



May 5, 2014

Comments on NCC Draft Policy Update for Parkways/Driveways
(by City Centre Coalition)

Introduction

The City Centre Coalition (CCC) is a network of representatives from several downtown Ottawa community associations as well as a students' association and a safe cycling group focused on transportation issues affecting the downtown.

Our transportation planning advocacy in Ottawa focuses on the expansion of walking, cycling, and transit as the most effective solutions to growing transportation needs. More information about the CCC can be found on our

website (<http://www.ccc-ottawa.ca/>). Contact: info.ccc.ottawa@gmail.com

NCC Vision

The NCC's vision of "parkways as continuous green corridors that include land and water, walking and cycling paths" strikes us as a good and clear expression of where the NCC wants to go.

With a view to making the Vision Statement better still, we suggest that the Commission also include in it some date-specific targets for achieving particular goals.

We also recommend that in support of its vision Statement, the NCC:

(1) Adopt a suitable set of metrics to assist it and its stakeholders in tracking the Commission's progress in realizing its goals; and

(2) Report annually on its results with respect to each of its parkways and driveways.

We understand that the NCC has recently concluded an audit of its parkways and driveways network. We recommend that the NCC make that analysis available as part of its ongoing public consultation process. There may well be

useful contributions that could be made by the network's many users.

Parkway and Driveway Classification

Categorizing parkways/driveways according to their characteristics and then treating them accordingly looks to be a good start in the right direction. For planning and program development purposes, it should be helpful to recognize that some of the parkways and driveways have distinctly different characteristics and challenges.

We see this as an improvement over the 1984 policy approach and will be helpful in developing action plans that are the most appropriate to the evolution and improvement of each of them.

In the list of Parkways and Driveways referred to in the document we see no mention of the Champlain Bridge. It is our understanding that this is under NCC authority and we feel it should also be considered within the scope of the document particularly with regards to its role in providing access to the recreational areas on Bate Island.

The Principal issues

The City Center Coalition fully supports the NCC's decision to give greater priority to pedestrians and cyclists than to cars. Much as we welcome the NCC's policy focus on making its ribbon of green more scenic and more animated with supporting amenities for pedestrians and cyclists, we are concerned that the Commission risks not achieving its hoped for benefits unless the NCC gives more attention to coping with the ever-growing vehicular use of its ribbon of asphalt.

This is particularly so with respect to Colonel By Drive, the Queen Elizabeth Driveway, the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway and Island Park Drive, each of which is heavily travelled and has many nearby residents who would welcome taking greater advantage of the leisure opportunities afforded by living so close to the NCC's parkway and driveway network if only they had more and safer access points to the NCC's adjacent green spaces.

As a practical matter, choices will need to be made between the NCC's stated desire to maintain a continuous ribbon of freer flowing traffic on the one hand and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on the other. When it comes to safety, the

NCC's choices should always be in favour of pedestrians and cyclists first. Therefore providing more and safer access points to the green corridors along its so-called "urban" and "waterfront" parkways and driveways should rank amongst the NCC's highest short-term priorities.

As for other specific suggestions, we recommend the following for the NCC's consideration:

- Auto speeds are far too high on many sections of the parkway network. To mitigate these impacts we suggest to re-engineer sections of the parkway network where roadway narrowing and/or the addition of segregated bike lanes (eg. Island Park Drive, Colonel By Drive) could slow down traffic and improve safety.
- With the growing use of the multi-use pathways in many of the parkway corridors, more conflicts are beginning to occur between the various active transportation users. The NCC should consider providing a separate pathway for cyclists in some of the busier sections.
- Re-align segments of the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway where doing so could create larger areas of contiguous green space for recreational use. (In some locations, the green median that divides the bi-directional parkway is wide but not wide enough to be used by anyone except as an island refuge by pedestrians and cyclists seeking to get to the other side)
- Where doing so would improve/increase the use of the NCC green corridors along the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway, move the lanes either north or south, as best appropriate, to better separate the two categories of users (cars and active transportation). There are many locations where the traffic lanes are closer to the shoreline and to the recreational paths than they should be
- Use landscaping (2-3 ft high berms and shrubbery) to reduce tire noise that significantly detracts from the quiet enjoyment of the green corridors and the shorelines along the urban and waterfront parkways/driveways
- There are at least two locations where new traffic lights are needed in the short term to increase safety: at Island Park Drive/Clearview and at the Queen Elizabeth Driveway/5th Avenue (once Lansdowne Park is re-opened and in anticipation of the pedestrian/cycling bridge to be built there across the canal). There may well be others as well
- Clear out the underbrush and rehabilitate the now largely disused pathways in the stretch of woods on the south side of the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway between Holland and Island Park Drive

- Access points to the Ottawa River are too few and far between. Many of the gated access points from the Champlain Park and Westboro Beach communities to the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway are little used because of their poor visibility and because in some cases the pathways are blocked by fallen trees and underbrush. Better signage and some restoration work would much improve the situation.
- Explore the feasibility of restoring the former beach along the Ottawa River to the west of Tunney's Pasture'
- Evaluate how Bate Island can be better used as a recreational destination

Thank you in advance for your consideration. We look forward to the results of the NCC's deliberations and would be pleased to meet with the NCC at its convenience to further discuss our submission.

John Verbaas
Chair
City Center Coalition