

My interest in this case is the appeal by the National Capital Commission (NCC) of the City of Ottawa Zoning By-law (By-law No. 2026-50), specifically with regard to the zoning designation of that portion of the "**Rivergate/McCarthy lands**", located between the Rideau River and Airport Parkway, owned by the National Capital Commission and zoned either Greenspace Zone, Neighbourhood Mixed-use Zone, Recreation Zone, or Open Space Facility Zone.

I have lived in this community for most of my life, approximately 50 years in total, and I believe that there would be more harm than good if these lands were developed for the purpose of addressing a housing crisis in the City of Ottawa.

I am concerned that the NCC changed their protective role of these lands to assist in the Federal request for under the Public Lands for Homes Plan and the Federal Lands Initiative without fully considering the impacts of this decision on the health of the ecosystem and residents. I also think the development of this important ecosystem will have limited housing benefits for those who are most affected by the housing crisis - those in need of deeply affordable housing. Up until February 2026, the NCC stated goals for these lands included

- reinforcing urban vegetation cover and conserving the Capital's picturesque landscapes,
- providing improved access to green and blue spaces year-round; and
- contributing to building a livable Capital Region.

I would like the NCC to continue with the important and successful mandate they had until they voted to offer the Rivergate/McCarthy lands for housing development in February 2026.

My participation would assist the Tribunal by providing local knowledge of the land under discussion (specifically who uses the land, how accessible it is to Ottawa residents, what species of animals, birds, plants and insects live and travel in this nature corridor, formerly protected by the NCC as a green space). I intend to rely on my professional knowledge in public and environmental health, and public reports such as those from local agencies including the Ottawa Police Services, and minutes and decisions of City of Ottawa committee and council meetings. I do not expect to call expert evidence unless authorized by the Tribunal and disclosed in accordance with its directions. I have a background in public health, specifically environmental health and I think my knowledge and the information shared in this letter could better inform the tribunal about what is at stake should this amendment be approved.

The reasons I do not want the NCC appeal to succeed is that the existing land use is protective of the health and safety of our community and will offers insufficient housing benefits to those who are truly in need within the City of Ottawa. I have provided backup information for my position in the following four points:

1. **These lands are mature, established green spaces that should continue to be protected.** Most of the Rivergate/McCarthy Lands, including waterfront property along Revelstoke Drive, have only ever been used as farmland or greenspace. As such, flora, fauna and humans have flourished in this ecosystem. We know this because this ecosystem is documented and protected not only by the NCC but by neighbours and visitors. Examples of this stewardship includes compilations of detailed lists of trees, bird and butterfly species; removal of noxious weeds and invasive species; protection and enjoyment of woodland flowers by volunteers who give tours; organized community garbage cleanups; ongoing volunteer maintenance of pathways; regular volunteer remove dog excrement; and the reporting of problems to the NCC. This green space is important to the species that live there and the NCC would be negligent in its mandate should they suddenly decide to withdraw protection of this land and its occupants.
2. **The homeless and housing affordability crisis in Ottawa will not improve by permitting development on the Rivergate/McCarthy lands.** The 2024 [2024 City of Ottawa Housing Needs Assessment](#) found the people most at risk of being affected by our housing crisis and homelessness are low-income residents. A recent report however found that newly constructed rental apartments do not improve this crisis because they are too expensive for lower income renters. In fact, they have high vacancy rates of **6.7%**, driven by higher price points that outpace general affordability ([CBC](#), May 5, 2026). So new builds will not assist those most in need of housing.

It is my understanding that there are already many housing developments approved within our municipal ward that are yet to be built and as such, the root of our housing issues is not lack of opportunity but lack of funding to build developments already approved to be built.

3. **Transportation shortfalls already exist around these lands creating health and safety issues that have not been resolved.** Residents without cars find that this neighbourhood has very poor transit access, and some of the worst traffic congestion in the City of Ottawa, with the intersection of Hunt Club and Riverside Drive consistently ranked as Ottawa's worst and most dangerous intersection in the City with (CTV News, January 2026). The Ottawa Police Services reported 87 collisions at this intersection in 2025. This

neighbourhood is widely considered to be underserved by OC Transpo services, a sentiment that is shared by residents, community advocates and City officials. (June 2026, City of Ottawa Motion No: 2025-71-13).

Lastly, the high-speed corridor along Riverside Drive experiences heavy traffic and is a busy truck route. This makes walking unpleasant and dangerous due to noise, air pollution and few crossing lights for pedestrian crossing. It is difficult to have a conversation with someone if you are walking along this busy route because of the noise. It is well documented that higher levels of air pollution are found on and near major roads and highways. Most local air pollution in Ottawa is caused by traffic, especially during and after rush hour. People who live or exercise outdoors less than 100 metres away from a major road or less than 500 meters from a highway are at increased risk of exposure to air pollution and its harmful health effects, including damage to our tissues and inflammation in our bodies. Small particles can be breathed deep into the lungs and carry pollutants directly into our bloodstream. (Ottawa Public Health, [Traffic Related Air Pollution](#), Accessed on Oct 6, 2026) This will result in a increased need for infrastructure improvements that will be very expensive for the City of Ottawa taxpayers. Development costs will be borne by residents who will be negatively impacted by a surge in housing in a community that already has significant road and transit issues.

4. These lands provide important health and climate resilience benefits to Ottawa residents. Natural green spaces in urban settings are known to have many important human health benefits. (Ottawa Public Health, [Building Healthy Neighbourhoods](#), Accessed on October 6, 2026)

- Green spaces support physical and mental health, help people stay active and connected, and play a key role in protecting communities from climate change.
- Green spaces with trees can block noise and wind while making neighbourhoods cooler and the air cleaner.
- Natural spaces help reduce stress, anger, sadness, and fatigue, and boost happiness and energy.
- Green spaces offer children places to play and older adults welcoming places to relax, stay active and connect with others. The [2025 Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play \(AOP10\)](#) highlights the connections between active outdoor play and significant individual, population, and community health benefits.

According to Health Canada and Ottawa Public Health, climate change is expected to bring warmer, wetter and wilder weather to Ottawa.

- Urban areas are often hotter than places with trees and water due to the urban heat island effect, which occurs when buildings, roads, and parking lots absorb heat during the day and release it at night. The green space areas of the Rivergate/McCarthy lands have been documented to provide a cool area that helps cool down surrounding urban heat island areas and provides a cool place for people and nature to go to stay cool during extreme heat events. Figure 1 shows a 2023 surface temperature map from the [GeoOttawa database on Climate Resiliency](#) on a summer day in the City of Ottawa and illustrates on a scale of 18 to 42 degrees Celsius, that the Rivergate/McCarthy lands in the centre of this map are much cooler, and therefore protective of human and ecosystem health than the surrounding urban areas that are impacted by pavement, structures and lack of shade and trees.

Figure 1 City of Ottawa Urban Heat Island 2023

In summary, I would like to be a participant in the hearings on this appeal to bear witness to the decision, to provide input from a local resident perspective and to bear witness to the proceedings that will affect myself, my children, my neighbours, and the wider community

of the City of Ottawa who come to these properties to enjoy nature, relax, learn about their environment and feel good about the world.