

NCC Greenbelt master plan renewal survey

CPAWS-OV thoughts and ideas

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is in the process of renewing the 2013 Greenbelt Master Plan and we need your help to ensure the preservation and restoration of biodiversity is the first and overriding priority in the new plan. The CPAWS-OV vision is for a protected, connected and restored Greenbelt.

To help you complete the survey, we are providing you with some thoughts you may wish to use in your own responses.

Question 1 - What are your thoughts regarding the proposed draft vision for the Master Plan? What could be improved or clarified?

The proposed draft vision:

The National Capital Greenbelt is an urban park that protects vital ecosystems, sustains local agriculture and offers diverse experiences in the National Capital Region. It is stewarded as a public asset of national significance and is a living legacy for present and future generations.

***We find the draft vision vague.** Our vision at CPAWS-OV is for a protected, connected and restored Greenbelt. We would like to see an emphasis on those three elements in the new vision. We feel the word 'protect' is important and we are pleased to see it, but we would like to see clearer language in terms of 'legal protection', we would also like to see the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity and biodiversity as the first priority – protecting nature should come before anything else and should inform everything else the NCC does in the Greenbelt – before agriculture and before recreation. We would also like to see connectivity be a central part of the vision. We would also like to see the NCC make a strong statement, in the vision, of engaging with Indigenous communities in terms of reconciliation and co-management of the Greenbelt, while weaving Indigenous knowledge and western science into its management.*

Question 2 - What are your thoughts regarding the following draft guiding principle? What could be improved or clarified?

Draft guiding principle 1: Responsible Leadership

Strengthening proactive collaboration with federal, provincial, municipal and Indigenous partners, community organizations, and farmers is essential to ensure long-term stewardship.

***CPAWS-OV agrees with this statement.** Community organizations have much to offer in the preservation and management of the Greenbelt, there needs to be meaningful engagement with these groups by the NCC. For example, CPAWS-OV would be happy to collaborate with the NCC on education and stewardship projects in the Greenbelt.*

Question 3 - What are your thoughts regarding the following draft guiding principle? What could be improved or clarified?

Draft guiding principle 2: Ecological Integrity

Protecting the natural environment in the Greenbelt is essential to ensure the sustainability of important habitats and ecological links and provide important ecosystem services for the broader area. The health of these ecosystems is an intrinsic part of the Greenbelt.

CPAWS-OV agrees with this statement, we would add the need for legislative protection through an Act of Parliament (akin to amendments to the National Capital Act) to truly protect the Greenbelt's boundaries and to provide the NCC with a mandate to manage the Greenbelt to protect and restore the areas which have been degraded over time. There should be some mention of ecological connectivity between the Greenbelt and other natural areas, like the Carp Hills, Marlborough Forest or the Larose Forest.

Question 4 - What are your thoughts regarding the following draft guiding principle? What could be improved or clarified?

Draft guiding principle 3: Agricultural Vitality

Agriculture remains a vital contributor to community well-being and the Capital's food security and sufficiency. It is supported by responsible, sustainable, diversified and climate-ready models and farming systems that protect soils, water and ecosystem health. This principle recognizes the essential role of farmers, whose knowledge, livelihoods and financial viability are integral to sustaining the Greenbelt's agricultural resources.

CPAWS-OV agrees with this statement, we support sustainable agriculture in the Greenbelt. We would like to see the NCC support more community-based agriculture and promote diverse forms of agriculture in the Greenbelt which support biodiversity. We would like to see a move away from mono-culture crops of corn and soy, for example.

Question 5 - What are your thoughts regarding the following draft guiding principle? What could be improved or clarified?

Draft guiding principle 4: Capital Experience

The Greenbelt continues to serve residents and visitors as a distinctive Capital destination with meaningful, accessible and diverse experiences that connect people to nature, water, agriculture, culture and heritage while preserving its integrity.

CPAWS-OV agrees with the intention of the statement. We would suggest replacing the word 'preserving' with 'protecting' in terms of the integrity of the Greenbelt.