



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NCC MANDATE REVIEW

**Remarks by Panel Chair Gilles Paquet
For the Submitting of the NCC Mandate Review Report:
*The National Capital Commission: Charting a New Course***

**Université du Québec en Outaouais
Thursday, December 21, 2006, 10:30 AM**

Minister Cannon, members of the media, on behalf of my colleagues Guy Benoît and Barbara Farber, I want to thank you for joining us for the presentation of our report on the NCC Mandate Review.

Before we get into some of the details of the report itself, allow me to remind you of how we went about our work, and how we arrived at this point.

The Panel was announced in August, and we were given approximately 100 working days to do our work.

The Panel first spent time working through the written material, studying all aspects, historical and current, of the NCC in order to have a solid understanding of this Crown corporation.

Then, in September, a 2-month consultation period was launched during which the Panel had the opportunity to meet with and hear from a broad range of key stakeholders. Meeting with experts and stakeholders allowed the Panel to clarify some of our preliminary findings, to validate certain provisional hypotheses derived from the examination of the dossier, and to hear first-hand the concerns and suggestions of many informed individuals.

The Panel is extremely pleased with the enthusiastic response to its call for input, and gratified by the generous collaboration of so many stakeholders. I would like to thank all of those who participated in the review process.

The Panel reviewed more than 85 briefs and comments, heard from over 30 groups and individuals at the public meetings, and met two dozen experts during the fact-finding phase of our work. Everyone who contributed a brief or met with the Panel is listed in an annex of the report.

.../2



It is clear to the Panel that the Capital and the role of the NCC as steward of the Capital region are topics of great interest and importance to many.

Having gathered information, input and suggestions, the Panel spent the last weeks formulating our recommendations and preparing this report.

And now for the report –

The National Capital Commission: Charting a New Course.

The Panel has chosen to put on the cover of its report an image of Samuel de Champlain as he stands looking at Canada's Capital and the Ottawa River from Nepean Point along Confederation Boulevard. Nothing could better represent the spirit of the Panel's report: Champlain the explorer 'finding his way'.

Canadians have much to be proud of when it comes to their Capital. And much of what has been accomplished to create this beautiful and vibrant Capital can be ascribed to the National Capital Commission. And this, despite the many constraints having been imposed on its activities.

Yet it is the view of the Panel, after having listened to a large number of stakeholders, that the NCC has, at times, seemingly lost its way: it has valiantly continued to try to do everything that was asked from it even when its funding was slashed. It has agreed to funding and governance arrangements suggested by government that have proved detrimental to its own reputation. And, it has proved insensitive at times to seemingly basic demands from stakeholders and partners. How much of this can be attributed to the NCC proper? And how much to its circumstances?

The Panel's job is not to assign blame but to suggest repairs.

The Panel has concluded that the NCC remains an extremely important institution in the National Capital Region and should continue to play a key role in the future of the Capital.

However, there are two fundamental considerations:

First, nothing short of a major transformation of the NCC is required to ensure that it can fulfill its mission well. Second, nothing short of a reasonable level of funding by the government is needed so that the NCC can do its job and to ensure that Canada's capital remains a world-class capital. One of which all Canadians can be proud, and one that will be the envy of all international guests.

.../3



The Panel is proposing a road map to help the NCC refocus on its basic mission, and is suggesting both a mandate renewal (so that the NCC is given the authority and the tools to do the job) and the financial support it will need to do the job well.

You may be tempted to skip right to the recommendations – but the Panel urges you to carefully review the preceding chapters to have a better appreciation of the spirit, context and the premise that the Panel has been working with.

In reviewing the mandate of the NCC, the Panel has addressed head on the major irritants and constraints that have been brought to its attention and that have plagued the NCC in recent years.

Key repairs that the Panel proposes include:

- opening up all NCC Board and Advisory Committee meetings, to eliminate the culture of secrecy and the lack of transparency;
- ending immediately any sale of so-called surplus lands to meet the challenge of government under-funding;
- a new Charter to protect the Gatineau Park and the Greenbelt nested in an ammended *National Capital Act*; and
- a new way of doing business at the NCC that includes: (1) an endorsement by Parliament of the NCC Plan for Canada’s Capital; (2) the splitting of the roles of Chair of the Board and the CEO; and, (3) bringing in the very best national and local experts as key advisors and board members.

Most importantly, the Panel calls for **a cultural transformation of the NCC** involving the development of a new ‘culture of consensus’. To launch the NCC on this path, the Panel proposes: (1) the creation of a position of Associate CEO dedicated to ensuring healthy collaboration and creative external relations with all the partners and stakeholders, as well as a collaborative governance conducted with the requisite trust, openness and transparency; and, (2) a significant enhancement of the Ombudsman position to ensure that all the problems and irritants experienced by partners, stakeholders and users can be addressed promptly and fairly.

The Panel has also recommended a renewed mandate so that the NCC might better navigate the realities of today and of the future.

.../4

-4-

The report proposes:



- a new, reinforced coordination role for the NCC with a more direct connection to Parliament;
- a new focus on the environment, on heritage and on inter-provincial transportation;
- a new responsibility to coordinate the 75/25 initiative for the distribution of federal employment and investment on the two sides of the Ottawa River;
- a new focus on the core of the capital and, in particular, the Parliamentary Precinct; and,
- a renewed emphasis on the planning function and a greater coordinating role for celebrating and promoting the Capital.

Minister Cannon, Canadians deserve to continue to have a world-class Capital, and the Capital needs a steward that is capable and well equipped to ensure its successful evolution.

The Panel believes that the changes proposed in this report will make the new NCC more effective, more efficient, more inclusive and more participative than the existing NCC.

The Panel also submits that the actions recommended are technically feasible, socially acceptable, *implementable* with the collaboration of partners, and not too politically destabilizing.

Canada's Capital deserves these changes.

Thank you.

