

# National Capital Commission seeks comments during third phase of Greenbelt study

## Residents ask for more comprehensive plan

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Whether their cause was adding the Leitrim Wetlands or the South March Highlands, residents urged consultants working for the National Capital Commission to take a more proactive approach on planning for the Greenbelt at a public consultation held at the Nepean Sportsplex on May 26.

"My community has greatly benefitted from access to the Greenbelt," said Gord Henderson, president of the Beaverbrook Community Association. "And my heart is committed to the preservation of the South March Highlands. It is more bio diverse than Mer Bleue (Conservation Area)."

The Greenbelt is a 20,000-hectare band of rural land in the southern part of the National Capital Region, which is managed by the NCC.

Henderson urged planners to take a role in the conservation.

"I was in the audience after the clear cutting of the Beaver Pond when Mayor Jim Watson and (city manager) Kent

Kirkpatrick said that a partnership has to be formed between the city, the province and the federal government," he said. "I think the NCC would fit in this role."

In this round of consultations, the public was being asked to consider the third phase of a master plan that would look at the uses of the Greenbelt for the next 10 years.

The consultations started in 2009 with the public advisory committee helping NCC staff and consultants look at the Greenbelt as it stands today.

"It really asked what the Greenbelt means to people," said Cynthia Levesque with Senes Consulting.

Staff worked with the master plan for the Greenbelt in 1997 and then compared best practices from locations in the United States and Britain.

What resulted were three concepts the public was able to vote on, which Levesque said would be compiled and then sent to the NCC board of directors in the fall of 2012 to make a final decision.

"The end result is likely to be a mix of all three concepts," Levesque said.

The concepts involve enhancing ecological linkages and corridors, in part through the use of forest plantations, adding and enhancing "buffer zones" between the Greenbelt and other ecologi-

cally sensitive areas. Levesque said they are considering removing some buildings that aren't "compatible."

Levesque said in the second concept, areas such as the Nepean Sportsplex, the Queensway Carleton Hospital, the airport and the Fallowfield and Eagleson park and rides would have the Greenbelt designation removed. There will be equal parcels of land to replace them and they would still remain under the ownership of the NCC.

"We identified them because they have more of an urban feel to them," Levesque said.

In the third concept areas like the Sportsplex and the hospital would return with the Greenbelt designation, and other buildable sites could potentially be sold or leased.

Levesque said an area on the west side of Highway 417 near Walkley Road had been identified, along with parts of land where the Greenbelt Research Farm sits near Woodroffe Avenue and Hunt Club Road and another site in Bells Corners bounded by Baseline and Richmond roads and Highway 416.

Levesque said the key points during other phases of public consultation were maintaining and expanding the green space.

She said that partnerships with land owners may help add some space to the city's "emerald necklace."

"We are looking at partnerships with the Tomlinson and Lafarge quarries for

takeover of those lands when they begin their termination strategies," Levesque said.

The group also identified a parcel of land in Barrhaven bounded on both sides by Highway 416.

Richard Stead, president of the Cedarhill Community Association, said the land was being developed for single family homes.

"The owner just blasted the service road to make room for an entrance way so I don't see how you're going to expropriate that," he said.

Levesque said the NCC wasn't planning to expropriate the lands, simply purchase or work out arrangements with owners.

"But we just identified areas for their ecological benefits, we didn't really look at their stage of development," she said.

This prompted calls for better planning.

"You folks have a slew of consultants and have been working on this for four years, I would think it would be advisable to do a little more research into the sites," Stead said.

Another resident, Ken Young, said the city planned for 20 or 30 years in advance and it would be nice if the two bodies could come together to have something cohesive.

"I would like to see a plan that really strengthens the Greenbelt areas like Mer Bleue, the Carp Hills and the Leitrim Wetlands," he said.



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**L**ast year, Andy Kaleta's life turned upside down. The Orleans resident was diagnosed with oral cancer in his mouth and tongue.

"I felt something was wrong, so they biopsied it and that's when I was diagnosed with cancer. It happened really fast," he said.

In April 2010, he underwent a major nine-hour surgery at The Ottawa Hospital Cancer Centre. Doctors removed skin from his mouth and tongue, his lymph nodes and grafted skin and muscle from his left arm into his mouth. He credits the support he received from friends and family during his year-long recovery.

A healthy lifestyle enthusiast and avid cyclist who averages 5,000 km a year on his bike, the environmental manager got back on the saddle and to the gym as soon as he was able. Amazed at his recovery, the 51-year-old attributes the success of his surgery to the skill of the doctors and the research that happens at The Ottawa Hospital.

"I believe it's the research over the last few years that has brought me to where I am today," he said.

Kaleta was looking for a way to give back when he heard about Ride the Rideau. A 100km bike tour from Ottawa to Merrickville-Wolford in support of groundbreaking cancer research at The Ottawa Hospital, Ride the Rideau raised more than \$940,000 in its inaugural year. With a fundraising goal of \$1.8 million, the second annual event will be held Sept. 10.

While Ride the Rideau fits into his model for health – "I want to keep active and fit so I can enjoy my family longer and be a positive role model," he said – it's also a great way to raise much-needed funds for cancer research, he added.

"I've always been active in the community, and this was the perfect opportunity for me. The research that this event will fund will make a huge difference to a lot of people."

Kaleta has set his fundraising goal at \$2,000 and is already thinking of increasing it. More than a year later, Kaleta considers himself one of the lucky ones.

"My fight was nothing compared to what some other people are going through, he said. "The cancer has a chance of coming back, but if it happens, I'll take each day as it comes."

"My whole attitude in life has changed completely," he added. "My family is first and foremost. I live life by the moment. I'm not the same guy I used to be. I've changed in a very positive way."

To support Andy Kaleta and cancer research at The Ottawa Hospital through Ride the Rideau, or to volunteer, visit [www.ridetherideau.ca](http://www.ridetherideau.ca).



Photo by Jennifer McIntosh

Sandra Pecek, director of public affairs and information management with the National Capital Commission started off the presentations by consultants and NCC staff at a public consultation held at the Nepean Sportsplex on May 26.