

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Review of the National Capital Core Area Plan

Public consultation - Phase 3

SUMMARY REPORT
MARCH 2025

Canada

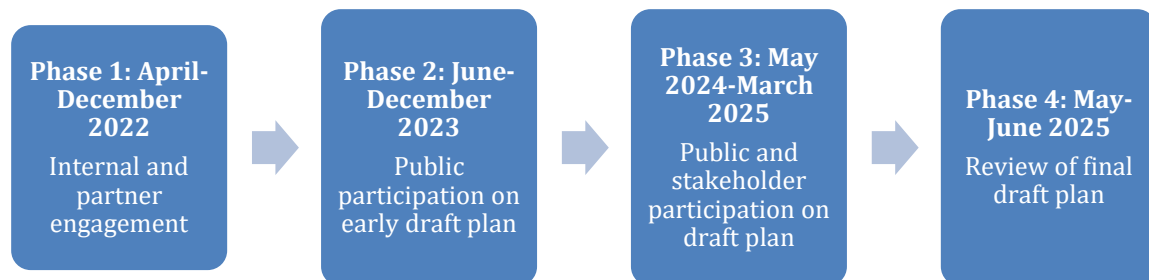
Context

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is undertaking a comprehensive review of the National Capital Core Area Plan (the Plan), which serves as the principal long-term planning document for the development and management of federal lands within the downtown cores of Ottawa and Gatineau. Originally approved by the NCC Board of Directors in 2005, the Plan is being reviewed to establish a unified vision that will guide future planning and management efforts in the core area.

In this review process, the NCC is committed to engaging with the public and various stakeholders to gather their insights on the Plan's priorities and to enhance awareness of its objectives.

Overview of Public Participation

This report summarizes the results of engagement activities with members of the public and stakeholders carried out under Phase 3 for the Plan, from May 2024 to March 2025.¹ Feedback received during previous public consultations was incorporated into the draft version of the Plan presented to the public during this Phase.



Engagement activities included as part of phase 3 included:

- **Public advisory committee (PAC):** Ahead of the public release of the full plan, a meeting was held with PAC members on May 22, 2024.
- **Individual stakeholder meetings:** Meetings were held with L'Association des Résidants de l'Île de Hull (ARIH) on July 3, 2024 and Somerset Street Chinatown Business Improvement Association on July 12, 2024 to introduce the draft plan.
- **Public workshop:** held on January 23, 2025 in the Urbanism Lab. 41 people attended the workshop.

¹ Phase 1 of engagement (April-December 2022) involved internal and partner consultation. The results helped to establish the existing conditions for the Plan. Phase 2 (June-December 2023) involved public participation on the early draft plan.

- **Public survey:** open from January 23 to February 12, 2025, hosted online using Survey123. 200 respondents completed the survey.
- **Community meetings:** The project team met directly with community groups located within the project area. Meetings took place with the New Edinburgh Community Alliance (January 21), Centretown Community Association (February 4), Lowertown Community Association (February 10), and ARIH (February 26). An additional in-person meeting was held with the New Edinburgh Community Alliance on March 6 with 53 residents.
- **Letters from stakeholders:** interested groups including the Centretown Community Association, the Lowertown Community Association, the New Edinburgh Community Alliance provided their feedback to the Plan via email.

Phase 3 of public participation activities focused on obtaining feedback on the draft concept and sector plans. Participants were also given an opportunity to comment on the updated themes. More information on the updated Plan can be [found here](#).



A member of the NCC project team presenting the Core Area Plan to residents and stakeholders at the public consultation workshop at the NCC Urbanism Lab on January 23, 2025.

What We Heard

This section summarizes key findings across all engagement activities.

Themes

Members of the public were given an opportunity to comment on the updated themes, which included the addition of a sixth theme, *Mobility and Access*.

Many respondents appreciated the updated themes, agreeing that they reflected feedback provided during Phase 2 around accessibility, sustainability, and vibrancy.

There was strong support for enhancing waterfront access and creation of new public spaces. Some respondents were concerned about development and loss of natural spaces, and the need for better connectivity to public transit.

Suggestions for improvement included enhancing existing spaces and ensuring new spaces include more seating, shade, and amenities such as public restrooms. Respondents also highlighted the need for continued engagement with local communities to ensure plans align with priorities of residents.



Members of the public were able to provide feedback directly onto project plans and ask questions to NCC staff during the workshop event on January 23, 2025.

Concept

1) Capital waterfront

Respondents generally agreed with the five key opportunities presented, particularly the focus on improving public spaces, access to the waterfront, and sustainability. Many comments focused on parks, including increasing available seating, number of restrooms, and adding shaded areas. There was also desire for more destination spaces along the water with amenities like restaurants and cafes, as well as improved pathways and boardwalks.

Overall, the feedback highlighted the importance of creating lively, accessible, and sustainable public spaces that improve the quality of life for both residents and visitors.

2) Capital open space

Respondents largely supported the five key opportunities, appreciating the focus on outdoor recreation and play. They also advocated for safety in infrastructure by separating bike and pedestrian pathways and providing essential amenities like public toilets and drinking fountains. Respondents also emphasized the inclusion of Indigenous peoples by dedicating spaces for cultural and ceremonial activities.

Respondents had mixed opinions on commercial services, with some supporting cafes and restaurants to animate spaces, while others prefer preserving natural areas. Many also suggested creating more public spaces that are available year-round with features available for all seasons.

3) Capital fabric

Respondents were generally supportive of the five key opportunities, specifically for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly developments that respect historical contexts and integrate green spaces. Respondents offered various ideas for implementing these opportunities, such as creating more parks, improving pedestrian pathways, and enhancing connections between different areas.

There remained a strong focus on the need for amenities like seating, restrooms, and shaded areas. Suggestions for additional opportunities and improvements include better preservation of historical sites, more focus on sustainability, and creating more public spaces.

4) Capital destinations

Respondents were generally in favour of the six key opportunities listed and the proposed initiatives. They provide various ideas for implementing these opportunities, such as improved wayfinding, reliable public transit, and pedestrian-friendly areas.

Suggestions for additional opportunities and improvements include making neighbourhoods dynamic and sustainable, better showcasing civic buildings, protecting Indigenous heritage, and ensuring tourism spaces are mixed-use and part of active transport corridors. Comments also included a desire for showcasing local art and culture, as well as more diverse events to allow for better and more inclusive experiences.

5) Capital streetscape

Respondents expressed support for the four key opportunities listed but also highlighted a need for reducing the speed of traffic, more greenery along streets and roadways, and better accessible spaces for people with disabilities. While many favoured reducing spaces for cars and parking to

promote pedestrian-friendly areas, there were concerns about practicality for families and local businesses.

Respondents also provided feedback seeking improved public transit, while highlighting that safety is also essential for reducing car dependency, and balanced development is needed to maintain essential service routes.

Sectors

The feedback received on the sectors reflects a strong desire for a more accessible, vibrant, and environmentally friendly urban core in the National Capital. Key themes reflected in the comments received include:

- environmental preservation
- improved transportation
- urban development
- enhanced public spaces
- new event spaces
- addressing social concerns
- improving accessibility

A total of 439 comments in total were received on the sector plans during the consultation period.² For ease of reference to feedback, sectors will be divided into four 'zones': Zone 1 (Sectors 1 and 11), Zone 2 (Sectors 2 and 3), Zone 3 (Sectors 4-8), and Zone 4 (Sectors 9 and 10), along with a section for general comments received.³

Zone 1: Sectors 1 (Parliamentary and Judicial Precinct) and 11 (Rideau Canal and Elgin Street)

Feedback for Sectors 1 and 11 highlighted a strong emphasis on enhancing public spaces, accessibility, and historical preservation.

For Sector 1, there was support for converting the riverfront into a park space, improving pedestrian infrastructure, and revitalizing areas like Sparks Street and the Cliff parking lot.

Comments also stressed the importance of maintaining historical character, increasing accessibility, and removing parking lots to create more green spaces.

For Sector 11, feedback focused on protecting and enhancing the Rideau Canal area, improving pathway connections, and support for the redesign of Confederation Park as a functional event space. There was also support for making the Rideau Canal

² A table with a full breakdown of number of comments received per sector during the consultation period is included in Appendix 1.

³ A map identifying the zone divisions can be found in Appendix 2.

more accessible for activities such as swimming and enhancing nearby pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

Comments received on both sectors emphasized the need for thoughtful urban planning that balanced historical preservation with modern accessibility and environmental sustainability, while also addressing community needs and promoting vibrant public spaces.

Zone 2: Sectors 2 (LeBreton Flats and Aqueduct) and 3 (Chaudières and the Islands)

Feedback for Sectors 2 and 3 emphasized the importance of preserving greenspace, enhancing connectivity, and creating vibrant community spaces.

For Sector 2, there was strong support for developing event spaces, improving existing pedestrian bridges, and ensuring that the new Ottawa Public Library and National Archives are incorporated into the design. Comments also highlighted the need for transit infrastructure to handle major events, preserving greenspace, and creating pathways to connect different areas.

For Sector 3, feedback focused on restoring natural features like Chaudière Falls, improving pathway connections for cyclists, and creating more cultural and recreational spaces. There was also a significant emphasis on reconciliation and engaging with Indigenous peoples in the planning process. The feedback reflected a desire for development that respects natural landscapes and fosters a sense of community.

Zone 3: Sectors 4-8 (Ruisseau de la Brasserie, Scott Point to Museum of History, Jacques-Cartier Park, De l'île Pathway, Centreville Gatineau)

Feedback for these sectors highlighted the need for improved accessibility, preservation of greenspace, and community-focused development.

For Sector 4, comments emphasized the potential for development, with a focus on making Rue Montcalm more accessible and maintaining public green space near Ruisseau de la Brasserie.

Sector 5 feedback included suggestions for bicycle lanes, better winter maintenance, and the need for animation and usage of open spaces.

In Sector 6, there was support for inclusive affordable housing, public restrooms, and performing arts animation.

Sector 7 comments focused on integrating intersections, promoting small businesses along boulevards, and ensuring buildings faced pathways.

For Sector 8, feedback included the need for grocery store space in Hull, consideration of flood zone remapping in planning, and better design of bike paths

with user experience in mind. The feedback reflected a desire for development that fosters connectivity and enhances the quality of life for residents.

Zone 4: Sectors 9 (Sussex Drive and Rideau Falls) and 10 (Sussex Drive and Byward Market)

Feedback for Sectors 9 and 10 highlighted the importance of preserving historical and cultural elements, improving accessibility, and enhancing community spaces.

For Sector 9, comments emphasized the need to preserve heritage buildings, ensure new buildings along Sussex Drive are mixed-use, and improve pathway connections. There was also strong support for the planning for 24 Sussex, creating more green spaces, and ensuring the area remained accessible and vibrant. However, mixed commentary was received on development or infill, with concerns expressed about security, traffic congestion, and the impact on the area's historical character.



Picture of the presentation and workshop organized with the New Edinburgh Community Alliance on March 6, 2025.

For Sector 10, feedback focused on removing truck traffic from downtown, pedestrianizing the Byward Market, and creating student spaces. There was also a significant emphasis on cleaning up the area to make it more tourist-friendly, ensuring all commercial spaces were occupied, and addressing noise concerns in Sussex Courtyards.

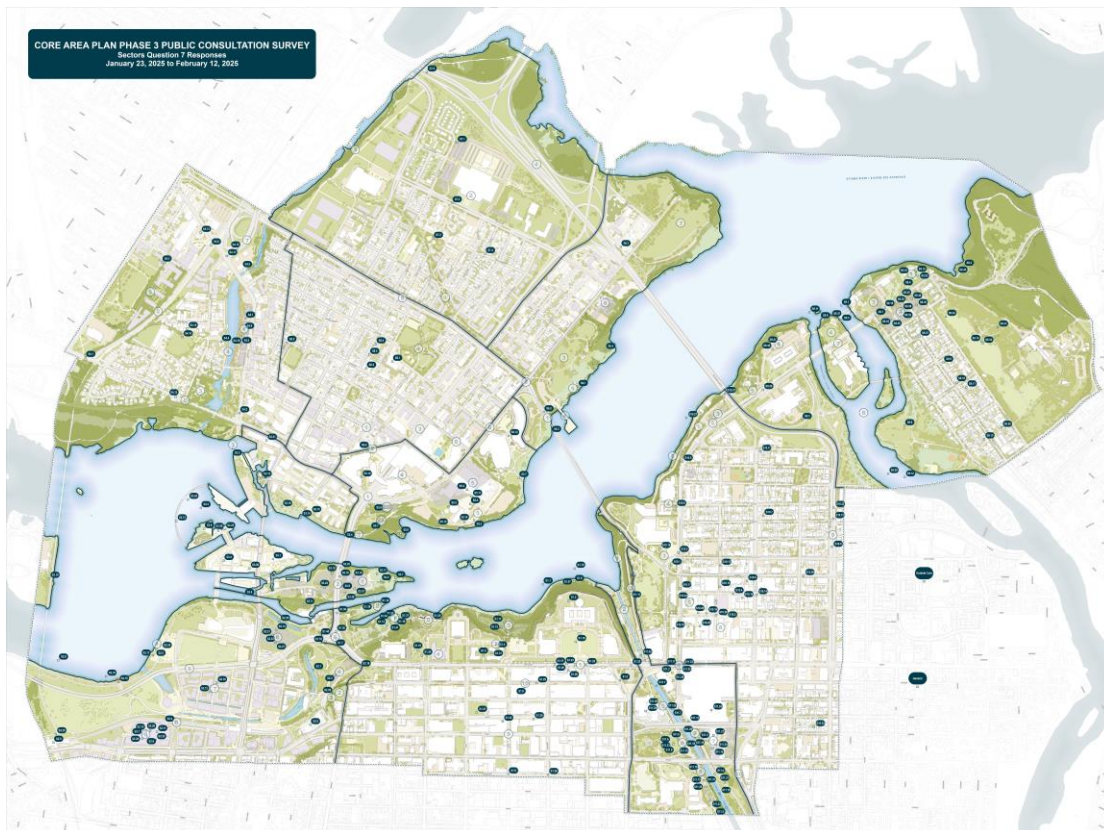
The feedback reflected a desire for development that enhances the urban experience and supports a thriving community, while being mindful of concerns related to security, traffic congestion, and the preservation of historical character.

General Comments

A number of more general comments on the plan were also received and were categorized independently. Similar to comments received on the sectors, there remained a strong focus on preserving greenspace, enhancing accessibility, and improving public transportation.

Comments also highlighted the importance of maintaining the historical and cultural character of the Core Area while promoting sustainable development. There were also concerns about the impact of new developments on traffic, parking, and community safety.

Additionally, feedback suggested the need for better communication and engagement with the public to ensure that needs and preferences were considered during the planning process. Overall, the general comments underscored the importance of thoughtful and inclusive urban planning that balanced development with environmental sustainability and community well-being, while also addressing practical challenges and promoting a vibrant urban environment.



A map of the core area displaying the location attached to each comment received about the various sectors through the online survey.

Next steps

Work is underway to finalize the Plan in 2025. Following Phase 3 of public consultation, comments and feedback received will be integrated into the Plan ahead of the release of a final draft. This version will be available for comment to the public during one final phase of consultation:

- Spring-summer 2025: public consultation on the 90% version of the Plan ahead of review by the NCC Board of Directors.

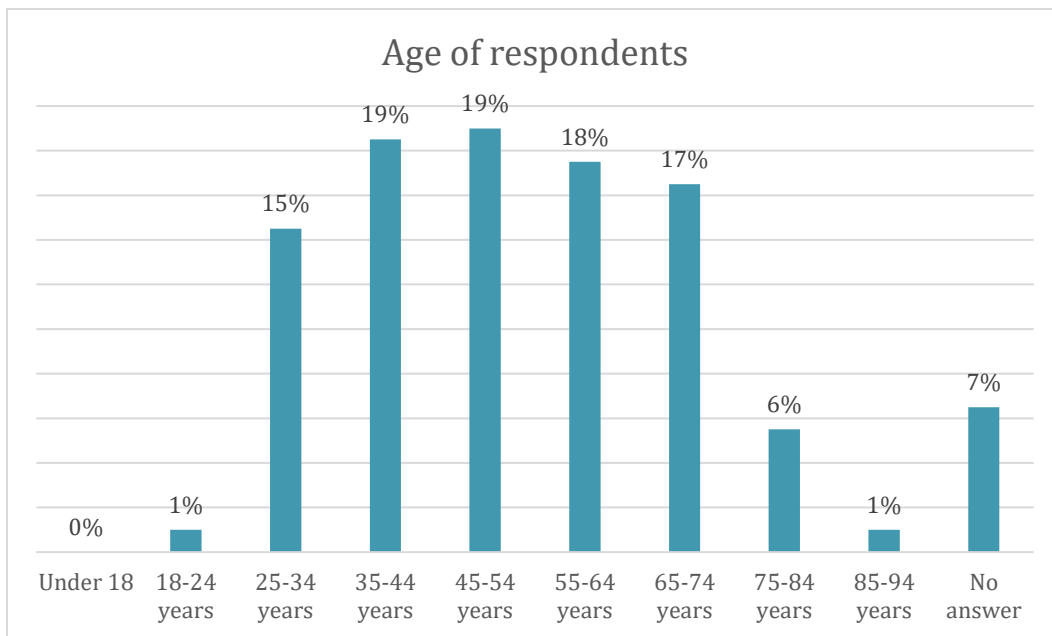
The final phase of public participation will also involve feedback from internal stakeholders, and the Public Advisory Committee.

Demographics

Demographic information for respondents was gathered through the survey:

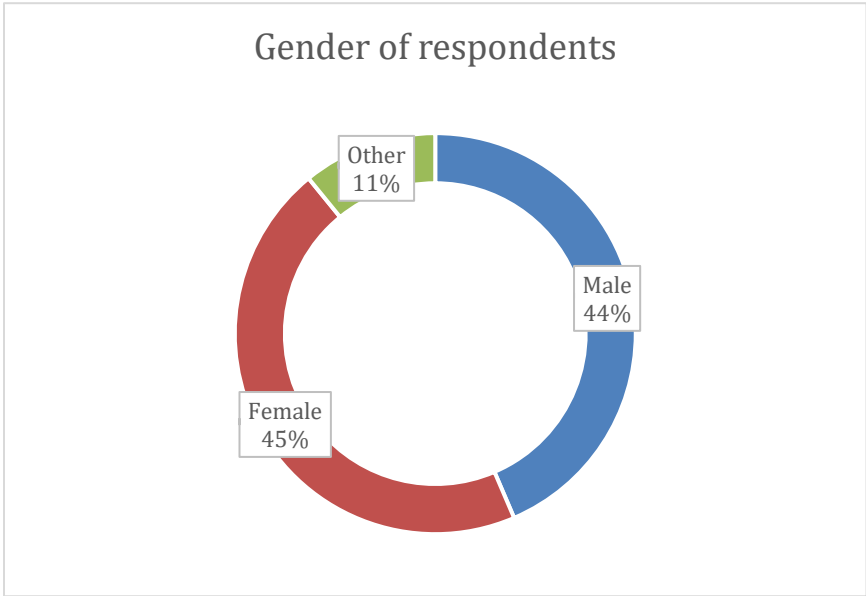
Age

The majority of respondents were between 35 and 54 years of age, with the fewest respondents being less than 25 years of age. Survey results generally aligned with 2021 Census data for age groups in the Ottawa-Gatineau Metropolitan area.



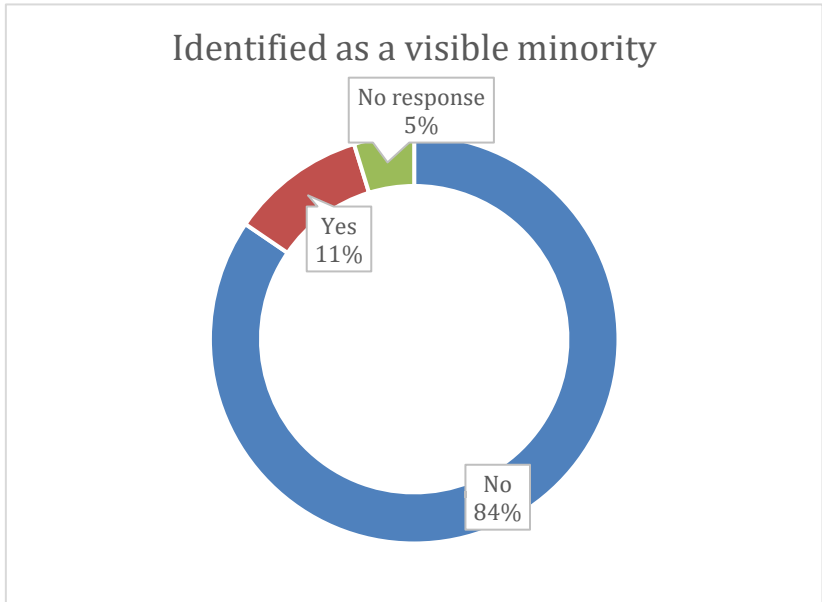
Gender

Gender distribution is presented in the graph below, which is in line with Census data for the Ottawa-Gatineau Metropolitan area.



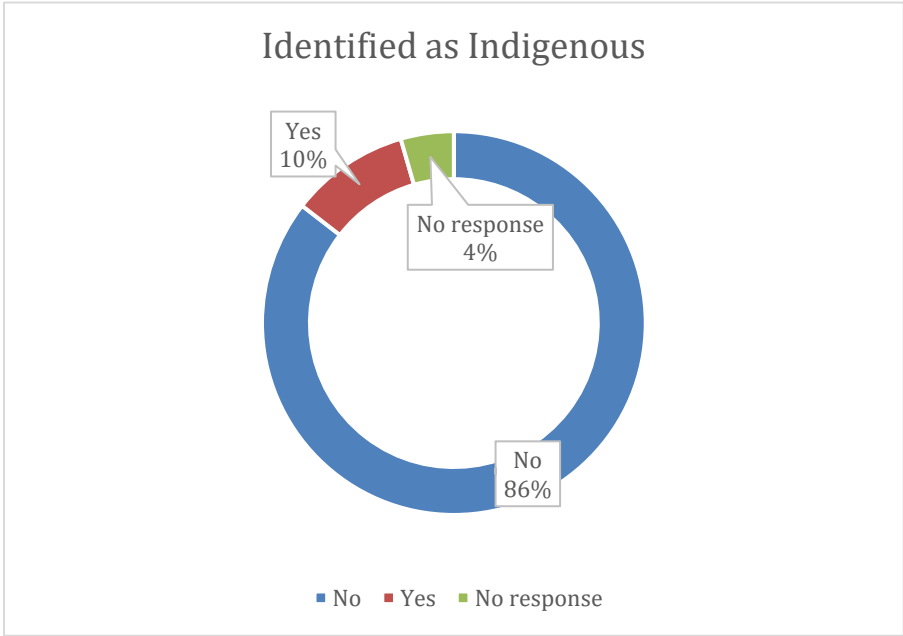
Identified as a visible minority

A total of 11% of survey respondents identified as a visible minority, which is lower than the average of 26% in the Ottawa-Gatineau Metropolitan area.



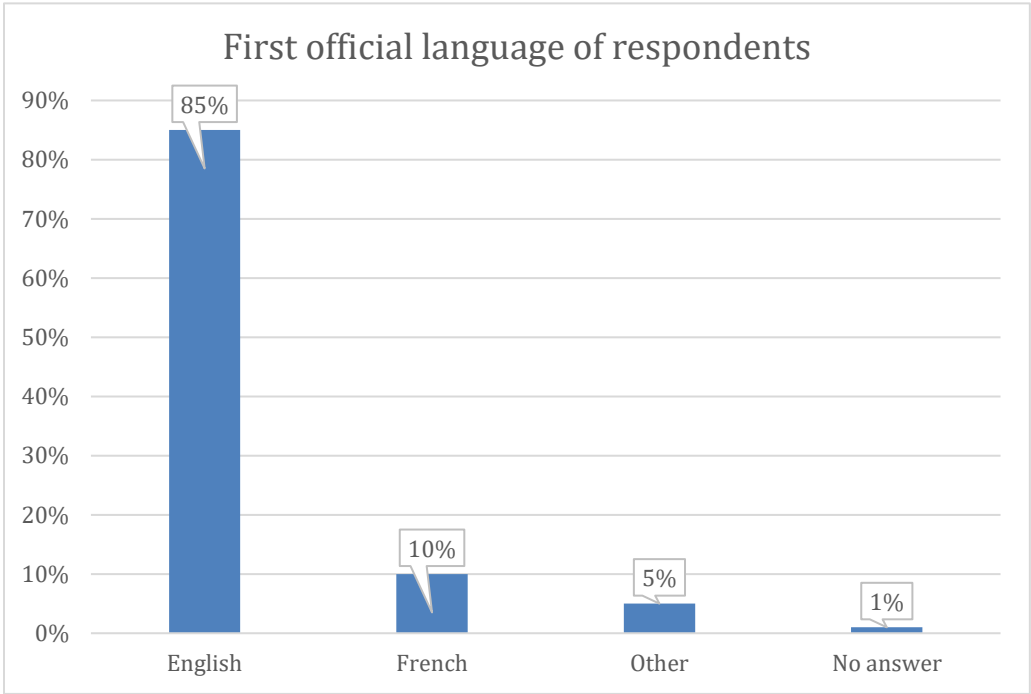
Identified as Indigenous

A higher percentage (10%) of those who took the survey identified as Indigenous, compared with 3% who identified as Indigenous in the Ottawa-Gatineau Metropolitan area .



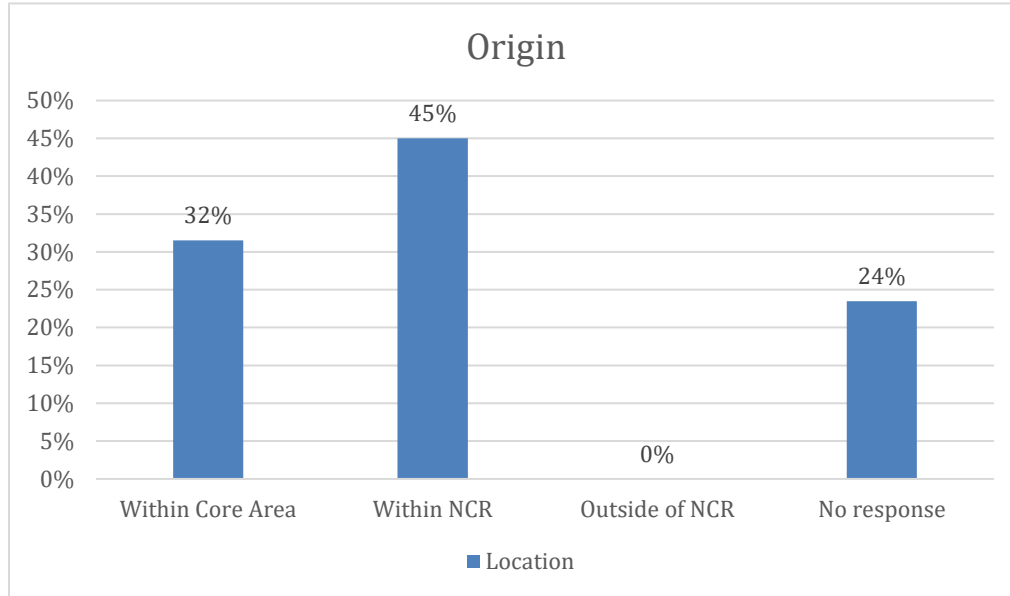
Language

A higher proportion of respondents to the survey (85%) identified English as their first official language compared with the average for the Ottawa-Gatineau Metropolitan area, which is 66%.



Origin

A higher number of responses (45%) were received from respondents from within the National Capital, but outside of the study area. No responses were received from respondents indicating they lived outside of the National Capital Region.



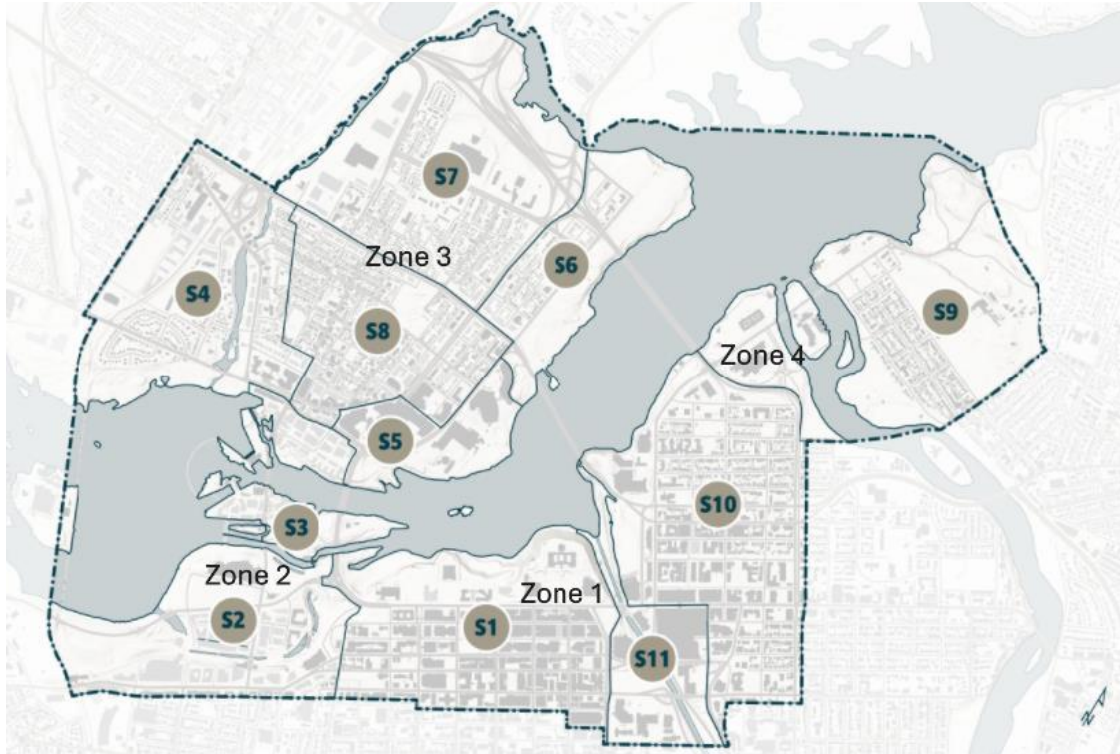
Appendix 1

Table 1: Sector comments received during Public Consultation period

Sector Number	Workshop	Survey	Total
S1: Parliamentary and Judicial Precincts	14	41	55
S2: LeBreton Flats and Aqueduct	16	29	45
S3: Chaudières and the Islands	7	28	35
S4: Ruisseau de la Brasserie (Brewery Creek)	5	16	21
S5: Scott Point to Museum of History	3	14	17
S6: Jacques-Cartier Park	4	5	9
S7: De l'Île Pathway	4	5	9
S8: Centreville Gatineau	3	6	9
S9: Sussex Drive and Rideau Falls	6	38	44
S10: Sussex Drive and Byward Market	20	28	48
S11: Rideau Canal and Elgin Street	12	35	47
General Comments (not attached to any sector)*	N/A	90	90
Outside Core Comments*	N/A	10	10
Totals	92	345	439

As part of the Survey123 format, users were able to select any area of the map to provide comments. Some of these comments were general in nature or fell outside of the boundaries of the scope for the Plan. They were categorized accordingly as either 'general' or 'outside core'.

Appendix 2



A map of the National Capital Core Area showing the distribution of the sectors with their corresponding zones to assist in sorting comments received on each of the sectors.