

January __, 2026

The Hon. David McGuinty, MP
Ottawa, Ontario

Re: NCC's Southern Corridor - Development Reserve Zones

Dear Mr. McGuinty,

Background

The “Southern Corridor” is a wide greenspace that stretches from the Rideau River to the Airport Parkway. It contains McCarthy Woods, several large meadows, a riverside walk, and a variety of thickets and open spaces.

I am writing to request your assistance in persuading the National Capital Commission to withdraw its demand for “Development Reserve” zoning in the Southern Corridor.

As you may recall, the Hunt Club Community Association first drew your attention to the proposed zoning changes for the Southern Corridor over six months ago. Since then, we have corresponded with you on multiple occasions and your executive assistant, Jenny Hooper, has met with us regarding this issue. As suggested by Ms. Hooper, we have engaged the media and our efforts have resulted in substantial articles in the *Ottawa Citizen* and on CBC’s local news.

Councillor Brockington has been fully supportive of our position. On December 17, the Southern Corridor issue was raised at the final Joint Committee review of the new Zoning By-law. At this meeting, Councillor Brockington tabled a motion which would essentially convert the current zones “like for like” to the new Zoning By-law (*see Annex A*).

At the Joint Committee, no fewer than 12 delegations spoke in favour of this motion for ecological, recreational, and cultural reasons. These delegations included the Ottawa South Eco-Action Network, Riverside Park Community Association, Greenspace Alliance of Canada’s Capital, Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability (CAFES), Bird Friendly Ottawa, the Poets’ Pathway, and a number of concerned residents who live near the corridor.

In spite of strong opposition from the NCC, and even from the Chair of the Planning and Housing Committee, Councillor Brockington’s motion was carried by a vote of 11-4. The final decision, however, will be made by the full City Council on January 28. Our concern is that the NCC will use the remaining time to mobilize support for its position among City Councillors.

To date, the NCC has not engaged constructively with local residents in Ottawa South. It has sought to use the cover of the comprehensive Zoning By-law review to short-circuit the normal planning process and has threatened to override the City's zoning decision if Development Reserve zoning is not applied to the Southern Corridor. Such a threat is a massive over-reaction to legitimate concerns expressed by community groups in South Ottawa.

These community groups have expressed deep concern about the NCC's position for the following key reasons:

- **Development Reserve zoning for the McCarthy Woods corridor would directly contradict the NCC's own “Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017-2067”** (its counterpart to the City of Ottawa's Official Plan). Under this Plan, the McCarthy Woods corridor contains lands which are designated as “Valuable Natural Habitat”, “Capital Urban Greenspace”, and “Regional Interest Land Mass” – intended for stewardship and conservation, not development. If the NCC wishes to pursue development in this section of the corridor, it should (a) change these Capital Urban Land Plan designations and (b) submit zoning amendments for specific parcels through the City's new improved planning process.
- **Development Reserve is not the only – let alone the best – zoning option for the lands surrounding McCarthy Woods.** Greenspace, Open Space, Recreation, and Neighbourhood Mixed-Use zones are also fully consistent with a Neighbourhood designation under Section 6.3.1 of the Official Plan. The NCC's preferred draft of the new Zoning By-law, for example, includes a Recreation zone near the apartment towers on Rivergate Way and a Greenspace zone that covers Hackett Pond and a portion of the Hunt Club Creek. A more nuanced approach to the McCarthy Woods corridor, therefore, would better reflect the reality of these greenspaces and would benefit the thousands of residents who live within a short walk of the corridor.
- **Councillor Brockington's motion is a reasonable compromise.** It retains a mix of Recreation, Greenspace, and Open Space zones near the Rideau River and the surrounding residential areas. At the same time, it does not “downzone” the NCC's properties. The two Light Industrial zones, which have been in place for several decades, will be converted to a Neighbourhood Mixed-Use subzone which recognizes existing light industrial uses in lands which have been designated as Neighbourhood in the Official Plan. If, as noted above, the NCC should decide in the future to pursue development for portions of the McCarthy Woods corridor, it would retain the ability to submit zoning amendments for specific parcels – but with more of a “level playing field” than would be the case with Development Reserve zoning.

Prior to the Joint Committee meeting on December 17, the NCC submitted a letter to City Councillors which stated its position on the McCarthy Woods corridor. To our knowledge, however, the NCC has not released a public response to Councillor Brockington's approved motion and has not provided its views on the delegations made at the Joint Committee.

Accordingly, as a matter of urgency, we would now ask you to request the NCC to provide a detailed response and constructive engagement along the following lines:

- **Response to the approved motion** – the NCC to provide, by January 12, 2026, a detailed response from Mr. Alain Miguelez (Vice President, Capital Planning and Chief Planner) regarding the balanced approach set out in Councillor Brockington's motion, identifying areas of potential agreement; and
- **Constructive engagement** - the NCC to convene a meeting, by January 16, 2026, between Mr. Miguelez, Councillor Brockington, our community association, and other interested parties to discuss options for resolving this situation in a way that would benefit both the NCC and the City of Ottawa.

If the NCC is not prepared to engage constructively on this issue, we would then ask you to intervene personally and to convene a meeting with the NCC under your own auspices.

Ms. Hooper has assured us that you strongly support our position. At this critical point, therefore, we really need you to encourage the NCC to reconsider its position, to meet with the interested groups, and to inform the City of Ottawa that it will support Councillor Brockington's motion.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Andrei Grushman
Hunt Club Community Association

c.c. Councillor Riley Brockington
c.c. Christine Johnson, President, HCCA

Encl.

1. *Approved Motion*

Approved Motion

Motion No. PHC-ARAC2025-07-20¹

Moved by R. Brockington

WHEREAS the National Capital Commission (NCC) owns properties in Ward 16 along the Walkley rail corridor between the Rideau River and Airport Parkway, commonly referred to as the Southern Corridor and McCarthy Woods, and in Ward 8 along the Beachburg rail corridor between Woodroffe Avenue and Merivale Road, commonly referred to as the Southern corridor; and

WHEREAS the Official Plan designation for the NCC-owned McCarthy Woods is a mix of Neighbourhood and Greenspace; and, the designation for the NCC-owned Southern corridor is Neighbourhood; and

WHEREAS the current zoning in Zoning By-law 2008-250 for the Southern Corridor and McCarthy Woods is Parks and Open Space, Community Leisure Facility, and Light Industrial; and, the current zoning for the Southern corridor is Minor Institutional; and

WHEREAS the first draft of the new zoning by-law proposed for McCarthy Woods Open Space Facility, Recreation, and Greenspace; and, for the Southern corridor Institutional; and

WHEREAS the NCC expressed a desire for the lands within both corridors to be designated in the new Zoning By-law as Development Reserve; and

WHEREAS a zoning designation of Development Reserve in the final draft of the new Zoning By-law in both areas are consistent with the Official Plan designation of Neighbourhood; and

WHEREAS the proposed zoning in the first draft of the new Zoning By-law in both areas are consistent with the Neighbourhood designation of the Official Plan; and

¹ <https://pub-ottawa.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=97890283-23be-41e9-976a-b0c03954bcd1&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English>

WHEREAS a significant number of public submissions have been received from both communities requesting that the zoning for their respective areas revert to zoning designations aligned with what was proposed in Draft 1; and

WHEREAS the Baseline-Merivale Secondary Plan is currently underway and includes the Southern corridor; and

WHEREAS following the conclusion of the Baseline-Merivale Secondary Plan process, the City will initiate a Zoning By-Law amendment to implement the intent of the Secondary Plan.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the zoning for the lands designated Neighbourhood in the Official Plan along the Walkley rail corridor for the Southern Corridor and McCarthy Woods in the new Zoning By-law revert to the zoning in line with what was shown that was proposed in the first draft of the new Zoning By-law, except for the following changes:

- lands currently zoned IL – Light Industrial in Zoning By-law 2008-250 will be zoned NMU4 – Neighbourhood Mixed-Use subzone 4 instead of GRN – Greenspace;
- the lands zoned FAC-1 – Open Space Facility Subzone 1 in the first draft of the new Zoning By-law will be zoned FAC4 – Open Space Facility Subzone 4; and
- exception [310] and the holding symbol -h will not be included in the zone codes,

as shown on the map in Document 1, attached to this motion and on file with the City Clerk; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the zoning for the lands designated Neighbourhood in the Official Plan for the Southern corridor revert to the INZ[416]-h zone, as was shown in the first draft of the new Zoning By-law, as shown in Document 2, until such time that the Baseline-Merivale Secondary Plan has been completed and the zoning is amended to implement the secondary plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to subsection 34(17) of the Planning Act, no further notice be given.

Against (4) L. Dudas, G. Gower, J. Leiper, and W. Lo

Document 1

