

URBAN PLANNING PROJECT

Animating the Ottawa Riverfront in the Core of Canada's Capital

Course Objectives

This workshop course is intended to give students experience in preparing a plan under conditions that simulate professional practice. The class will have the opportunity to sample the experience of working in a professional consultant's office. The course has added value because it is led by a real client whose needs are immediate. You will be required to think, act and deliver results as if you were professional planners. In return, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that your plan may be used by the National Capital Commission in guiding future development of the Ottawa riverfront in the Core of Canada's Capital

Course participants will work as a team, in large and small groups. They will be largely responsible for all work, under the overall guidance of the course leader. As in a professional office, they will learn to be self-reliant, since planning commissioners or principals in a consulting firm are rarely available on a daily basis. The class will be required to:

- manage a large multi-disciplinary planning project under tight deadlines
- collect, analyze and synthesize background information (fieldwork and secondary sources)
- prepare text, graphic, and policy analysis and produce a plan that meets professional standards of content and presentation
- present the plan to the client and project stakeholders

The Project Team

The Project Team will consist of nine students primarily from the land-use planning stream of the SURP program. The team is expected to be self-motivated and self-guided. To this end, the students will elect project managers and editors from their midst and these people will be the liaison between the class, the instructor, and the client. Class interaction with the course leader and the client must be channeled through the project manager, as in a professional project. The project manager and class are responsible for organizing the day-to-day management of the project, assuring participation, quality control and deliverables. All team members will participate in editing and production of the final report and presentation. If past experience is a guide, these tasks will be a significant component of everybody's workload.

Project Coaches and Co-ordinator

The National Capital Commission will provide professional staff who will act as coaches and be the principal contact with the students. The principal project coaches have been appointed as adjunct instructors at SURP

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The course will be coordinated by Dr. David Gordon. Professor Gordon will provide strategic guidance, budgetary approval, technical assistance, quality control and evaluation.

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The Client

The client for this project is the National Capital Commission's [Capital Planning Branch](#). Professional staff will act as our liaison and principal instructors. The Branch is responsible for federal land use and transportation planning and policy in accordance with the NCC's role "to prepare plans for and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance". (National Capital Act, sec. 10.1)

The NCC is the main federal urban planner in Canada's Capital Region. In this role, the NCC works in collaboration with stakeholders to enhance the natural and cultural character of the Capital. The NCC ensures that the highest standards of excellence in urban and architectural design are upheld. The NCC's goal is for Canada's Capital Region to be a model of urban planning: a place where decisions about the use and development of urban lands are based on considerations of environmental sensitivity, sustainability and best practices.

The Context:

- The NCC is the steward of the vast majority of the shorelines and lands along the Ottawa River in the Core Area.
- Public organizations, community groups and business enterprises are requesting more opportunities to access the river.
- The NCC wishes to animate the Capital by creating animation points along the riverfront(s) which are iconic and character defining elements of the region.
- A cohesive and coordinated approach is required to respond to the proliferation of requests for facilities and installations within the central basin of the Ottawa River.

Goals :

- Develop a plan that will support recreational and business opportunities along the shorelines, while ensuring the quality design and iconic landscapes of the Capital Core Area.
- Identify water-based activities and sites that could support tourism and visitor experience, while ensuring the protection of sensitive environmental features and the scenic qualities of the riverfront landscape.
- Develop strategies to provide sites for recreational and commercial services along riverfront lands and on water, as well as docking and launching locations for personal and commercial watercraft, while considering the support infrastructure(s) required.

The Site – the Ottawa riverfront in the Core of Canada’s Capital:

Consistent with its mandate to plan and manage federal lands wisely and sustainably on behalf of all Canadians, the NCC wishes to animate the Ottawa riverfront in the Core of Canada’s Capital.

The Project Team is expected to identify the unique features and qualities of the Core Area riverfront and develop an understanding of its complexities and the underlying opportunities it presents. The main task is to cultivate new ideas and vision for the riverfront corridor and evolve the notion of a vibrant capital waterfront.

The NCC lands to be addressed by this study are classified as Capital Realm and are of national importance. The Study area is focused on the riverfront lands within the Core Area boundary (see appendix A), however, the shorelines also form part of a larger river system that stretches from Montreal to Kingston via the Ottawa River and Rideau Canal. The SURP Project Team will be responsible for verifying and confirming the boundary of the project study area and proposing any broader areas of influence.

The NCC has many federal, provincial and municipal partners, with each partner overseeing a particular jurisdiction, whether it is an area, a system, a destination or a thematic mandate. Because issues in the Core Area are complex and interconnected, partners share many common objectives, necessitating cooperation. The City of Ottawa’s *Official Plan* and the Ville de Gatineau’s *Plan d’urbanisme* expresses their respective land designations for the corridor and should be considered.

Plans to Consult

- [*Plan for Canada’s Capital*](#), NCC 2017
- *Ottawa River Shoreline Initiatives*, NCC 2013 web based app
- *NCC Shoreline Initiatives Request for Proposals*, NCC 2017
- [*Ottawa River North Shore Parklands Plan*](#), NCC 2018
- [*Ottawa River South Shore Riverfront Park*](#), NCC 2018 (reference only)
- [*Ottawa River Integrated Development Plan*](#), Multi-agency 2009
- [*City of Ottawa Official Plan, 2021*](#)
- [*Ville de Gatineau plan d’urbanisme*](#), 2020

These plans form the policy framework and past consultative context for the riverfront lands.

This project will entail the following key planning principles –

- A waterfront city, with a vibrant and lively river culture
- unique Capital identity with high quality of design and landscape treatment
- appropriate balance of active and passive uses that consider a variety of user needs
- equitable and convenient waterfront access with a balance of public and commercial opportunities
- permeability and connectivity with adjacent lands and communities via multiple modes of transportation
- protection, integration, and enhancement of environmental, scenic, heritage and cultural features
- parking impacts and solutions for recreation areas and activation points
- corridor interpretation and commemoration opportunities
- carbon footprint minimization
- phased development/implementation

Previous SURP workshops had created visions for the Sir John A Macdonald Parkway, the Sir George Etienne

Cartier Parkway, Tunney's Pasture, Sparks Street and the Rideau Canal. But how should a mid-twentieth century riverfront interact with a 21st century region of over a million people? What does a modern, waterfront capital look like? Answering these questions will require a riverfront corridor study, with discussions with key stakeholders such as the NCC's various portfolio groups, City of Ottawa, Ville de Gatineau, and Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.

Project Deliverables

- Inventory and Characterisation Report of shoreline potential
- Organization of meetings with NCC staff and preparation of minutes of discussions
- Analysis of existing conditions, including opportunities and constraints (SWOT)
- Synthesis of several Canadian and international examples of riverfront parks
- Preparation of a vision and conceptual plan for the Core Area riverfront
- Development of broad implementation strategies
- Preliminary report of recommendations
- Presentation to NCC in Ottawa (unless changes in public health guidelines require remote delivery)
- Final report including resolution of NCC feedback and comments

Tasks:

A. Analysis of existing conditions (to be refined)

Review and analyze relevant federal planning documentation previously listed;.

- Review and analyze relevant municipal planning documentation.
- Assess the shoreline conditions, such as: topography, bathymetry, river currents, navigation rules and regulations, riparian vegetation and habitats, environmental characteristics, quality of landscapes, views, capital symbolism and importance, access from public lands, existing or potential support infrastructures, and ownership/uses of adjacent shoreline lands.
- Inventory the existing animation points and characterize them according to their type, function, size, type of user, etc.
- Inventory the existing formal and informal places used as launching and landing places located in the basin of the capital core (reference: map 1) and the neighboring basins, and characterize their use according to their physical particularities, the type of installations or boats and the operating methods;
- Characterize the existing or potential user groups that could benefit from launching or docking facilities (e.g. locals, tourists) and describe the need (type of infrastructure and facilities required);

B. SWOT from Existing Conditions:

1. Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

C. Precedent Catalogue:

1. Prepare a compendium of precedents and best-practices for riverfront corridors and for creating/animating/enlivening public spaces
2. Identify which strategies may be most appropriate for the National Capital Commission to consider for the core area riverfront.

D. Vision and concept for Core Area Riverfront, including:

1. Organize and lead discussions with NCC staff to better define the needs and constraints to be considered;
2. Establish a set of site selection criteria for new and improved animation points along the shoreline;
3. Identify sites and develop policy recommendations and potential implementation strategies to achieve the concept;
4. Develop design guidelines;
5. Develop small demonstration plans for up to four locations of the riverfront.

The deliverables are chapter-by-chapter components of the final report, including an inventory, evaluation and policy recommendations. In other words, preparation of the final report starts at the beginning of the project.

Resources

The Project Team will be provided with electronic files from the National Capital Commission that will assist in determining existing conditions of the study area, including:

- Caractérisations environnementales des berges (2015), en français seulement [(Shoreline Environmental Assessment (2015))]

GIS Layers :

- o Environmental Features (vegetation, endangered species, etc.)
- o Bathymetry (water depths)
- o Property and ownership data
- o Topography (contour lines)
- o Pedestrian routes, pathways, roads and parking areas.

Several maps will also be provided in hard copy and digital files. In addition, a Resource List with links to files, maps, and tools online will be included. The National Capital Commission's and City of Ottawa, and Ville de Gatineau's websites are excellent resources and it is recommended that students become familiar with the materials available there.

Proposed Evaluation

Mid-term report chapters	10%
Mid-term presentation	10%
Final report (including maps and diagrams) and supporting reports	50%
Final presentation (including the use of visual aids, e.g., PowerPoint)	20%
Peer evaluation*	10%

*each student is required to evaluate the contributions of all other students enrolled in the project course. Additional information on peer evaluation will be provided in the first week of the course.

N.B.: This is a professional practice course. Presentation dates are set in advance with the cooperation of the client. Late submission of written material, including the final report, is discouraged and will be subject to the usual penalty of 1% per day. Since the final report is a group project, all students in the class will be responsible for its completion.

There will be some discretion on the part of the course coordinator in assigning additional marks for merit to the course managers.

Budget

The course sponsor has agreed in principle to provide a small budget to cover course expenses. The National

Capital Commission, with the help of other key stakeholders has agreed to provide base plans, selected reports and digital information. The sponsor will cover the cost of field trips and reproduction of the report. The project manager, project treasurer and the instructor will confirm the available budget at the beginning of term and will approve and monitor expenses throughout. The managers must monitor the design and format of the final report to ensure that copies for the project team are affordable within the budget. However, students may incur some costs for internet services, telephone calls, faxes, reports or materials that would not be covered by our modest budget for these items.

Schedule

Tuesdays between 11:30 and 2:30 for formal meetings and Fridays between 2:30 pm and 5:30 pm for team meetings and reviews. Most classes take place on Mondays, from 11:30 and 2:30 pm, unless arranged otherwise by the project manager, course instructor or the course coach.

PROJECT STAGES

Note: This is a **suggested** schedule for the entire course, intended to give participants an overview of the content and deliverables at each stage. However, this course is being run on the model of a consultant study, in which considerable flexibility is retained in order to respond to issues as they arise. The class and their project manager will be responsible for creating their own schedule and fine-tuning it throughout the term.

Stage 1 - Orientation and Background Research

1a. Tuesday, September 6, 11:30-12:30 Course Orientation and Team Organization

- Introduction to the faculty and course pedagogical objectives (faculty)
- Review of roles of faculty and adjunct instructors
- Orientation to the course and expectations
- Discussion of course protocols, roles and responsibilities
- Workshop: project management techniques and planning processes

Location: SURP Mackintosh Corry Hall D326

Deliverables: None

1b. Tuesday, September 6, 12:30-2:20 Project Orientation and Team Organization

- Overview of site & client interest (Teams – 1-1:30 September 6)
- Review of resources available
- Orientation to the project and expectations
- Election of project manager(s)
- Election of treasurer

Location: SURP Mackintosh Corry Hall E230

Deliverables: None

2. Friday, September 9, 7:00am- 11:00 pm

- Field trip to Ottawa by minivans
- Site visit by windshield survey
- Meeting with adjunct instructors & client staff (NCC Building, 40 Elgin, Room 702)
- Stakeholders' meetings with NCC
- Site visit (late afternoon) by bicycle?, foot and van? boat?
- Field work (early evening)

Location: Ottawa

Deliverables: Meeting notes, databases of stakeholders

3. Week of September 11 - Background Research

- SWOT analysis
- Existing conditions (data collection, organization and evaluation)
- Arranging further stakeholder interviews (if necessary)
- Riverfront comparisons- Research into riverfront access approaches???
- Consideration of plan implementation instrument approaches (criteria, format, etc.)

Location: SURP Mackintosh Corry Hall D326

Deliverables: Confirmation of project management team structure and budget. Presentation of work-in-progress interview notes, precedent examples, parkway research, etc.

4. Week of September 18 (OPPI conference)- Background Research

- NCC client meeting moved to Friday afternoon Sept 23 in 2:30- 5:30
- SWOT analysis continues
- Existing conditions (data collection, organization and evaluation)
- Additional stakeholder interviews by Zoom/Teams if needed
- Comparison- ongoing research
- Consideration of plan implementation instrument approaches (criteria, format, etc.)

Location: SURP Mackintosh Corry Hall D326

Deliverables: Confirmation of final product (format, layout, etc.) Presentation of work-in-progress: interview notes, precedent examples, sustainability research, etc.

5. Week of September 25 - Project Analysis

- Stakeholder interviews complete
- Workshop- precedent and policy analysis
- Preliminary Visions or Strategies for Ottawa riverfront

Location: SURP Mackintosh Corry Hall D326

Deliverables: Presentation of work-in-progress; chapter outline for policy analysis; stakeholder analysis; parkway analysis and framework for application to the riverfront corridor

Stage II - Evaluation

6. Week of October 5 - Mid-Term Status Report

- Project team prepares for next week's presentation of preliminary findings (mid-project report)
- Identification of strategic issues
- Identification of "best-guess" response and alternatives
- Focus on intensification and greyfield redevelopment

Location: SURP Mackintosh Corry Hall D326

Deliverables: Policy analysis; stakeholder analysis; precedent catalogue, draft report chapters for grading.

Week of October 9th – Fall Reading Week

7. Week of October 16 - Presentation of Preliminary Findings

Tuesday October 18th 11:30- 2:30 pm

- Workshop setting presentation by team to coaches and stakeholders
- Full presentation of work-in-progress (issues and options)
- Critique and recommendations for changes discussed
- Brainstorming session on design options
- Issues: findings of analysis to date, exploration of alternatives, report format, considerations, additional research needs, etc.

Location: Kingston

9. Week of October 23 - Planning Recommendations

- Begin preparation of draft report, policies and planning instruments
- Refine site design options for demonstration projects
- Advanced development of report template
- Prepare implementation strategy
- Report and Presentation evaluation rubrics provided

Location: SURP

Deliverables: Draft report chapters (issues paper, opportunities, explanation of future directions; implementation strategy; final presentation to coaches and critique.

10. Week of October 30 - Project Refinements

- Workshop and studio format
- Team continues to refine site designs
- Fill in missing research gaps
- Refine project report format
- Advanced development of report template
- Report and Presentation evaluation rubrics provided
- Refine presentation- style, roles and responsibilities

Location: SURP Mackintosh Corry Hall D326

Deliverables: Status report on above; status report forwarded to coaches for comments and direction.

11. Week of November 6 - Project Refinements

- Workshop and studio format
- Team continues to refine plan and report based on Client's comments
- Fill in missing research gaps
- Complete design drawings
- Refine project report format
- Refine presentation- style, roles and responsibilities

Location: SURP

Deliverables: status report on above.

12. Week of November 13 - Draft Report complete

- Draft report written and supporting graphics continue
- Revised design drawings
- Final research additions

Deliverables: Executive summary outline presented to coaches

Stage III – Final Report and Presentations

13. Week of November 20 - Executive Summary and Presentation

- Executive summary completed
- Report graphics completed
- Presentation outline prepared

Deliverables: Executive summary, presentation outline.

14. Week of November 27 - Executive Summary and Rehearsal

- Draft report completed for review
- Presentation graphics completed
- Presentation prepared for faculty
- Presentation rehearsal for faculty and student review

Deliverable: Friday December 2nd - Revised report submitted to coaches for review and evaluation; printer organized and quote obtained

14. Friday, December 2nd - Presentation to Faculty and School

- Team to present findings in presentation to faculty and fellow students in special session
- Presentation to include audio-visual support, models, graphics, maps and schemes
- Critique and guidance provided re: changes required
- Comparison to other team presentations

Location:

Deliverables: Full-scale audio-visual presentation developed.

15. Week of Dec. 4/11 - Presentation to Client and Stakeholders

- Full-scale audio-visual presentation to client, accompanied by handouts
- Delivered in person to NCC staff and guests, unless changes to public health regulations preclude an in-person presentation
- Questions and answers in 'breakout' sessions
- Discussion, advice, re: changes, directions, etc.
- Organize changes to final report

Location: NCC Head Office

Deliverables: Professional-quality presentation; schedule for report amendments

Monday December 12- Coaches return report with minor amendments; printing cost confirmed

Monday December 19- Final report delivered to printer for reproduction

Delivery to NCC of final report and presentation in electronic form and two paper copies of final report.