4.0 THE VISION & FRAMEWORK

This section presents the Vision for the Escarpment District. A series of development and planning principles are identified to reinforce the Vision and underpin future development across the area. To move the Vision forward, this section also introduces a series of recommended interventions - or “big moves” - that, once implemented, will make the Vision for the Escarpment Area a reality.

The Vision for the area is positioned within a structural framework comprised of a series of inter-related urban systems, including land uses, circulation and movement, open spaces, utilities and built form. This framework sets the parameters for future change within the Escarpment District. The final section of the Chapter identifies where change is likely to occur across the Escarpment District on a block by block basis. This sets the foundation for the detailed proposals presented in the following chapters (Chapters 5 and 6).

Sections include:

4.1 The Vision
4.2 The Principles
4.3 The Framework
  4.3.1 Structuring Systems
    - Land Use
    - Open Space Structure
    - Movement & Circulation
    - Utilities
  4.3.2 Approach to Built Form
4.4 Where Change May Occur
4.1 The Vision

Over the next 15 years the Escarpment District will be transformed into one of the most desirable neighbourhoods in Ottawa. It will be recognized as an active, diverse and attractive Downtown community and celebrated for its natural features, the quality and character of its open spaces, public realm and new buildings. At its heart, a new Upper Town Commons will act as a neighbourhood focus and will support a range of formal and informal activities. New high quality developments and an enhanced green network will bridge the gap between the emerging community of LeBreton, the Escarpment District and the Downtown core.

Residents of the Escarpment District will continue to benefit from the amenities afforded by living in such an urban setting – including easy access to Ottawa's diverse cultural facilities, close proximity to the business core and Ottawa's best shopping and leisure offer.

The Escarpment Area District Plan articulates a contemporary and inspiring entry statement for the Downtown core of Ottawa. It positions this area for future opportunities by creating a strong framework for the introduction of new development and park spaces, allowing the Escarpment District to be more integrated with the Downtown, LeBreton, national open space and waterway systems.

At the top of the Escarpment, striking new residential developments will seamlessly integrate with existing towers to frame a major new community park – Upper Town Commons. This park space will provide much needed green space and act as a formal stage for a spectrum of community-based activities for the enjoyment of local residents and visitors. This green space will be fully connected to the NCC’s wider open space network, allowing users to move easily between their high-rise urban neighbourhood, the Ottawa River and the Chaudière Islands.

A diversity of residents will be accommodated across a range of housing types and tenures, supporting all levels of affordability and amenity. The high rise character of the area will contribute towards the creation of an exciting and varied skyline for the Nation’s Capital. Taller buildings will be carefully positioned to allow for the greatest sunlight permeability and sky views as possible.

In harmony with existing developments, new buildings will be supported by a high quality public realm and streetscape. Street life will bring activity and vitality to Ottawa's downtown and help transform the area's blank walls and harsh pedestrian environment into a pleasant realm with new opportunities for local shopping and dining.

The mix of natural landscapes and high density urban developments will continue to create contrasting city experiences. To soften the district’s urban character, facilitate movement between the upper and lower Escarpment areas and integrate the federal and civic realms, green connections will be drawn into the heart of the community. New and enhanced parks will act as green stepping stones between the top and bottom of the Escarpment.

At the base of the Escarpment, the reinvigorated park area will give way to the waters of the historic aqueduct and beyond into the new LeBreton community. New waterside development to the south of the aqueduct will transition down in scale to meet the heritage streets south of Wellington Street.

The Escarpment District will be celebrated across Ottawa as one of the most sought after addresses for downtown living – offering unrivalled views over the city and the river, easy access to the core, plentiful green spaces and the best in quality new development.
4.2 The Principles

In support of the long-term Vision, the following ten development and planning principles have been developed to help guide decision making within the district:

i. The Escarpment District will be a safe, attractive and comfortable place to live, work, visit and play.

ii. Unique attributes of the area, including unparalleled views, dramatic topography and landscapes, built heritage, and key connections between the Federal Realm and the Civic Realm will be protected.

iii. The Escarpment District will contain a variety of uses that support the needs of local residents and visitors to the area.
iv. While recognizing the high density character of the area, new development will be of high quality, create a comfortable pedestrian environment and will integrate harmoniously with existing development.

v. Streets will provide a balance between the need for moving vehicles, cyclists and people.

vi. The quality and design of the public realm will create desirable settings for new investment and new development.

vii. Open spaces will be designed to support the needs of the surrounding communities and the city at large.

viii. The Escarpment District, through its public realm and development pattern, will ensure that the LeBreton community is well connected to the downtown.

ix. Public transportation should support both the density and functions of the community.

x. New developments and open spaces must embrace the challenges of designing for a Winter city. Design must be adaptable for all seasons.
4.3 The Framework

Introducing the Big Moves & Structuring Systems

The Framework Plan, presented to the left, identifies 9 key opportunities - or Big Moves - that, once completed, will make the Vision for the Escarpment District Area a reality. The opportunities, marked 1 to 9 on the plan, are a mix of open space and physical development proposals. Each is explained in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

Open Space Opportunities
- new upper town commons
- north/south pedestrian mews
- bronson park improvements
- escarpment park
- key intersection + streetscape improvements

Development Opportunities
- ottawa-carleton district school board south parcel
- ottawa-carleton district school board north parcel
- heritage parcel intensification strategies
- south lebreton development framework

In addition to the priority opportunities, a series of more general urban systems comprise the framework. These systems break the framework down into more specific components, such as circulation, the public realm, open space networks, land uses and activity, and so forth. These urban systems exist in every neighbourhood and act as the over arching organizational layers that work to direct the location and form of buildings, the function and scale of open spaces and ease of access and movement for people and cars.

The following structuring systems are presented within this chapter:
- land use
- open space structure
- movement & circulation
- utilities
- approach to built form
4.3.1 Structuring Systems

Land Use

To successfully accommodate new uses, the challenge is to create an environment that is more integrated with existing uses, works to protect current strengths and creates new opportunities for development.

The Escarpment Area District Plan presents a major opportunity for the delivery of a cohesive, high quality, higher-density urban quarter with significant levels of new residential and supportive commercial uses. To grow in the most sustainable way possible, this study fully supports residential intensification at key public transport interchanges across both the LeBreton Flats area and the Upper Town area of Downtown Ottawa.

In higher traffic zones, such as Bay at Queen, some additional street level retail and commercial uses are encouraged to provide a suitable mix of activities and opportunities. A mix of ground related retail or other commercial uses within this area will contribute to the emerging cluster of ground related activity in the area and provide valuable local services. These have been accommodated through a mixed-use land designation.

Closest to the Downtown edge, an opportunity exists to include a dedicated office component along Bay Street. This inclusion would help the City to capitalize on the increasing demand for quality new office provision in the core and help to stimulate both job creation and local employment opportunities.

The land use proposals for the South LeBreton area remains unchanged as presented in the City’s Official Plan with a mix of residential and commercial uses.

The colours on the plan are a graphic illustration of the diversity of activity which is envisaged in the Escarpment Area. The diversity of new uses proposed in the study area include housing, employment, open space, community, recreation and local shopping - potentially including a new food store. The variety of new uses reflects the demands of the new economy and will create new markets for Ottawa that will allow the Escarpment Area to accommodate the Vision presented as an active, diverse and attractive Downtown community.
Open Space Structure

The open space system identifies existing parks and open spaces, as well as a number of proposed new and improved open spaces.

The open space network of the Escarpment District is comprised of a series of green spaces that provide a diversity of settings for activity, recreation and amenity for existing and new residents, as well as visitors to the area.

The Framework Plan to the right highlights the inter-linked nature of the open spaces. The variety of spaces - both existing and proposed - work together to create a very green backdrop for what is a thoroughly urban area of the City.

Types of open spaces which comprise the network include:

- **Large formal open spaces** acting as both neighbourhood amenities and regional attractions by providing a formal focus for both passive and active recreational activity.
- **Smaller community park spaces** providing local amenity and green spaces.
- **Pedestrian connections** to and through the study area offering greater permeability and linkages to community services and facilities.
- **The natural heritage** of the Escarpment itself. A series of connected green park spaces act as stepping stones from the top of the Escarpment down to its base.
- **The National Park and Waterways**.
Movement & Circulation

A critical objective of the Escarpment Area District Plan is to ensure that the area is fully connected to not only the core of Downtown Ottawa, but also to the LeBreton Flats community, Centretown and the City’s wider open space network.

To achieve this objective, a shift needs to be made from an area currently dominated by vehicular traffic to one that can also support a pleasant pedestrian and cycle environment. The Escarpment District must be a fully integrated and easily accessible neighbourhood able to accommodate a workable balance between vehicular traffic, public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. This will be achieved through the establishment of a strong hierarchy of routes and the addition of new pedestrian connections.

Key infrastructure components related to movement include the corridor through the heart of the study area, the green park connections from Upper Town to LeBreton and beyond to the Ottawa River, a new local street network in LeBreton between Albert Street and the aqueduct, improved riverside footpaths, a new road bridge over the aqueduct, a series of new and/or improved crosswalks and major sidewalk repair and improvements along much of Slater Street and Bronson Avenue.

**Street Hierarchy**

Providing a clear street hierarchy helps to avoid conflicts between pedestrians and motorists by directing traffic away from neighbourhood-based activities. A strong hierarchy is also important to keep traffic moving well and provide easy access to the City’s Downtown amenities.

The Escarpment District Area Plan outlines a street hierarchy that is consistent with the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan and largely maintains the existing patterns. Overall, the district will be divided into a north and south section by the public transit routes that run along both Slater and Albert, joining at the base of the Escarpment. As these streets provide the greatest capacity for movement, they should support the highest quality treatments and most intense developments.

Beyond the public transit focus, Bronson and Laurier act as arterial roads, while Bay, Queen, Sparks and the residential streets of LeBreton are considered local residential streets where high capacity traffic is not encouraged.

Vehicular-free pedestrian connections have also been highlighted on the plan along Sparks Street, east of Lyon, as well as between Slater and Laurier, west of Bay Street.
In the Upper Town area, no new vehicular roads are proposed. In the lower part of the study area (South LeBreton), most routes are proposed in an effort to better connect existing developments south of Albert - namely Empress and Lorne Streets - more closely into LeBreton. The South LeBreton road network is conceptual in nature and will have to be more precisely defined once the exact nature and alignment of the transit corridor is fully understood.

New roads and public paths (pedestrian and cycle) will, wherever possible, be stitched into existing road and pathway networks. These roads and paths will have no impact on the existing or proposed transit system for the area.

- Vehicular Circulation
**Transit**

In the short to medium term, pending the implementation of the DOTT/LRT alignment, the primary public transport routes will continue to be Albert and Slater. These multi-use streets will retain their function as Ottawa’s main public transport corridor, in addition to buses, taxis, cars and pedestrians, with LRT in the Downtown tunnel. In the longer-term, when the transitional section between Baseline and Blair stations is converted to LRT, the function of Albert and Slater may change substantially depending on how Société de transport de l’Outaouais (STO) services are accommodated in the Downtown core. The Interprovincial Core Area Rapid Transit Integration Strategic Study, led by the NCC, is expected to address this issue.

Regardless, while local OC Transpo bus routes will operate on Downtown streets, including Albert and Slater, a separate study may be required to examine and identify what changes/modifications, if any, to the Downtown network may be required once BRT service is removed from the Albert/Slater corridor. Due to the function of Albert Street, and the proximity of the proposed new local road to the major Albert/Booth and Albert/Bronson intersections, its connection to Albert Street will likely be restricted to rights-in/rights-out only.

To maximize the development potential in the Escarpment District, the DOTT portal should be located as far west as possible, ideally west of Booth and possibly located as far west as Bayview. Locating the tunnel portal at the most western boundary point will present the opportunity for the tunnel to be covered and will therefore provide seamless integration and connection between LeBreton North and LeBreton South, while also presenting greater space for development.
• **Pedestrian & Cycle Links**

Across the study area, an emphasis has been placed on creating a pleasant pedestrian environment able to support a logical pattern of pedestrian routes and linkages to and through the district. This pattern has been developed to establish easy and walkable connections to the Downtown, along the Escarpment and into LeBreton Flats.

In addition, supporting and reinforcing connections into Ottawa’s impressive cycle and walking network has also been a priority. This has been particularly important to provide access down the Escarpment and into LeBreton, NCC parklands and the Ottawa River.

In the Upper Town area, one additional north-south connection is also proposed to link Albert, through to Slater and down to Laurier. This pedestrian-dominated route will create a convenient mid-block connection. In addition, it will sub-divide one large development block to allow for a finer grain of development to be introduced with active ground floor uses to overlook the path.

All new pedestrian and cycle paths will, wherever possible, be stitched into existing road and pathway networks.

Key non-vehicular connections include:

1. A green mid-block pedestrian mews connection joining Laurier and Albert across Slater.
2. A rationalized and re-configured street network at the base of the Escarpment to allow for the creation of a usable green space.
3. A potential new vertical pedestrian connection from Bronson Park down the Escarpment edge to the new Escarpment Park.
4. A series of new and/or improved crosswalks at key intersections along Bronson, Wellington, Bay and Laurier.
5. Pedestrian connections placed above the DOTT to link the South LeBreton community north to the aqueduct, OC Transpo transport interchange and emerging LeBreton Flats community.
6. A fully connected pedestrian and cycle network across the study area.
Traffic Impact + Mitigation Measures

The following sections outline the approach to transportation, servicing and parking. Additional details are provided at Appendix IV.

Four varying development options identified for the Escarpment District are defined within Section 6 of this Plan. The approach used to determine the potential traffic impact and requirements, if any, of the development scenarios is as follows:

• Determine the weekday morning and afternoon peak hour traffic generation, using appropriate downtown walk, cycle, transit, and vehicle occupancy values for the hypothetical level and type of development allowed under current zoning;
• Determine the traffic generation for each of the four development options using the same above-noted assumptions;
• Identify the absolute total traffic generation for each development scenario as well as the net difference compared to that related to maximum development allowed under current zoning; and
• Identify any anticipated traffic-related issues and related mitigation for each development option.

Using the above to test the four development options, the following is concluded:

• The streets which will provide opportunity for future development are currently operating well below their capacities and further spare capacity appears to be available on the adjacent road network. This will present generous accommodation to traffic volumes generated by the new development.
• Less, rather than more, traffic may be desirable, but as surplus road capacity exists in the immediately adjacent streets, transportation considerations are not a constraint in selecting between alternative developments.
• Accordingly, at this level of analysis, the traffic impacts from full build-out appear manageable and no mitigation is required.
• However, at the time of site plan approval for each specific project, the required detailed Traffic Impact Study will more precisely focus on traffic generation, site access, street impact and adjacent intersection capacity analysis, based on more detailed project specific data, and current traffic counts.

Parking Approach

The approach to parking within the proposed development scenarios has been to consolidate and conceal parking so that it does not detract from the character of the area.

New developments should provide parking internally. This could be achieved by providing underground parking or where this is prohibitive due to cost, a portion of the parking may be located in the podium level of new buildings. Locating parking within the podium section of the development would be permitted only if the outside perimeter facing a public street or park is faced with an active use and does not result in the creation of any blank or frosted walls along the street.

Where there are a number of buildings proposed, and multiple parking and access areas required, efforts should be made to consolidate access and servicing areas to improve building efficiency and minimize breaks in the pedestrian realm. This may require the use of laneways or shared entrance courts, the details of which should be worked out at the site planning stage.

Utilities

A full analysis of the existing Municipal Services and Utilities within the study area is provided at Appendix V. In summary, the following has been determined:

• Water Distribution System
An adequate water supply capacity exists to service the proposed redevelopment options. However, a fire protection engineer should analyze the fire flow needs of any new buildings.

• Sanitary Sewer System
Any new development will create an increase in sanitary flows. Nevertheless, the impact can be reduced by the construction of separate sanitary and storm sewer systems. At present, Slater Street and Laurier Avenue are totally serviced by combined sewers, with Albert Street partially serviced by combined sewers. Bronson Avenue has no sanitary or combined sewer servicing the area and Bay Street is almost entirely serviced by sanitary sewers. One option to mitigate the increase in sanitary flows would be to reduce the existing stormwater runoff from the area to be redeveloped. This would require additional stormwater storage on the redeveloped properties.

• Storm Sewer System
The proposed redevelopment scenarios represent no increase in hard surfaces for much of the study area. The exception is in the OCDSB South Parcel (see Appendix V). This will impact the combined sewer system on Slater Street and Laurier Avenue.

Stormwater quantity control measures will have to be addressed during the design phase of the redevelopment of each parcel. The City may request that the post-development release rate be the five-year pre-development flows.

• Other Utilities
Telephone, cable, gas and hydro are located adjacent to the study area. There are no known service limitations regarding natural gas and hydro. However, utility companies should be contacted prior to site plan approval to confirm the adequacy and availability to service the proposed development.
4.3.2 Approach to Built Form

The Escarpment Area District Plan seeks to establish a new benchmark for high-density development in Ottawa, one that embraces the high-rise character of the community yet is more pedestrian friendly, addresses the street better and results in a more visually appealing form of development.

The strategy behind new development in the Escarpment District is two-fold. First, new development must break from the traditional slab-style development. Density will shift from the more squat distribution found in existing high-rise developments to a more slender vertical “point tower”. This will help to preserve views and sunlight, reduce shadow impacts, maintain privacy, and eliminate blank walls and inactive frontages. Second, at the foot of these towers, buildings will incorporate a strong base. These will be pedestrian in both scale and articulation, will work to define and animate the streets, and will reduce the impact of the taller structures. The combination of point tower and podium (building base) is one that has been used with success in a number of other cities and is recognized for creating liveable environments that integrate well with existing low-rise developments.

Building Components

Given the prominence of large buildings within the Escarpment District, special attention must be paid to creating well proportioned structures that can both integrate with their surroundings and contribute to an enhanced image for the District.

To this end, new buildings should typically be comprised of three parts:

- base
- middle
- top
**Base**

The base of a building is generally known as the podium and helps to integrate the tower with existing development and provides definition to surrounding streets and open spaces. The base provides an opportunity to create a pedestrian-scaled environment at street level and can also be used to mitigate the impacts of site servicing and vehicular access.

**Middle**

The middle part of a high-rise comprises the most prominent vertical element of a tower. Through its position, height and orientation it defines the scale and proportion of the building and how it impacts upon its surroundings. Taller more slender buildings can help to maximize views both to and from their surroundings, reducing the impact of shadows and maximizing the potential for natural daylighting within units.

**Top**

The top of the tower is the location where the middle meets the sky and where the image of the building from a distance is formed (creating the ‘skyline’). A carefully considered top can both contribute to an impressive skyline and create an identity for a city.

The following guidelines shall be applied to the base of new buildings:

- Bases are typically between 3 and 6 storeys in height.
- Townhouses that wrap around the podium are the preferred approach for defining the base of a building and integrating with existing smaller scale development. This is crucial to ensure that all new development is sensitive to existing low-rise development.
- Ground level access to individual units shall be consistently provided along both street and mews frontages to animate streets and provide a pedestrian quality to new development.
- Ground level units should be articulated within the façade of the base to reduce the scale of the podium and reintroduce a more finely grained rhythm to the street frontage.
- While the base or podium of a building will generally wrap around the tower it may be appropriate to ‘pull back’ the base in places where the tower meets the ground.
- For bases that are 6 storeys in height, a setback or change of material is recommended after the 4th storey.

The following guidelines shall be applied to the middle portion of new buildings:

- Ideally, the shaft of a tower should support a setback from the base of the building. However, it is possible to create a good transition between the shaft of the tower and the base in the absence of a physical setback. This can be achieved through a variety of design techniques including: creating a gap in the façade, using variation in building materials or introducing perpendicular articulation where the shaft meets the base.
- The use of balconies is encouraged as a form of private residential amenity space and visual interest.
- Blank walls should not be permitted.
- Balconies should be recessed and/or integrated into the building façade as an important design consideration.
- Providing a mix of materials is encouraged to provide greater design variation.

The following guidelines shall be applied to the top of buildings:

- The tops of towers shall be articulated through the use of a small setback on the top 3 to 6 storeys, a difference in articulation or the use of an architectural element or feature.
- Mechanical systems should be integrated into the design of the top in a manner which is consistent to the style of the building.
Creating a Positive Experience on the Ground

The way buildings relate to the ground and how the public and private realms meet is integral to one’s perception of how well a street works. On commercial streets, buildings should promote interaction between the pedestrian and interior spaces of the building, whereas in more residential conditions buildings should attempt to provide for greater privacy and a buffer from the public realm. The integration of parking and servicing is an important part of this mix and can have an impact on the contribution a building makes to its environment.

• Why is this Important?

How buildings relate to the street has a significant impact on both pedestrian safety and comfort.

A good street relationship helps to clearly distinguish those areas that are public and those that are private, creating greater certainty about what may or may not be appropriate activities, and defines where pedestrians should not just be supported but encouraged. Buildings that are transparent and open at ground level promote safety by increasing both the level of activity and by placing ‘eyes on the street’.

On commercial streets this sense of comfort can be accomplished by creating smooth and transparent connections between the public sidewalk and interior spaces. On residential streets the same can be accomplished through the provision of direct entrances into units and small garden spaces that also provide private amenity spaces.

For larger structures, a street relationship that supports podiums and appropriate setbacks can help to reduce the sense of scale and mitigate against the impact of height in larger developments.

Changing past practices: existing ground condition with poor street relationship. Escarpment District, Ottawa.

Promoting better design: how the treatment of residential ground floor units can positively support the street, Vancouver.

Promoting better design: how a commercial ground floor can contribute to animated street life, Vancouver.

Consolidated and concealed parking strategies help to reduce pedestrian–vehicular conflict and create greater opportunities for activity and pedestrian-building interaction along the street.
• How can this be Achieved?

The following strategies apply to how a building should relate to the ground:

General Strategies:
• Buildings should be setback 3 to 3.5 metres from the property line to allow for streetscaping, planting and generous sidewalk widths.
• Buildings should create animated frontages through the use of windows, raised terraces/balconies and easily identifiable entrance ways.

Commercial Strategies:
• In areas identified for commercial uses at grade, floor-to-floor heights should be a minimum of 4 metres.
• Access to retail and restaurant uses should be directly from the street.
• Hard landscaping treatments that extend public sidewalks are encouraged along commercial frontages.

Residential Strategies:
• The ground floor of the residential units should be no greater than 1.2 meters from the sidewalk level to provide for privacy.
• Building lobbies should be accessed from the most prominent street fronting the building.
• Ground floor residential units are to make use of setbacks for small private garden spaces or terraces.
• Additional landscape features such as trees, small shrubs, low-railings or walls should be used to provide a clear delineation between the public realm and the private residential space.

Servicing & Parking Strategies:
• Servicing and parking should be accessed from secondary streets and away from main pedestrian entrances.
• Parking and servicing facilities should be combined wherever possible to minimize their impact upon building frontages.
• Parking and servicing elements should not detract from the animation of the street through the creation of blank walls or false façade.
• Where parking is located internal to the podium, care should be taken to ensure that it is wrapped in active single aspect uses that maintain activity and “eyes on the street”.

Vancouver
Separation Distance

Setting the appropriate distance between towers is an important strategy for ensuring a high quality development that helps to preserve views, maintain privacy and mitigate the impacts of tall structures on issues such as day lighting and pedestrian wind levels.

In a number of cities across Canada, such as Toronto and Vancouver, minimum distances between towers have been set between 24 and 25 metres. However, in a city such as Ottawa - due to its smaller block depth and street widths - this would be prohibitive. Consequently, it is recommended that in the Escarpment Area District minimum distance between towers should be no less than 20 metres. This is equivalent to the distance between buildings on either side of a typical Ottawa street.

Illustrative Separation Distance

Changing past practices: inadequate amount of space between buildings limits daylight and views negatively impacts the neighbourhood environment. Escarpment District, Ottawa.

Promoting better design: appropriately spaced towers can mitigate impacts while contributing to a more visually impressive city skyline. Coal Harbour, Vancouver.
Floor Plate Size

The size of the floor plate, in combination with minimum distance standards and siting requirements, is crucial to avoiding the 'canyon effect' created by wide slab buildings placed side-by-side. This canyon effect has been the signature of many of Ottawa’s higher density residential developments over the last 30 years and the impact on the City’s streets and open spaces has not been positive. In recent years, floor plate size across the City has gradually reduced from upwards of 1,000m² to as small as 500m² or even less in some cases. For the purposes of both residential and pedestrian amenity, floor plate sizes should ideally be no greater than 750m² in total with a maximum length or width of no more then 35 metres.
Building Height

Building height regulations intended to protect the visual integrity of Ottawa’s most symbolic structures – the Parliament Buildings and the spire of the Peace Tower - were first introduced in Ottawa in 1910 and were maintained until the early 1970s when they were revised to better account for the changing urban environment and the region’s topography.

In the early 1990s, in response to a proposal for a new office tower that could have potential impacts on the protected ‘skyline’, the City of Ottawa joined forces with the National Capital Commission to undertake a detailed study for the protection and enhancement of the visual integrity and symbolic primacy of the Parliament Buildings. The Ottawa Views Study (1993) provided the technical and methodological basis of the current view protection measures which control the heights of background buildings, preventing them from obscuring the silhouettes of national symbols. The study’s recommendations are incorporated in the current City of Ottawa Official Plan and Zoning By-law for the Central Area as well as the NCC’s planning policy.

Although the Escarpment District falls outside the formal height controls established by the NCC and the City of Ottawa, any future development in this location will have to be sensitive to the intentions of the controls and work to integrate with adjacent built forms.
The height plan to the right has been defined by a number of recent developments in the District and is reflective of the existing character of the area.

In keeping with existing developments in the area, it is recommended that buildings along Bay are permitted to rise up to a maximum of 72 metres in height. West of this, buildings will step down towards Bronson to a height of 56 metres adjacent to the new Upper Town Commons and heritage housing south of Albert.

The block bounded by Sparks Street, Queen Street, Bronson Avenue and Bay Street (including the Cathedral Hill Conservation District) should be protected from inappropriate infill projects that may damage the existing historical character of the block. The cluster of beautiful historic churches located in this block gives a special character to this location that is not found in many other areas outside the Market. This collection of impressive heritage properties is a highly desirable asset that should be preserved and maintained.

In the LeBreton area, care will have to be taken when introducing any new developments along the southern edge of the precinct, as these will have a direct impact on well-established adjacent neighbourhoods to the south. Along this edge, the height and scale of any new developments should create a transition to the existing residential neighbourhoods.

If proponents of particular development applications within the Escarpment Area wish to pursue building heights which exceed those expressed within this Plan, the specifics of these requests must be reviewed and approved in the context of the "Ottawa Views" study, which was prepared for the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa, and which addresses the "Visual Integrity and Symbolic Primacy of the Parliament Buildings and other National Symbols", as implemented by the City of Ottawa Official Plan and the City of Ottawa Comprehensive Zoning By-law, as amended; and shall also adhere to any architectural design and community design plan requirements and/or guidelines for the Escarpment Area.

Increases in height and density deemed suitable by the above review may be considered by the City under Section 37 of the Planning Act to secure identified community benefits in permitting such increases in height and/or density.
Architecture

The way one experiences the Escarpment District is to a large extent through the architecture of the buildings: the way they look and feel. As the District evolves, each building or proposal - no matter the size - should be given careful consideration with respect to how it contributes to the overall context and greater image of the Escarpment District.

As the area continues to evolve and intensify, the architecture of buildings should pursue architectural excellence. New buildings must also be mindful of their impact on the environment, the local context, the existing heritage and the overall image of the District. New buildings should reflect contemporary design ideas while contributing to the area’s coherence and creation of a sense of place.

The following guidelines should be considered for new buildings:

- Encourage architectural diversity in order to create a dynamic, contemporary image of the District;
- Promote buildings of an enduring quality;
- Horizontal and vertical building articulation are encouraged to provide long and/or tall façade variation;
- Provide an opportunity for the integration of public art with the building;
- Providing a mix of materials and colours are encouraged to provide design variation; and
- Recessed and/or integrated exterior balconies should be considered to articulate and modulate building façades.
4.4 Where Change May Occur

While a good portion of the Escarpment District has either been fully built-out, or undergone some form of site specific zoning, there are a number of additional areas where change is likely to occur in the future. Based on our analysis, the plan to the right identifies where anticipated changes are likely to occur across the study area. It also highlights where special considerations may be required. The anticipated levels of change is differentiated using the following categories:

- **Change Likely to Occur**
  These are the zones where change is anticipated to occur due to existing zoning opportunities and/or development pressures. They include both the South LeBreton Flats, adjacent underutilized parcels and the lands of the former Ottawa Technical High School.

- **Change Unlikely: Existing Zoning to Remain**
  These areas are currently built-out and are unlikely to change, or alternatively, have already undergone a site-specific zoning process to identify an appropriate form of development.

- **New Open Space / Open Space Improvements**
  The Escarpment Area District Plan identifies a series of new open spaces and/or improvements and additions to the city’s existing network of open spaces.

- **Heritage Considerations**
  These are areas that support a heritage designation but may be suitable for some form of sensitive redevelopment. Included in this category are the Cathedral Hill Heritage Conservation District and some properties south of Albert Street. Any change that occurs within these areas should only be permitted within the context of a comprehensive block-wide strategy that seeks to protect the integrity of the existing heritage structures.

- **Change Likely to Occur with Heritage Consideration**
  The redevelopment of 453-463 Slater to accommodate densities that are higher than currently present may be permitted within the framework of an agreement between the adjacent heritage land owners. The purpose of this agreement would be to enable the transfer of development rights to these lands and to ensure that development occurs within a coordinated and sensitive manner.

The illustration to the right identifies where the greatest changes are anticipated.