

NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

Dear Mr. Boomgaardt,

We wish to thank the New Edinburgh Community Alliance (NECA) for taking the time to prepare the detailed response you forwarded to us on February 7th 2025 regarding the draft Core Area Sector Plan. We acknowledge that the time provided was short, even with the additional week we added to the online survey.

In this regard, we would like to follow up with NECA's request to hold an additional in-person information session about the Core Area Plan so that residents can have additional access to the information and ask questions. It is important to underline that the opportunities we have presented are not yet approved by the NCC's Board of Directors and, if approved, would need to follow additional stages before they are implemented. For the more complex ideas contained in the draft Plan, such as the Sussex Blocks project, there will be additional consultation on a more precise and site-specific basis.

In advance of the public information session, we would like to share the following to address the points raised in your letter.

1. Heritage

NCC planning staff is familiar with the New Edinburgh Heritage Conservation District Plan (2014) and the associated Study (2000) and have conducted an initial analysis of its policies and guidelines to confirm the alignment of our proposal with the HCD Plan. In addition, NCC Heritage staff has undertaken research on the NCC-owned properties on this block and we will be able to discuss those in detail with NECA and residents. We are specifically aware of the importance of the Fraser School House at 62 John Street and can advise that this building is not in any danger; the project we have advanced anticipates its full retention.

2. Parking and Traffic

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We agree that parking and traffic-related issues will require careful consideration, and we are prepared to work with all stakeholders to identify suitable approaches (we would be happy to participate in Councillor King's efforts in this regard).

Although the project remains at a very preliminary stage, we provide three points of clarification to further describe our ideation thus far:

- (a) The goal is not necessarily to create a 'destination' node, it is to complete the urban fabric in a way that integrates with the neighbourhood first and, to the extent that it would address gaps, would be doing so first and foremost by serving the immediate environs (i.e. employees of Global Affairs Canada, the National Research Council, nearby embassies and residents). As understood by the "Jane Jacobs vision", if an urban place is attractive for its immediate environs, it may generate "pull" from beyond, but that "pull from beyond" would not be the primary driver. Therefore, to the extent that food and beverage services may be offered, the viability of such services would rest on the immediate catchment area and secondarily benefit tourism to Rideau Hall; tourism would not be the main driver all by itself.
- (b) There may be an ability to incorporate public paid parking into the project, something to which the NCC remains open should there be a demonstrated need for such a facility.
- (c) Traffic calming measures can be considered and incorporated into the design of the project, subject to concurrence from, and collaboration with, the City of Ottawa. Similarly, on-street parking restrictions and permissions are entirely under the jurisdiction of the City of Ottawa. Conversations could take place when this idea becomes an actual project to explore any changes that might need to be contemplated to existing permissions and restrictions.

3. Trees and Parkland

We take note of the request to maintain as many mature trees as possible and would endeavour to do so, per our [Capital Design Guidelines](#). And although, as you note, the NCC is not bound by municipal parkland dedication provisions, the

project includes the creation of a new public park which would be of equal or greater value than a regular parkland dedication.

4. Urbanism and Core Area Plan

We are happy that NECA concurs with our assessment about the low level of activity and activation along Sussex Drive, between the Mint and Rideau Hall. Likewise, we fully intend to explore, through this Plan and other initiatives, opportunities to animate the various waterfront areas across the Core including the Rideau River.

The idea to implement banners along the side streets leading to Confederation Boulevard is worthy of consideration and would fit well under the intent of our notion of “Capital Streetscapes”. We would be delighted to explore collaboration opportunities with community and volunteer associations.

The number and types of dwelling units that might be included in the project is not defined at this time, and we remain open to further input in this regard. Our first objective was to generate building forms whose exterior architecture would be suitable for this important site near to Rideau Hall, and whose interior design can be adaptable over time in the manner of time-honoured traditional buildings. Hence, ground floors along Sussex may or may not all be commercial; upper floors may be residential or office space; and residential units may be of different types and sizes. We intend for these buildings to become established as part of the neighbourhood fabric and thus ensure their longevity and preservation over time as part of the streetscape of Confederation Boulevard by virtue of their architecture and the quality of the urban public realm that they generate, and to incorporate suitable uses within them as may be determined over time.

5. Construction concerns

We acknowledge NECA’s concerns about the duration of construction. We remain open to further discussions about phasing, although we would note that a two-phase approach would have the advantage of letting us relocate existing tenants into units in the new buildings.

We also acknowledge that Thomas Street residents would have a different view if this project were to be built, although our respectful estimation is that the project we are now discussing would provide much better views, and a much better streetscape environment, than the embassy compounds anticipated for these lands in the current Core Area Sector Plan (2005).

6. Flood plain and insurance

We appreciate NECA's background of discussions with RVCA and the City on this matter and would be grateful for additional information and any reports or correspondence that may be shared with us. Our intent is to address this issue at the time that this idea becomes a project.

7. Food, drink and amenities

As stated above, the determination of how much retail and commercial space is to be provided would take place at much later stages and we would make use of our leasing experience at other locations, including further south along Sussex, to inform a strategy. Food trucks may be seen by some as detracting from the beauty and majesty of this particular location. Although seasonal kiosks have proven to be a very popular option, we would seek to understand the opportunities for year-round offerings of a higher caliber and of greater variety to benefit surrounding office and embassy workers and residents, in addition to seasonal volumes of tourists. Opportunities within the grounds Rideau Hall itself may also be considered.

8. Pathway system

We appreciate NECA's feedback and are open to exploring opportunities to better serve all pathway users. Floodplain-related works may indeed offer such an opportunity. We would return to discuss options with the community when more detailed information is produced.

9. Hydro lines

NECA's comments are duly noted; as per our Capital Design Guidelines we pay close attention to the health of the street tree canopy and would explore the potential to bury the Mackay line in conjunction with the next level of detailed studies for this site, should the project move forward.

10. Animating the Rideau River


We take note of NECA's suggestions about identifying barriers to more fulsome recreational enjoyment of the Rideau River. We are intrigued by the portage routes idea.

11. Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Thank you for sharing NECA's initiatives and ideas under this important rubric, the NCC Public Affairs team will continue to be the point of contact for these initiatives.

Please feel free to share this letter with interested members of your association and community. We look forward to continuing our dialogue and will be in contact shortly to coordinate the next meeting.

Best regards,

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