital Core Area Plan (Volume I) for Approval
- Appendix B – National Capital Core Area Plan (Volume II) –Demonstration Plan and Policies for Sector 1 – Central Ottawa for Approval
- Appendix C – Strategic Environmental and Economic Assessment (SEEA)
- Appendix D – National Capital Core Area Plan Public Consultation Report

**12. Authors of the Submission**

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