



Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
Alliance pour les espaces verts dans la capitale du Canada

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Planning Committee chair commits to implementing the results of natural linkage studies

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For Immediate Release

At the launch of the official plan review event held last Tuesday, January 29th, City of Ottawa Planning Committee Chair Peter Hume committed the City to implementing into the Official Plan the results of natural linkage studies now available or under way.

The Official Plan is Ottawa's prime legal document that governs land use. "Natural linkages are components of Ottawa's natural heritage system that should be set aside when an expansion of the urban boundary is considered," said Amy Kempster, chair of the Greenspace Alliance. "No better time to recognize them than now, when immediate expansion is not under consideration. This is the time to objectively consider the evidence and adopt the principle, without the immediate pressure of land owners ready to turn their land urban."

As the Ministry of Natural Resources states, natural linkages "provide connectivity (at the regional or site level), supporting a complete range of community and ecosystem processes, enabling plants and smaller animals to move between core areas and other larger areas of habitat over a period of generations." (*Natural Heritage Reference Manual*, 2nd edition, 2010, page 217) Several linkages in and around Ottawa need strengthening and protection, including in North Kanata and the Greenbelt.

A study by the National Capital Commission on linkages in and around the Greenbelt has just been completed.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is about to embark on its study of the Ontario side of an Ottawa Valley Conservation Plan.

The City of Ottawa, under Terms of Agreement with the Greenspace Alliance signed in January 2012, is obliged, "prior to the next comprehensive Official Plan Review in 2014," to "identify and map existing and conceptual natural heritage linkages at a City-wide scale, including consideration of regional linkages outside the City boundaries."

At the launch of the Official Plan review on January 29, 2013 at Andrew Haydon Hall, Councillor Hume not only confirmed that the City would do its part, but that any implications from the studies would be implemented in the Official Plan now under review.

The primary implication of the studies is that linkages that are found to be vital for connectivity, wildlife movement and other natural processes should receive a protective designation in the Plan. In addition, the methodology for identifying candidate lands for urbanization needs to respect the

importance of natural linkages.

The Greenspace Alliance also commends City of Ottawa planning staff for again recommending that country lot subdivisions no longer be allowed. This is what it recommended in 2003 and again in 2009, when Council voted to impose a 5-year moratorium on such developments. The moratorium was upheld by the Ontario Municipal Board but Cavanaugh Ltd. received leave to appeal that decision to Divisional Court.

"It's therefore somewhat strange," said Sol Shuster, vice-chair of the Alliance, "that the current proposal should be framed as a continuation of the moratorium rather than have Council just prohibit new country lot subdivisions and be done with it, as have other municipalities in Ontario."

Working with citizens and groups, the Greenspace Alliance works to preserve green spaces, including waterways and wetlands, in the National Capital area since 1997.

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Background

The January 2012 Terms of Settlement with the Greenspace Alliance -- attached

On appeals of the 2009 moratorium on country lot estates - <http://greenspace-alliance.ca/node/541>

On the current round of the Official Plan review: <http://www.greenspace-alliance.ca/OP2014>

Web site home page: <http://www.greenspace-alliance.ca/>