

Approximately 180 kilometers northeast of Ottawa, in the Municipality of Chalk River, there is a proposal on the table to build a permanent nuclear waste disposal site. This has raised concern as this site is part of a wetland complex that empties directly into the Ottawa River.

Municipalities in Quebec have been particularly vocal in expressing concern over this proposed plan, including Mayors in the Montreal Metropolitan Community (CMM) who unanimously opposed the development of the Chalk River disposal site in April 2018.

The current Ottawa City Council has yet to take a stance on this proposed nuclear waste storage facility.

In its recent survey of municipal election candidates, the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital asked the following two questions about the proposed nuclear waste disposal site:

*“Are you aware of the Chalk River nuclear waste disposal plan?”*

*“In April 2018, mayors in the Montreal Metropolitan Community (CMM) unanimously opposed the proposal to build the permanent nuclear waste disposal site in Chalk River, Ontario. As an elected official, would you support a Council declaration opposing to the Chalk River nuclear waste disposal plan?”*

More than half (61 percent) of candidates who participated in the survey said they were very aware of the nuclear waste disposal plan, while one-third said they were somewhat aware of the plan. All, except for one candidate, in wards bordering the Ottawa River (Wards 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) cited being aware or somewhat aware of the plan, while candidates who are not aware tended to represent wards non-adjacent to the Ottawa River.

Incumbent status did not appear to play a factor in awareness of the disposal plan. Of the 8 incumbent participants, David Churneshenko, Catherine McKenney, and Jeff Leiper claim to be very aware of the plan, Stephen Blais and Mathieu Fleury are somewhat aware, and Shad Qadri, Tobi Nussbaum and Riley Brockington claim to be not at all aware.

Regarding support for a declaration by Ottawa City Council opposing the Chalk River nuclear waste disposal plan, most candidates (81 percent) were in favour of following Montreal's lead and opposing the plan.

When it comes to incumbents, however, reaction was mixed. Three said they did not support a Council declaration opposing the plan (Nussbaum, Qadri, and Churneshenko), two skipped the question (Brockington and Blais) and three were in favour of such a declaration (Leiper, Fleury, and McKenney). Both Councillor Nussbaum and Churneshenko indicated in written comments that they did not know enough about the issue to take a position in favour of a declaration.

As a whole, the incumbents were in proportion much more likely to answer no or skip this question about opposing the nuclear waste disposal site, 5 out of 8, than the other candidates (5 out of 41).

To see how each candidate responded to these questions as well as for full survey results visit <http://greenspace-alliance.ca/>