

REGION OF OTTAWA CARLETON
 RÉGION D'OTTAWA CARLETON

REPORT
 RAPPORT

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TO/DEST. Co-ordinator, Planning and Environment Committee

FROM/EXP. Commissioner, Planning and Development Approvals

SUBJECT/OBJET **RMOC RESPONSE TO NCC'S DRAFT *PLAN FOR CANADA'S CAPITAL***

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning and Environment Committee recommend that Council approve this report as the RMOC response to the National Capital Commission's Draft *Plan for Canada's Capital*.

PURPOSE

The National Capital Commission released two documents for public review and comment in June 1998. These are the Draft *Plan for Canada's Capital* and *A Capital for Future Generations - A Vision for the Core Area of Canada's Capital Region*. This report provides a response to the Draft *Plan for Canada's Capital*. A response to the Core Area Vision is provided in a separate report and is not repeated in this report, despite some overlap between the two draft plans. The deadline for submission of comments to the National Capital Commission is 28 Sep 1998.

BACKGROUND

The draft *Plan for Canada's Capital* is an update of the 1988 *Plan for Canada's Capital (A Federal Land Use Plan)*. It is the federal government's lead policy statement on the physical planning and development of the National Capital Region over the next fifty years. The draft Plan has been prepared to address new opportunities or issues which have emerged since the mid-80s or are anticipated to emerge in the future.

The Capital Plan is designed to provide high-level, strategic advice to the federal government as it considers its role in the evolution of Canada's Capital over the next fifty years and explain the federal government's perspective on the vocation of its considerable land base in the National Capital Region.

One of the key initiatives is a “commitment to harmonisation and co-operation among the various agencies and authorities involved in the planning and development of land use and transportation in the National Capital Region.” Staff have reviewed the draft Capital Plan from the perspective of how it harmonises with the Regional Official Plan. Staff of the two agencies have generally worked together to harmonise our respective plans. Regional staff provided comments on previous drafts of the Plan for Canada’s Capital on a staff-to-staff basis.

Master Plans and Sector Plans, some of which already exist (e.g., the Greenbelt and Gatineau Park Plans) and some of which are forthcoming (e.g. the Urban Area Master Plan), are to be the main policy planning instruments for implementing goals and policies of the Capital Plan. One of the tests of the Capital Plan is the strategic direction it provides to these Plans as well as to plans prepared by other federal departments and agencies (e.g. plans for CFB Rockcliffe). The Capital Plan clearly anticipates continuing rationalisation of federal government land holdings; the issue then becomes what guidance the Capital Plan provides for the future use of federal land which no longer has a Capital or departmental program role.

The draft Plan has also been prepared in compliance with related federal government policies and procedures, many of which are footnoted in the document.

Section A of the Plan provides Context. The goals, policies and supportive interpretive maps in Section B - The Capital Plan may only be changed through a process of formal amendment. This response focuses primarily on this section of the Plan. Lastly, Section C deals with Plan Management.

DISCUSSION

The introductory material to the Plan includes a list of Key Initiatives. This page summarises the principal themes of the Capital Plan very well and is included for information as Annex A.

The Context material in Section A includes a subsection (2.5) on Planning Principles. The 1997 Regional Official Plan includes a list of Shared Principles in Section 1.3 which were drawn up jointly by the RMOC, Communauté urbaine de l’Outaouais, the MRC des Collines-de-l’Outaouais, and the National Capital Commission. These shared principles are paraphrased and elaborated (in ways which are consistent with the overall intent) in this subsection of the draft Capital Plan under the headings of Capital Planning Principles and Regional Planning Principles.

Policies begin in Section 4 of the Capital Plan, which deals with **Capital Settings**. The Capital Settings policy areas include:

- Natural Heritage Areas
- Rural Lands
- Capital Urban Green Spaces
- Capital Waterways and Shorelines
- Urban Design
- Built Heritage
- Archaeology.

In the discussion of goals and policies which follows, the response is in italics to clearly distinguish it from summaries of draft Capital Plan content.

The goal for **Natural Heritage Areas** is “A network of natural heritage areas that protects valued ecosystems.” The policies for Natural Heritage Areas call for the management of Gatineau Park and conservation areas of the Greenbelt for ecosystem protection and then recreation, and the protection of natural links owned by the federal government between natural heritage areas and waterways. In line with the theme of harmonisation, one policy specifically refers to respecting provincial and municipal environmental and natural heritage resource policies and laws. Other policies call for the protection of Valued Ecosystem Components (VECs) on federal lands and securing (by zoning or other means) “in partnership with other governments... outstanding portions of natural heritage areas designated as of Capital significance...”.

Response

The general intent of these policies is endorsed. However their specific adequacy cannot be fully judged because the Conceptual Maps do not indicate where Valued Ecosystem Components (VECs) or natural heritage areas are located or where “outstanding portions of natural heritage areas designated as of Capital significance” are not adequately protected.

The goal for **Rural Lands** is “Productive rural lands that provide opportunities to learn about Canada’s rural and resource heritage.” Policies for Rural Lands include conservation of federal properties with Class 1-3 agricultural soils and direction of recreational activity to lower (agricultural) quality rural lands.

Response

These policies are consistent with the Regional Official Plan.

Capital Urban Green Spaces include both Capital Parks and green corridors. The goal is “Urban green spaces that are key elements of the Capital’s setting and open space network, and provide stages for Capital events, activities and interpretation.” The policies propose to focus public events and programming in Capital Parks, protect environmental components of corridors, reserve locations in urban green spaces for commemorations and public art and ensure visitor wayfinding and support services.

Response

The chief difficulty with the Capital Urban Green Spaces policy is that the Conceptual Maps do not indicate which of the green spaces are considered to be Capital Parks nor which lands “proposed as Capital green spaces in the 1988 Plan for Canada’s Capital are not expected to serve the roles envisaged for them; others are not considered to serve a Capital role.” (p. 39)

Comparison of Maps 3.2. and 3.3 in the Capital Plan to the 1988 Federal Land Use Plan indicates that the properties no longer shown as Green Space in the 1998 draft Plan include

several which are Waterfront Open Space in the Regional Official Plan (Moffat Farm, Revelstoke lands at the Rideau River and the Southern Corridor between the Rideau River and River Road). The NCC is aware that proposals for uses or development of Moffat Farm which are inconsistent with the Region's Waterfront Open Space designation will require a regional official plan amendment.

The Revelstoke lands and the Southern Corridor lands have been the subject of study in the context of the City's preparation of Neighbourhood Plans for Riverside Park and Hunt Club. The Riverside Park study has concluded (at the staff level) that the lands west of Revelstoke should remain open space, although perhaps in municipal ownership. A recreation facility is proposed for some of the Southern Corridor lands. The Hunt Club study has not yet reached conclusions for that portion of the Southern Corridor within their study area. McCarthy Woods is shown as Greenspace on Conceptual Map 3.2. It is assumed that the policy under Natural Heritage Areas on the protection of natural links owned by the federal government between natural heritage areas and waterways will ensure that at least some of the Southern Corridor between the Woods and Rideau River will remain open space. The Regional Official Plan has a recreational pathway through the Southern Corridor on Schedule I, Regional Open Space Network. The policies require that pathways be provided "within a green and open corridor."

The goal for **Capital Waterways and Shorelines** is "Waterways that serve as accessible, continuous symbols of Canada's heritage." In general the policies seek to strike a balance between protection of environmental integrity and public access. There is a specific policy on encouraging the expansion of the navigable waterways of the Capital (e.g. Ottawa River to Témiscamingue). Several other policies refer to working in partnership or co-operating with local government and provincial agencies to, e.g. manage storm water and prevent or reduce environmental impacts to waterways and shorelines.

Response

The general intent of these policies is supported, but some of them are weak and lack detail. For example, what does "accommodate recreational pathways" mean? The NCC instigated the preparation of a plan in conjunction with municipalities on both sides of the Ottawa River for recreational pathways. The result is the Integrated Network of Recreational Pathways for the National Capital Region (1994). Although all jurisdictions have a role to play in bringing the plan to fruition, the federal government should make a commitment that where they currently own land crossed by proposed recreational pathways they will ensure that opportunity for the pathway is protected, even if they do not retain ownership of the surrounding land. This is currently an issue for a property along Station Boulevard which is shown as Capital Pathway in the draft Capital Plan. It does not appear that the NCC made any provision for protection of a pathway corridor in its proposed terms of sale to a private developer.

While the Plan promises to "Work in partnership with local and provincial government agencies to manage storm water...", the direction could be clearer and the commitment stronger. When federal government sites are developed or redeveloped, there should be a specific commitment to prepare sub-watershed or stormwater site management plans and implement Best Management Practices in order to ensure that the quality and quantity of water which supports aquatic life,

fish habitat and recreation uses is not adversely affected, etc.. For example, the first step in planning for redevelopment of Rockcliffe Canadian Forces Base should be preparation of a sub-watershed plan as required by policy 3b) of section 5.3.2, Policies for Sub-Watershed Plans, of the Regional Official Plan.

Council adopted a motion in September 1996 encouraging the federal government to “take a leading role ... in commissioning a study to examine the benefits of full seasonal tourist navigation on the Ottawa River ...”. Council has declared its willingness to study extending the navigable reaches of the Ottawa River. Its final position would be determined by the results of a study.

The goal for **Urban Design** is “Urban design that incorporates standards of architecture and planning befitting a national capital.” The policies speak to protection of the views and symbolic primacy of the Parliament Buildings, appropriate standards of maintenance and architectural design for lands and buildings of Capital significance, and “actively seek the co-operation of municipal and other agencies to retain, plan and enhance key gateways and entry corridors to the Capital (e.g., the Airport Parkway, provincial highways, and waterways).” Another policy, “Continue to encourage local and regional governments to provide lands that meet the open space requirements of their citizens”, is a response to the identified issue that “There is an over-dependence on federal lands to provide the open space needs of local communities and commercial cores.”

Response

The intent of these policies is supported. The 1997 Regional Official Plan contains a policy about protecting the views and symbolic primacy of the Parliament Buildings. The Conceptual Maps do not specifically identify Gateways or entry corridors. The NCC should use the roads shown as Entry Routes on Schedules I and J of the Regional Official Plan. The Capital Plan should also refer to rail entry corridors.

The comments and policy re meeting local open space needs require clarification and would be better located under Capital Urban Green Spaces. The NCC recently indicated it was willing to enter into a long term lease with the City of Nepean for Greenbelt lands to be used for an arena complex and other sports fields. What circumstances define when use of federal lands to meet local open space and/or recreation needs is appropriate?

The goal for **Built Heritage** is “Built heritage that is protected and preserved as an important part of the Capital’s cultural landscape.” The policies speak to improving public access to heritage properties and enhancing visitors’ experience of built heritage resources. There are also policies which apply when undertaking works on or new construction in federal heritage buildings. Another policy calls for making “suitable efforts to arrange for alternative uses compatible with the character of a federal heritage building when program needs end, or the building is no longer fully used by the federal government.”

Response

The Plan would be improved by addition of a policy which speaks generally to the preservation of built heritage in federal government ownership or stewardship (as well as the specific circumstances of when undertaking works or new construction). The policy on arranging compatible alternative uses for federal heritage buildings when no longer fully used by the federal government is directly relevant to the circumstances of some of the heritage buildings on the Central Experimental Farm and is supported.

The goal for **Archaeology** is “Archaeological resources that are preserved and interpreted as a way to tell the story of Canada.” The policies including complying with established standards and continuing to develop interpretation programs (e.g. Leamy Lake). The key policy is to “undertake necessary actions to identify, conserve and interpret archaeological resources of national interest on federal lands.” Another policy is to “respect and take into account archaeological resources of local or regional interest on federal lands when undertaking environmental assessments.”

Response

The potential for archaeological resources is often greatest along waterfronts. Since the federal government owns much of the waterfront along the major rivers in the National Capital Region, it has a critical role to play in the preservation of archaeological resources. The policies are supported, but should be made even stronger. The NCC has recently completed a study of the potential for prehistoric archaeological resources on federal lands in the National Capital Region. Reference to this study should be added to the policy and an archaeological resource impact assessment by a qualified archaeologist required prior to any disturbance of a site identified as having high or medium potential for archaeological resources in the study. The Region’s own study of archaeological resource potential will also deal with federal lands in Ottawa-Carleton, since the issue of historical archaeological potential has not been fully addressed.

Chapter 5 deals with **Capital Destinations**, which are of two types: Visitor Destinations and Federal Office and Research Facilities.

The goal for **Visitor Destinations** is “A network of Capital attractions that helps visitors explore the Capital and learn about Canada.” Policies for several of the visitor destinations (Parliamentary Precinct, Confederation Boulevard, the Ottawa River (actually about LeBreton Flats and Victoria and Chaudière Islands and the North Shore in Hull), and the Ottawa Core Area) are presented in more detail in the NCC’s Core Area Vision and have been responded to in a separate report.

National Cultural Institutions are also Visitor Destinations. The goal is “National cultural institutions that showcase Canada’s cultures, history and achievements, meet program needs, and are visible and accessible.” The first policy establishes an order of priority for locations of these institutions “on or adjacent to Confederation Boulevard, the parkway network, and regional roads served by public transit.” Another policy calls for enhanced access to these institutions through a diversified transportation system (e.g., parkways, recreational pathways, regional roads and

provincial highways, and public transportation) and a visitor orientation system. The Region is directly affected by the policy which calls for creation of a tour bus management strategy “in partnership with national cultural institutions, and local and regional governments.” There is also a policy about working in partnership with Canada’s aboriginal peoples to identify a site for an interpretation centre.

Response

The Region shares the NCC’s desire that national cultural institutions be in visible and accessible locations. In keeping with the transportation strategy of the Regional Official Plan, accessibility by walking, cycling and transit should always be provided. The second priority direction to locations on the parkway network creates some problems with regard to transit access, since buses are allowed on the parkways only by specific exception. It is recommended that either parkway locations which already have transit service be selected or that additional exceptions to permit transit buses on the parkways be made when needed to provide an attractive transit service to a national cultural institution. This may be the intent of a policy under Capital Parkway Network, “Where appropriate and feasible, accommodate by special arrangement public transit service along segments of the Parkway Network to enhance public access to Capital destinations and settings.” If so, a cross-reference in the National Cultural Institutions section would clarify that this is one of the circumstances considered appropriate and feasible.

The Conceptual Map for the Core Area Concept clearly shows an intent to locate national cultural institutions in the northern part of LeBreton Flats, although it is not on Confederation Boulevard or the parkway network (Booth Street qualifies as a regional road with transit service). The ambiguous status of the future LeBreton Boulevard should be resolved, through either its inclusion as a parkway or, preferably, making it part of Confederation Boulevard.

The goal and policies for **Official Residences of Canada** do not require a Regional response. The goal for **Diplomatic Missions and International Non-governmental Organisations** is “Diplomatic missions and international non-governmental organisations whose symbolic role, physical presence and accessibility is enhanced.” The only policy which directly affects the Region is the one to “encourage municipal land use plans and zoning by-laws to recognise the unique contribution and special needs of the diplomatic community (e.g....).”

Response

Clarification is required on how a municipal plan could recognise the unique contribution and special needs of the diplomatic community. Official plan policies on preferred locations for chanceries and embassies might be seen to conflict with the acknowledged “right of diplomatic missions and international organisations to make autonomous location decisions...”.

The general goal for **Federal Office and Research Facilities** is “Federal accommodations that meet program needs, provide a healthy work environment, and whose location is sensitive to effects on the regional community.” The policies establish the priorities for location of federal agencies and departments as follows: first, in the Core Area; second, at employment centres or in transit nodes identified by local and regional government plans; third, in close proximity to public

transit services. Provision is made by exception for specialised locations (e.g. in the Greenbelt for CANMET). The policy of an approximate 75%:25% split between federal government employment in the Ontario and Quebec parts of the NCR is continued “subject to regular review of variations permitted to achieve the best value for Canadian taxpayers and operational flexibility.”

The harmonisation theme is reflected in several policies. There is a policy to “redevelop surplus federal lands or buildings in a manner that meets federal government needs and complements municipal government objectives (e.g. urban intensification, mixed land uses, regional economic development).” Another policy encourages “development and redevelopment concepts for federal employment areas that support alternatives to the use of personal automobiles, demonstrate a preference for travel demand management measures, and support public transit.” There is a policy to “ensure that the function, scale and design of federal buildings and services are properly integrated with adjacent community land uses and services...”. Lastly, a policy directs consideration of “issues such as the symbolism of building location, heritage status, use, community stability, demands on urban infrastructure and effects on the region’s environment”, but doesn’t say when these issues are to be considered. It is assumed that these issues are to be considered when making decisions on the location and design of federal employment areas.

Response

The locational priorities are supported. The policies which are harmonised with regional planning are appreciated but should be further strengthened. The goal would be improved by revising “whose location is sensitive to effects on the regional community” to “whose location supports regional and local municipal planning objectives.” The policy which encourages concepts that support alternatives to auto travel should be worded “ensure” or “require” rather than “encourage.”

The goal for **The Core Area: Federal Accommodations** is “A core area in which the federal government maintains a significant physical and employee presence.” The policies reinforce this goal by considering the Core Area as the “preferred location for the majority of federal office employees based in the National Capital Region” and directing “the headquarters functions of department and agencies with national or international significance” to locate “to the extent practicable” within the Core Area.

Response

Specifically for the Ottawa Core Area, there is a tension between the policy direction to locate federal agencies and departments and specifically headquarters functions in the Core Area and direction (from Treasury Board) to favour consolidation of departments in Crown-owned space. Much of the federal government office accommodation in the Core Area of Ottawa is leased (see pages 22 and 23, 69 and 70). In 1996 there were 36,382 federal government jobs (including museums and crown corporations) in the Ottawa Central Area (a smaller area than Core Area in the Capital Plan). This was 44% of federal government employment in Ottawa-Carleton and 44.6% of total employment in the Central Area. Clearly, decisions on the location of federal

government employment in the Central Area have a major impact on the economic vitality and attractiveness of the Central Area.

The policies in the draft Plan for Canada's Capital reflect the NCC's awareness of the critical nature of the federal government contribution to a healthy Core Area. The concern is that other parts of the federal government may not share this awareness or follow this direction. Maintaining a healthy Core Area is absolutely essential to a positive image of the Capital and should always take precedence over any short-term savings. Staff will open a dialogue with Treasury Board on this issue and bring forward further recommendations for Council action as required.

The goal for **Non-Core Areas: Federal Accommodations** is "Federal employment nodes that meet the program needs of federal departments, and whose functions and character are compatible with adjacent communities." The first policy calls for intensifying employment development in existing federal nodes. Many of the draft Capital Plan policies are supportive of Regional Official Plan policies concerning public transit and mixed use (e.g., locate federal employees in buildings that are close to ... regional public transit stations or bus stops", "integrate commercial, research, institutional and/or residential forms of development that complement existing land uses in federal nodes", and "locate consumer services such as restaurants, banking facilities, day-care, recreation and fitness complexes in federal employment nodes." However, these policies are qualified with "where appropriate" or "wherever possible".

Response

In the Regional Official Plan some existing federal nodes (Tunney's Pasture, Confederation Heights) are designated as Primary Employment Centres, while others, such as Montreal Road and Booth Street, are not. If existing federal nodes which are not well located with respect to transit, and particularly rapid transit, are to be intensified, the Plan should make a clear commitment to working with regional authorities to improve transit service to these nodes.

It is assumed that the Urban Sector Master Plan will indicate where a greater mix of uses and more consumer services in federal nodes are appropriate and possible. The regional position is that such uses are appropriate in all but exceptional circumstances, e.g. where a national security function is present.

Chapter 6 deals with **Capital Links**. The first type is **Capital Gateways**, which includes (road, rail and river) entries at the edge of the National Capital Region and the major rail, bus and air terminals. The goal is "Capital gateways that create a sense of arrival to the Capital and meet visitors' needs for information, orientation and services." The policies address issues such as signage and working with other jurisdictions to achieve consistent and high-quality design standards at Capital Gateways (which include the Airport Parkway).

Response

The policies are supported. The Regional Official Plan contains similar objectives and policies for Entry Routes. It would be helpful if the conceptual maps showed the Capital Gateways.

The goal for **Inter-provincial Access** is “inter-provincial crossings that facilitate movement of people, goods and vehicles between the Ontario and Québec parts of the National Capital Region.” The draft Capital Plan does not endorse a specific new inter-provincial crossing; it commits to co-operation “with other levels of government ... to reach a consensus regarding the most appropriate corridors for ...new inter-provincial crossings...”. In the meantime, another policy continues protection of rights-of-way on federal lands for possible new inter-provincial road crossings. The draft Plan also addresses considering the need for a bridge authority to manage future crossings. Other policies promote travel demand management measures. “Where appropriate” new or rehabilitated inter-provincial crossings are to “accommodate public transit vehicles, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, emergency vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.” There is also a policy on co-operating “to preserve... abandoned... transportation corridors (e.g. surplus rail lines) as potential corridors for transit, recreational pathways, or other transportation modes.”

Response

These policies are generally supported. The Region is currently engaged in a new process to reach consensus on the issue of inter-provincial crossings, which includes a study on the potential role of a bridge authority.

It is reasonable to make decisions on the appropriateness of facilities such as high-occupancy vehicle lanes on a case-by-case basis. However, given the limited number of crossings and the greater sensitivity of pedestrians and cyclists to distance, accommodation of cyclists and pedestrians on inter-provincial crossings should be the rule except under exceptional circumstances (e.g. cyclists on Macdonald-Cartier).

Historically the NCC played a major role in preserving abandoned rail corridors in the NCR for future use. In recent years, the Region has assumed this role. The Region would welcome the co-operation of the NCC and other federal agencies in preserving these corridors, but requests flexibility for future transportation or utility use, as expressed in policy 3 of section 9.9 of the 1997 Regional Official Plan.

The goal for **Capital Parkway Network** is “a parkway network that facilitates safe, scenic and efficient road access to Capital settings and destinations.” The policies include improving accessibility for federal employees to federal employment nodes by Capital Parkways (as well as the traditional role of providing access to visitor destinations). There is also a commitment to facilitating commuter cycling (as well as recreational cycling) as part of repair or reconstruction programs along Parkway corridors. Public transit service along the Parkway network is limited to “by special arrangement.” Other policies address maintaining approved standards of design and landscaping, orientation signage and naturalisation of Parkway corridors.

Response

The Region supports acknowledgement that the Parkways provide access for federal employees to federal employment nodes and the recognition that commuter cycling occurs in Parkway

corridors and needs to be accommodated safely. The issue of transit service to National Cultural Institutions located on Parkways was addressed earlier in this report.

The goal for **Capital Pathway Network** is “a pathway network that provides safe, scenic and accessible pedestrian or cycle access to Capital settings and destinations.” The policies include a general commitment to “continue to work in partnership with local and regional governments to plan, implement and manage an integrated network of recreational pathways.” The policies also address connecting the Capital Pathway Network to national trails (e.g. Trans-Canada Trail), upgrading existing pathways, signage, naturalisation of Pathway corridors, and management of some segments for all-season use (e.g. cross-country skiing in winter). Two significant policies are “Provide continuous green links between the Greenbelt, Gatineau Park, the Core Area and other Capital destinations (e.g., national cultural institutions, federal employment nodes)” and “Permit and encourage land uses and ancillary facilities in appropriate locations along the Pathways (e.g. restaurants, bicycle rentals, rest areas and washrooms).”

Response

As discussed earlier, a more specific commitment on how federal agencies will help implement the recreational pathway network is desired. Certainly, no federal agency should sell land which is crossed by a Proposed Capital Pathway without reserving the land required for implementation of the pathway. If there is a pathway proposed in the Integrated Network of Recreational Pathways for the National Capital Region which is not a Capital Pathway, the federal agency should notify the Region and the affected local municipality of the proposed sale and offer them the opportunity to secure the pathway corridor at a price which reflects its intended future use as open space.

The Region supports the provision of green links between the Greenbelt, the Core Area and other Capital destinations. There is no indication of a Capital Pathway to link the Museum of Science and Technology to the Core Area.

Section C of the Plan deals with **Plan Management**. This section provides for implementation of the Plan through the NCC’s Federal Land Use, Land Transaction and Design Approval processes, as well as through Master, Sector and Area Plans. Direction is also provided for a continuous monitoring and evaluation process. The products of the monitoring and evaluation process will be an annual Summary Report to the Executive Management Committee and advisory committees, and updates to the Statistical Handbook and the Federal Employment Survey every five years. A comprehensive review is proposed on a five-year cycle, with the intent of coinciding with the review periods for the regional government land use plans. Any proposed amendment to the Plan “will be subject to a thorough review carried out according to the NCC’s Corporate Administration Policies and Procedures, specifically the NCC’s Federal Land Use Approval Process.”

Response

The intent to co-ordinate comprehensive reviews of the Capital Plan with regional government reviews of their land use plans is supported. Many readers of the Plan for Canada’s Capital

may not be familiar with the NCC's Federal Land Use Approval process. Since this is a corporate administration policy, which presumably can be amended unilaterally by the NCC, it may not be desirable or necessary to spell out the process in the Capital Plan. However, the role of public information and consultation in both the monitoring and evaluation process and in the Plan amendment process should be clearly stated in the Plan Management section.

It should be noted that *The Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Plan for Canada's Capital* was released in June with the draft Plan. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) document provides information on how and why the SEA was done and on new or amended policy directions which resulted from the SEA process. It concludes that "at this point in the SEA process, it is determined that potentially adverse environmental effects that may be caused by the Plan are insignificant (i.e. minor or mitigable with known technology/policy adjustment) when considered individually or cumulatively." Subsequent plan or site-specific EA is the most common mitigation method. The SEA also indicates the need for comprehensive environmental inventory research and for research supporting the identification of thresholds or standards.

CONSULTATION

This report recommends a response by Regional Council to the NCC's draft *Plan for Canada's Capital*. The NCC is conducting a public consultation process on its proposals. Regional staff have not conducted a separate public consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications for the Region in approving the recommendation of this report.

CONCLUSION

The general intent of most of the policies of the draft *Plan for Canada's Capital* is supported. The deliberate attempt to harmonise with local and regional planning policies and the greater attention than previously to considerations of local community impact are very positive changes. However in many instances the lack of detail in policies or on the Conceptual Maps makes it impossible to evaluate the impact of a proposed policy. This severely diminishes the value of the document as a guide for other plans prepared by either the NCC or other federal agencies. It is requested that the NCC hold another round of public consultation on a revised draft which provides sufficient detail (e.g. location of natural heritage areas) to assess the significance of proposed policies and to ensure protection of natural heritage areas, recreational pathway corridors, etc. in the interim period before the Urban Area Master Plan completed.

*Approved by
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