

QTN Vision and Actions

Background

In early 2013, Ottawa's Queensway Terrace North Community Association (QTNCA) agreed to begin a "visioning process". Its main goals were to identify and agree on the following:

1. Vision statement
2. Main issues that QTNCA should be involved with (i.e. scope)
3. Cross-cutting principles used by QTNCA to manage the above issues
4. QTNCA positions/actions for each of the main issues

With the above, the QTNCA believes that it will have a more holistic and comprehensive picture of what it does, what it stands for, and why. This will assist and help guide QTNCA activities in the future. Examples include:

- Deciding on whether or not to get involved with an issue or debate.
- Already knowing the QTNCA position on an issue when that issue becomes significant or controversial.
- Supporting the communications between QTNCA, QTN residents, and external parties (e.g. governmental bodies and other associations).
- Informing whether QTNCA should apply for a grant, project or funding, or raise funds through other means.

A note on process: QTNCA discussions were held from 2013 to 2014. Preliminary results were presented and discussed at the 2013 Annual General Meeting (AGM). The final results will be presented and discussed at the QTN community AGM in November 2014.

1) Vision Statement

QTN aims to preserve and enhance its core values and neighborhood character while welcoming diversity. We are open to change, progress and alternatives which benefit our neighborhood's tangible and intangible assets.

While recognizing that QTN is one part of a broader community in Ottawa, and considerate of the need for balanced development and intensification, we wish to maintain the historic character of our neighborhood which centres on a diversity of low-rise housing.

We strive to preserve and enhance our natural assets for the benefit of all members of our community.

We strongly believe in fostering a safe and cohesive community, to instil a sense of security, spirit and belonging among residents. We will endeavour to achieve this by encouraging support for those in need or new to our neighbourhood, taking proactive steps to improve road safety and reduce crime, and promoting a diversity of social, cultural, green and recreational services and amenities.

2) Main issues that QTNCA should be involved with (i.e. scope)

Main issues

QTNCA members were asked to send in a maximum of five of their top main issues for QTNCA, from most important to least important. These inputs were then entered into an Excel table. The most important issue was given a weight of “5” all the way down to the 5th most important issue getting a weight of “1”.

An assessment of the table found that six issues dominated, while there were some deviations around how a member named or described the issue. Please note that the math behind this was not perfect, but it was sufficient to identify the following:

1. Natural assets (e.g. Frank Ryan Park, Connaught Park, playground, rink)
2. Housing (e.g. intensification, housing, development, zoning)
3. Road Safety (e.g. traffic, speeding)
4. Public works (e.g. bus, LRT, sewers)
5. Crime
6. Community cohesion (e.g. social activities, spirit, neighbourliness, improvement of the lives of residents, welcoming new residents, sense of belonging)

Outlying issues

There were a number of inputs that could not be easily placed into the above six issues, usually made by one member, although some had overlap. They are: Revitalization; Community Resources (e.g. daycare, fitness); Community development (e.g. parks, retail?); Taxes?; Schools; Providing wealth and neighbourhood value; Political liaison to support QTN; and Become a voice in Bay Ward and City.

3) Cross-cutting principles used by QTNCA to manage the above issues

QTNCA has drafted **6 principles** which it applies to *how it deals with the main issues* above. These principles are “cross-cutting”, meaning that they go across all or most of the issues.

In some cases, all of the principles might be considered when discussing an issue. In others, only some might be, while the priority of principles may also change, depending on the issue at hand. For example, in some cases diversity might be the main principle. In others, it might be prosperity. Overall, the goal is to strike a balance among the principles.

Based on inputs and a follow-up meeting held April 8 2013, the following 6 principles were identified (not listed according to priority). A short draft summary of the principles is also included.

Draft summary of principles

QTNCA welcomes diversity in the community, and is open to a diversity of housing types and social, cultural, transportation, green and recreational services and amenities. We strive to preserve our core values and neighbourhood character while being open to change, progress

and alternative solutions and practices. We want to preserve and enhance our community's tangible and intangible assets.

We choose long-term sustainability over short-term fixes, especially for our natural environment. We seek strong community cohesiveness, by improving the lives of our residents and encouraging community spirit and participation. We also fully recognize that QTNC is part of a larger community which we need to consider in our decisions and activities.

Principles in detail

- ***Diversity***
 - We are open to a diversity of housing types (as long as they fit within the character of the community and the current zoning by-law) and social, cultural, transportation (e.g. cars, bikes, transit), green and recreational services and amenities that are suited to a diversity of families/individuals (and pets) with different income levels and demographics (e.g. age, family type, gender).
 - We stress inclusiveness over exclusiveness.

- ***Progressivity***
 - Our community has core values and aims to retain its neighbourhood character.
 - At the same time, we wish to balance the above with being open to change, progress and new solutions, and in keeping up with the times.
 - When faced with an issue, we should avoid “knee-jerk reactions”, and concentrate on goals and best solutions and practices.

- ***Prosperity***
 - We want to preserve and enhance our community assets, both tangible (e.g. parks, homes, schools) and intangible (e.g. community character, quality of life).

- ***Sustainability***
 - We prefer long-term sustainable solutions over short-term quick-fix solutions, for our natural and built environment.
 - We seek to minimize our footprint on the natural environment.

- ***Community development***
 - We seek to improve the lives of our residents, instil a sense of belonging and welcome, and encourage community spirit (e.g. through activities).
 - We encourage participation across the community in decision-making.
 - We ensure that the QTNCA effectively voices and supports our community's interests and maintains constant communication with the community.

- ***Broader connectedness***
 - We are part of a larger interdependent, diverse web of communities (e.g. built, social, green) which we need to consider in our decisions and activities.
 - We are a voice for our community which can be linked with the voices of other communities. We can work together for broader goals.

4) QTNCA Positions/Actions for Main Issues

Note: In producing the QTNCA positions on main issues, the cross-cutting principles (presented above in #2) were considered as much as possible. Furthermore, for each position, the following structure was agreed:

- Define the issue
- Why do we care about the issue?
- How is the issue threatened or at risk?
- What actions can QTNCA take to minimize threats and risks?

(3.1) Natural assets

Define

- Change name from “greenspace” to a diversity of “natural assets” which includes:
 - Public areas such as Connaught Park, Frank Ryan Park, Elmhurst Woods, Transitway greenspace and Pinecrest Creek
 - Any natural assets such as green areas (e.g. Grant School), and private home yards and trees
 - Differentiate between natural areas (e.g. Elmhurst Woods) and engineered areas (e.g. Frank Ryan baseball fields)

Why do we care?

- It’s a great attribute and a key reason why people moved here and stay
- Relief from urban challenges
- Improved quality of life (prosperity)
- Many ecosystem goods and services (nature provides good and services, such as water, wood, clean air and flood prevention)
- Good air, oxygen
- Nice landscapes, aesthetically pleasing
- Natural biodiversity (wild species and habitats)
- Encourages fitness and activity
- Good for child education
- Pet-friendly
- Encourages community building and relationships

Risks, threats

- Pinecrest Creek is highly damaged (possibly from storm sewer overflow) and partially buried
- Development/intensification pressures (especially on main arteries)
- Confusion around what is “park” and “undeveloped city lots” – latter could be easily developed
- Pests, parasites (e.g. Emerald ash borer, grubs)
- LRT construction

- Other human activities (e.g. waste, fire, ATV, dog poop)

Possible QTNCA actions

- Preserve or enhance existing natural areas
- Protect from development
- Minimize negative impacts from infrastructure (e.g. LRT, roads, pipes, electric)
- Maintain overall natural balance – compensate if negative impacts (e.g. plant a tree)
- “Adopt-a-tree” project: City or we could manage; raises awareness that we care
- More recreational activities in parks (e.g. chess tables, improve fitness trail); *Let’s have a creative talk about this!*
- Increase accessibility, especially for walking, benches, and wheelchairs in park
- Remediate Pinecrest Creek: need to assess situation; QTNCA should engage with ongoing City project; possibly “daylight” the buried stretch of the creek.
- More awareness raising
 - Possible annual event linked to clean-up
 - Plaques that celebrate nature and show that it is greenspace
 - Includes kids, scouts...
- End confusion around what is “park” and “undeveloped city lots”

(3.2) Housing

Define

- Only housing and residential (commercial can come later)
- *Density*: the number of dwelling units or the residential population of a given geographic area
- *Infill*: using land within a built-up area for further construction.
- *Intensification*: development that results in an increase in housing or jobs on a piece of land.

Why do we care?

- The type of housing we have in our community has a major impact on its character, community feel and cohesion, and quality of life – all factors which we want to optimize.
- Density impacts infrastructural requirements.
- We would like to have a common look and feel. This basically means low-rise homes, while they can be single-family, duplex or triplex.
- Some change can be positive (e.g. replacing derelict housing).

Risks/threats

- We understand and support Ottawa and Ontario’s policy for intensification (e.g. given that it can help reduce city pressures on urban sprawl, environment, etc.). However, we want to ensure that it is balanced in our community.
- Increasing the density too much can burden existing infrastructure (e.g. parking).
- Some developers are only interested in developing as much land as possible with the highest density to increase profits. Some do everything they can to enact variances with the City.

- Many seniors have to sell their homes and are doing so without consideration of the type of housing to follow.
- Many bungalows are being torn down to make way for large semi's etc. with little greenspace.
- New housing could be built to replace valuable natural assets and greenspace.
- Any development on Carling Avenue should conform to this vision and the historic character of our neighborhood.

Possible QTNCA actions

- Be vigilant for changes in the community and assist community residents where possible (e.g. at City planning meetings).
- Aggressively defend against proposed zoning changes and variances when they are not in conformity with our desired character for our community.
- Proactively work with the City and planning processes to balance their interests for intensification with those we desire for our community.

(3.3) Road Safety

Define road safety

- Ensuring our roads are safe for people and animals.

Why do we care?

- We want roads to be safe, to avoid accidents, especially for children, seniors and bicycles.

Risks, threats

- Speeding
- Driving through stop signs
- Lack of sidewalks
- Poor winter ploughing
- Insufficient space or attention for bicycles
- Potholes
- The pedestrian and bike paths near the Carling-Transitway intersection are very dangerous.

Possible QTNCA actions

- Invite Community Police to QTNCA meeting to discuss above (Anna is in contact with Amir) (Deputy Skinner is also in our community)
- More stop signs and better enforcement by police
- To reduce speeding, change speed throughout community to 40 km/hr, and consider adding speed bumps or tree pots
- Request City to improve safety conditions at the Carling-Transitway intersection for bikes and pedestrians (e.g. through stop signs before bike paths, and pedestrian tunnel or bridge).

(3.4) Public Works

*(*This issue does not include works relating to roads and traffic -- e.g. sidewalks, curbs, stop signs -- which is covered in the 'Traffic Safety' issue.)*

1. LRT

Define

- The City's new Transportation Master Plan calls for a new LRT train to connect the downtown to Bayshore Station. The train will pass over a bridge over Pinecrest Creek, go through a tunnel under Connaught Drive, and re-emerge on land at a new station on Queensview Drive. The train will continue to Pinecrest Station and end at Bayshore Station.
- The LRT is expected to especially benefit Kanata residents who can commute by bus to the Bayshore Station.
- The overall estimated cost for the Lincoln Fields to Bayshore Station section is \$400 million.
- The expected date of completion is 2023; and construction around QTN could start within the next five years.
- A new foot bridge is planned from Queensview Station over the 417 to Pinecrest Mall (where IKEA is). "Pathways" to Queensview Station are also planned.
- An Environmental Assessment will be carried out.
- The NCC, which owns much of the lands (and the bike paths there), most likely has not yet been approached, nor is it certain that they will be receptive to the plan.

Why do we care?

- The LRT goes right through our community, including the tunnel.
- It has many benefits for us and others, but also has risks.

Risks/threats

1. New LRT stations typically encourage increased **intensification**. But we don't know what degree of intensification the City is planning around Queensview Station.
2. **Construction**, especially of the tunnel, could result in **noise** and **mess** for years. Where will the construction material be **stored**? Furthermore, given the experience with other bridges under construction, the timing of the project could take much **longer** than expected.
3. Pinecrest Creek and other greenspace and **natural assets** could be at risk.
4. Funds could be scarce, later forcing the tunnel to become an **over-ground route**.
5. A new road **connection** may be made between Queensview's east end and another road within the community, increasing traffic, and possibly parking, on some streets.

Possible QTNCA positions

- In principle, we agree with an LRT going through our community, in order to benefit our community and others.
1. We accept some degree of **intensification** around Queensview Station, but not too much. For example, six floors above a retail level would be acceptable. We want more information on this issue. For example, why is a foot bridge needed to connect

to IKEA (answer: to allow residents from other side of 417 to use station)? Will there be intensification on the IKEA side as well? What does the new Official Plan have for this area? And could we get a guarantee from the City that there will not be over-intensification (as some other communities have done)?

2. We would like more information on **construction** planning and impacts.
3. We support the environmental assessment process and would like more information. We want to preserve the quality of our **natural assets**.
4. We only support a **tunnel**, not an over-ground route over the community to Queensview.
5. We would like more information. If a **road connection** is to be made, then potentially affected residents should be consulted.

2. Sewer

Background

- Many culverts are unmanaged and messy.
- Pinecrest Creek is mainly a storm sewer.

Possible QTNCA actions

- Request City to better manage culverts.
- Improve stormwater management and reduction. Encourage the City to start a pilot project and offer to be the first pilot project community (e.g. retention pond, downspout disconnections).

3. Buses

Background

- We used to have a bus but it was cancelled.
- A bus would be very helpful during peak hours.

Possible QTNCA actions

- Request City to restore one bus route that runs twice a day during rush hour on weekdays.

4. Public works initiatives

Background

- Various levels of government have funds and initiatives for improving public works.

Possible QTNCA actions

- QTNCA becomes more proactive in identifying such initiatives and applying

(3.5) Crime

Define

- Any human action that breaks Criminal Code law (not bylaws), other than those related to road safety (this is covered under the 'Road Safety' issue).
- The key actions of concern are harm to persons; and harm to, or theft of, property (mainly structures, vehicles and bicycles).

Risks/Threats

Theft

- Home: More common in daytime; usually if windows or doors were left open while break-ins are less common.
- Bikes: mainly kids stealing
- Cars: Usually if windows or doors left unlocked (kids sometimes check between 2-4 a.m.; sometimes doors are forced open; kids typically take what's inside (e.g. GPS) and run.

Harm to persons

- Streets are considered safe.
- Kids are quite safe in area and can walk on their own (e.g. from home to park).
- Women feel relatively safe, except at night in forest, transitway (bike lanes and footpath) and Roman Avenue pathway next to 417.

Possible QTNCA Actions

- Stay informed by police
 - Anna continues to get updates (e.g. police trends reports) and informs Board.
 - Check online crime reports and apps.
 - Police attends Board meeting sometimes.
- More police cruising at night (find out how much there is now).
- Neighbourhood Watch: It has benefits and is still in progress in QTN. Anna can update and let's decide on next steps (e.g. to continue or not) at the next meeting.
- Raise awareness that people should get to know their neighbours and let them know when they are absent from their home (e.g. include this is a public meeting).
- Raise awareness about car window anti-theft cards and hand more out.
- More lighting on Clarendon, Frank Ryan Park (??) and the Roman Avenue pathway.

(3.6) Community Cohesion

Define

- Community spirit, neighbourliness, sense of belonging

Why do we care?

- Improves quality of life
- Supports new residents
- Helps others with issues or problems

Risks/Threats

- Lack of awareness about neighbours, community, QTNCA, community events...
- Apathy
- High turnover of residents
- Difficult neighbours
- Intensification

- This can be positive or negative. Positive, for example, by bringing more people together. Negative, for example, by creating friction around limited space or different lifestyles.
- Temptation of home electronic devices prevents residents from socializing.

Possible QTNCA actions

- Neighbourhood Watch
- Improve communications and awareness
 - E.g. about QTNCA, website, community events
 - Who are most needy? What are our biggest issues?
 - How? E.g. website; community events; new flyer to be handed out or made available at events; permanent sign in the park; community workshop
- Events
 - Continue existing ones (e.g. carnival), with improved awareness raising.
 - Tie into existing city events (e.g. Kindness Week)
 - Food bank collections
- Welcome new neighbours if we hear about them
- Awards, such as our current volunteer appreciation certificates