

**National Capital Greenbelt Master Plan Public Advisory Group (PAG)
Member Orientation Minutes**

**April 9, 2026
Calvary Church
1681 Cyrville Road, Ottawa**

Participants

PAG members (in-person):

- Erin Rosewell – Leslie Park Community Association
- Brian Kelly – Glens Community Association
- Arto Keklikian – CPAWS Ottawa Valley
- Andrei Grushman – Hunt Club Community Association
- Paul Johanis – Greenspace Alliance
- Amanda Brewster – Cedarhill Community Association
- Ian McConnachie – Crystal Beach Lakeview Community Association

PAG members (virtual):

- James Terhune – West Barrhaven Community Association
- Deb Sonogo – Bridlewood Community Association
- William Van Geest – Ecology Ottawa
- Kate MacNeil – Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre (observer)
- Donna DuBreuil – Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre
- Rob Attrell – Convent Glen Orleans Wood Community Association
- Kate Twiss – Crystal Beach Lakeview Community Association (observer)
- Lauren Mintoﬀ – Findlay Creek Community Association
- Bende (Robert Bender) – Individual (observer)

NCC staff:

- Andrew Sacret
- Kelly McRae
- Patricia McCann-MacMillan
- Cédric Pelletier
- Michelle Prévost-Bisson
- Ryan Kleinau

#	Member	Item	
Part 1: Introduction			
	NCC	Meeting protocols for in-person and virtual participation were outlined, including microphone use, speaking order and accessibility considerations. Members may participate using either official language. Welcome and introductions: a. Land acknowledgement b. Health and safety instructions (bathrooms, emergency exits) c. Agenda	
Part 2: PAG Terms of Reference			
	NCC	Introduction to Terms of Reference and opportunity for members to comment following distribution of documents prior to meeting.	
	A. Brewster	Transparency – If a community association feels strongly about an issue, would their perspective be able to be published, in case there isn’t agreement by the entire group?	Project team response Minutes and summaries will be shared with all members prior to being published. Members can request adjustments as needed to ensure accuracy. Members will have one week to review and comment on the Terms of Reference prior to distribution of final versions.
	E. Rosewell	Confirmation as to what the PAG’s role would be in reviewing the meeting notes – What does this entail?	
	NCC		
Part 3: Introduction to the Greenbelt Master Plan (Project Team Presentation)			
	NCC	Introduction to the Plan and planning frameworks, the Greenbelt, and regional context followed by questions of clarification.	
			Project team response
	W. Van Geest	Clarification on what “capital experiences” are and potential examples.	Distinction between offerings by the municipalities and those to a capital city. Considered

#	Member	Item	
			those experiences specific to visitors (from outside of Ottawa and abroad). Outside of the Greenbelt, this would include key tourist destinations and attractions that would draw folks to the Greenbelt (i.e., Mer Bleue).
	D. Sonego	Under experiences – Would there be promotion of cross-country ski trails?	Yes – Typically Gatineau Park is the focus, but we would want to draw attention to those in the Greenbelt as well.
	A. Keklikian	How are cultural build and natural features dealt with, and would they be part of the land use?	On cultural heritage, a study is underway and should be concluded shortly to help inform policy direction of the Plan. Once sector work is done, will be looking to see how those are integrated.
	R. Attrell	Ecologically sensitive nature of the land and how invasive species are identified and managed across the Greenbelt. Also interested in what considerations exist for areas like Mer Bleue (for example) that aren't accessible other than by vehicle to help make them more accessible and draw more people to these areas.	Part of the process currently being looked at; trying to make the Greenbelt accessible to more people. Likely dealing with this further down the process to understand what would be sustainable; could potentially build off of success of the Gatineau Park shuttle. Also work closely with the City of Ottawa on sustainable transportation measures through the planning process.
	W. Van Geest	(via chat) Busloads and busloads of people would be far better than car lots and car lots!	

#	Member	Item	
	A. Keklikian	Creating access to the spaces, but it was mentioned that natural environment was the highest value. Balance will be needed between conservation and human footprint on these ecosystems.	Noted by project team.
Part 4: Discussion			
	NCC	Opportunity for additional discussion. 1. Which major challenges would you like to see or should be expanded in the National Capital Greenbelt?	
			Project team response
	I. McConnachie	Our community association has dealt with challenges related to lands nearby that have not yet been built on, i.e., lands adjacent to Moodie Station. Although the City of Ottawa originally recognized the value of the surrounding lands as Greenbelt, recent provincial initiatives place pressure on these lands to be designated for transit-oriented development. The perception is that the Greenbelt is land not yet developed. Would want to see negotiations on trade-offs for land uses (development versus conservation). Challenge will be having the vision come to a successful conclusion – visions of keeping greenspace against governments with other priorities. Would want to see protections in the visioning that takes place. There are challenges with the interactions between the NCC and other government structures.	

#	Member	Item	
	P. Johanis	Conservation as the main focus – if it's still there in 50 years, would be a win and should be central to what we do, dependent on community hopes for the land/area. Conservation should be top of mind – there are challenges in keeping conservation as a goal that is top of mind as it would be a difficult asset to conserve with existing pressures (climate, capacity of NCC, development and potential selling of lands). Wondered whether there has been any reaction or impact following nature declaration announcement of the prime minister made recently in Wakefield.	Regarding declaration – certainly aware; however have not discussed potential impacts on this specific Plan.
	A. Brewster	Raised the need for clearer communication regarding permitted uses of the Greenbelt, including recreational and agricultural activities, and how this information is shared with communities. Sought clarification on how different NCC assets (e.g., Gatineau Park versus the Greenbelt) are positioned and understood. Asked whether, as part of longer-term thinking, there may be opportunities to explore fee-based experiences as a potential funding mechanism, rather than as an expectation or proposal.	Agricultural lands – being transitioned to sustainable crops that is being worked on within the NCC through the Real Estate group.
	W. Van Geest	Getting access right by establishing connections to existing networks like buses from an overall user and an equity standpoint – land that is unused for development is just development in waiting. Important to	

#	Member	Item	
		get people to experience and get invested in Greenbelt lands for education and to help them realize the value of the lands without destroying them (need a balance). Lands should be accessed in a sustainable way – sprawling parking lots don't help; should be connected in a sustainable manner (via cycle paths, shuttles). Would love to see it untouched but that's not feasible currently – getting people to understand its value will be part of its success, question of doing it properly.	
	R. Attrell	<i>(via chat)</i> We have park and rides already that might tie into shuttle routes to Greenbelt sites.	
	A. Keklikian	Public education and outreach – people don't know much about the Greenbelt, would help to emphasize its role and long-term importance. Fragmentation and encroachment should be mitigated and prevented where possible. Legal protection is important as well.	
	A. Grushman	Boundaries of the Greenbelt – How are they established, and what is the process for potential change between plans?	Currently no enshrined boundary – dependent on the land ownership at the moment. Having the current boundaries and designations uploaded into the official plan developed a congruence between federal/municipal planning processes. Conversation on boundaries may be something that will need to be discussed as this process

#	Member	Item	
			goes on. Lands have also been added as the opportunity to acquire lands have happened; also removed (such as the airport). It is a changing process – but looking to maintain and protect ecological corridors, similar to Gatineau Park.
	NCC	2. What major opportunities do you think will be most important for the National Capital Greenbelt?	
			Project team response
	I. McConnachie	West side – farms along Moodie Drive, nice to see success to convert to more sustainable practices. Also helps to get the message out to create value for the Greenbelt; have been able to highlight some of these successes within community newsletters. NCC needs to highlight what farms offer in terms of sustainability and availability. On land use, wants to know how much the NCC knows about the ecosystems within the Greenbelt to ensure continuity of ecological corridors to help defend against development.	NCC does have an environmental team (ecosystems services) as well as biologists that are interested in the Greenbelt.
	D. DuBreuil	Biodiversity strategy will be important – will need to connect somehow with the nature strategy announced by the federal government. Suggest a stewardship committee approach so people can continually participate and align with the federal natural strategy.	

#	Member	Item	
	R. Attrell	Looking at opportunities for active transportation for transportation purposes specifically – working with city and NCC on use of space adjacent to other transportation options. Potential opportunities for a multi-use pathway along 174 that runs through NCC farmlands. Along the river in the east end, e.g., at Convent Glen – need something between the parkway and the dirt pathway to connect better to downtown. The Ontario Bill 60 is restrictive to bike use. To provide active transportation opportunities, could take advantage of the space within the existing road rights-of-way.	NCC has considered these connections and has developed policies that speak to these gaps in the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Park Plan.
	A. Brewster	Education will be key – need to also understand what’s happening below the land, such as watersheds and water resources and their connections within the Greenbelt. Would like to understand where the priorities lie, and the linkages between the systems. Understand what the criteria are and work with the city to be part of land decisions. Is it possible, through partnerships to buy and then donate land to the NCC for protection? What do acquisitions look like? Can they happen?	NCC has had discussions with the city, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, other developers as well to understand impacts on NCC lands.
	D. Sonego	Regarding bike trails – there are many informal trails but enhancing and formalizing these trails to help commuters and others choosing to bike rather than drive are	

#	Member	Item	
		opportunities for the NCC. Accessibility may be difficult for some communities based on proximity to the Greenbelt. On education and signage – signs in the Greenbelt are often vandalized; Geocaching on site and online may be another option to help with education and enjoyment of the Greenbelt and make it more accessible. NCC website was difficult to navigate – might be easier to segregate by park/priorities.	
	I. McConnachie	Sites with success (Ottawa West Winter Trail) and skiing – but there are also challenges in other areas; with popularity, need to maintain amenities and facilities (i.e., lack of parking spaces) and how to access them. Going forward, there will be a need to manage how people get to these amenities without impacting nearby natural spaces. Active transportation network should be built to more completion, linking lands adjacent to NCC lands. The NCC knows about the popularity of its lands and the challenges of getting there.	Capital Stewardship Branch within the NCC manages and oversees these facilities; surveys within the NCC on trail usage have also taken a look at Greenbelt specifically.
	A. Keklikian	Opportunity to improve/enhance the wayfinding of the Greenbelt – both getting there and within the Greenbelt for areas of interest.	
Part 5: Next Steps			

#	Member	Item
NCC	Upcoming open house events and public survey happening this spring, beginning in May. PAG members will be asked to help promote the upcoming public participation through their networks. Next PAG meeting will be in early May – at that point, discussion will be on the draft vision and guiding principles. Members are also asked to consider potential involvement as a co-chair. Presentation materials will also be shared following this meeting with all members.	
		Project team response
A. Keklikian	Will notes of stakeholder meetings be shared with the PAG and vice versa?	Yes – outcomes of meetings will be shared.