



2005 Public Awareness Survey

Executive Summary

National Capital Commission

December 5th, 2005

FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

The National Capital Commission (NCC) is a Crown Corporation that was created by the National Capital Act of 1958. The mission¹ of the organization is to ***‘create pride and unity through Canada’s Capital Region’***. Its mandate includes the management of federal lands in the National Capital Region and “to organize, sponsor or promote such public activities and events in the National Capital Region as will enrich the cultural and social fabric of Canada”.

Given the broad mandate of the organization, the NCC consults regularly with a wide range of stakeholders both nationally and in the National Capital Region. This study focuses on residents of the National Capital Region. The objective is to continue the tracking that has been on-going since 2002 related to:

- General public awareness of the NCC;
- Public awareness of NCC contribution to festivals and cultural events in the region;
- Public awareness of the NCC contribution in maintaining and beautifying federal lands in the region;
- The reasons for positive and negative assessments of the NCC, if any; and
- Public approval of NCC operations with regard to areas such as public consultation, land use planning and promoting the National Capital Region.

This executive summary examines tracking data collected since 2002. The 2005 survey information is based on a representative sample of 603 National Capital Region residents who were interviewed between November 3rd and 8th by telephone. The sample was stratified to ensure the inclusion of a significant number of Quebec residents, allowing for meaningful comparison between Ontario and Quebec results. The results are accurate within plus or minus 4 percentage points, at the 95 percent confidence level.

¹ Information about the mandate and mission of the NCC was obtained through the NCC website - www.canadacapital.gc.ca

Changes over Time

There are a number of areas in which perceptions of the NCC have changed, albeit modestly.

Changes over the last 4 years

- 56 percent of residents now recognize the NCC as the organizer of Winterlude – up 8 percent since 2002.
- Recognition of the NCC as responsible for Gatineau Park has increased by 6 percent in the last four years to 53 percent of residents.
- 54 percent of residents in 2005 recognize the NCC as the custodian of recreational pathways – up 5 percent since 2002.

Changes over the last year

- Overall familiarity with the NCC dropped by 5 percent (to 60%) following several years when approximately two-thirds of residents were familiar (67% in 2002, 69% in 2003, 65% in 2004).
- There has been a change in the reasons being stated for positive feelings about the NCC. Twenty-one percent of residents mention events and festivals (up 6% in the last year) and 17 percent mention parks and green spaces (down 6% in the last year).
- Four-fifths (81%) of residents state that they personally benefit from NCC activities (up 5% in the last year). Three reasons why residents feel this way have increased in the last year:
 - Activities and events - 30 percent (up 8 percent in last year)
 - Bike paths - 22 percent (up 5 percent in last year)
 - Parkways - 19 percent (up 6 percent in the last year)

Continuing Misperceptions

There are three areas where the local public believes the federal government is the organization responsible for the activity when more specifically it is the NCC.

- 41 percent name the federal government as the organization responsible for Canada Day celebrations – up 13 percent since 2002. Over the course of the study 36 percent correctly mention the NCC.
- Recognition of the federal government as the organization responsible for the bridges spanning the region's major rivers has grown to one-fifth of residents (22%) from only one-tenth (12%) in 2002. One-fifth (19%) correctly name the NCC – the same percentage as in 2002.
- Residents are also more likely to say the federal government is responsible for maintaining Official Residences. Over-half (53%) of residents in 2005 name the federal government as the organization responsible for fulfilling this role while only one-third (36%) did so in 2002. One-quarter (28%) correctly name the NCC – the same percentage as in 2002.

The misperception between the federal government and the NCC with regard to bridges and Official Residences is more prominent in Quebec than in Ontario. The provincial difference does not affect perceptions of responsibility for Canada Day Celebrations.

Another area of continuing misperception is related to the Tulip Festival. Fifty-three percent of NCR residents **incorrectly** recognize the NCC as the organization responsible for the Tulip Festival – up 8 percent since 2002.

Consistent Attitudes

There are a number of areas where a resident's awareness of the NCC has not changed.

- Residents still feel a great sense of pride about the National Capital Region. Almost nine out of ten residents (87%) feel a sense of pride about living in the National Capital Region – essentially the same as in 2002, 2003 and 2004. This having been noted, there has been a decrease in the percentage of residents who say they are 'very proud' (minus 6%) and an increase in those who say they are 'generally proud' (plus 4%) in the last year.

- Resident's recognition level of the NCC as the organization responsible for federal lands (the Parkways 54%, the Greenbelt 53%, and LeBreton Flats 38%) has remained the same over time.
- Unaided (unprompted) awareness of the NCC remains the same as in 2002. Four in ten residents name the NCC as the organization responsible for several activities in the region, based on a description of the NCC mandate. Five in ten (49%) report not knowing who is responsible for these activities.
- The group, who did not correctly state the NCC as the organization responsible for federal land use and related activities, that recalls the NCC when prompted represents 51 percent of residents. These trends are the same as those exhibited over the four years of the study.
- Overall impressions of the NCC (61% positive) have remained steady over time.
- The main reasons why residents have a positive assessment of the NCC are: the NCC does good work (26%), they enjoyed the festivals, events and activities supported by the NCC (13%), the cleanliness or aesthetic beauty of the NCR (12%), and they enjoyed the parks and green spaces (10%).
- The main reasons for negative assessments of the NCC are: poorly managed (2%), there is a lack of consultation (2%), and the NCC has too much power (2%).
- Residents are also as likely to believe that they benefit personally from the NCC presence in their community (81% in 2005) - as they have indicated in the past.
- The public assessment of the NCC in terms of its operations has not changed over time. In organizing events that 'animate' the capital (87%), developing federal government property (61%), promoting the National Capital Region across Canada (61%), planning land use (49%), working with local municipalities (47%), and consulting the public (32%) – the percentage of residents saying the NCC is doing an 'excellent' or 'good' job is consistent over time.
- The most often mentioned NCC contributions to the NCR that local residents name are maintaining parks and green space (25%) and preserving or maintaining the greenbelt (10%).