

October 3, 2025

New Zoning By-law Team
City of Ottawa

Re: **Southern Corridor – “Development Reserve” Zones**

Dear New Zoning By-law Team,

I am writing to provide feedback from the Hunt Club Community Association (HCCA) on Draft 3 of the new Zoning By-law.

HCCA’s position

1. The HCCA **strongly opposes the proposed “Development Reserve” (DR) zoning** for most of the NCC-owned greenspace in the Southern Corridor between the Rideau River and the Airport Parkway.
2. Instead, the HCCA **urges the City of Ottawa to adopt Draft 1 of the new zoning map**, which accurately reflects the social and ecological value of this greenspace.
3. In particular, **the Development Reserve zones should be removed and replaced** with Environment Protection (EP), Greenspace (GRN), Facilities and Open Space (FAC), or Recreation (REC) zones as shown in Draft 1 for the following lands:
 - the **“Riverwalk”** between Revelstoke Drive and Rivergate Way;
 - the **“McCarthy Meadows”** between Riverside Drive and McCarthy Woods;
 - the **“Airport Parkway Woodlot”** between McCarthy Road and the Parkway.

These NCC-owned lands are well used by local residents and make a significant contribution to the City’s tree canopy and natural heritage. Together, they provide one of the largest urban greenspaces in Ottawa, offer access to the Rideau River shoreline, and support the biodiversity of McCarthy Woods - one of the City’s most important urban natural features.

Background

In the new Zoning-Bylaw, the City of Ottawa is responding to both a housing crisis and a climate emergency. While promoting increased density and affordable housing, the City is also seeking to expand its urban tree canopy, preserve greenspace, and build healthy communities.

The HCCA shares these goals. In June 2025, in a delegation to the Planning and Housing Committee, we strongly supported Taggart's plans for over 600 housing units at 3930-3960 Riverside Drive. At the same time, we worked closely with Taggart and City staff to explore options for preserving notable trees while building a multi-use pathway through Riverwood Park.

In the case of the Southern Corridor, we are now urging the City to strike a better balance between the need for housing and the need for urban greenspace. The Hunt Club and Riverside Park communities will see greatly increased density in the coming years. In addition to the Taggart project mentioned above, there are major residential developments planned or under construction for Confederation Heights, the Mooney's Bay area, North Bowesville Road, and the corner of Bank Street and Walkley Road.

The new Zoning By-law will convert most of Riverside Drive and Walkley Road to Minor Corridor zones, which will permit buildings of up to 6 storeys. In the interior of neighbourhoods, gradual intensification will take place across the Hunt Club and Riverside Park communities. This increase in population will place ever greater pressure on the available urban greenspace in our communities.

Considerations

Urban Tree Canopy. Ottawa's Official Plan sets a target of 40% tree canopy cover in the urban area. The most recent update, however, finds that canopy coverage within the Greenbelt was only 21% in 2022. In River Ward, only 25% of tree canopy coverage was achieved.

In this context, the Southern Corridor makes an important contribution to the City's tree canopy targets. McCarthy Woods is an Environment Protection zone with one of the largest and most diverse urban forests in Ottawa. The adjacent "McCarthy Meadows" (to the west) and "McCarthy Wetlands" (to the east) contain a wide variety of plant species, including large sections of fully grown trees.

Along the Rideau Canal waterway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, there is extensive tree cover from Revelstoke Drive to Rivergate Way – including a stand of endangered Butternut trees near the CNR bridge and a portion of floodplain near Revelstoke Drive which is currently an Environment Protection zone.

Ecological Value. In 2005, the City of Ottawa’s study of Urban Natural Areas found three features of significant ecological value in the Hunt Club corridor¹. In particular, this study assessed the ecological value of McCarthy Woods and the Southern Corridor as “high”. In section 4.1, it emphasized the value of the surrounding meadows in sustaining the biodiversity of McCarthy Woods:

*...areas of regenerating meadow habitat that offer significant wildlife habitat or contribute to the ecological functions of adjacent natural areas have been included within the boundaries of urban natural areas defined in this study. For example, the meadow habitat adjacent to McCarthy Woods provides feeding habitat for raptors and other wildlife found in the forested core of the natural area.*²

In 2006, the City’s Greenspace Master Plan confirmed the value of these open spaces and natural areas to Ottawa’s Urban Greenspace Network³.

NCC Land Designations. Most of the Hunt Club corridor is owned by the National Capital Commission. In 2015, the NCC designated this corridor as a “Regional Interest Land Mass”, worthy of conservation and stewardship - rather than urban development. This designation was confirmed in January 2025.

The RILM designation applies to “*properties supporting regionally-significant recreational, ecological or infrastructure-support functions*”. The NCC considers that these lands:

*“...serve a secondary role in support of the development, conservation and improvement of the broader National Capital Region...Over time the NCC will explore options to transfer NCC-owned RILM properties to another appropriate steward, such as a municipality or land conservation trust, for continued use in the public interest”*⁴.

In light of this designation, the NCC and the City of Ottawa should consider options for transferring ownership of the Hunt Club corridor. In the meantime, the new Zoning By-law should reflect the underlying ecological and social value of this land.

Healthy communities. Thousands of Hunt Club and Riverside Park residents live within a 15-minute walk of the Southern Corridor, including those who live near the “Riverwalk”

¹ Site summaries were prepared for “McCarthy Woods and the Southern Corridor”, the “Leopold Woodlot”, and the “CNR Line” north of Plante Drive.

² https://app06.ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/occ/2005/06-08/pec/Final%20Report_UNAEES.htm

³ <https://ottawa.ca/en/planning-development-and-construction/official-plan-and-master-plans/greenspace-master-plan>

⁴ <https://ncc-website-2.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Capital-Urban-Lands-Plan-amended-january-2025.pdf> (January 2025, p.38).

(Quinterra-Riverwood, Rivergate, and Revelstoke), “McCarthy Meadows” (Hunt Club Woods, Uplands Drive), and “Airport Parkway Woodlot” (Plante Drive, Owl Park).

The urban greenspaces in the Southern Corridor provide opportunities for unstructured recreational uses such as walking and observing wildlife. Such spaces help to maintain the “livability” of the Hunt Club and Riverside Park communities, and the health and recreational benefits of such spaces are well documented.

In future, the local community could work with the NCC and City to promote the stewardship and conservation of these areas – by helping to remove invasive species, encouraging wild pollinators, and sponsoring educational or work programs for local students.

Conclusion

In the City’s 2022 Official Plan, most of the Hunt Club corridor was designated as “Neighbourhood” rather than “Greenspace”.

Even so, Draft 1 of the new Zoning By-law respected the recreational and ecological value of the Hunt Club corridor. Only minor changes were made to the zoning map for this greenspace, and the existing zones were mostly converted to the new Environment Protection, Greenspace, Recreation, and Facilities and Open Space zones.

Drafts 2 and 3, however, have converted most of the NCC-owned lands outside McCarthy Woods to “Development Reserve” zoning. If approved, this zoning map would directly contradict the Greenspace Master Plan and the NCC’s own Capital Urban Lands Plan. It would increase the risk that the Hunt Club corridor would be developed despite its “*regionally significant*” ecological and recreational value.

For these reasons, the Hunt Club Community Association opposes the Development Reserve zoning in Draft 3 and urges the City of Ottawa to return to the proposed zoning shown in Draft 1 of the new Zoning By-law.

For further detail, please see the attached extracts from the zoning map for Draft 1 of the new Zoning By-law.

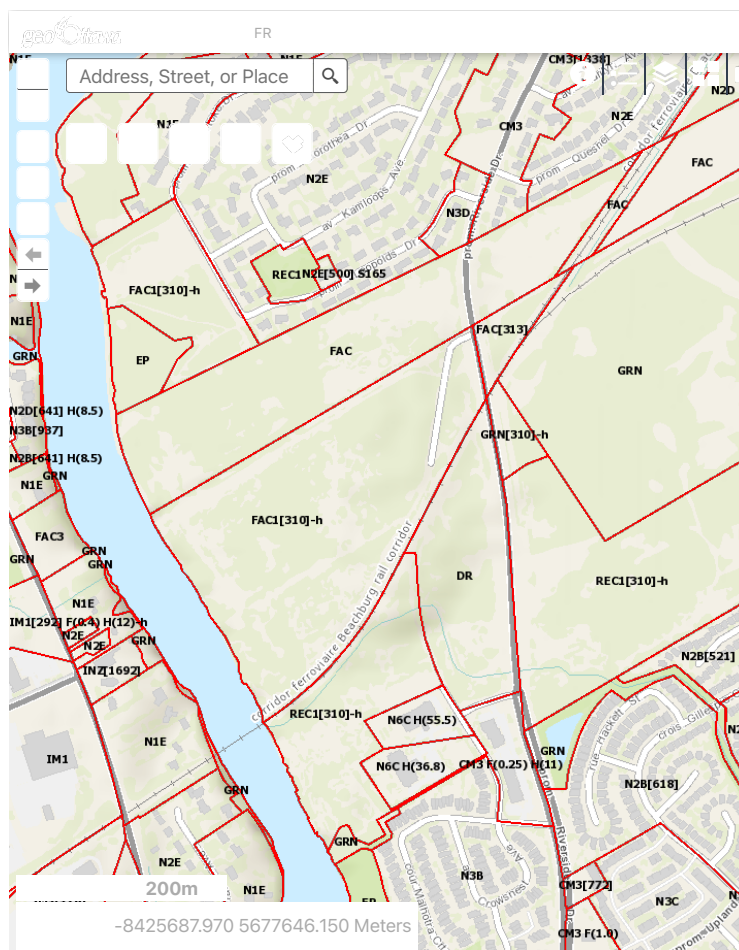
Sincerely,

Audrey Bélanger
President, Hunt Club Community Association

c.c. Councillor Riley Brockington
c.c. Dave Coyle, President, Riverside Park Community Association
c.c. Paul Johanis, President, Federation of Citizens' Associations
c.c. Owen Clarkin, President, Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club
c.c. Erwin Dreessen, Greenspace Alliance for Canada's Capital
c.c. William van Geest, Ecology Ottawa
c.c. Angela Keller-Herzog, Community Action for Environmental Sustainability
c.c. Shelley Crabtree, Forêt Capital Forest
c.c. Ottawa South Eco-Action Network

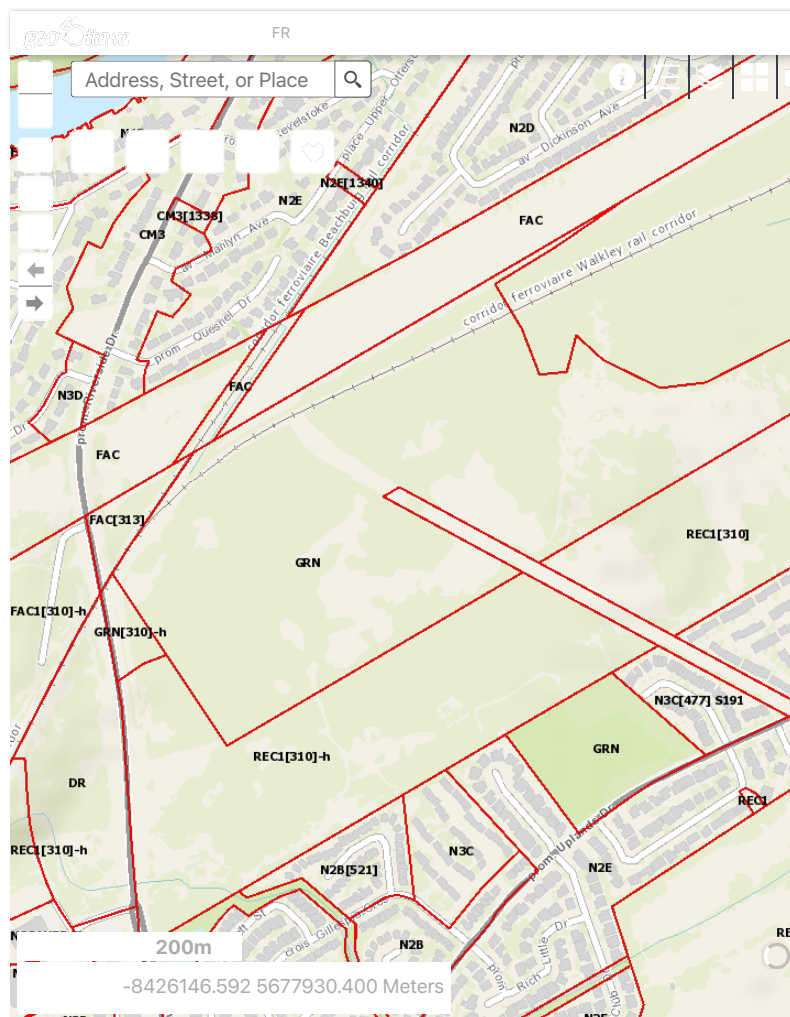
“Riverwalk”: Revelstoke to Rivergate

- The “Riverwalk” (3869 Revelstoke Drive, 3530 & 3576 Old Riverside Drive, and 3600 Rivergate Way) should be zoned as shown in Draft 1 of the zoning map (below). These NCC-owned lands border the Rideau River and are well used by local residents.
- In Drafts 2-3, most of the FAC, EP, and REC zones outside the hydro corridor were converted to DR (Development Reserve) zones.
- Only a small parcel at 3600 Rivergate Way (the former, now non-existent, DND marina) remained as a REC1 (Recreation) sub zone. Another very small parcel at the entrance to Riverwood Park was converted to a GRN (Greenspace) zone, presumably to facilitate a future pathway connection from Malhotra Drive.



McCarthy Meadows

- The “McCarthy Meadows” (3545 Riverside Drive) contain a variety of trees, thickets, and open spaces that are well-used by local residents. They are located between Riverside Drive and McCarthy Woods.
- Draft 1 (shown below) improved the current zoning map by deleting the IL (Light Industrial) zone for the northern portion of the meadow and replacing it with a GRN zone. It also proposed REC (Recreational) zoning for the southern portion.
- Drafts 2-3 provided a FAC (Facilities and Open Space) strip along the CNR line but converted the rest of the meadow to Development Reserve. This DR zoning would facilitate the development of urban greenspace that was assessed as having “high” ecological value by the City’s study of Urban Natural Areas.



Airport Parkway Woodlot

- This large woodlot is located between McCarthy Road and the Airport Parkway (3183 McCarthy Road, 1100 Walkley Road, and 1 Airport Parkway). In the current Zoning By-law, most of the woodlot is zoned as IL (Light Industrial).
- Draft 1 (below) proposed to re-zone both this large IL section and the southern section near Plante Drive as GRN (Greenspace). Drafts 2-3, however, proposed to zone both sections as DR (Development Reserve).
- This Urban Natural Area was assessed as having “moderate” ecological value some twenty years ago. Since then, the tree canopy has expanded considerably and much of the land appears to be well used by local residents.

