

City Maker Meets City Dweller

A Conversation About Public Engagement and the Rideau Canal

by

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ABSTRACT

In a city where pointing the finger is not uncommon, Ottawa's top-down parliamentary decision making has led to an apparent divide between planning officials, architects, and citizens regarding proposed public projects. In addition to that, stringent policies that allow for the public to have their voices heard in the wrong way make for ineffective public consultations. With a rewritten Official Plan on its way, the resistance to change and confusing policies need addressing for a successful implementation. This thesis considers a series of design methodologies for a schematic rejuvenation of the Rideau Canal – one of Canada's most famous waterways. It attempts to develop a more holistic view on city planning and explores methods of architectural thinking and production that stray from convention. Focusing on conversation, mapping, and storytelling, this thesis looks to bridge the extensive gap that exists between city makers and city dwellers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my two lil' fellas - and you know who you are - thank you for always putting up with me in this crazy journey called life. You are my rocks. Don't ever change.

To my extremely patient advisor, Johan Voordouw for your constant support. You made this experience a little (a lot) less stressful.

To my friends who have encouraged and believes in me even when I didn't, I am forever grateful to you.

Lastly, I would like to give a special thank you to all the people who took the time to sit down and have a conversation with me.

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CONTENT

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
CONTENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
METHOD 1 CONVERSATION	9
METHOD 2 MAPPING	13
METHOD 3 STORYTELLING	22
FORMAT	24
PART I CRITICAL ANALYSIS	
INTRODUCTION	26
SITE PLAN CONTROL (OTTAWA)	
BACKGROUND	28
WHAT IS WORKING	31
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY : GUIDELINES AND TOOLKIT (OTTAWA)	
BACKGROUND	34
WHAT IS WORKING	45
CORPORATE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES : PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION)	
BACKGROUND	49

WHAT IS WORKING	55
WHAT IS NOT WORKING	58
DISCUSSION WITH GRÉGOIRE JODOUIN	65
PART II RATIONALE PROPOSAL	
INTRODUCTION	73
PREAMBLE SAY HELLO TO OTTAWA'S NEW OFFICIAL PLAN	76
THEME I COMMERCIALIZATION	78
DOW'S LAKE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	85
DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT	89
THEME II MOVEMENT	93
CATCH THE WATER TAXI!	97
LET'S NOT TAKE THE CAR	102
THEME III ARTS AND THE SEASONS	107
HAVE A BREAK	110
AND OTTAWA SAID: "LET THERE BE ART!"	115
THEME IV PROGRAMMING AND ACCESSIBILITY	121
ANIMATING BRIDGES AND PATHWAYS	123
PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY CANAL	127
THEME V HERITAGE AND PRESERVATION	131
JANE'S WALK WITH THE RIDEAU CANAL	133
WHEN WATER AND LIGHT DANCE	140
CONCLUSION	145
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX 1 ETHICS CLEARANCE	148
APPENDIX 2 THE ROLE OF THE URBAN PLANNER	153
APPENDIX 3 WHAT HAPPENS AT CITY HALL ANYWAYS?	156
LIST OF FIGURES	159

ENDNOTES	162
BIBLIOGRAPHY	169

INTRODUCTION

At its core, this thesis is about engagement, and the complexity of consultation processes in Ottawa. Whether it be by legislation or the direction of Council, many Ottawa architects and planners are familiar with the laborious task of hosting a public consultation or engagement meeting. Oftentimes, before they can even get a word out, a swarm of people starts expressing that the city “absolutely cannot allow such a project to go up in this neighbourhood”. Why? Because many people believe that the buildings and spaces that are being designed do not “fit in” with neighbourhoods they are being proposed for.

An example of this is the infamous Patterson Creek Bistro, a pilot project proposed by the National Capital Commission (NCC).

“The Glebe is full of fine bars and restaurants - Why locate a bar/ bistro here??!! And to have attempted to proceed without consultation is a

damning verdict on all those behind the whole idea. Please do not proceed!”¹

As clearly stated above, one of the reasons for opposition was the lack of engagement with the community. Many residents had only caught wind of the project once a liquor license application sign went up in the park (which seemed to be an issue in itself).

However, the approach of architects and planners is not solely to blame; it is important to note that the public in Ottawa plays a part in the problem. Decades of parliamentary top-down decision making has been the cause of public distrust towards architects and urban planners. The famous NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) movement in the city of Ottawa has escalated to a point where ANY change is seen as bad change. In 2012, the Ottawa Sun posted an article stating that “Nimby is based on the belief that most new development in a given area will hurt existing communities: Highrise buildings will disrupt views and increase traffic, while townhomes built on

infill lots will destroy the character of older, single-family home communities.”² The article mentions a Westboro resident who said he did not care if they built new houses, he just did not want to have to look at them.³ This resident, who refused to give his name to the interviewer, summed up the NIMBY argument perfectly. This aggressive opinion towards new builds is largely due to a history of tearing neighbourhoods apart for the sake of development.

In an interview with a planning consultant, it was noted that “this comes from this 60s displacement of entire disadvantaged communities so that highways could be built through them.” He continued by saying it was more than just history though; it is a social justice issue of involving people in what is going to happen in their neighbourhoods.⁴

The Patterson Creek Bistro project mentioned earlier is only one example in a pool of hundreds of proposals. Quoting an Ottawa architect who has presented at approximately 30 public

consultations: “Think of it this way, imagine you were a scientist and the only thing that was standing between you and your doctorate was that you had to meet with a member of the public who [likely] had no background in your field. How would you feel about that meeting?”⁵ The architect went on to say that he had only experienced a handful of positive comments come from these public consultations. It always seems as though these consultations are set up to give people the opportunity to fight and stop a project instead of introducing ideas that could improve it. This tension-filled relationship between designers and citizens creates a hostile environment and a problem that ultimately has no compromise or end in sight.

All that said, Ottawa is not alone in the matter. The Overhead Wire, a consulting firm out of San Francisco, wrote: “When there is a piece of land, often people don’t think it should be anything. It’s kind of crazy, especially with housing costs so high.”⁶ This resistance to change needs to be addressed in the city of Ottawa

and it needs to happen sooner rather than later.

During a lecture by Director Jill Stoner of the Azrieli School of Architecture, she said “if you want to know a city, you need to develop a relationship with it.”⁷ and although that may be true, how does one go about developing such a relationship with a “city”?

For architects and planners to be able to design a city that evokes a sense of communal pride and culture while meeting density targets and proper planning protocols, they must be given the opportunity to communicate effectively with the people who inhabit a city’s neighbourhoods. This means that both groups need to understand what the other does, wants, and needs.

As someone who has grown up, and attended university in Ottawa, my knowledge of how the city works is, at face value, well rounded. This thesis is an attempt to further that knowledge and understanding, and apply that relationship towards one of the

city's oldest structures.

The site on which this thesis will focus is the Rideau Canal; one of Canada's most well-known UNESCO World Heritage sites. As a lifeline to the city with a rich history that people hold dearly, it is unfortunate to see the almost two-hundred-year-old waterway slowly fading into the background due to a multitude of jurisdictional red tape that ironically both protects and suffocates it (see fig. 01).

With being an important landmark, often come restricting titles and even more restrictive regulations. Here lies the issue: the more designations and regulations are forced upon a site or a building, the less lies within its name and nature.

Shakespeare had the right idea when he used the line "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet". This essentially means that the name of something is irrelevant; it is the quality of the thing that truly matters. If we

took away all the designations of the Canal, would as many people worldwide gravitate towards it? Would people recognize it for the amazing piece of engineering it is without having all its current titles?

These questions lead to another, more significant challenge, one that relates to the great “designer vs. the people” problem: How can a rejuvenation plan for the Rideau Canal be designed in a responsible way that tells its story in combination with the story of the citizens who interact with it all the time?

The thesis is meant to showcase different methodologies that can aid in the public consultation processes. Although the focus is on Ottawa, these methods could be applied to other cities facing similar issues. The three methods that were used over the duration of the project are conversation, mapping, and storytelling.

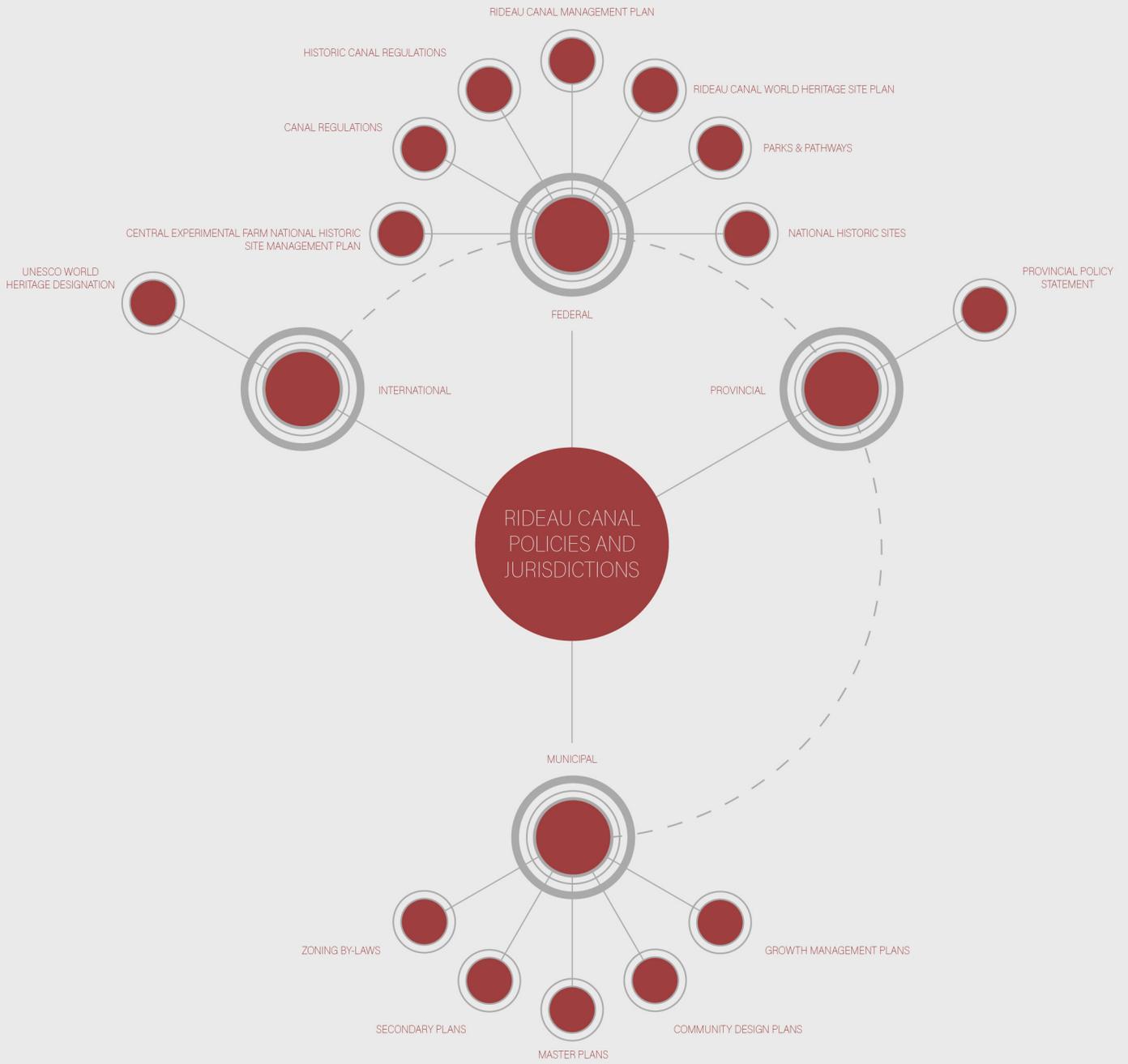


fig. 01 // Rideau Canal Policies & Jurisdictions
 *ADAPTED FROM QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY'S ANIMATING THE RIDEAU CANAL

METHOD 1 CONVERSATION

“A talk between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed, questions are asked and answered, or news and information are exchanged.”⁸

The first method used in this thesis consists of conversations had with approximately thirty citizens of Ottawa. A handful of participants (such as planners, architects and City officials) answered questions relating to policies and procedures. Every individual who participated was asked in the style of an informal interview, varying in length, personal and experiential questions about the Rideau Canal (this includes those who answered policy and procedural questions). The choice of the participant included people from differing backgrounds such as teachers, students, architects, musicians, etc. The goal of this approach was to make the project more inclusive. This aspired towards a more fruitful design process that spoke to more than just one person (or small group of people).

Before being able to conduct the interviews, an ethics clearance from Carleton's Office of Research Ethics was needed (see appendix 1). This process quickly became an ironic parallel to the red tape that has inhibited the Rideau Canal from progressing in its development over the years.

Though this step was necessary, even something as simple as asking a few questions quickly turned into a lengthy process smothered with protocols, forms, and policies; making it increasingly less enticing to follow through with a project that could involve public opinion. Be that as it may, the clearance was granted, and interviews ensued.

The purpose of conversation was to get people more involved in the design and development process of the project. It was to sit down and listen to their stories and experiences; this would guide the design interventions in the proposed rejuvenation plan for the Rideau Canal.

The use of this method was an attempt to answer previously un-answerable questions, such as “What is the character of your neighbourhood?” This question, although valid, is difficult to answer, leading to wondering whether planners and architects are asking the right questions at community engagements to begin with.

Initially, when the questions and atmosphere were more structured, the answers were more rigid. Once questions that were more open to interpretation were asked, the conversations started reaching a fluidity and openness that was more conducive to a productive engagement experience.

Interviewees responded best to the following questions:

1. What makes the Canal memorable to you?
2. What activities do or did you like to do on the Canal?
3. What is something you do not like about the Canal?

It is important to note that the type of question was not the

only component to a successful interview. It was critical that the interactions stayed relatively informal. The reason for this was to invite people to feel more comfortable with sharing their stories and memories, leading to a better understanding of what they thought was important about the Canal and why.

These interviews quickly made obvious that residents enjoy being involved in project planning. People care about their neighbourhoods and naturally, they do not want to see them turn into high-rise jungles that are designed solely to generate a profit.

METHOD 2 MAPPING

“One simple way to understand a Mind Map is by comparing it to the map of a city. The city center represents the main idea; the main roads leading from the centre represent the key thoughts in your thinking process. [...] The Mind Map is the external mirror of your own radiant or natural thinking facilitated by a powerful graphic process, which provides the universal key to unlock the dynamic potential of the brain.”⁹

Increasingly popular in the world of architecture and landscape design is the use of creative mapping techniques.¹⁰ Like topographic maps, street maps, and pedestrian maps, cognitive maps also help layout complex ideas, processes, and relationships. It was critical for this thesis to utilize a method that could take both quantitative and qualitative research and visualize it uniquely and clearly. That said, it is important to understand the different types of mapping strategies used throughout the project.

“Mind mapping, concept mapping, and cognitive mapping

are three powerful visual-mapping strategies for organizing, communicating, and retaining knowledge”¹¹ and though the three may seem similar, they all have specific uses and definitions.

Mind maps are the most simplistic of the three types. They provide a clear organization and structure for one central topic.¹²These maps are used in the thesis to depict simple pieces of information (see fig. 02).

Concept maps are a more complex version of a mind map. They are meant to illustrate relationships between multiple topics.¹³ This clarifies how quantitative and qualitative information is related (see fig. 03).

Cognitive mapping allows for the most creative freedom of the three mapping techniques. They are virtually limitless; following no visual rules or restrictions on how information is visually represented. They have no structure or form, often having no

consistent hierarchy.¹⁴ (see fig. 04 to fig. 07)

In the thesis, mind mapping will be used to describe quantitative research such as policies, official plans, zoning by-laws, etc. Concept maps will show research such as the relationship between interviews and themes, and cognitive maps describe the discussions that guide the design interventions found in the rejuvenation plan, ultimately leading to a project that is designed for people and by people from both ends of the stakeholder spectrum. These three types of mapping techniques were meant to enhance the overall understanding of how city makers and city dwellers think and feel about the City of Ottawa, and more specifically the Rideau Canal. Mapping the information from research and conversations aims at showing both sides of the story in a clear way that everyone can understand and enjoy. Additionally, they act as visual proof that designers and planners can implement creative visual tools when engaging the public in planning processes.

INTERVIEW COMMENT THEMES & DISTRIBUTION

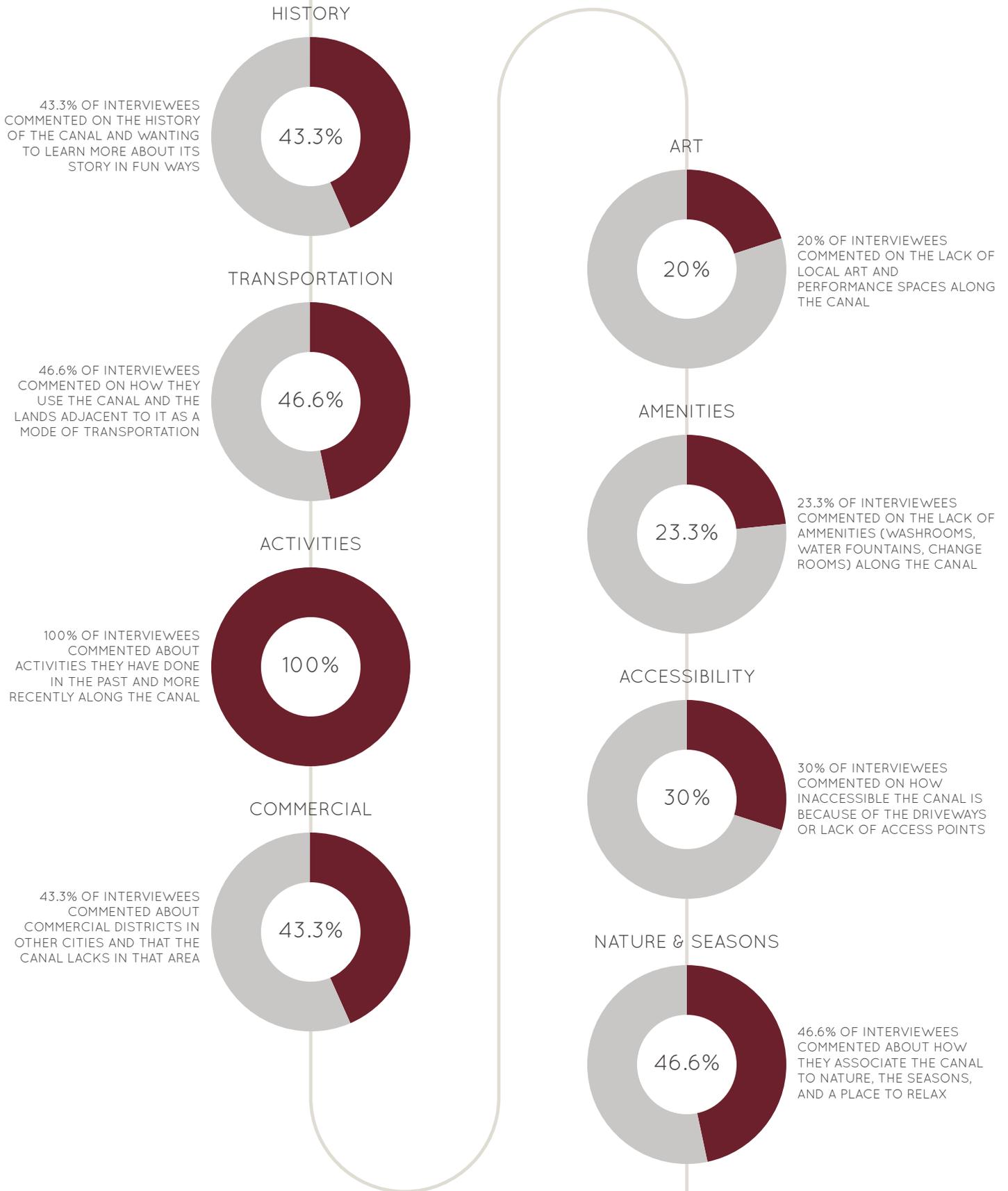


fig. 02 // Interview Comments & Theme Distribution

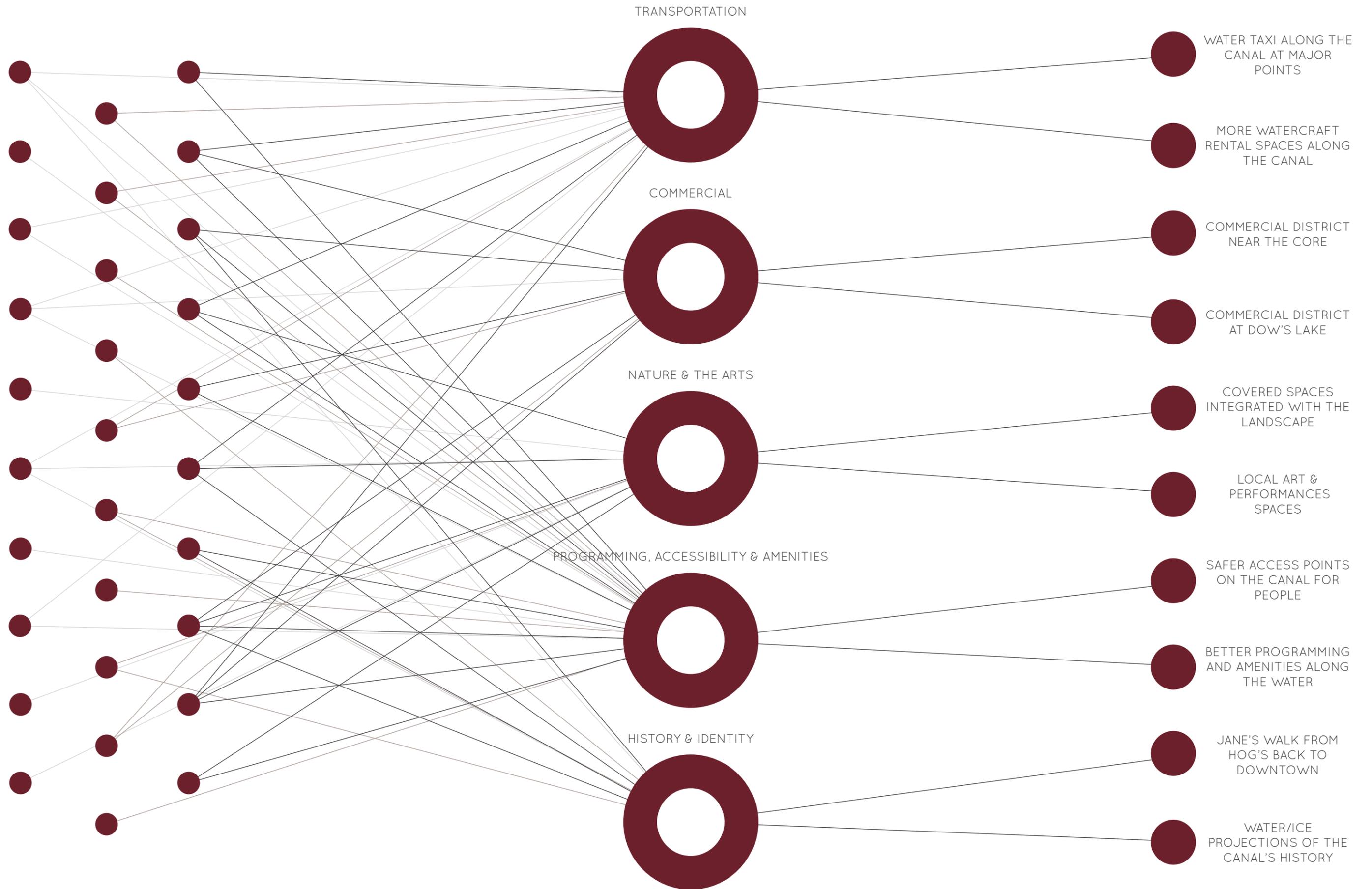


fig. 03 // Relationship Between Interview Comments, Themes & Interventions

"THE BOARDWALK AT DOW'S LAKE IS NICE... BUT IT STOPS"
 • COULD WE CONTINUE THE BOARDWALK AND HAVE MORE?
 • HAVE DOCKS THAT BUMP OUT TO ACCOMMODATE FOR SEATING?
 "DOW'S LAKE USED TO HAVE MORE ACTIVITIES FOR WINTERLUDE"
 • HOW TO PROPOSE INEXPENSIVE ACTIVITIES? (ON THE LAKE)

"CITY AND THE PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS ON THE DEFENSIVE"
 • HOW CAN WE BE MORE RESPONSIVE AND LESS DEFENSIVE?

• ESCARPMENT NEAR DOW'S COULD BE SMALL BUILDINGS INTEGRATED WITH LAND?

• COULD THERE BE A SMALL HUT? DRINKS/ SNACKS IN SUMMER/ WINTER?

• COULD ALSO BE AN EXHIBITION SPACE FOR LOCAL ARTISTS?

• TEMPORARY LOCAL ART ON THE BOARDWALK

"IT WAS A KIND OF WOODEN STRUCTURE WITH A PLATFORM. I THINK THERE USED TO BE A RESTAURANT OR BAR OR WHAT-NOT. I THOUGHT THAT WAS AN INTERESTING IDEA. I THOUGHT IT ADDED SOMETHING TO THE CANAL. I THOUGHT IT WAS SOMEWHERE PEOPLE COULD GATHER - DURING THE DAY OR EVEN THE EVENING."

"EACH NEIGHBOURHOOD HAS ITS OWN DNA, WE NEED TO ADAPT TO IT?"

• DOES EACH NEIGHBOURHOOD GET A PARKLET THAT THEY CAN DESIGN/ACCESSORIZE?

MUSIC

• COULD THIS SPACE BE TAKEN BACK?
 • MORE EVENT SPACES.

• THIS SPACE IS CURRENTLY UNOCCUPIED, OR OCCUPIED VERY LITTLE. POOR MANAGEMENT. ONLY FOR PRIVATE EVENTS. WHY?
 • MORE PARKLETS WITH PROGRAMMING

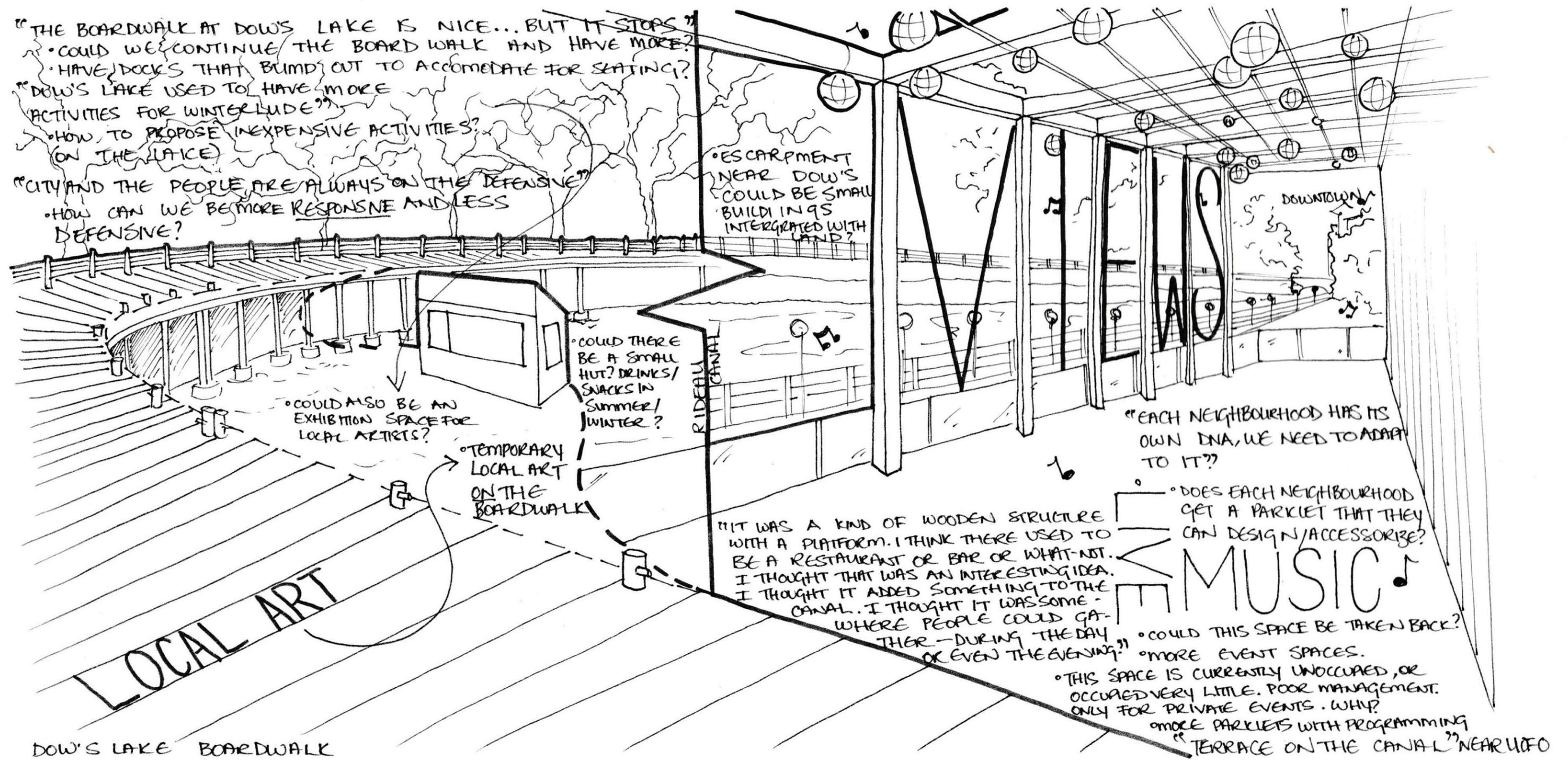
"TERRACE ON THE CANAL" NEAR UFO

LOCAL ART

DOW'S LAKE BOARDWALK

RIDEAU CANAL

DOWNTOWN



"I REMEMBER STANDING—AND I WAS A LITTLE GUY—AND LOOKING AT THE REFLECTION OF THE TRAIN IN THE WATER OF THE CANAL BECAUSE THEY WERE SO CLOSE. YOU COULD SEE ALL THE STEAM AND STUFF. THEN, WE GOT ON THIS—THIS KIND OF ADVENTURE INTO NORTHERN ONTARIO FROM THAT SPOT."

RELATIONSHIP "THERE'S A SURREALNESS TO THE CANAL"

"SO THERE WAS A CONNECTION. THE CANAL AND THE ROADWAYS—I THINK IT WAS BETTER WITH TRAINS. THE CONNECTION IT HAS TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD AS WELL AS THE CITY, I THINK, IS PART OF ITS SUCCESS."

"COULD PART OF THE OLD STATION BE PUBLIC & FOR PUBLIC USE?"

"THERE'S AN AGGRESSIVE DIS-TRUST AGAINST THINGS WE DON'T UNDERSTAND"

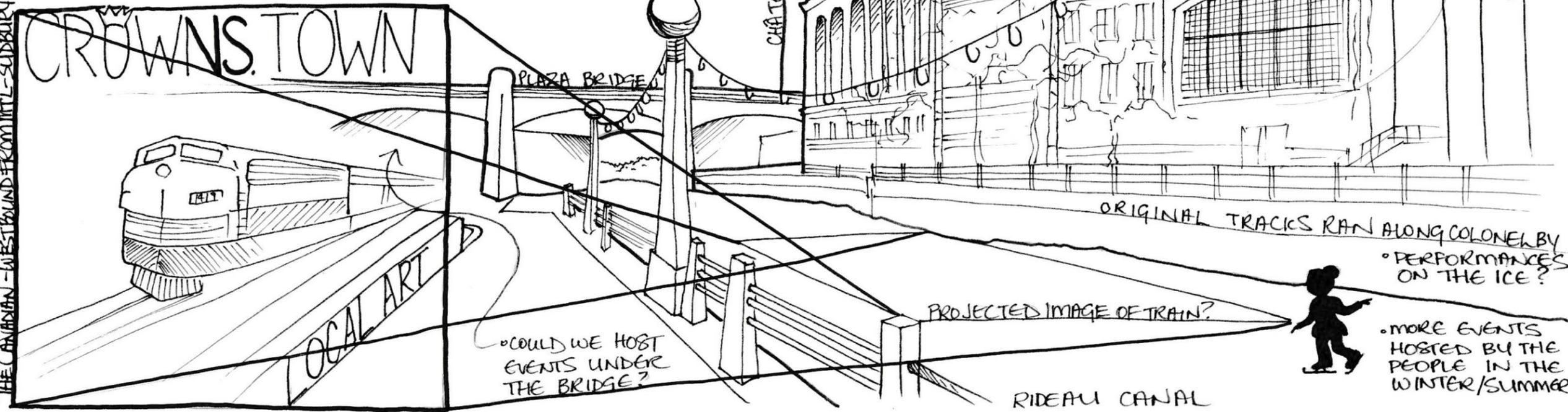
- HOW COULD WE BETTER EDUCATE PEOPLE ABOUT PLANNING?
- PROJECTING IMAGE OF OLD TRAINS ONTO WATER AND/OR ICE.

"I KNOW SUMMER'S COMING WHEN THE WATER COMES BACK UP; WINTER'S COMING WHEN THEY DRAIN IT."

• PROGRAM TO BETTER SHOWCASE SEASONAL CHANGES.

"THERE USED TO BE FIGURE SKATING FOR CHILDREN AT WINTERLUDE. IT WOULD BE JAM PACKED WITH PEOPLE. WHY NOT HAVE A GRANDSTAND ON THE ICE?"

- MORE GATHERING SPACES THAT ARE 4 SEASONS.
- PERFORMANCE SPACES
- ART SPACES
- BETTER PROGRAMMING



• COULD WE HOST EVENTS UNDER THE BRIDGE?

• PERFORMANCES ON THE ICE?

• MORE EVENTS HOSTED BY THE PEOPLE IN THE WINTER/SUMMER

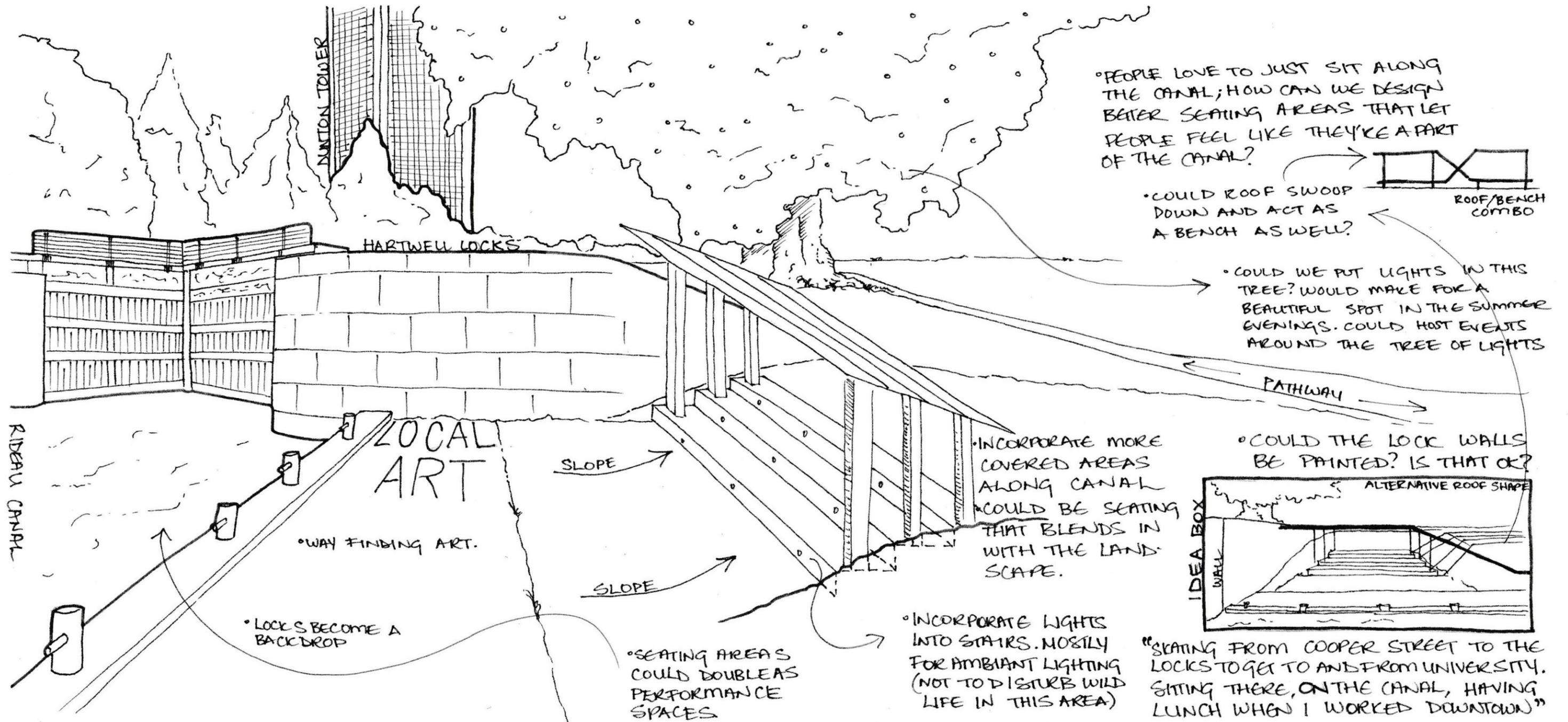


fig. 06 // Rideau Canal Through the Eyes of a Dreamer

"ONE YEAR DURING WINTERLUDE, SPEAKERS WERE SET UP ALONG THE CANAL AND WE WERE TREATED TO WALTZES AND BEAUTIFUL CLASSICAL MUSIC AND LULLABIES TO SKATE TO... IT WAS THE MOST WONDERFUL NIGHT-TIME SKATING I HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED"

◦ MORE LIGHTS ALONG CANAL. THEY DON'T NEED TO BE BLINDING OR DISRUPTIVE. IT'S NEEDED FOR ATMOSPHERICS.

◦ PROJECTIONS ONTO TREES AT NIGHT (SIMILAR TO INDIGENOUS GARDEN AT BOTANICAL GARDEN IN MONTREAL)
 ◦ GIVE THE ILLUSION OF SKATING THROUGH A FAIRYTALE FOREST

◦ COULD ALSO HAVE PROJECTIONS ON THE ICE.

◦ MORE MUSIC ON CANAL. NIGHT TIME MUSIC COULD BE MORE CALMING.

◦ IN SUMMER, BOARDWALK CONTINUES FROM DOCKS TO PLATFORMS DOWN THE WATER. PEOPLE COULD DOCK KAYAKS / CANOES

◦ PLATFORM (SOME) COULD GET LOWERED IN WINTER (RISE IN SUMMER)

◦ HAVE STORY TELLING STATION (SUMMER + WINTER)

◦ LOCAL ARTIST COULD DESIGN MOTIFS THAT COULD BE LASER CUT AND CLIPPED ONTO RAIL
 ◦ STORY HOPPING ON THE ICE
 ◦ HOW TO MAKE CANAL MORE MAGICAL ALL YEAR ROUND?
 ◦ COULD BUSKING BE ALLOWED ALONG THE CANAL?

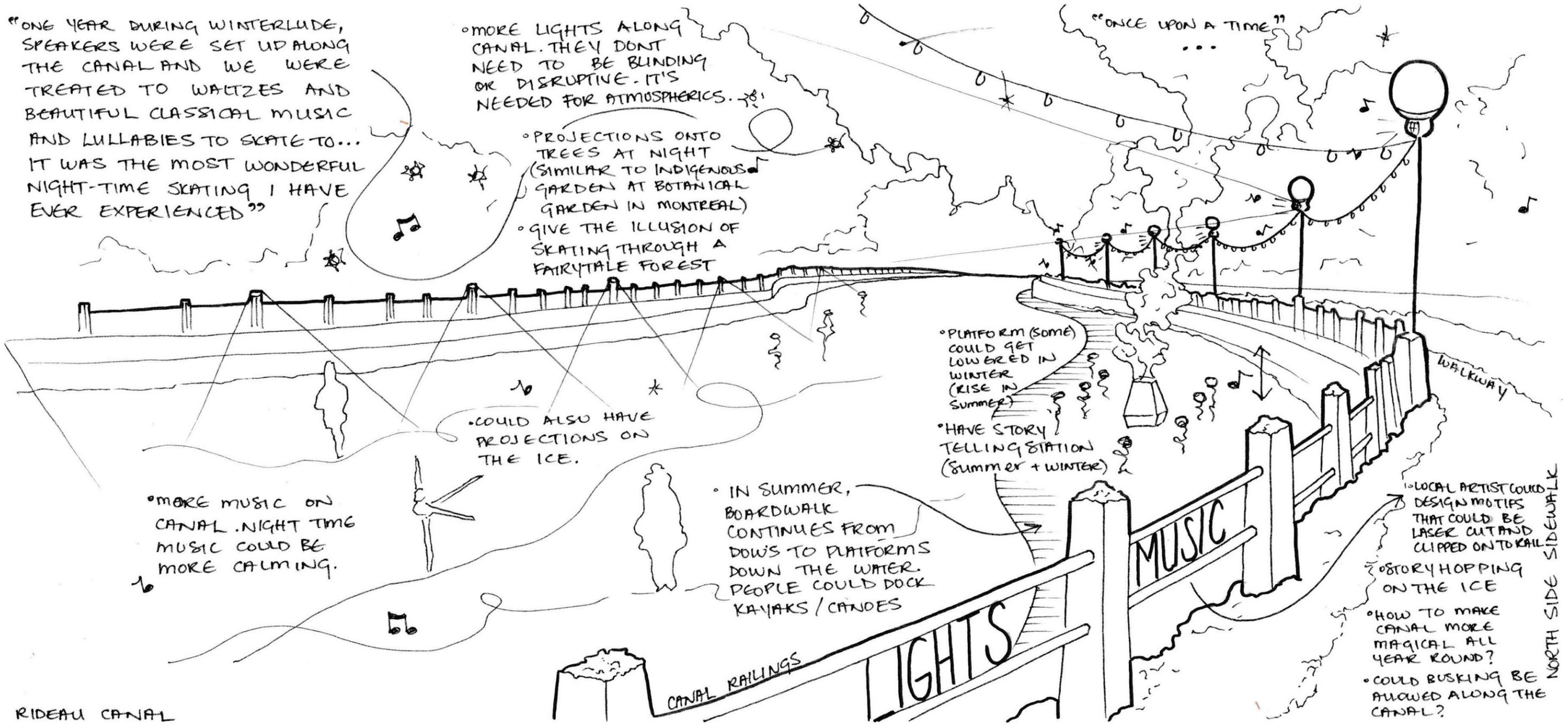


fig. 07 // Rideau Canal Through the Eyes of a Fairytale Skater

METHOD 3 STORYTELLING

“Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.”¹⁵

This last method, storytelling, is known to help people organize thoughts and experiences and record important events. “Stories have been used for as long as we can remember to celebrate the feats of great individuals, transmit the spirit and facts of major occurrences, and point out patterns of human experience and behaviour.”¹⁶

“We have two jobs as scholars: Answering interesting questions and telling the story.”¹⁷ This thesis will be no different. The proposals will showcase moments from the Rideau Canal’s past and be accompanied by the various comments that inspired them from the interviews.

In having conversations with the citizens of Ottawa about the great waterway, they too become a fundamental part of its history. Francis Flaherty, the business editor from the New York Times, emphasizes that “A story should be dry-eyed, of course. It should not be like some hysterical bad opera. But too many stories are bloodless and blank, with the human emotion washed out.”¹⁸

The objective of using this method is to create visual compositions about the national historic waterway, preserving its history and emphasizing its importance as an iconic Canadian landmark. “All too often, academic writers remove the human elements from their storytelling in an effort to sound ‘scholarly’”¹⁹. Architecture is similar. When we begin to take the human element out of it, it loses its connection with the citizens of a city.

FORMAT

Having summarized the methods of the thesis, the structure of the document is split into two part:

1. Critical analysis of policies relating to public engagement
2. Design proposal and rejuvenation plan for the Rideau Canal

This document aims to shed light on the complexities that happen behind the scenes of city planning, as well as showcase the importance of having thoughtful interactions with city residents to allow people to contributing in the growth of their city.

PART I

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The first part is a critical analysis of public engagement strategies in Ottawa, and urban planning processes in both the private and public sectors. The following policies, procedures, and bylaws will be analyzed to give the reader a better comprehension of the public engagement processes:

- I. Site Plan Control (By-law No. 2014-256 as mended by By-laws No. 2015-142, 2016-271, 2016-355, 2017-320, 2019-39 and 2019-336), City of Ottawa, June 2014 (Mandated by Section 41 of the Planning Act)
- II. Public Engagement Strategy: Guidelines and Toolkit, City of Ottawa, January 2015
- III. Corporate Administrative Policies and Procedures: Public Engagement, National Capital Commission (NCC), July 2012

The Site Plan Control and Public Engagement Strategy are municipal policies, while the Corporate Administrative Policies and Procedures are from the NCC and is therefore a federal policy. Other policies and bylaws will be noted throughout the critique in

lesser detail.

Each policy/procedure has two main parts:

- I. Background: An overview of the current policy or procedure, and;
- II. Critique: What Has Worked

The “What Has Not Worked” portion of the critique will discuss all three procedures because they share many of the same issues.

The section will end with a discussion about the New Ottawa Public Library Main Branch and the engagement process that they adopted for the project.

SITE PLAN CONTROL

BACKGROUND

Mandated by Section 41 of the Ontario Planning Act, and perhaps one of the most relevant by-laws of the built environment of any city in the province, is Site Plan Control. The City of Ottawa sees nearly 300 Site Plan Control applications come through its doors every year.²⁰ It is the second most common development application (the first being Committee of Adjustment).²¹ These applications range from new residential buildings, new unit developments, non-residential development of five or more storeys, etc. It is a tool used by the City to ensure that “land development is designed appropriately, safely, functionally and minimizes impacts on neighbouring properties.”²²

Site Plan Control outlines the location of the building(s), landscaping, traffic and pedestrian access, drainage, parking lot layout and more. It follows a 5-step application process (see fig. 08 for more details):

- I. Pre-application Consultation Meeting
- II. Public Notification

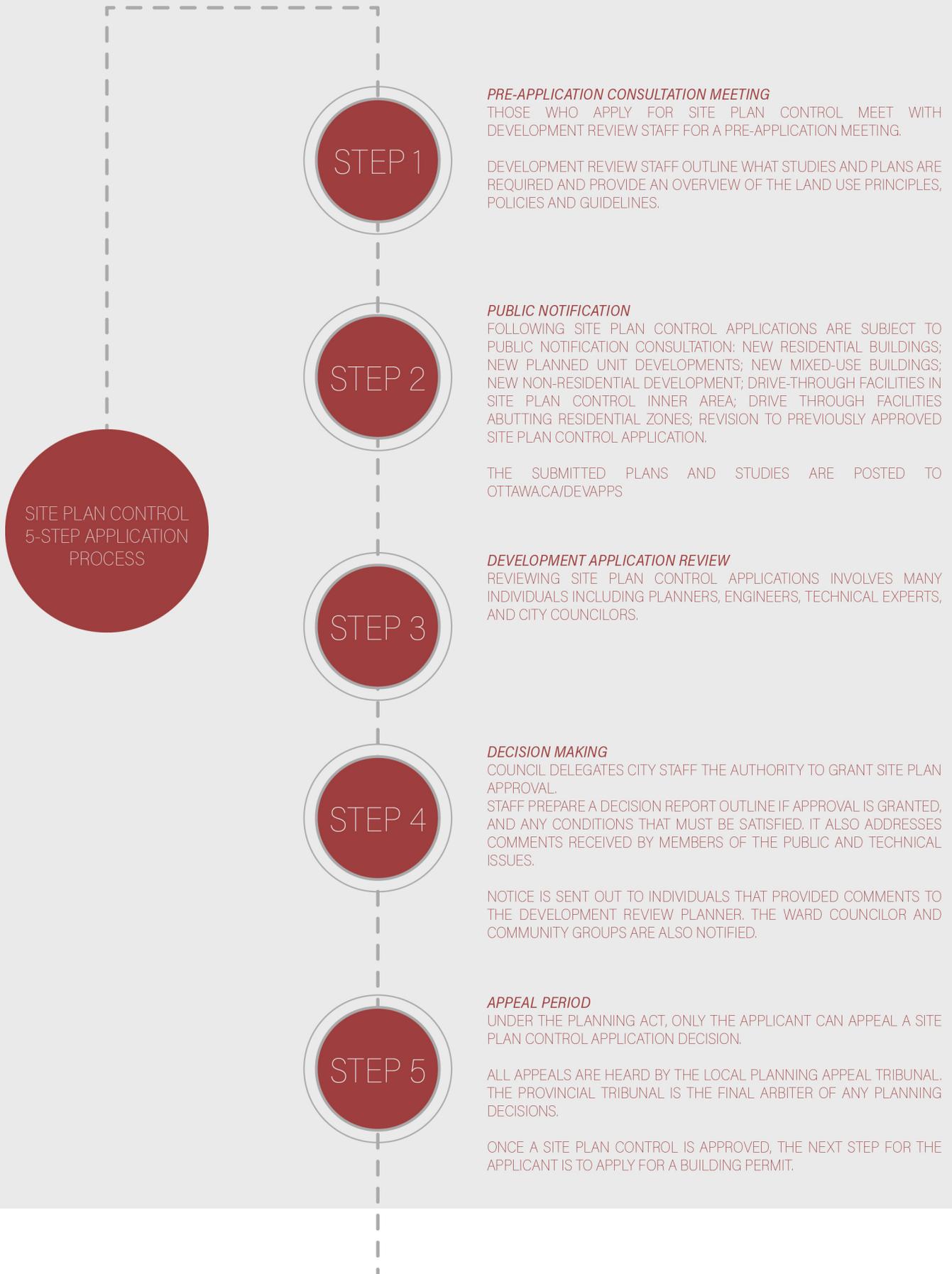
III. Development Application Review

IV. Decision Making

V. Appeal Period

Generally, a Site Plan Control application approval is required before a building permit can be issued. Once it has been determined that there is the need for a Site Plan Control Approval, “the approval authority and whether or not the application is subject to public consultation must be determined.”²³ This determines the length of the process, and the application fee.

fig. 08 // 5-Step Application Process
*ADAPTED FROM OTTAWA'S WHAT IS SITE PLAN CONTROL?



SITE PLAN CONTROL

WHAT IS WORKING

The Site Plan Control application ensures that the applicant follows a set of general rules in relation to municipal and provincial planning processes.

What works in this procedure is that certain site plan proposals are subject to the “City’s public notification and consultation process.”²⁴ Detailed information about site plan proposals are made available to everyone through the Development Application Tool website. Residents can get involved by submitting comments to the Development Review Planner or go to an open house that is usually hosted by City staff. The architects behind the design of the proposal often go to these open houses in order to answer questions that may arise. The process allows citizens’ voices to be heard, which is critical when wanting to design a city that evokes citizen pride.

Another consideration that Site Plan Control takes for larger projects is that it attempts to keep developers and architects

accountable. Pre-application Consultations with staff are mandatory if the proposal is subject to a public notification and consultation (previous paragraph). The application and all of its accompanying information is sent to “technical agencies, public bodies and the Ward Councillor for consideration.”²⁵ This distribution of information gives all parties the opportunity to make comments on the project and application. The review of Site Plan Control is “technical and requires the consideration of a number of factors.”²⁶ Items that planners review, and that the public will provide comments on include:

- Compliance with Official Plan policies
- Compliance with zoning
- Impact of development on traffic flow
- Location of pedestrian and vehicular accesses
- Location of garbage storage
- Shadowing
- Lighting, and light spillover
- Potential increase in noise

- Lot grading and drainage
- Stormwater management
- Location of parking
- Compliance with principles of safe design (CPTED principles - Crime Prevention Through Environment Design).²⁷

Once the comment period ends, the file lead reports the outcomes of the consultation with the applicant and any modifications needed are updated and re-submitted to the City for review and approval.²⁸

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

The City of Ottawa conducts over 100 consultations per year, Council identified the need for a consultation strategy. The City of Ottawa's Public Engagement Strategy Guidelines and Toolkit was the result of a 2013 public consultation about public engagement within the nation's capital.

“In March and April of 2013, the City initiated a public consultation process to find out how residents want the City to engage with them with a view to shaping the final Public Engagement Strategy according to the public's expectations of meaningful engagement.”²⁹

Before heading into what was said, here is a summary of the input resulting from in-person and online consultations that took place:

- Five public consultations held between March and April of 2013 (74 residents in attendance);

- Seven focus groups and three sessions with community service groups (116 residents in attendance);
- A bilingual questionnaire made available for one month (generating approx. 350 responses per question);
- An online Ideas Campaign made available for one month (generating 33 ideas, 1020 votes, and 13 comments);
- Ongoing opportunities to provide general comments (comment sheets, edits, or briefs) submitted by mail, fax, email or by hand (65 submissions).³⁰

On the City of Ottawa’s website it was noted that “participants in the consultation activities demonstrated a high level of understanding of the subject matter and were able to clearly articulate what they expected when it comes to meaningful engagement.”³¹

The most prominent theme indicated that residents had a strong desire to influence outcomes of a City project or policy

matter. The previous was summarized as requiring three elements:

- I. Sufficient time and notice to become educated about a subject in order to participate in a meaningful way and to provide informed input.
- II. Ability to participate early enough in the process, before a decision of concept is too far developed to be modified;
- III. Having their input considered with the same 'weight' as that accorded to other sectors (developers or other business interests)

There remains a growing cynicism and lack of trust in the municipal processes. Many participants that believed they did not have the ability to influence the outcomes of a City of Ottawa-led public engagement.³² It was also noted that many people felt highly dissatisfied with past engagement activities because they had the “impression that the City had pre-determined the outcomes and that public input, although solicited, was disregarded.”³³

There was also a strong perception that the City of Ottawa was not a very effective communicator in respects to public engagement (explaining objectives, how input will be used, etc).

The City's summary of this engagement clearly states that "the Strategy will help ensure that when City of Ottawa staff seek input on issues, that they do so in a manner that meets public expectations"³⁴ and that it will be "an essential component to promote trust and credibility in the engagement process."³⁵

The consultation summary identifies Elements of Meaningful Public Engagement that lists a detailed compilation of what participants thought would be required for future City of Ottawa engagements to be meaningful³⁶ (see fig. 09).

ACCOUNTABLE

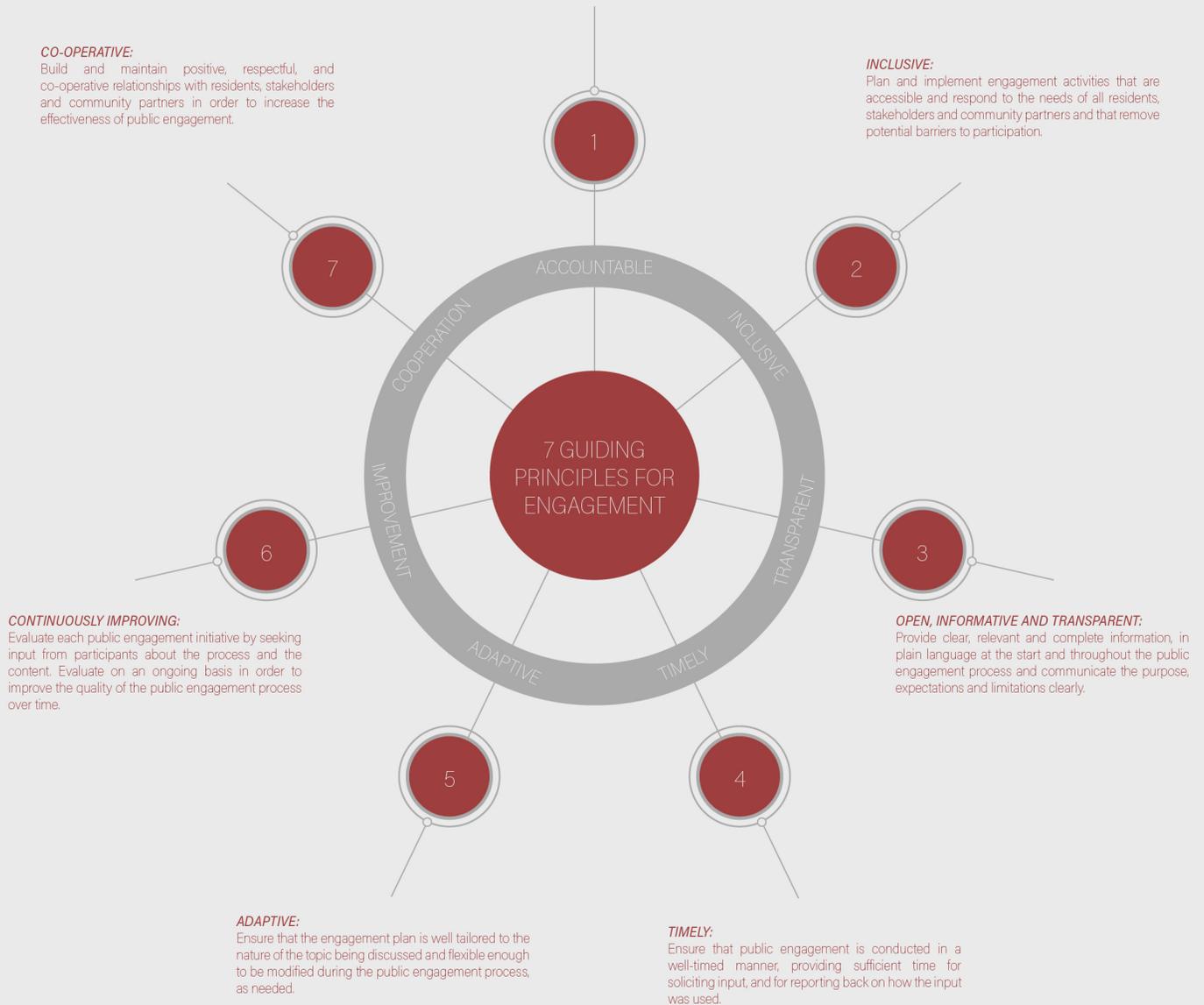
Provide residents, stakeholders and community partners with information on how their public engagement feedback was considered and adopted, or why it was not adopted.

CO-OPERATIVE:

Build and maintain positive, respectful, and co-operative relationships with residents, stakeholders and community partners in order to increase the effectiveness of public engagement.

INCLUSIVE:

Plan and implement engagement activities that are accessible and respond to the needs of all residents, stakeholders and community partners and that remove potential barriers to participation.



CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING:

Evaluate each public engagement initiative by seeking input from participants about the process and the content. Evaluate on an ongoing basis in order to improve the quality of the public engagement process over time.

OPEN, INFORMATIVE AND TRANSPARENT:

Provide clear, relevant and complete information, in plain language at the start and throughout the public engagement process and communicate the purpose, expectations and limitations clearly.

ADAPTIVE:

Ensure that the engagement plan is well tailored to the nature of the topic being discussed and flexible enough to be modified during the public engagement process, as needed.

TIMELY:

Ensure that public engagement is conducted in a well-timed manner, providing sufficient time for soliciting input, and for reporting back on how the input was used.

fig. 09 // 7 Principles | Ottawa

*ADAPTED FROM OTTAWA'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: GUIDELINES & TOOLKIT

This public consultation for the Engagement Strategy was Ottawa's step in the right direction towards more fruitful consultations with residents regarding varying projects across the city. On December 3rd, 2013, the motion to approve the Public Engagement Strategy was passed and in January of 2015, the official document was released.

The Public Engagement Strategy is mostly meant for staff that is initiating or planning public engagement. Reasons to have consultations range from planning to municipal programming and services. The following questions and answers were pulled directly out of the document:

What is Public Engagement according to the document:

“Public engagement involves any two-way communication to inform and/or involve the public in problem solving or decision-making. There are different types of engagement

(providing information, consulting, and collaborating) and various engagement activities or techniques (i.e.: information kit, in-person meetings, online surveys, advisory groups, etc.).”³⁷

Why does the City need a Public Engagement Toolkit?

“Public engagement is one way City staff work with the public. The Toolkit provides a common and consistent approach to public engagement across City of Ottawa departments. Consistently applying the Toolkit and Guidelines will increase our ability to achieve successful public engagement outcomes and in turn, improve public satisfaction.”³⁸

What will be achieved by using the Toolkit?

“The Toolkit should be utilized

for every public engagement initiative regardless of complexity, with the understanding that less detail may be required for smaller, simpler projects. The Toolkit is designed to enhance existing public engagement processes and tools. When working with consultants, staff should provide them a copy of the Public Engagement Strategy.”³⁹

According to the document, good public engagement consists of the following points:

- Clear promise/commitment to participants;
- Considers the needs of participants;
- Seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected;
- Has a communications plan;

- Provides participants with information necessary to participate in a meaningful way;
- Uses techniques that are tailored to and appropriate for the audience;
- Allows some flexibility to deal with unanticipated dimensions of an issue and to ensure unforeseen problems are resolved; and
- Uses appropriate feedback mechanisms to communicate to participants about how their input affected the final decision.

The Public Engagement Strategy follows a seven-step process called the Public Engagement Cycle⁴⁰ and has several other policies and legislation which apply to all public engagement processes. The seven steps of the Public Engagement Cycle and other policies and legislation are summarized using the following two mind maps (defined in the methodology section).

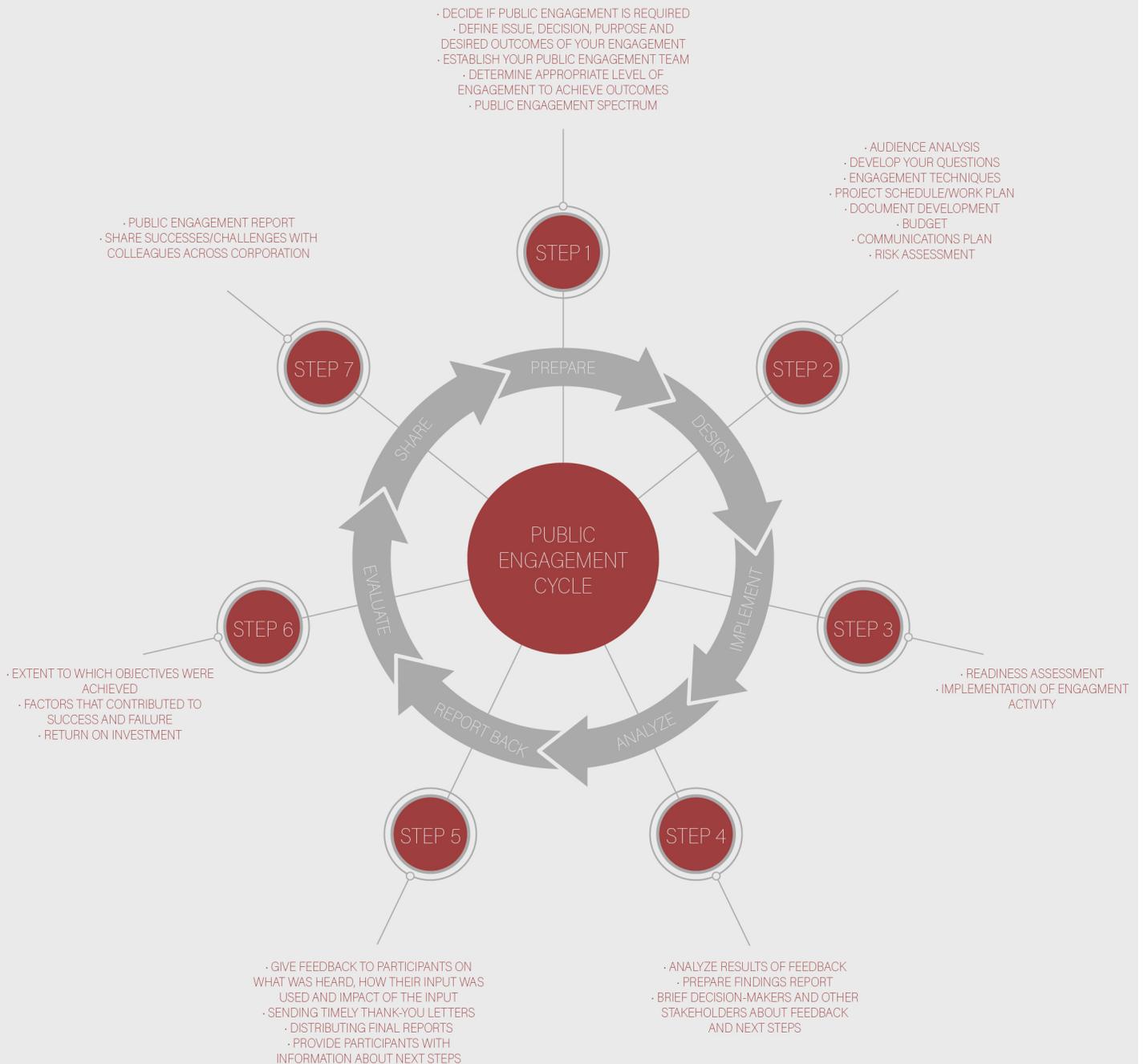


fig. 10 // PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CYCLE
 *ADAPTED FROM OTTAWA'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY : GUIDELINES AND TOOLKIT

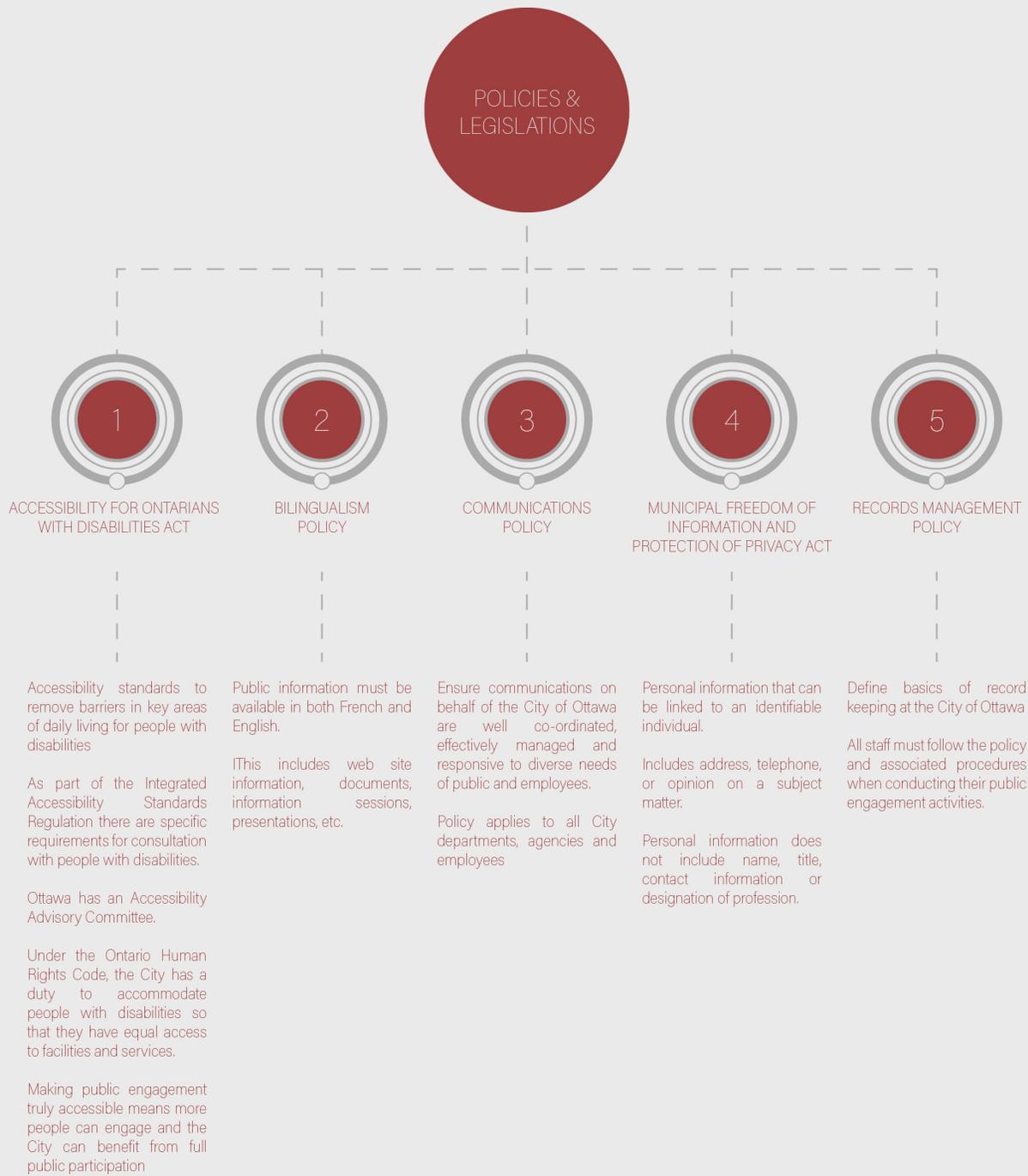


fig. 11 // POLICIES AND LEGISLATION
 *ADAPTED FROM OTTAWA'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY : GUIDELINES AND TOOLKIT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

WHAT IS WORKING

The Public Engagement Strategy was adopted in 2013 and the official document was released in 2015. Ever since, the City of Ottawa has been taking steps towards better community engagement. “Around the same time of the Public Consultation Engagement, the city initiated what they call the ‘Planning Primer’. [...] It’s open to the public, and it’s free.”⁴¹

The Planning Primer is a program offered by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department to “help residents become more aware of, and more involved in, the land-use planning process.”⁴² It is built around a series of half-day courses that include two core courses (Primer I and Primer II) and includes two elective courses. The core courses “describe the legislative and policy basis under which land-use planning decisions are made, the way policy documents are amended and how to make a development application.”⁴³ The goal of the program is to build a better relationship and understanding between the City of Ottawa and communities, as well as providing resources to help in resident

participation in land-use planning processes.

The Planning Primer is a step towards providing residents with information about planning processes, zoning by-laws, development, and other planning topics in the City of Ottawa.

Another step towards better consultation that the City has taken is in the development of the Engage Ottawa website. This website introduces new online tools that aims at improving how the City engages with its residents regarding upcoming projects and initiatives.

Residents can register online to receive updates about projects that interest them. It gives them access to discussion forums, surveys, polls, and other opportunities. People as young as 13 (with parental consent) can register and provide their opinion; meaning that people from all age groups can get involved.⁴⁴

Current opportunities include Vision Vanier (Vanier revitalization projects), The Orleans Corridor Secondary Plan (feedback opportunity to future development along the main strip of Orleans), and perhaps most important, Ottawa's new Official Plan. The latter will be discussed in further detail in Part II of the thesis.

Engage Ottawa provides residents not only with engagement opportunities, but all the documentation necessary to make an educated remark. Before the launch of the website, finding full reports on matters of the city was more difficult. The City of Ottawa's main website is not always intuitive, and it can become frustrating searching through many pages to find a single report. For example, the 2013 Public Engagement Strategy Consultation Report is not on the Engage Ottawa website because it is an older document. To get full reports, residents previously had to e-mail a communications manager of the city and wait to receive a link. However, this link did not even lead to the document. It would lead

to the council meeting, which had another link and the list goes. Engage Ottawa eliminates the need for multiple e-mails and links and searching, allowing for residents to access documents quickly and efficiently.

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION, JULY 2010

BACKGROUND

Published in July of 2010, the National Capital Commission's (NCC) Public Engagement document has the purpose of providing a framework that ensures a consistent approach towards public engagement in NCC projects and initiatives. The NCC's definition for public engagement is as follows:

“The term ‘public engagement’ refers to informational, consultative and collaborative activities that serve to inform members of the public of the possible impact of a project on their lives and/or to improve the decision-making process for the project in question”⁴⁵

The document boasts 12 key principles that have been established by public engagement specialists. These principles are as follows:

1. Transparency
2. Honesty

3. Meaningfulness
4. Inclusiveness
5. Clarity
6. Mutual Respect
7. Clear Timeframe
8. Accessibility
9. Universally Accessible
10. Mutual Understanding
11. Accountability
12. Consistency⁴⁶

An elaborated version of these principles can be seen in figure 12.

This document allows the NCC to make better decisions that follow constructive, open, and transparent processes, leading to a National Capital that reflects all Canadians.⁴⁷ Similar to the City of Ottawa's Public Engagement Strategy, the document follows its own set of policy statements and procedures (see fig. 13)

The consultation policy clearly states the different levels of public engagement. A table in the document showcases goals, methods, and examples for each kind of consultation level⁴⁸ (see figure 14).

12 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT

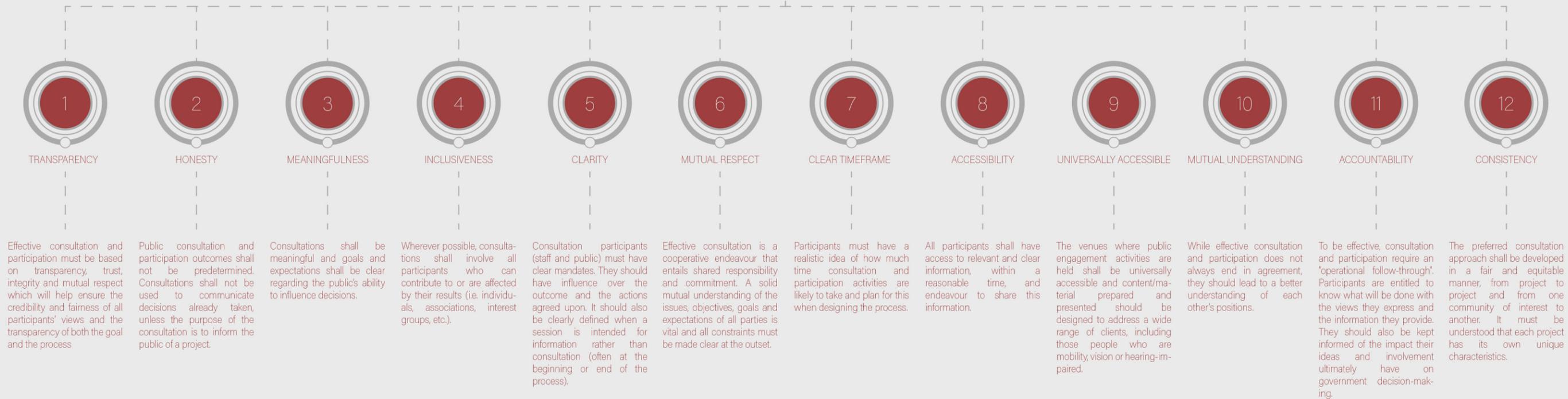


fig. 12 // 12 Principles | NCC
 *ADAPTED FROM CORPORATE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Provide residents, stakeholders and community partners with information on how their public engagement feedback was considered and adopted, or why it was not adopted.

Plan and implement engagement activities that are accessible and respond to the needs of all residents, stakeholders and community partners and that remove potential barriers to participation.

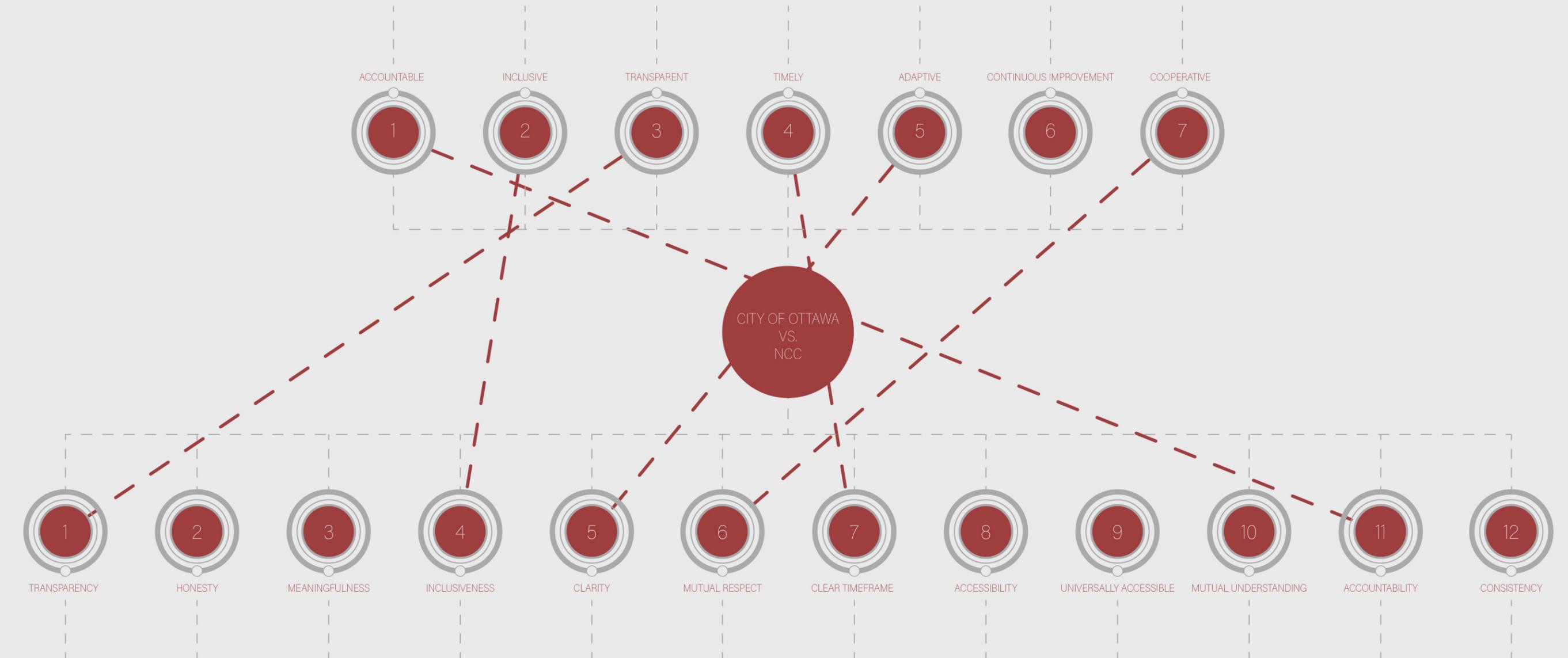
Provide clear, relevant and complete information, in plain language at the start and throughout the public engagement process and communicate the purpose, expectations and limitations clearly.

Ensure that public engagement is conducted in a well-timed manner, providing sufficient time for soliciting input, and for reporting back on how the input was used.

Ensure that the engagement plan is well tailored to the nature of the topic being discussed and flexible enough to be modified during the public engagement process, as needed.

Evaluate each public engagement initiative by seeking input from participants about the process and the content. Evaluate on an ongoing basis in order to improve the quality of the public engagement process over time.

Build and maintain positive, respectful, and co-operative relationships with residents, stakeholders and community partners in order to increase the effectiveness of public engagement.



Effective consultation and participation must be based on transparency, trust, integrity and mutual respect which will help ensure the credibility and fairness of all participants' views and the transparency of both the goal and the process

Public consultation and participation outcomes shall not be predetermined. Consultations shall not be used to communicate decisions already taken, unless the purpose of the consultation is to inform the public of a project.

Consultations shall be meaningful and goals and expectations shall be clear regarding the public's ability to influence decisions.

Wherever possible, consultations shall involve all participants who can contribute to or are affected by their results (i.e. individuals, associations, interest groups, etc.).

Consultation participants (staff and public) must have clear mandates. They should have influence over the outcome and the actions agreed upon. It should also be clearly defined when a session is intended for information rather than consultation (often at the beginning or end of the process).

Effective consultation is a cooperative endeavour that entails shared responsibility and commitment. A solid mutual understanding of the issues, objectives, goals and expectations of all parties is vital and all constraints must be made clear at the outset.

Participants must have a realistic idea of how much time consultation and participation activities are likely to take and plan for this when designing the process.

All participants shall have access to relevant and clear information, within a reasonable time, and endeavour to share this information.

The venues where public engagement activities are held shall be universally accessible and content/material prepared and presented should be designed to address a wide range of clients, including those people who are mobility, vision or hearing-impaired.

While effective consultation and participation does not always end in agreement, they should lead to a better understanding of each other's positions.

To be effective, consultation and participation require an "operational follow-through". Participants are entitled to know what will be done with the views they express and the information they provide. They should also be kept informed of the impact their ideas and involvement ultimately have on government decision-making.

The preferred consultation approach shall be developed in a fair and equitable manner, from project to project and from one community of interest to another. It must be understood that each project has its own unique characteristics.

fig. 13 // Ottawa Principles vs. NCC Principles

*ADAPTED FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY: GUIDELINES AND TOOLKIT; CORPORATE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

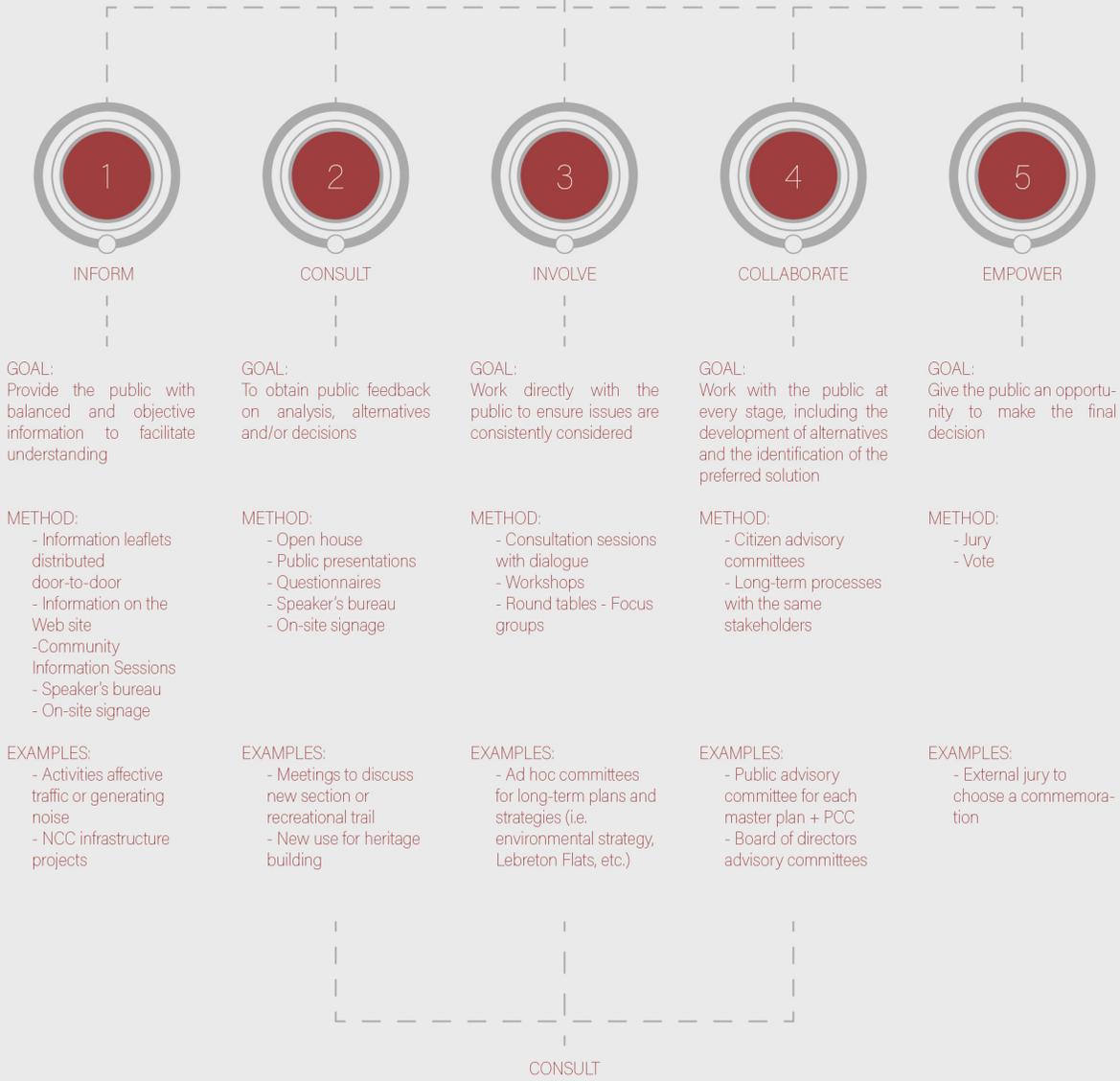


fig. 14 // Public Engagement Levels | NCC
 *ADAPTED FROM CORPORATE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION, JULY 2010

WHAT IS WORKING

Mandated by the National Capital Act, the National Capital Commission prepares plans for federal lands in the National Capital Region. When putting together new plans, planners at the NCC apply the following principles:

1. Symbolism
 - a. The Capital should tell Canadians about themselves and introduce Canada to people from abroad
2. Beauty
 - a. The Capital should be a physical place of high quality
3. Greenery
 - a. The Capital should be a model of a healthy and sustainable environment
4. Stewardship
 - a. Historical buildings, parks and archaeological treasures should be protected
5. Orientation
 - a. Visitors to the Capital should be able to find all services they need

6. Safety, comfort, and accessibility
 - a. Federal lands and buildings should be identifiable, offer pleasing and secure surroundings, and be universally accessible.
7. Transportation and communication
 - a. The Capital should be linked by good connections, with everything from bus routes and bicycle paths to electronic network⁴⁹

Similar to the City of Ottawa, the NCC gives the opportunity for people to sign up to their newsletters about projects happening in the Capital Region, allowing them to get more involved. Their website is one of the easiest to navigate which makes for accessible follow-ups on consultations hosted by the NCC. As seen in figure 11, the last procedure of the engagement plan is Public Engagement Activity Follow-Up and Evaluation and ninth step to the procedure is “post the final version of the public engagement report on the NCC Web site.”⁵⁰ The site is used not only for reports relating

to consultations, but an array of other information that revolves around planning the National Capital Region. This touches on the point of transparency between the NCC and the residents of the National Capital Region.

Another key principle for engagement is inclusivity. The NCC's Urbanism Lab is a "space where Canadians and leaders in urbanism, design, heritage and conservation, sustainability, and placemaking come together to inspire the future of Canada's Capital Region."⁵¹The Urbanism Lab hosts a lecture series that invites people to learn about different topics relating to the National Capital Region. In November of 2019, the topic was Inclusive Urbanism: Perspectives on age, socio-economic status, gender and accessibility in planning. This lecture series has been shared with the public since 2017, creating interesting discussions between professionals in the field and the public.

WHAT IS NOT WORKING

This section merges a critique of all three policies. Issues with each individual policy are quite small in comparison to the way they are enforced and by who. All three policies have good intentions and aim to keep applicants and organizations responsible. However, it is clear that these policies are not always followed in a neutral and objective way.

The first issue regarding the Public Engagement Strategy is actually in its name. The document is a Guideline and Toolkit. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a guideline is “a piece of information that suggests how something should be done.”⁵² The key word in this definition is “suggests”. As it stands, the Strategy is more of a suggested policy rather than a formally implemented policy. James O’Grady, President of Unpublished Media Inc., ran for City Council in 2010 and wrote an article about how the City needs a Public Consultation Policy and not a guideline as a response to the adoption of the Strategy. O’Grady states that “a formal policy that is binding on all stakeholders [staff, elected officials, public, interest

groups, etc.] would go a long way toward re-establishing the trust with the public that City officials have lost since amalgamation.”⁵³ Mentioned earlier, the City has come a long way since that original consultation in 2013, but to this day, it is technically only meant for staff to follow (if they want).

The second issue, an extension of the first issue, is how the Guideline is used and by who. City staff are typically the ones who use the guideline and it only is used AFTER a Site Plan Control Application has either been submitted or is in the works. This forces designers make the design decisions, prior to bring the proposal in front of the public (and for it to get torn apart).

Which brings us to the second topic of Site Plan Control. The By-law mandates that the applicant of a project provide a series of drawings and studies before it can go out to public consultation. The issue however is what citizens are told they can comment on.

- Compliance with Official Plan policies

- Compliance with zoning
- Impact of development on traffic flow
- Location of pedestrian and vehicular accesses
- Location of garbage storage
- Shadowing
- Lighting, and light spillover
- Potential increase in noise
- Lot grading and drainage
- Stormwater management
- Location of parking
- Compliance with principles of safe design (CPTED principles - Crime Prevention Through Environment Design).⁵⁴

These are the same issues that a plan's examiner looks over when reviewing a Site Plan Control application. If this is the job of a City official, why are they asking the public questions about zoning and Official Plan compliances? When did residents become stormwater management experts? This is not to say that there are

no citizens of Ottawa that are knowledgeable on the matter, but if the City writes in their document that they can comment on it, the question might be why have a plan's examiner look at it at all?

Toon Dreesen, an Ottawa architect, wrote an opinion piece for the Ottawa Citizen addressing development within the city of Ottawa. He references the 2018 Ontario Association of Architects' Report on Site Plan Approval noting that is it a \$1 billion hit to the Ontario economy. Delays in site plan approval can add \$233,000-\$278,000 per month of delay to the cost of a 100-unit apartment building; a cost that is then passed on to buyers and renters.⁵⁵ This stresses the importance of proper public engagement. If architects and developers do not engage with the public early in the project, the project gets delayed.

Taking a step back and looking towards the National Capital Commission, their consultation policy is, admittedly, the easiest to follow. However, because the NCC is a federal agency, it does

not technically have to look to the municipal government for permission on project proposals. Although this is a good thing in some situations, in others it leaves the public in a state of limbo. Projects such as Lebreton Flatts, which went through an extensive design competition, only to be scrapped and started over because of a dispute between Eugene Melnyk and John Ruddy⁵⁶, can be on hold for years before seeing any progress. As a result of the dispute, the NCC ended their agreement with RendezVous Lebreton Group. In hindsight, that may have been the better decision, but Lebreton Flatts remains vacant.

The main issues for all the public engagement strategies that have been analyzed is that people are told that they have a say, but they are given a voice in the wrong areas.

During an interview with two ex-councillors from the City of Ottawa, it was said that:

“so much of this city [Ottawa] is

simply function oriented for profit [...]
There have been two forces in the development of Ottawa. One of them is the force that serves the people who live there [the city] and the force that serves the people who make money from it. Most of Ottawa is treated like an open pit mine.”⁵⁷

This interview brought out an interesting and serious issue in the way Ottawa governs its city - the way the inner workings of the city works are very, very political. Recently this was exacerbated when in February 2020 when many suburban councillors gained seats on Ottawa’s Finance and Economic Development Committee.
⁵⁸As Catherine Mckenney remarked: “there is a whole urban core being shut out at city hall and the mayor is doing it deliberately and it continues to be frustrating.”⁵⁹ (for more details see appendix 03)

Although this portion of the critique has become less about community engagement and more about the politics behind decision making, it is critical to know that these issues exist and play an active role in the way that public engagement and city planning works in Ottawa. The sad reality is, is that public engagement has become a symbolic procedure in the City of Ottawa and that, amongst many other things, needs to change.

Knowing the impact that a rejuvenation plan of the Rideau Canal would have on the city and its citizens, it was important to keep in mind how the public engagement strategies could be improved. In a real scenario, an application would have to be submitted to the National Capital Commission discussing the proposal (similar to Site Plan Control). In the methodology section of the thesis, it was made clear that engaging with the public prior to developing a proposal was the key difference.

DISCUSSION WITH GRÉGOIRE JODOUIN

NEW OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY AND LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

The following section is a discussion that explored a different public engagement process; one that Ottawa could benefit from doing more often.

A rejuvenation plan for the Rideau Canal would require a thorough public engagement process and to better understand what would go into such a task, I looked towards the new Ottawa Public Library and Library and Archives Canada building as a precedent.

The design for the building was revealed to the public in January of 2020. This project, over four years in the making, has gone through an extensive public consultation process.

Before the site was chosen, the Ottawa Public Library board had approved a public consultation strategy for the project.⁶⁰ The engagement program was run by PACE (Public Affair + Community Engagement), a consulting firm that specializes in

“developing, planning and implementing meaningful stakeholder and community engagement programs.”⁶¹ To better understand how the strategy came together, an interview with PACE’s President and Founder, Grégoire Jodouin, was essential. The action plan the team developed was described as follows:

“We take an assessment of just how significant the project is to the community and its impact. This determines how much we need to be engaged with the community. [...] If it’s [a particular community] complicated and it’s expected to have an emotional reaction (values, etc), there’s a deeper dive into that particular community. We try to understand where every is coming from, not just the adjacent communicates, but other stakeholder groups (heritage, environment,

greenspace). We do this through interviews or media analysis like social media, reviews, statistics, etc.

Once you have a good idea of the sentiments, we develop an engagement framework. On one hand it's the activities and objectives as well as the communication like discussions that resonate with the sentiments so that you're hitting home with people. You're really telling a story and not using planning or architectural terminology. You try grabbing people's attention in their language. There's so much work to be done within how you frame the discussions.

The public library was tricky because of the location and moving it. We followed the same process I explained earlier. People really didn't want to move it. Being a third party that can meet with all the different sides as a mediator between the two groups as mutual grounds helps.

Everything you do with the framework is essential. Communicating gets the message out about opportunities and what's up for discussion. People need to have the right understanding of the project."⁶²

As a specialist in the field, I asked what he thought architects and city planners could do to have more fruitful community

engagements when proposing a project. His answer was as follows:

“I think a way forward in the urban planning projects or engagements is to have engagement be more integrated in the technical process. What’s been really significant for the Library is that the engagement is directly integrated in their [the architects’] design process. [...] We are doing the engagement in real time and in tandem with the architects’ design. Schmidt [Diamond Schmidt Architects] had never worked this way before but it ended up working great.”⁶³

Anecdotally, Don Schmidt from Diamond Schmidt Architects and Ralph Wiesbrock from KWC were present at the Ottawa Public Library and Library and Archives Canada reveal. I took the

opportunity to ask them how they felt about the engagement process. They both took turns explaining their experience during the whole process. Schmidt expressed that the first workshop with the public was a little overwhelming due to the amount of people and the approach they took. He continued by saying that everyone regrouped after to come up with a more balanced approach. Both Schmidt and Wiesbrock admitted to having a much more enjoyable experience after that. Wiesbrock said that the outcome of the process was extremely rewarding, and Schmidt jokingly said he was surprised that people were not up in arms at the open house.⁶⁴

My conversation with Schmidt and Wiesbrock sparked inspiration as proof that public engagement can be productive if done properly.

As previously mentioned, Site Plan Control allows for public to comment on a variety of points that are also reviewed by a plan's

examiner, which leads to another great point that Jodouin pointed out during our interview.

“Having people [general public] talk about technical aspects doesn’t work. You need to make sure you’re asking the public the right questions. If you need a specialist [for the question], don’t ask the public, but explain it to them. On the flip side, it’s more than just asking them about colour. There are deeper and more meaningful conversations that need to be had.”⁶⁵

The conversations had with Jodouin, Schmidt and Wiesbrock, begin to show that public engagement within the City of Ottawa has the potential to be a positive and productive experience. Part II of the thesis studies when we ask the right questions, we get better answers that add to the design process.

PART II

RATIONALE AND INTERVENTION

INTRODUCTION

REVITALIZING THE RIDEAU CANAL

Part II of the thesis tackles Ottawa's new Official Plan and varying other policy documents that need to be considered when putting together a revitalization plan.

The Rideau Canal has many stakeholders (see fig. 15), one of which is the National Capital Commission (NCC). Their Capital Urban Lands Plan notes that the NCC is committed to "Working closely with the region's municipal governments to ensure that the Capital's national interests are taken into account where planning exercises, development applications and infrastructure projects pertain to sites adjacent to federal property or that affect federal interest."⁶⁶

The proposal aspect to the thesis considers many of the policy directions from the Capital Urban Lands Plan as well as Ottawa's official plan. For clarity's sake, Part II will focus mainly on describing the municipal plans.

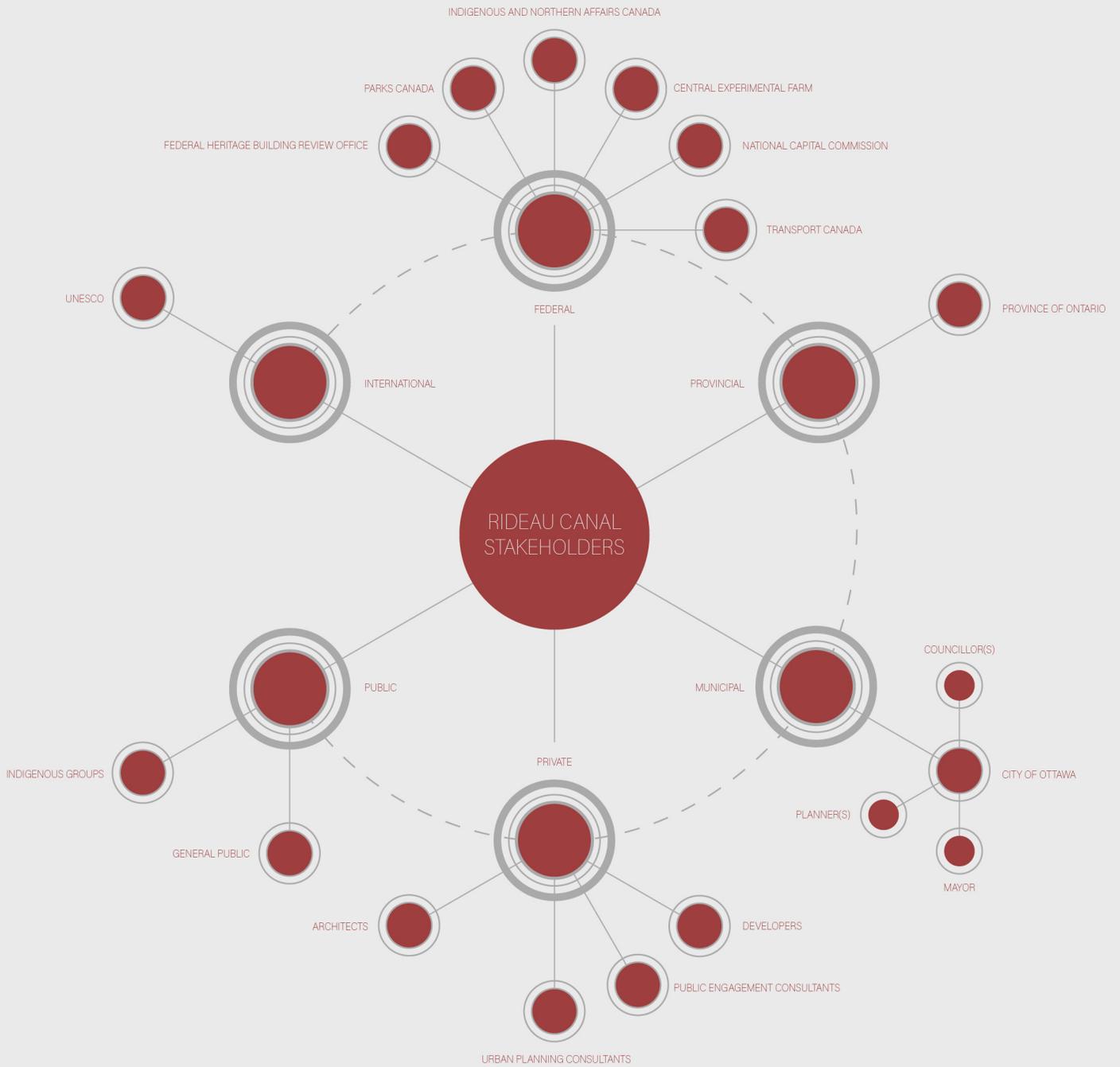


fig. 15 // Rideau Canal Stakeholders

However, as seen in Part I, there is still a lack of communication between various jurisdictions. This is especially true in the context of the Rideau Canal. Understandably, it is a national landmark and must be protected. The issue with the current methods of protection is that they hinder the advancement of the waterway and lands beside it. This proposal and revitalization plan, although in keeping with many of the NCCs guidelines, also pushes some necessary limits. It attempts to make the case for a more vibrant waterway in the heart of the city by introducing proposals that have been inspired by conversations with the public as well as various precedents from across the globe.

PREAMBLE

SAY HELLO TO OTTAWA'S NEW OFFICIAL PLAN

It is critical that the reader know what the New Official Plan is all about. The new plan is built around “5 Big Moves”:

1. Growth Management
2. Mobility
3. Urban and Community Design
4. Climate, Energy and Public Health
5. Economic Development⁶⁷

In late 2019, the City of Ottawa’s planning department revealed a more detailed document, containing the New Official Plan’s twenty-point Preliminary Policy Directions. Though many people refer to Ottawa as “the biggest small town”, the goal of the new Plan is to make Ottawa the most liveable mid-sized city in North America.⁶⁸

As the design themes move along in this thesis, so too will the explanation of Ottawa’s New Official Plan. It is important to note that the rewriting of the plan is still in a drafting phase and though

many preliminary documents have been released for public viewing, information provided may vary upon adoption of the official document.

The five themes of the proposal are:

1. Commercialization
2. Movement
3. Arts and the Seasons
4. Programming and Accessibility
5. Heritage Preservation and Education

THEME I

TAKE A WALK ALONG THE RIDEAU CANAL

The Rideau Canal acts as a stunning backdrop to activities such as kayaking, canoeing, walking, biking or picnicking. However, the waterway lacks commercialized space. Currently, the Canal houses five restaurants: Mexicali Rosa's, Umbrella Bar, and LAGO at the Dow's Lake Pavilion, (see fig. 16) Canal Ritz near the Glebe (see fig. 17), and 1 Elgin Restaurant (see fig. 18).

In 2012, 8 Locks' Flat (see fig. 19), a patio restaurant on the shore of the Canal, opened near the Somerset footbridge and University of Ottawa. This project, unsuccessful, would be replaced with Terrace on the Canal. Much like its predecessor, Terrace on the Canal would "serve as a community-oriented spot for grabbing coffee, food, beer or just enjoying the ambience", said Sharif Virani, the bar's marketing director.⁶⁹ During an interview with the Ottawa Citizen, owner Aydin Kharaghani said: "It's a way to support local businesses in Ottawa, from local food people, to Urban Juice Press, to craft beers and local breweries."⁷⁰ Unfortunately, today, the space sits vacant.

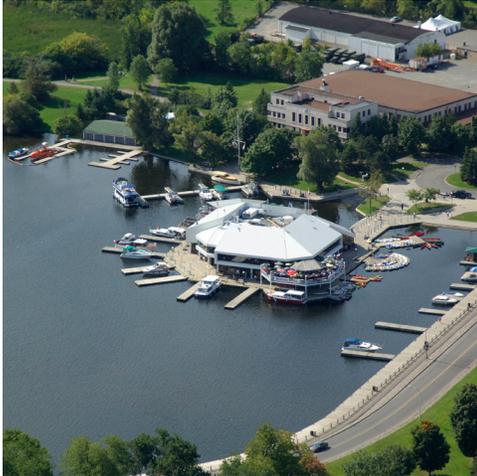


fig. 16 // Dow's Lake Pavilion

Marinas, *Dow's Lake Pavilion*, n.d., digital photograph, Ottawa, On, Accessed May 2020, https://marinas.com/view/marina/8qcx83_Dows_Lake_Pavilion_Ottawa_ON_Canada



fig. 18 // 1 Elgin Restaurant

NAC.CNA, [*What a Beautiful Day!*], June 8, 2017, digital photograph, Ottawa, On, Accessed May 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BVFrHH9DX8N/>

fig. 17 // Canal Ritz

Canal Ritz, [*Canal Ritz Restaurant Patio*], n.d., digital photograph, Ottawa, On, Accessed May 2020, <http://www.canalritz.com/>



fig. 19 // Terrace on the Canal

Terrace on the Canal, [*Terrace on the Canal Patio*], July 17, 2017, digital photograph, Ottawa, On, Accessed May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/terraceottawa/photos/a.1004373716319388/1424398087650280/?type=3&theater>



During an interview with a City Planning Official, they were asked to answer the following question: “What makes the Canal memorable?” The answer?

“That’s easy – it’s a landmark and we’re going to call it a Special District in the new Official Plan. We’re going to give it its own set of rules so that when a tourist is on a boat tour going back and forth, they will have a memorable impression of the city from that boat ride. Everything along the Canal should give you that image.

It should also give an image of urban activity and vitality. Anybody who says more activity, more commercial, more etc. even along Colonel By near U of O. Use some of that grass to build- we don’t

need all of that grass. Keep it green, but use it in a much, much better way. We can really animate it and give it life. It's beautiful, but it isn't charming. Canals in Amsterdam are charming (see fig. 20). It lacks that extra layer and texture. It needs to be more populated with both people and built objects. It still needs to be green, though – vertical greenery goes a long way!”⁷¹

This answer led to further researching, and consequently finding something new in Ottawa's upcoming Official Plan, the use of Special Districts. The Preliminary Policy Directions document admits that the current Official Plan has the tendency to disregard important areas in neighbourhoods that have a significant influence on their identity and character.⁷²



fig. 20 // Cafe By the Canal Amsterdam
RadissonBlu, [Cafe By the Canal in Amsterdam], May 9, 2019, digital photograph, Amsterdam, Accessed May 2020, <https://blog.radissonblu.com/amsterdam-best-brown-cafes/cafe-by-the-canal-in-amsterdam/>

Focusing on urban design (arts, heritage, public realm, contemporary interpretation) and community design (mix of uses, street design), each area will have its own design objectives provided by the City. Naturally, these objectives will have to coincide with National Capital Commission and other federal planning documents that are currently in place.

The Policy Directions document states that the Rideau Canal's special district policies will consider the following points:

- "The Heritage Management Plan will include policies regarding development adjacent to the Rideau Canal, requirements for Cultural Heritage Impact Statements and relevant policy in Parks Canada, National Capital Commissions plans."⁷³
- "Delineate boundary, recognize changing character from downtown to more picturesque landscapes and cityscapes along its shorelines near Dow's Lake. Provide design guidance for changes in characters as develops, heritage and animation

through buildings facing canal.”⁷⁴

- “Facilitate public access, interface with multi-use pathway and connections to neighbourhoods.”⁷⁵

Currently listed as Special District 2: Rideau Canal (subject to change), the city’s most important waterway will likely see more considered development in the future. The following proposal of two commercial districts align with the City’s goal of animating the Rideau canal, and touches on four of the City’s “5 Big Moves” (Mobility; Urban and Community Design; Climate, Energy and Public Health; Economic Development).

The following proposals explore the idea of having two commercial districts along the Rideau Canal, one at Dow’s Lake and one along the lands that run parallel to the O-Train line near the University of Ottawa.

THEME I

INTERVENTION I : DOW'S LAKE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The Chicago River shares a similar past to the Rideau Canal, it was an artery for industrial shipping. Located in the heart of downtown, the Chicago Riverwalk is on the South bank of the Chicago River. It is a “multi-award-winning, pedestrian friendly strip that is populated with coves; waterfront cafes, wineries, and bars; history-making public art; monuments; museums and amazing excursions on the water.”⁷⁶ It is a two-kilometre stretch while the “urban” part of the Rideau Canal is 8.2km long with virtually nothing on it.

The New Official Plan discusses Economic Development and Employment lands in its Policy Directions.

“In the Downtown Core and Inner Urban areas, additional employment also serves to reinforce and consolidate the established businesses along main streets and near nodes, especially those with higher-order transit service, and

encourage retail diversification to the benefit of the broader neighbourhood.”⁷⁷

The Rideau Canal has untapped economic potential. The Skateway sees thousands of people every single year and people look forward to grabbing a Beaver Tail on the ice. The summer is a bleaker experience.

Dow’s Lake is not the entertainment hub it could be. It is the centre point to where Queen Elizabeth Drive, Prince of Wales Drive and Preston Street meet. Although Chicago has the infrastructure and buildings to support their entertainment district, Dow’s Lake could be home to many temporary local establishments or even pop ups along the water’s edge. This would bring more value to the area through a boost in summer economy from both locals and tourists.

“Wish we had more cafés and bistros by the Canal. The one by uOttawa struggled.”

– Ottawa Resident

“When I lived in Sandy Hill, I would get up before dawn and skate the length of the Canal to watch the sun come up, then walk home along Rideau Street to pick up a warm pastry from the Rideau Bakery. I loved doing that on a Saturday morning.”

– Sunrise Skater

“We have about three restaurants on what’s basically a water city. The one thing I would blow up if I had the chance – Dow’s Lake Pavilion. It should be a jewel with better facilities, better food. More sustainable options. The extension of the Carling LRT station shows an opportunity to have proper development.”

– Just a Born and Raised Ottawa Kind of Guy

BUILT IN 1980s

DOW'S LAKE PAVILION

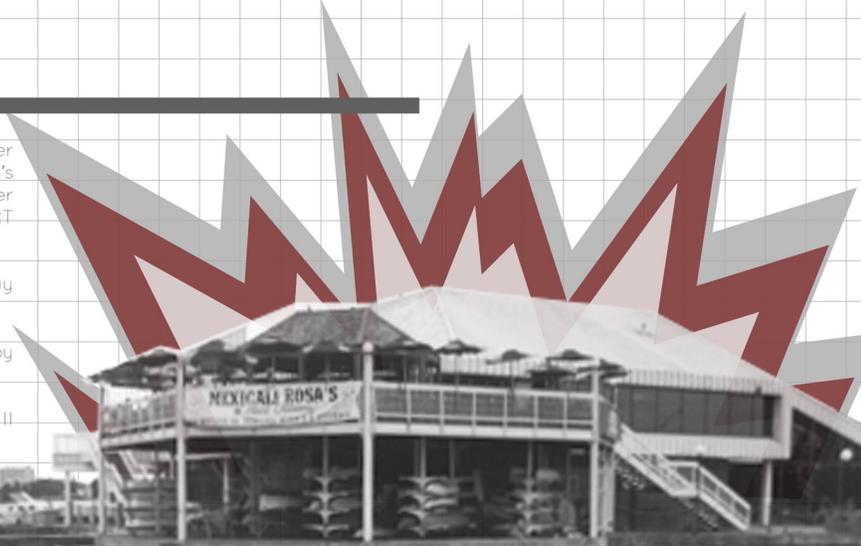
"We have about three restaurants on what's basically a water city. The one thing I would blow up if I had the chance - Dow's Lake Pavilion. It should be a jewel with better facilities, better food. More sustainable options. The extension of the Carling LRT station shows an opportunity to have proper development."

— Born & Raised Ottawa Kinda Guy

"I wish we had more cafés and bistros by the Canal. The one by the University of Ottawa struggled."

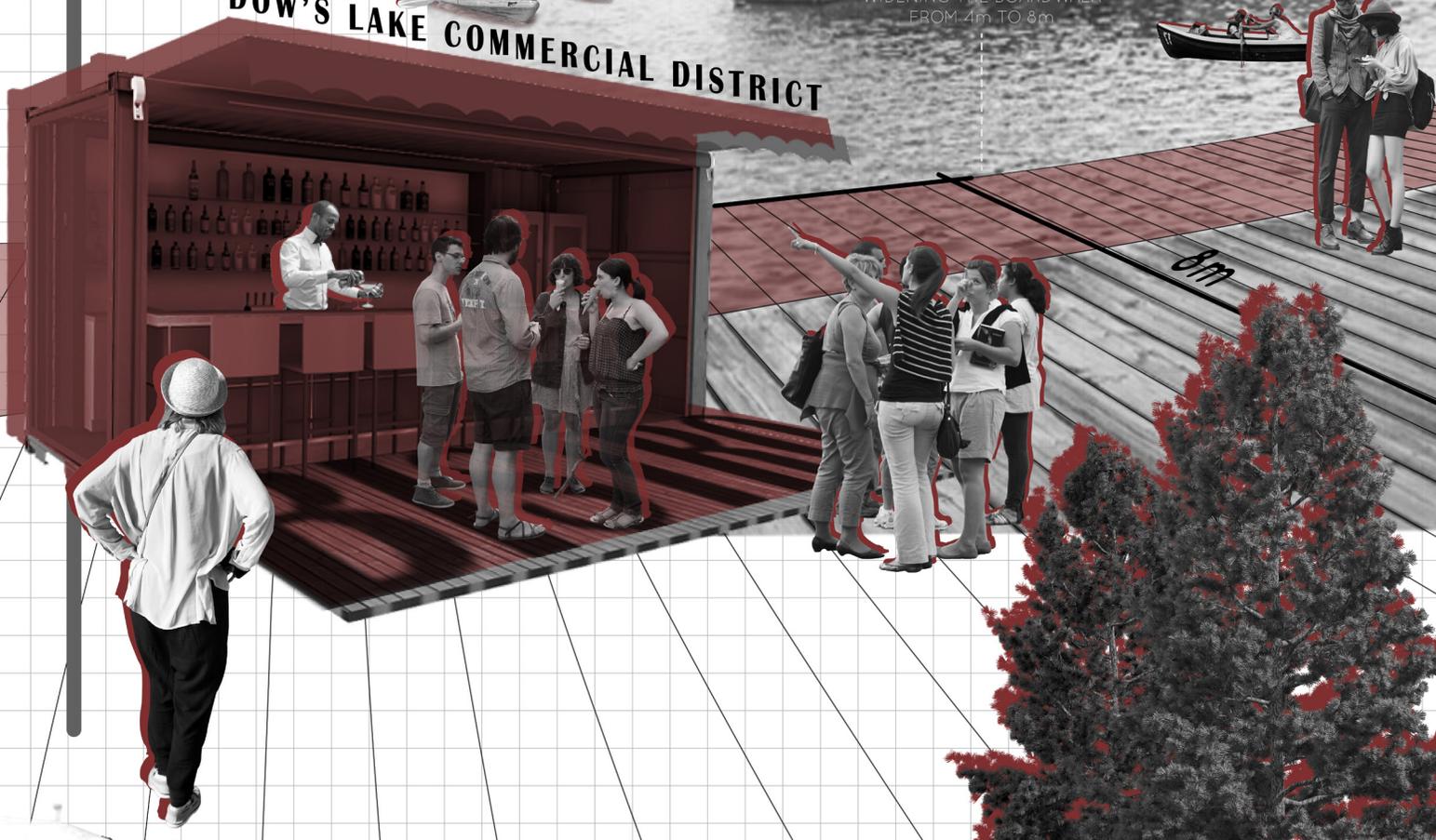
— Ottawa Resident II

HAVE A LINE OF SHOPS & CAFÉS
RUN BY LOCAL BUSINESSES



DOW'S LAKE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

WIDENING THE BOARDWALK
FROM 4m TO 8m



BUILT IN 1904

DOW'S LAKE CAUSEWAY



THEME I

INTERVENTION II : DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The San Antonio River Walk is a 24 kilometer walk that houses shops, restaurants, bistros, bars and other activities. “Tucked quietly below street level and only steps from the Alamo, it provides a serene and pleasant way to navigate the city.”⁷⁸ The San Antonio River Walk sees nearly 13 million people every year.⁷⁹ To put things into perspective, Ottawa’s population is about 1 million, whereas San Antonio’s 1.5 million. In comparison, the Rideau Canal sees about a million visitors each year, most of which are during the skating season.

A consideration for development is the strip that faces the University of Ottawa as a vibrant student and local business run commercial hub. While not all ventures have been successful, Ottawa has seen successful summer bistros such as Tavern on the Hill and Tavern on the Falls. Getting the public involved with a project like a commercial district could bring neighbourhoods together in creating a central hub that caters to their needs.

The Downtown Commercial District, running parallel to the O-Train line, would allow for students and passersby to experience the Rideau Canal.

“In Canadian cities, a working canal with accompanying parks is a rarity and a treat. Having said that, I have always thought that Ottawa could make better use of its rivers and the Canal. There could be more commercial use providing entertainment and nightlife. Think San Antonio, Texas, and its Riverwalk. I’ve been to Portland, Maine a couple of times in recent years. They have a great working water- front with fishing boats, fish markets/vendors, bars, restaurants and even housing. It’s lively and vibrant.”

– Ottawa Resident

“You had patios and restaurants, and you could go pick a random spot with your friends. It’s great because these areas give you an opportunity to meet people from all over the place. You go have breakfast, lunch, or dinner as a group and just go wherever! It’d be nice to have that without sacrificing the greenery, you know?”

– A Pastry Chef (About San Antonio Riverwalk)

CIRCA 1901

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

"In Canadian cities, a working canal with accompanying parks is a rarity and a treat. Having said that, I have always thought that Ottawa could make better use of its rivers and the Canal. There could be more commercial use providing entertainment and nightlife. Think San Antonio, Texas, and its Riverwalk. I've been to Portland, Maine a couple of times in recent years. They have a great working water-front with fishing boats, fish markets/vendors, bars, restaurants and even housing. It's lively and vibrant."

— Ottawa Resident

MAY 2020

RIDEAU CANAL

LINE THE CURRENTLY OPEN GRASS AREA WITH NON-PERMANENT STRUCTURES TO ACCOMMODATE FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

CIRCA 1905

RIDEAU QUEEN BOAT

THEME II

MOVING ON AND ALONG THE CANAL

Another important element is transportation. The new Official Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, the Ottawa Pedestrian Plan and the Ottawa Cycling Plan all define the City's priorities for more sustainable transportation.⁸⁰ Big Move 2: of the official plan is Mobility and

“The new Official Plan provides an opportunity to revise and strengthen targets for trips made by sustainable modes, both in terms of environmental sustainability and affordability (walking, cycling, transit, or carpool) to the year 2046 to create a healthy, complete, compact, liveable and resilient City.”⁸¹

The Rideau Canal sees many modes of transportation daily. In the summer, people can be seen walking, biking, kayaking, canoeing, paddle boating or driving. The winter sees mostly skaters or NCC

crews working hard at maintaining the Skateway.

There is, however, one problem; accessibility to the water during the summer months. During the winter there are 29 access points along the 8.2 kilometer skateway. In the summer, along the same stretch, if kayakers and canoers want to load their watercrafts into the water, there are only 9 access points – where all but one, are along Queen Elizabeth Drive, of which two are recent additions added only four years ago in 2016.⁸²

To improve transportation needs and access, the Preliminary Policy Directions that this part of the new Official Plan touches on the following:

1. “Increase the supply of parking for active and sustainable modes of transportation (bicycles, car-share, etc.) including in private developments.”⁸³
2. “Plan new street networks according to network principles that support safe and convenient trips by walking, cycling

and transit.”⁸⁴

Big Move 4 includes: Climate, Energy and Public Health, boasts the need for sustainable design and green communities. Preliminary Policy Directions include equitable access to recreational experiences for all residents and providing parks and space for recreation in the downtown and inner urban areas where populations are growing, and higher-density communities are expected.⁸⁵

Additionally, the City is considering implementing 15-minute neighbourhoods. In an article by CBC News, Alain Miguelez, a senior City of Ottawa planning official, said: “we have to start to think about what we need to put in place now to reach that two-to three-million threshold.”⁸⁶ Comparing the potential of Ottawa to what could be cities like Oslo, Copenhagen, or Amsterdam, Miguelez continues by saying that “we want to incorporate whatever teachings we can borrow to make sure that we’re avoiding the problems that they’ve

experience and that we're steering the city in the right direction to be a liveable city of that size".⁸⁷

The following two proposals aim to offer the opportunity for people to access the waterway from multiple points, enriching the citizen and visitor experience from one end to the other.

THEME II

INTERVENTION I : CATCH THE WATER TAXI!

“No Lights, No Traffic, Just Relaxation to Your Destination!”⁸⁸that is the Chicago Water Taxi’s slogan. Since 1962, Wendella (a Chicago river transportation service) began a rush hour commuter service between Michigan Avenue and the Northwestern Railroad Station.⁸⁹ Forty-five years later, the Wendella RiverBus was rebranded as the Chicago Water Taxi, which expanded its fleet and route. Chicago Water Taxi talks about three points on their website that showcase why they consider themselves different to other modes of transportation:

1. “Relieving Traffic Congestion”
 - a. In 2018, Chicago Water Taxi took over 400,000 passengers on various routes along the Chicago River. That equals over 8,000 buses and over 200,00 car trips.
2. Environmental Sustainability
 - a. Chicago Water Taxi goes above and beyond regulatory requirements to mitigate emissions and promote river health including but not limited to; aggressive re-powering of vessels to cleaners, more fuel efficient engines, adoption

and re-purposing of tourism, recreational and industrial vessels to provide transportation and exceeding EPA regulatory requirements regarding cleaning products, deck runoffs, and painting materials. Wendella also participates in annual trash cleanups of the Chicago River.

3. Increasing Access

a. Chicago Water Taxi provides connections to over eight different neighbourhoods located along the Chicago River, and hires crewmembers from all neighbourhoods in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs.”⁹⁰

This initiative could improve both transportation and access along the Rideau Canal. With onboard amenities such as climate-controlled vessels, restrooms, and allowing passengers to bring their bikes, luggage and food on board, a water taxi would be a viable alternative to Ottawa’s current transportation network.

It would give residents of the Byward Market, Sandy Hill, the

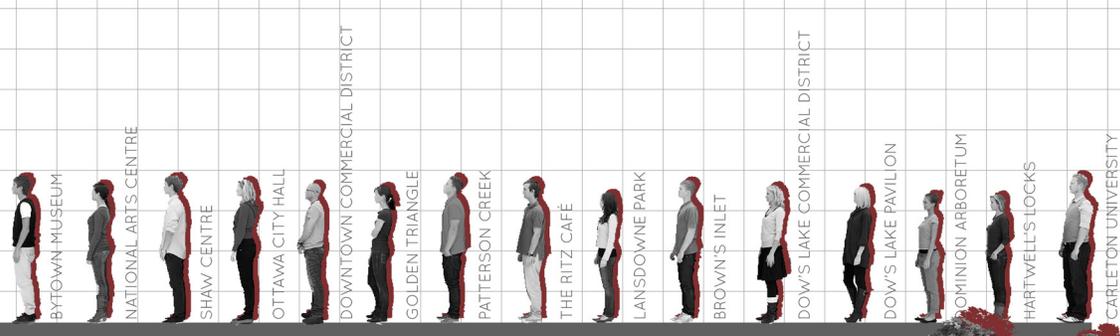
Golden Triangle, the Glebe, Old Ottawa East, Old Ottawa South, and students from the University of Ottawa, St. Paul's University and Carleton University the opportunity to move along the canal in an efficient, and more enjoyable, way.

“A water taxi from the Conference Centre or National Arts Centre to Lansdowne or Dow’s Lake would be a great idea.”

– Ottawa Resident

“What I like about biking is that it’s a mode of transportation. I like it when something is useful, and maybe there’s something to do there regarding the Canal. What? I don’t know. What we see now are a few people on tour boats, kayaking, there’s skating in the winter – which is great. Kayaking is fun. What I thought was interesting is this year – in I think July – I biked around and noticed that near the University [University of Ottawa], they had set up some kayaks for people to use, or rent I’m not sure. I thought that was nice! You would see individuals or families using them and it was a way for them to discover the canal or kayaking itself.”

– History Teacher



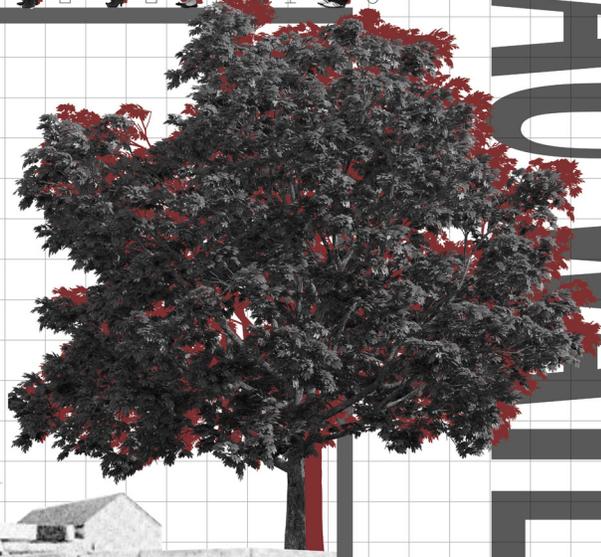
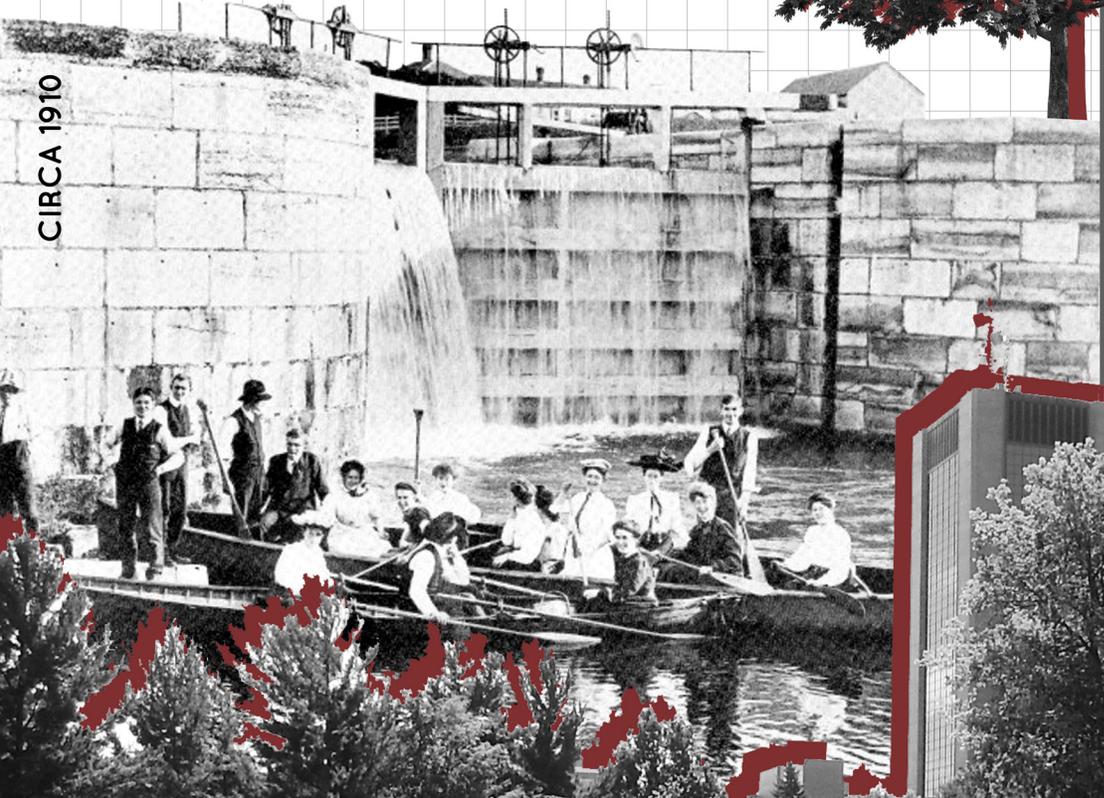
BYTOWN MUSEUM
 NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE
 SHAW CENTRE
 OTTAWA CITY HALL
 DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
 GOLDEN TRIANGLE
 PATTERSON CREEK
 THE RITZ CAFÉ
 LANSOWNE PARK
 BROWN'S INLET
 DOW'S LAKE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
 DOW'S LAKE PAVILION
 DOMINION ARBORETUM
 HARTWELL'S LOCKS
 CARLETON UNIVERSITY

DESTINATION...

"A water taxi from the Conference Centre or National Arts Centre to Lansdowne or Dow's Lake would be a great idea."
 — Ottawa Resident 1

RIDEAU WATER TAXI

CIRCA 1910



2007



HARTWELL'S LOCKS

HAVE A WATER TAXI THAT STOPS AT KEY DESTINATIONS ALONG THE RIDEAU CANAL.

THEME II

INTERVENTION II : LET'S NOT TAKE THE CAR

The Transportation Master Plan is a document that accompanies the Official Plan. Currently being updated to match the New Official Plan, the document touches on everything transportation related (cycling, walking, public transit, etc). Chapter five of the policy is titled Develop A Great Cycling City. It identifies six key factors that can motivate people to cycle:

1. “Suitable distances from trip origins to destinations
2. Pleasant, direct, safe, well-maintained cycling routes that provide as much separation from traffic as possible
3. Convenient, secure bicycle parking, shower and change facilities at destinations
4. Convenient, secure connections between cycling and transit facilities
5. Individual cycling skills appropriate for the routes available
6. Positive social attitudes towards cycling”⁹¹

The Transportation Master Plan also begins to discuss the Ottawa Cycling Plan (a separate policy) and their points:

- “Policies to Make Ottawa Cycling-Friendly
 - o Cycling-supportive Planning
 - o Improving Multimodal Travel Options
 - o Quality of Facilities
- Cycling Infrastructure
 - o Ultimate Network Concept
 - o Cycling Network Implementation
 - o Cycling-friendly Pavement
- Inter-Jurisdiction Cooperation
 - o National Capital Commission
 - o City of Gatineau
 - o Province of Ontario “92

Residents of Ottawa have used the Canal as a transit line for decades. Queen Elizabeth often sees road closure for events. At the time of writing, the world has seen the wrath of Covid-19 and getting out and being active has been an escape for many residents. A pilot project to close Queen Elizabeth from Dow’s

Lake to Downtown has been proposed to allow people to remain physically distant while maintaining an active lifestyle.

But what if they closed Queen Elizabeth to vehicular traffic permanently?

"Skating from Cooper Street to the locks to get to and from University or sitting there having lunch when I worked downtown."

- Old Ottawa Student

"I remember as a child walk to the Canal a little passed Billings Bridge plaza, walking to Bank, getting on the Canal (winter), skating on the canal with friends or alone. When I got older, I would skate to the Rideau Centre, have lunch, a beer or two, and then would take the bus home. In summer, I had a friend who worked on Paul's Boat Line; if he saw me he would say I was training for the olympics"

- The Would-be Olympian



1925

BANK STREET BRIDGE

2017

CLOSE QUEEN ELIZABETH DURING THE SUMMER

"What I like about biking is that it's a mode of transportation. I like it when something is useful, and maybe there's something to do regarding the Canal. What? I don't know. What we see now are a few people on four boats, kayaking, there's skating in the winter, which is great."

Kayaking is fun. What I thought was interesting is this year - I think in July - I biked around and noticed that near the University of Ottawa, they had set up some kayaks for people to use, or rent. I'm not sure. I thought that was nice. You would see individuals or families using them and it was a way for them to discover the canal or kayaking itself."

— History Teacher

NO MORE VEHICLE ACCESS

THEME III

THE SEASONS AND THE ARTS

Many comments that came up point to the seasonal association people have with the Canal. In the fall, when the leaves turn varying shades of red, orange and yellow, residents and visitors walk the pathways and fall in love with the Canal even more. In mid-October, when the Rideau gets drained, people know it is time to start cozying inside for the cold winter ahead. When the water comes up in mid-April, Ottawans welcome the spring season after a long and frigid winter. Trees in bloom, and the city full of life, the Rideau Canal and the natural system that lines it is a spectacle for city dwellers during all seasons of the year.

Ottawa is home to many talented local artists. Recently, the best integration of local art has been seen in the Light-Rail Train stations. Along Line one of the O-Train (Ottawa's trainline), passengers can explore artwork by twenty-four artists at thirteen stations.⁹⁵

The New Official Plan aims to embrace Ottawa's culture. The

Policy Direction document states that “a liveable city is based on the understanding that places exist for social and creative activities by all residents.”⁹⁴ Specific directions for bringing culture to the forefront include, but are not limited to: a new Culture subsection in the Plan, new policies directed towards public art and cultural expression, identity and social connection in nodes, corridors and in neighbourhood level plans.⁹⁵

The need for local art, which includes Algonquin Anishinaabe art, is vital to the solidification of Ottawa’s identity. The Algonquin Anishinaabe Nations have lived on Ottawa lands for millennia. Their culture and presence need to be celebrated and better integrated within the City. The new Official Plan Policy Directions make clear that the new document will need a more and active public art policy and program. The reason being that “public art is an important element of placemaking. It has the power to define a community and create a unique culture as well as global influences.”⁹⁶

Many musicians and performance artists leave the city to pursue bigger cities such as Toronto or New York. In order to better the art scene in the city, artist friendly spaces need to be generously scattered across neighbourhoods – especially within the urban centre.

The following proposals consider people who like to sit and dream, as well as those who like to dance along the winding paths of the Canal. They illustrate various spots that residents can relax, read a book, or just admire the scenery, and shows designated areas that are specific to local artists, allowing them to create freely.

THEME III

INTERVENTION I : HAVE A BREAK

The Official Plan Directives make clear that Ottawa needs to step in in terms of its environmental stewardship. Ottawa must embrace climate resiliency and the 2019 Provincial Policy Statement has stronger policies and requires municipalities to prepare for climate change and the mitigation of it.

The following Policy Direction in the Climate Resiliency section of the document is most relevant to the proposal:

- “Reduce the impacts of extreme heat and reduce the urban heat island effect by:
 - o Retaining and planting large caliper shade trees along streets, in public areas and on private property, in recognition of the health benefits and environmental services provided by trees, in addition to their aesthetic value.
 - o Creating shaded homes, routes (sidewalks, bike lanes, paths) and connections (bus stops).
 - o Installing cool (reflective) or green roofs, reflective materials in parking lots and other materials that reduce

the heat island.”⁹⁷

The document also covers Parks and Recreation. A large number of respondents to the Official Plan discussion forums said walking and biking to parks and greenspaces was very important to them. The Plan will aim to introduce policies that promote enough access to recreational experiences for all residents, this includes Policy directions on parks that fit downtown, inner urban, outer urban and rural contexts. It will also provide parks and space for recreation downtown and inner urban areas where populations are growing, and higher-density communities are expected in ways such as:

- “Include new approaches: Pursue opportunities to use underutilized spaces such as redundant vehicle lanes, leftover road segments and unconventional spaces.
- Partnerships with the National Capital Commission and school boards should also be explored for programming and using publicly owned greenspace.
- Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services will develop an

Urban Parks Strategy and Parks Master Plan that will guide parks and recreation facilities in different parts of the city in alignment with Official Plan policies.”⁹⁸

The following design proposal aims to bring forward areas for those who like to sit and read a book, draw in the sun or just need a few minutes to not think about anything at all.

“When I was a student at Carleton in the 1970s, it was great to have the river on one side and the Canal on the other: peaceful, tranquil, historic and useful.”

– Ottawa Resident

“Being on the water, any water, but especially Ottawa water. Seeing the ‘back side’ of Ottawa. Driving beside the water. Being able to stop by the water, to picnic, to calm, to reconnect with the world, to sit and dream. I’ve been away from Ottawa for 30 years now, and the river, the Canal, are still among the things I miss the most.”

– Previous Ottawa Resident

“There is something so peaceful about the canal that I love. Getting on the Driveway at Hog’s Back and driving to Rideau or getting on near Lisgar and driving to Dow’s Lake. This drive, or even walking along the Canal acts as a mind sedative that seems to relieve stress in all four seasons of the year.”

– Descendent of a Royal Sapper

SPACES TO ENJOY

DOCKS AND SPACES ALONG THE CANAL THAT ENCOURAGE PASSERSBY TO ENJOY THE SCENERY AND THE INNER CITY NATURE OTTAWA HAS TO OFFER

"I love it from Dow's to Pretoria. It's gorgeous all times of the year. In the fall it's red and full of colour. In the spring it's full of light. In the winter it's tranquil and many of the vistas are fabulous up the Canal. It's really quite magical. It was a great joy in my life. I miss it a great deal now that I live in Westboro

— Previous City Councilor



HAVE DOCKS FAN OUT ONTO THE WATER WHERE THERE CURRENTLY IS NO SEATING SPACE



2019

RIDEAU CANAL BETWEEN BRONSON & BANK

THEME III

INTERVENTION II: AND OTTAWA SAID: “LET THERE BE ART!”

Ottawa has many murals, sculptures and graffiti. Neighbourhoods such as Downtown Rideau, the By Ward Market, The Glebe and Little Italy all house beautiful local art that give Ottawa its character. Ottawa’s current Graffiti Program is intended to deal with graffiti vandalism. The City’s definition of graffiti is: “etching, painting or placing of a mark on public or private property.”⁹⁹ The website goes on by saying that “any type of graffiti places on public or private property without permission is considered vandalism.”¹⁰⁰ This thesis is in no way condoning vandalism on private property, however, there is a need for more local art and graffiti is constantly evolving as an art form.

The City’s Graffiti Management By-law requires that all property within the City of Ottawa remain free of graffiti, with the exception of areas designated “legal graffiti wall”.¹⁰¹ However, this by-law is not always closely monitored. With only three “legal graffiti walls” in the city (underside of the Dunbar Bridge [see fig. 31], Albert Street Education Centre Retaining Wall [see fig. 32] and Bob MacQuarrie

Recreation Complex-Orleans), it becomes difficult for artists to be creative in a city that has a lot of concrete. An initiative taken by the City is commissioning local artists to craft beautiful murals under a few of the City's underpasses. An example of this are the two murals depicting the Rideau Canal on each side of the Laurier Bridge (see fig. 33).¹⁰²

All this to say, the Rideau Canal currently has concrete bridges that offer little to no aesthetic or cultural value to the adjacent neighbourhoods. The Queensway bridge could easily become a canvas for local artists including the retaining walls could have local art on them.

Partnered with the City of Ottawa, artists could have virtually all creative freedom while incorporating wayfinding symbols or even working with communities to create pieces of art that speak to the lifestyles of each respective neighbourhood.



fig. 31 // Dunbar Bridge

Terry Steeves, [Dunbar Bridge], February 17, 2014, digital photograph, Ottawa, On, Accessed May 2020, <https://apt613.ca/hidden-gems-dunbar-bridge-north-side-legal-graffiti-walls/>



fig. 32 // Albert Street Retaining Wall

Elyob, Ottawa Tech Graffiti Wall, February 6, 2012, digital photograph, Ottawa, On, Accessed May 2020, <http://staging.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=3bee16fe-b8b7-4c2f-ad68-7ad67179484f&gid=3>



fig. 33 // Laurier Bridge Mural

Mathieu Fleury's Office, [Underpass Mural of Rideau Canal History], October 6, 2016, digital photograph, Ottawa, On, Accessed May 2020, <https://www.simcoe.com/news-story/6898941-murals-highlight-ottawa-s-history/>

Ottawa is home to local musicians, and theatre groups as well. The Rideau Canal sees few of these talented groups. It would be interesting to see spaces along the Rideau Canal that offer various opportunities for artists of all kinds to showcase their talent year-round.

The following proposal shows a variety of different spots that could be used as public canvases and performance areas.

“Our first job for the city was stenciling a sign on the paths of the canal. It said ‘Bicycle Pathway.’ This was 1972. The very beginnings of the bike paths.

– Ottawa Artist

“I love it from Dow’s to Pretoria. It’s gorgeous all times of the year. In the fall it’s red and full of colour. In the spring it’s full of light. In the winter it’s tranquil and many of the vistas are fabulous up the Canal. It’s really quite magical. It was a great joy in my life. I miss it a great deal now that I live in Westboro.”

– Previous City of Ottawa Councilor

“Because I’m a musician, I guess that’s the one thing that pops into my head. We’re always talking about gatherings. Well, why are people gathering? Are they protesting? Are they having a farmer’s market? People like live music. Performance spaces – which can be difficult in the winter – if you pre-program an amphitheatre, that’s not versatile for four seasons. It would have to be a design that allows for four-season use. I don’t want it to be an empty amphitheatre.”

– Urban Planning Consultant

• DESIGNATE SAPPER'S STAIRCASE AND PLAZA BRIDGE SPACE AS A PERFORMING ARTS AREA

• OPEN IT TO VARIOUS EVENTS, BUSKERS, ACTING GROUPS, MUSIC GROUPS, ETC

SAPPER'S STAIRCASE

ADDED IN 1990S

PERFORMANCE SPACE

"Because I'm a musician, I guess that's the one thing that pops into my head. We're always talking about gatherings. Well, why are people gathering? Are they protesting? Are they having a farmer's market? People like music. Performance spaces, which can be difficult in the winter, if you pre-program an amphitheatre, that's not versatile for four seasons. It would have to be a design that allows for four-season use. I don't want it to be an empty amphitheatre."

— Urban Planning Consultant

CIRCA 1905

CIRCA 1912

SAPPER BRIDGE & DUFFERIN BRIDGE

THEME IV

PROGRAMMING AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Canal has always been known to welcome activities. Winterlude brings forward many family-oriented events, making the Rideau a hub of energy. However, in the summer, aside from the tulip festival, the Canal sees very few organized events because an additional issue is that neighbourhoods on either end are cut off from each other, creating a disconnect between residents. Colonel By Drive and Queen Elizabeth act as barrier to the waterway from adjacent neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, the Canal bares few amenities such as washrooms, water fountains or change rooms. These amenities make it difficult for families with young children to walk the long of the Canal.

The Preliminary Policy Directions make note that the new Official Plan will advance policies that enable evolution to walkable, 15-minute neighbourhoods. The plan will aim at “developing traffic-calmed local roads for slower speeds, including 30km/h streets or less, as well as an inclusive public realm through “living streets”

which are designed as social spaces to promote very slow motor speeds for the benefit of people walking and biking, and children playing.”¹⁰³

Animating the Rideau Canal with more activities, would bring more life to the waterway. Animating it could include activities such classes along the Canal (art, music, yoga, etc.), movie nights under certain bridges, parks and more.

THEME IV

INTERVENTION I : ANIMATING BRIDGES AND PATHWAYS

Waterfront Toronto is a revitalization project created by the Government of Canada, the government of Ontario and the City of Toronto. The goal is to transform the city's waterfront by creating new places to live, work, learn and play.¹⁰⁴ This project will cost \$1.27 billion (from various sources) according to the Five-Year Strategic Plan.¹⁰⁵

The initiative released a program application guideline in 2017, which has the objective of “facilitating the production and presentation of three types of programming: Community Arts & Culture Workshops, Site-Specific Projects, and One-Day Festivals.”¹⁰⁶The guideline document suggests a number of eligible proposal types and maximum funding that the organization can contribute. Example of project categories are:

- Dance
- Music
- Literary Arts
- Performances

- Installations
- Screenings
- Community Engagements and more¹⁰⁷

Waterfront Toronto will be an incredible asset to the City of Toronto, both from economic and cultural stand points. The Rideau Canal could see similar revitalization projects.

The following proposal aims to help visualize some of the activities and events that could be hosted along the Rideau Canal.

"I kind of just miss regular ice sculptures on Dow's Lake, made with snow by just regular people. And I love, love biking the paths along the Canal in tulip season."

- Ottawa Resident

"My dad and the other fathers would help us plow rinks between the old bridge and Bank Street. We would play hockey every day after school. Our boots were all tucked into one of the street drains so we wouldn't lose them. We painted our pucks orange to help find them in the snow. Every team I played on later in life would always draw comments to the coach about my inability to use boards, but amazing stick handling skills."

- The Boot Hiding Hockey Player

"As a teenager, skating on the Canal with a bunch of friends at night. The lights would get turned off, and we'd have to hustle from Dow's Lake to the shack passed Pretoria Bridge in the dark, hoping it would still be open to get our boots!"

- The Hustler

PROGRAMMABLE

SPACES

"I kind of just miss regular ice sculptures on Dow's Lake, made with snow by just regular people. And I love, love biking the paths along the Canal in tulip season!"

— Ottawa Resident

QUEEN ELIZABETH DRIVEWAY

CIRCA 1903

2017

BANK STREET BRIDGE

REMOVABLE DOCK UNDER BANK STREET BRIDGE THAT STRETCHES OUT TO CREATE A LARGE GATHERING SPACE TO HOLD CLASSES AND EVENTS SUCH AS DANCE CLASSES OR YOGA ON THE WATER



THEME IV

INTERVENTION II : PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY CANAL

Ottawa’s Pedestrian Plan (2013) is part of “Building a Liveable Ottawa; a comprehensive review of City policy with respect to land use, transportation and infrastructure as embodied in the Official Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, the Infrastructure Master Plan and the Ottawa Cycling Plan.”¹⁰⁸ It aims to make Ottawa a more pedestrian-friendly city through proposed “enhancements to the pedestrian network, planning and design, safety and promotion, and maintenance and rehabilitation.”¹⁰⁹ It hopes to move Ottawa towards becoming a world-class pedestrian city that encourages residents to walk all year-round.

In 2019, the Flora footbridge was opened to the public, connecting Clegg Street and Fifth Avenue over the Rideau Canal. The Plan offers Pedestrian-oriented Design Guidelines and brings forward to key factors that contribute to making communities walkable:

1. Direct walking routes that connect to services (public transit, schools, community centres, and libraries) and key

destinations (work, home and shopping) that residents need to walk to on a regular basis.

2. Walking facilities that are safe, attractive, accessible and comfortable.

The following proposal introduces ways in which the Rideau Canal could be more pedestrian-friendly while still allowing for a variety of movement (theme two) on and along the Rideau Canal's lands.

"I think there could be better accessibility to the Canal. Unless you have a boat or a kayak, the water itself isn't very accessible. Which is too bad."

– History Teacher

"Way back before the NCC started plowing the and maintaining the ice, kids would just go out, shovel themselves a rink and play shinny. Now, pucks and sticks are 'forbidden' - I think that's a shame. As someone who works in our risk-adverse public service, I'm guessing it's a liability for the NCC. But yes, providing more some more designated hockey areas along the vast expanse of ice would make a great thing better!"

– Nostalgic Resident of Ottawa

WATER ACCESS POINTS

WATER ACCESS POINTS

"I think there could be better accessibility to the Canal. Unless you have a boat or a kayak, the water itself isn't very accessible. Which is too bad."

— History Teacher

CIRCA 1900

RIDEAU CANAL FROM BANK STREET BRIDGE



PROVIDE POINTS THAT ALLOW FOR PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE WATER WHILE MAINTAINING THE EXISTING BIKE LANES; BOARDWALKS ALONG THE COLONEL BY SIDE WOULD ALLOW FOR PEDESTRIANS TO MAINTAIN A SAFE DISTANCE FROM VEHICLES GOING UP AND DOWN THE DRIVEWAY



2019

VIEW NEAR HARTWELL'S LOCKS LOOKING NORTH

THEME V

HISTORY AND IDENTITY OF THE RIDEAU CANAL

Ottawa’s cultural landscape is comprised of many “vibrant spaces, places, practices and people.”¹¹⁰ A few of these include:

- UNESCO World Heritage Site (Rideau Canal);
- Major, national cultural institutions, and rich historic-archeological sites;
- Vibrant public art and engaging street culture, and;
- A thriving local food and culinary scene¹¹¹

The Rideau Canal has a story of its own, which has been seen through the various proposals in this thesis, and it is important to let that story be told.

The new Official Plan hopes to include a Cultural Plan for the City of Ottawa. In October of 2019, the City’s Cultural Development and Initiatives Section hosted an event called Defining Ottawa Together. It aimed to define Ottawa’s future through culture. The spaces/places in question were the following:

- Indigenous places and spaces

- New immigrant places and spaces
- Arts, heritage and cultural hubs
- Natural and rural areas, parks and open spaces
- Culture online

One of the comments in the forum for the Arts, heritage and cultural hubs section was “Develop local cultural hubs that reflect the community and its needs, creating an opportunity to share and celebrate the local culture.”¹¹²

The first proposal, a Jane’s Walk, is an extension to the already popular activity in Ottawa. The second, a water projection show, aims to curate an unforgettable installation that will stay with people forever.

THEME V

INTERVENTION I : JANE'S WALK WITH THE RIDEAU CANAL

In May of 2019, a series of outdoor exhibits along the 8.2-kilometre path of the Canal was unveiled to the public. “These seven exhibits include sculptures, plaques and illustrations that highlight the history and cultural significant of that particular location of the Rideau Canal.”¹¹³ These seven exhibits are located at the following sites:

- Ottawa Locks
 - o Experience the Kìchì Sìbì (Ottawa River)
 - o Defines the traditional Algonquin Anishinaabe territory
- Shaw Centre Esplanade
 - o Former railway lands
 - o Union Station
 - o Transportation history
- Pretoria Bridge
 - o Vertical-lift bridge
 - o Commercial History
- Lansdowne Park
 - o Site of national celebrations, military training, agriculture

fairs, sporting and cultural events, and where scientific innovations were unveiled.

- o Now feature an array of shops and restaurants, as well as sports and exhibition spaces.

- Dow's Lake

- o Used to be a swamp

- o Vibrant hub for a wide number of recreational and cultural activities

- Central Experimental Farm

- o Working farm since 1886

- o Used for scientific and agricultural research

- o Arboretum: created to test hardiness of trees and shrubs new to the Canadian climate

- Hartwells Lockstation

- o Gateway that allows boats to access the Rideau Canal system.

- o Beginning and the end

- o Heritage Buildings and Carleton University¹¹⁴

Though the Promenade's exhibits are meant to tell the story of the Canal and the buildings that complement their surroundings, educating those who are interested, they do not offer much of an experience. In order to preserve the Canal, there needs to be more storytelling and curiosity amongst the citizens of Ottawa.

“Jane’s Walk is about getting closer to your city, about getting out and observing, meeting your neighbours, discovering new area of the city, and learning about the urban landscapes, streetscape, buildings, parks, public art and monuments, and the details of daily existence that weave together into the fabric of our urban life. Sharing our passion for the city through events like Jane’s Walk helps knit people

together into a strong and resourceful community, forging a sense of identity and belonging, and encouraging civic pride.”¹¹⁵

After her death in 2006, a group of Jane Jacobs’ friends thought up the idea of a Jane’s Walk to honour her ideas and celebrating her legacy. The first was inaugurated on May 5, 2007 in Toronto.¹¹⁶ The following year, the walk would be held across Canada in ten cities – including Ottawa.

Curating a Jane’s Walk along the Rideau would allow for people to discover more than just the written history found on the exhibits. It would invite them to local shops and restaurants, parks, hideaways, and more. The proposed walk would consider all the other proposals shown thus far in the thesis, as well as the already existing exhibits.

Whether they start at the Entrance Locks or the Hartwells Lockstation, the goal of the walk would be to create an experiential and interactive journey down (or up) the Rideau Canal.

"I miss playing hockey on the canal. Used to do it a lot and one day it all stopped. We are Canadian after all. It was one of my favourite winter pastimes – playing hockey on the canal. I appreciate you being you and doing what you can!"

– A True Canadian Through and Through

"I think what is missing is a self-guided walking tour of the Rideau Canal with helpful information plaques. There is a nice walking tour at the Royal Military College in Kingston which is what I'd have in mind for Ottawa."

– A History Enthusiast

"Touring the various lock stations along the Canal is a great way to connect with the history and beauty of the Canal. Especially places like Jones Falls , Long Island, and Hog's Back. Seeing the dam at Jones Falls is an impressive wonder. The fact that it was the highest dam in North America at one point adds to that!"

– Lock Station Guru

JANE'S WALK

BANK STREET

1910

HAVE A JANE'S WALK FROM DOWNTOWN TO HOG'S BACK THAT VISITS ALL OF THE NEW EXHIBITIONS AS WELL AS EXPLORES THE NEIGHBOURHOODS AROUND THE RIDEAU CANAL

2014

DOW'S LAKE BOARDWALK

CIRCA 1900

LANSDOWNE ARCHWAY

"I think what is missing is a self guided walking tour of the Rideau Canal with helpful information plaques. There is a nice walking tour at the Royal Military College in Kingston which is what I'd have in mind for Ottawa."

—A History Enthusiast

1920

ENTRANCE LOCKS

1978

PRETORIA BRIDGE

THEME V

INTERVENTION II : WHEN WATER AND LIGHT DANCE

Projection mapping has been used in many cities across the globe to enhance a visitor's experience of a place. "It uses everyday video projectors, but instead of projecting on a flat screen (e.g. to display a PowerPoint), light is mapped onto any surface, turning common objects of any 3D shape into interactive displays. More formally, projection mapping is 'the display of an image on a non-flat or non-white surface'."¹⁷

An example of this can be found in Warsaw, Poland. Every year since 2011, The Multimedia Fountain Park has allowed visitors to marvel at the inimitable experience of water (see fig. 42). Perfectly choreographed stories are presented with the use of lighting, laser effects, projectors and music, leaving spectators in a state of awe.



fig. 42 // Multimedia Fountain Park

P.Z Studio, *Multimedia Fountain Park*, n.d., digital photograph, Warsaw, Accessed May 2020, https://www.inyourpocket.com/warsaw/multimedia-fountain-park_77575v#&gid=1&pid=11

The Rideau Canal has a long and unique history. The Canals story could be showcased in an equally unique way. Much like the Rideau Canal Skateway utilizes water beneath the ice to flood its surface, this yearly summer event would do the same. The length of the canal from Hog's Back to Downtown would have stories projected onto its surface. From the waterway's construction to the trains that once roamed Colonel By Drive, these invisible stories would be made visible through an unforgettable, 8.2 kilometer light installation.

"I am a descendent of an R.E. Sapper, too - A corporal Ross who married a Bayne and built the Bayne house near Sherwood Drive. My great grandfather has a tobacco shop on Sparks in 1881 and continued with my grandfather and father."

- Descendent of Cpl. William Ross and Ann Bayne

"One year during Winterlude, speakers were set up along the Canal and we were treated to waltzes and beautiful classical music and lullabies to skate to... It was the most wonderful and relaxing night time skating I had ever experienced"

- A History Enthusiast

"I also have a memory of catching a train at Château Laurier station — when the station was there. I was a little, little kid and we were moving away from Ottawa to go live in Northern Ontario. It was one of the last years. I would say probably 1965, maybe? And I remember standing at the canal, 'cause that was the boarding platform. The platform was on the edge of the Canal. Everything that's actually on the East side of the Canal was train tracks; it was five or six lanes of them. I remember standing — and I was a little guy — and looking at the reflection of the train in the water of the Canal because they were so close. You could see all the steam and stuff.

Then, we got on this... this kind of adventure into Northern Ontario from that spot. So, there was a connection. The connection it has to the outside world as well as to the city, I think, is part of its success."

- Architecture Faculty Member

PROJECTION SHOWS

"I also have a memory of catching a train at Château Laurier station — when the station was there, I was a little, little kid and we were moving away from Ottawa to go live in Northern Ontario. It was one of the last years. I would say probably 1965, maybe? And I remember standing at the canal, 'cause that was the boarding platform. The platform was on the edge of the Canal. Everything that's actually on the East side of the Canal was train tracks; it was five or six lanes of them. I remember standing — and I was a little guy — and looking at the reflection of the train in the water of the Canal because they were so close. You could see all the steam and stuff.

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— Architecture Faculty Member

TRAIN LINES BESIDE RIDEAU CANAL 1958

HAVE IMAGES AND VIDEOS OF THE CANALS HISTORY PROJECTED ONTO THE WATER IN THE SUMMER, AND ON THE ICE IN THE WINTER

RIDEAU CANAL BESIDE SENATE BUILDING

2019

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to identify the areas in which public engagement could improve within the nation's capital. The critical analysis of Ottawa's Site Plan Control By-law, Ottawa's Public Engagement Strategy and the National Capital Commissions Public Engagement Strategy has shown that there is room for improvement and both municipal and federal levels.

Through the use of conversation, mapping and storytelling, the thesis illustrates that public engagement can be an enjoyable experience for all parties if done properly and at the right time during the design process of a project.

Based on these conclusions, design practitioners could benefit from showing more interest in the people they are designing for that are not their client, and should consider public engagement as something positive that can bring new and innovative ideas to the city.

Policy makers should also show a better understanding of what areas of the conversation people should be involved with and to what extent. This would make consultation meeting significantly easier for architects and planners that try their best to make the city of Ottawa a great place to live.

Lastly, there is a component to the issue that is nor the city makers fault, nor the people's fault. It is political. Councilors of the city have shown hostility time and time again towards eachother, which begs the question of who actually has the citizens in their best interest. Further research would be needed to determine the cause of this and how the municipal government could be systematically improved at a greater scale.

This thesis has confirmed that people can be receptive towards a design project when given a chance to have legitimate input in the development and growth of their city.

APPENDICES

A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA

APPENDIX 1



Informed Consent Form

Name and Contact Information of Researchers:

Sandra Baran, Carleton University, Azrieli School of Architecture

Tel.:

Email: sandrabaran@cmail.carleton.ca

Supervisor and Contact Information: Johan Voordouw

Project Title

Rideau Canal Master Plan (unofficial title)

Carleton University Project Clearance

CUREB-B Clearance #: 111580 Date of Clearance: October 30th, 2019 Expires: October 31st, 2020

Invitation

The information in this form is intended to help you understand what we are asking of you so that you can decide whether you agree to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and a decision not to participate will not be used against you in any way. As you read this form, and decide whether to participate, please ask all the questions you might have, take whatever time you need, and consult with others as you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?

This project is part of a graduate thesis in Architecture in which the main researcher (myself) will interview citizens of the city of Ottawa about the Rideau Canal and its significance to people. The goal is to have an informal interview with various people within the city (students, professors, teachers, musicians, artists, etc). Participants will be asked about their opinion on the Rideau Canal, what they think make it important, what they like or dislike and what makes it memorable for them. They will be asked permission to be recorded (note taking and audio) while being interviewed. Each interviewee will be asked how they wish to be represented in the thesis (occupation or other). These interviews will be summarized and presented along with a design proposal associated to them. This will be presented to the thesis advisor and defense panel and will later be submitted to the School of Architecture and Carleton as a final document.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to take part in the study, we will ask you to:

- Have a conversation about the Rideau Canal
- Interviews should not last longer than 30min (all dependant on the participant)
- The interview will be recorded via note taking and audio recording (audio will later be typed out verbatim and inserted into the thesis document as an appendix. No personal information will be associated to this)

Upon reasonable request, it is the policy of CUREB, for cleared protocols, to release the name of the PI, the title of the project, and the date of clearance and any renewal(s).

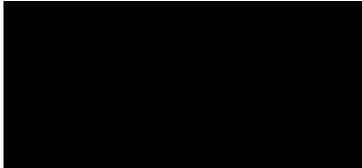
Please contact the Research Compliance Coordinators, at ethics@carleton.ca, if you have any questions.

CLEARED BY:

Date: October 30, 2019



Natasha Artemeva, PhD, Chair, CUREB-B



Janet Mantler, PhD, Vice-Chair, CUREB-B



Informed Consent Form

Name and Contact Information of Researchers:

Sandra Baran, Carleton University, Azrieli School of Architecture

Tel.:

Email: sandrabaran@email.carleton.ca

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- The interview will be recorded via note taking and audio recording (audio will later be typed out verbatim and inserted into the thesis document as an appendix. No personal information will be associated to this)

Risks and Inconveniences

There are no foreseeable risks to the study.

Possible Benefits

You may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation may allow researchers to better understand how citizens of the city of Ottawa could have a more impact in city design and planning.

Compensation/Incentives

You may choose to leave your e-mail address to receive a PDF version of the visual mind map and design associated to the conversation you have.

No waiver of your rights

By signing this form, you are not waiving any rights or releasing the researchers from any liability.

Withdrawing from the study

If you withdraw your consent during the course of the study, all information collected from you before your withdrawal will be discarded.

After the interview, you may request that your data be removed from the study and deleted by notice given to the Principal Investigator (named above) before March 1st, 2020.

Confidentiality

All identifying information from the study will be discarded after the final thesis document has been submitted, or once participant receives mind map. This will be no later than June of 2020.

We will treat your personal information as confidential, although absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific consent. Research records may be accessed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board in order to ensure continuing ethics compliance.

Data will be kept confidential, unless release is required by law (e.g. child abuse, harm to self or others).

The results of this study may be published or presented at an academic conference or meeting, but the data will be presented so that it will not be possible to identify any participants unless you give your consent.

You will be assigned a pseudonym so that your identity will not be directly associated with the data you have provided. All data, including coded information, will be kept in an encrypted file on a secure computer.

Data Retention

After the study is completed, your de-identified data will be securely destroyed and not used for future recruitment.

APPENDIX 2

THE ROLE OF THE URBAN PLANNER

It is important to note what the roles of urban planners from both the public sector (City of Ottawa staff) and the private sector (private planning consultants) are. The Canadian Institute of Planners' website makes available many resources regarding planning to the public.

What is planning? (According to the CIP)

“Planning means the scientific, aesthetic, and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities.”¹

During an interview with a planning consultant, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) Code of Professional Conduct was brought to the table. This document describes the main responsibilities of all planners that are licensed through the CIP. The first section

touches on the Planner's Responsibility to the Public Interest, and when asked about this, the planning consultant explained that "There's also a responsibility to our clients and employers, and then there's responsibility to the profession itself. But this is first for a reason, and it's because it takes prominence."²

Something most residents are not always aware of is that planners in the city do not make any city-wide decisions. "We're all part of the city, and communities, and wards. We elect members to make decisions on our behalf about a whole range of things."³ The consultant made clear that there is a misconception about what planners do in the city. Whether it be at the public or private level, residents often think that urban planners are the decision makers when it comes to city planning, when really, their suggestions are put to a vote (as are many things in a city).

During a different interview with a Senior Urban Planner, they mentioned that they have heard people say that:

“city planners are in the pockets of developers. We’re in the pockets of nobody. We work for city council. We’re paid by the general public. We do our jobs and recommend to city council. [...] I vouch for everybody here. We get up in the morning and come to work to make this city a better place.”⁴

This stresses the importance that residents, be it in Ottawa or elsewhere, need to have a better concept of what their municipal urban planners do.

APPENDIX 3

WHAT HAPPENS AT CITY HALL ANYWAYS?

The decision to shift members on the board came from Transportation Committee Chair Councilor Stephan Blais stepping down to run in a provincial by-election. Councilor Tim Tierney was named the new transportation committee chair, opening up seats on several committees and boards. When accepting the role, Tierney states he would be stepping down from his other positions (which include vice-chair of the city’s planning committee, chair of the library board, and his seat on FEDCO).¹

Many of the seats that were “up for grabs” went to suburban and rural councillors within the city despite many of the issues involving the urban core. A few of the decisions went as follows:

- Councilor Gower was given mayor Jim Watsons approval to be the vice-chair of planning over Councillor Jeff Leiper, who has been on the committee for the past five years.
- Orleans Councilor Matthew Luloff was recommended as the chair of the Library board.
- Councilor Mathieu Fleury was voted down as the

recommended new member of the board of the Shaw Centre, despite the facility being in his own ward (the position went to Councilor George Darouze of Osgoode)

- Councilor Gower, who represents the Stittsville ward beat out Councilor Catherine McKenney of the Downtown Somerset ward as FEDCO's member-at-large with Councilor Laura Dudas (Innes Ward) recommended as vice-chair.²

Councilor Shawn Menard questioned Watson on why urban councilors have been kept off the finance committee. "How do you justify not appointing members from huge swaths of regions onto the financial decision-making board here in the city?"³ he asked. His question was met with a rather disappointing and non-informative answer: "[...] all decisions we make at this committee level go to all of council, and every region of council is represented." Meaning that it does not really matter who is on the committee because all of the issues go through council as well. When pressed to give a better answer, the mayor adjourned the meeting.

One can begin to see why there is so much tension at city hall. Unfortunately, this also creates an invisible divide within the city. One of the ex-councilors interviewed said “none of the laws mean anything – the zoning doesn’t mean anything – the plans don’t mean anything – I just don’t have the patience for it anymore.”⁴As someone who was once an urban councilor, they made it clear that this division is nothing out of the ordinary. Both councilors agreed that much of the consultation that happens in the City is meaningless. As a young designer looking forward to changing the City, it was a hard pill to swallow.

LIST OF FIGURES

- fig. 01 //** *Rideau Canal Policies & Jurisdictions*
- fig. 02 //** *Interview Comments & Theme Distribution*
- fig.03 //** *Relationship Between Interview Comments, Themes & Interventions*
- fig. 04 //** *Rideau Canal Through the Eyes of a History Teacher*
- fig. 05 //** *Rideau Canal Through the Eyes of an Architectural Faculty Member*
- fig. 06 //** *Rideau Canal Through the Eyes of a Dreamer*
- fig. 07 //** *Rideau Canal Through the Eyes of a Fairytale Skater*
- fig. 08 //** *5-Step Application Process*
- fig. 09 //** *7 Principles | Ottawa*
- fig. 10 //** *Public Engagement Cycle | Ottawa*
- fig. 11 //** *Supplementary Policies in Public Engagement*
- fig. 12 //** *12 Principles | NCC*
- fig. 13//** *Ottawa Principles vs NCC Principles*
- fig. 14//** *Public Engagement Levels | NCC*
- fig. 15 //** *Rideau Canal Stakeholders*
- fig. 16 //** *Dow's Lake Pavilion*
https://marinas.com/view/marina/8qcx83_Dows_Lake_Pavilion_Ottawa_ON_Canada#&gid=1&pid=6
- fig. 17 //** *Canal Ritz*
<http://www.canalritz.com/>
- fig. 18//** *1 Elgin Restaurant*
<https://www.instagram.com/p/BVFrHH9DX8N/>

- fig. 19 // Terrace on the Canal**
<https://www.facebook.com/terraceottawa/photos/a.1004373716319388/1424398087650280/?type=3&theater>
- fig. 20 // Cafe By the Canal Amsterdam**
<https://blog.radissonblu.com/amsterdam-best-brown-cafes/cafe-by-the-canal-in-amsterdam/>
- fig. 21 // Theme I | Intervention I | Interview Comments**
- fig. 22 // Theme I | Intervention I | Intervention Collage**
- fig. 23 // Theme I | Intervention II | Interview Comments**
- fig. 24 // Theme I | Intervention II | Intervention Collage**
- fig. 25 // Theme II | Intervention I | Interview Comments**
- fig. 26 // Theme II | Intervention I | Intervention Collage**
- fig. 27 // Theme II | Intervention II | Interview Comments**
- fig. 28 // Theme II | Intervention II | Intervention Collage**
- fig. 29 // Theme III | Intervention I | Interview Comments**
- fig. 30 // Theme III | Intervention I | Intervention Collage**
- fig. 31 // Dunbar Bridge**
<https://apt613.ca/hidden-gems-dunbar-bridge-north-side-legal-graffiti-walls/>
- fig. 32 // Albert Street Retaining Wall**
<http://staging.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=3bee16fe-b8b7-4c2f-ad68-7ad67179484f&gid=3>
- fig. 33 // Laurier Bridge Mural**

<https://www.simcoe.com/news-story/6898941-murals-highlight-ottawa-s-history/>

fig. 34 // *Theme III | Intervention II | Interview Comments*

fig. 35 // *Theme III | Intervention II | Intervention Collage*

fig. 36 // *Theme IV | Intervention I | Interview Comments*

fig. 37 // *Theme IV | Intervention I | Intervention Collage*

fig. 38 // *Theme IV | Intervention II | Interview Comments*

fig. 39 // *Theme IV | Intervention II | Intervention Collage*

fig. 40 // *Theme V | Intervention I | Interview Comments*

fig. 41 // *Theme V | Intervention I | Intervention Collage*

fig. 42 // *Multimedia Fountain Park*

https://www.inyourpocket.com/warsaw/multimedia-fountain-park_77575v#&gid=1&pid=11

fig. 43 // *Theme V | Intervention II | Interview Comments*

fig. 44 // *Theme V | Intervention II | Intervention Collage*

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