

Cold Capital?

Adapting the National Capital Commission's outdoor public programs to the changing Canadian winter

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**Session: Adapting to Climate
Change in the Ottawa Region of
Ontario**



Enriching the Capital Experience

- NCC mandate
- NCC public programming
- Climate change and capital visitation
 - 5 million visitors per year
 - C\$1 billion



NCC Summer programs



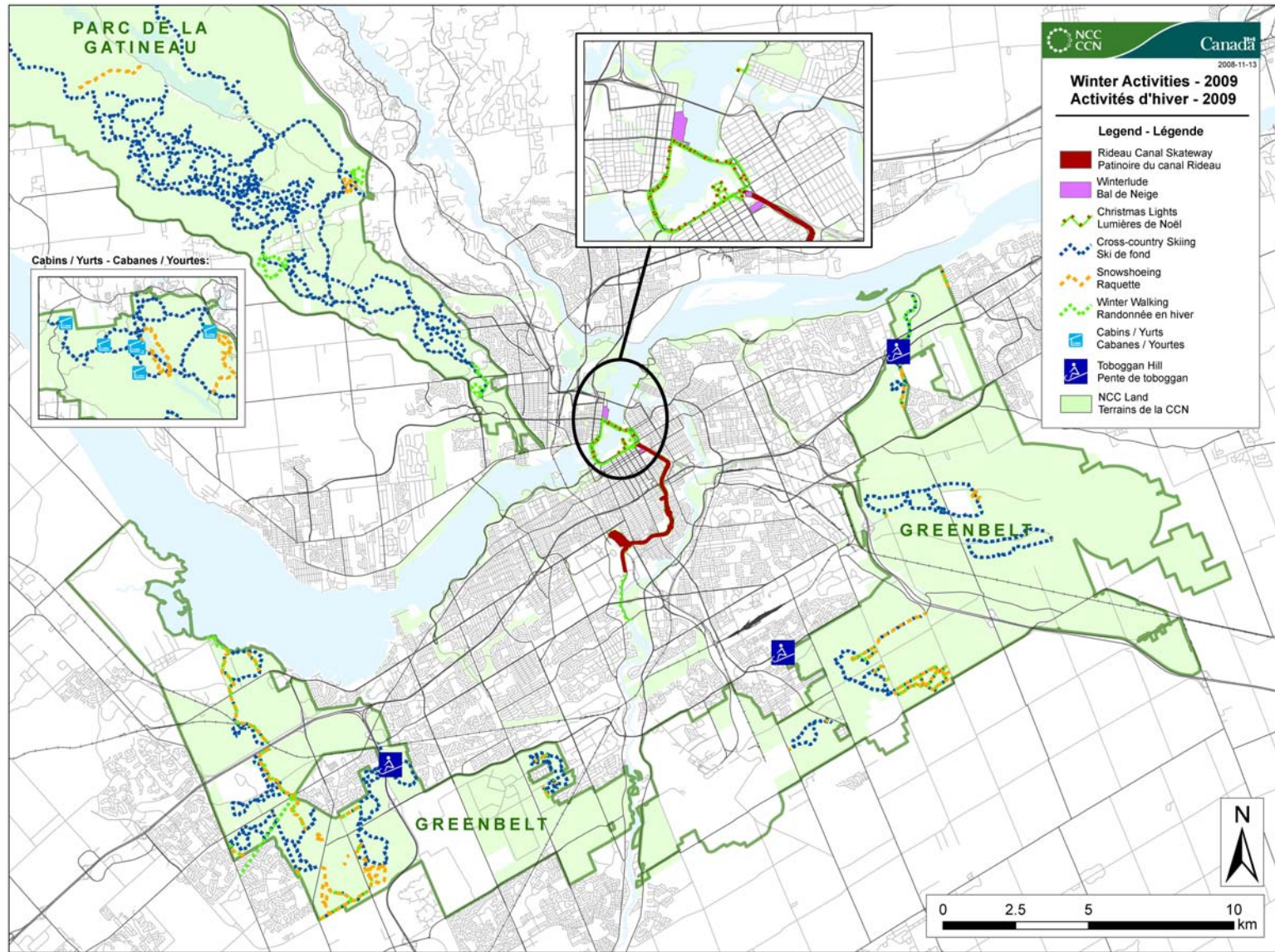
NCC Summer programs

- Capital Information Centre
 - Walking tours
 - Site Animation Program (noon concerts, outdoor exhibits, public art)
 - Banner Program
 - Confederation Blvd./Parliament Hill/Tulip interpretation
 - Canada Day
 - Parliament Hill Sound and Light Show
 - Opera Under the Stars
 - Orchestras in the Park
 - Festival exemption program
- 

Summer programming – Roll-up

- 2,500,000 total visits
- 10 primary event sites
- 120 programming days
- 1,000 performers, 500 volunteers
- Regional representation
- 25 programming partners
- 15 service partners

NCC Winter programs



Christmas Lights Across Canada

- 300,000 LED lights
- Conservation message



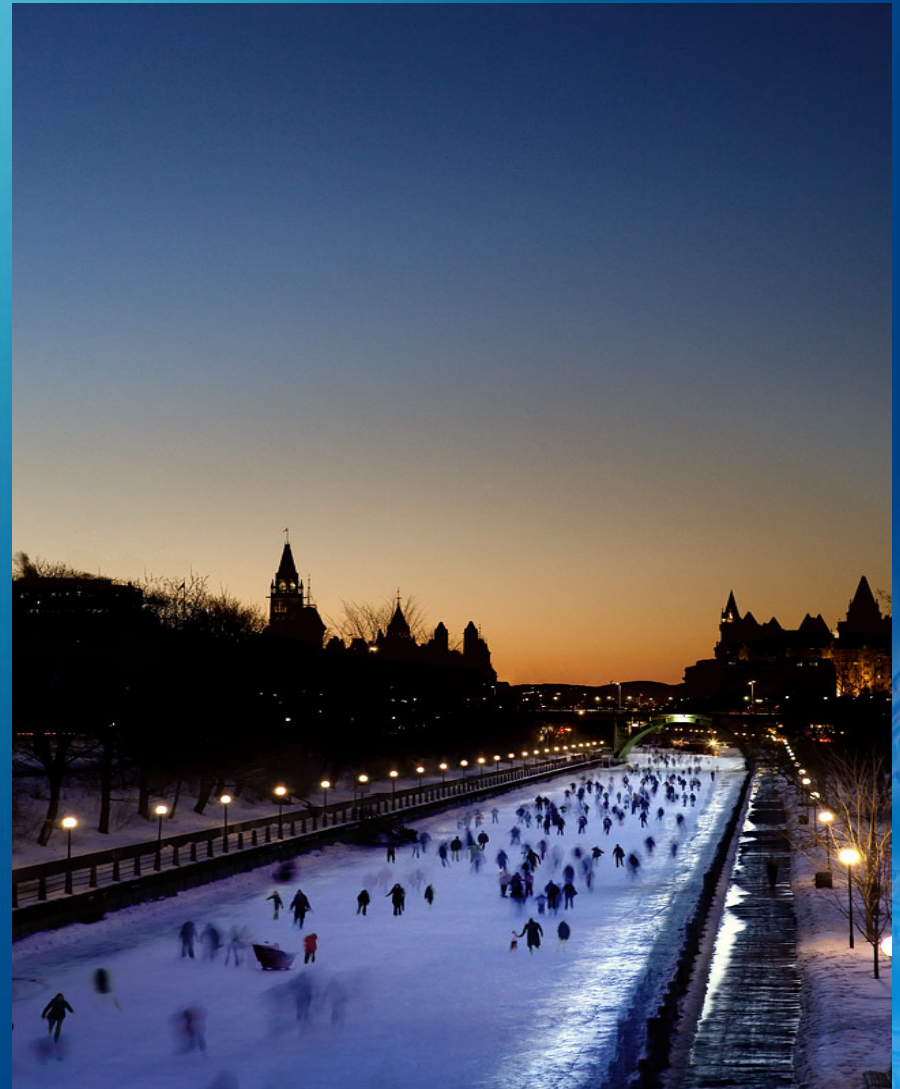
Winterlude

- Three weekends
- Three official sites
- 616,000 visitors (2004)
- 36% from outside Capital region



Rideau Canal Skateway

- 7.8 km of skating
- A linear park
- 5 service nodes
- Environmentally sustainable approach
- Safety of users



Gatineau Park

- 220 km of trails – ski, snowshoeing & walking
- 10 shelters
- 5,800 season ski passes & more than 200,000 ski days
- Six cabins for overnight stays



Greenbelt



Greenbelt
Ceinture de verdure



Winter Programming – Roll up

- 2,250,000 visits
- 150 days of site operation
- 60 days of programming
- 900 volunteers contributing 11,500 hours
- Representation of all provinces and territories
- 25 funding partners (*cash and in-kind*)
- 70 private sector sponsors (*cash and in-kind*)
- *Reliance on sustained winter conditions*

The NCC and the Environment

- Survival experiences!
 - Canada Day 2004: extreme heat and severe storms
 - Winterlude 2002: a decline in winter tourism due to uncertainty of freezing temperatures?
- Research:
 - U of Waterloo study
 - Choosing Our Future II
- NCC Environmental Strategy:
 - Conservation (greening)
 - Adaptation (contingencies)



Conservation - Winterlude

- Composting operational waste
- Winterlude Sno-Bus during weekends
- Burning eco-logs in fire pits
- Bio-degradable cups for all beverages
- LED lighting
- Reduced vehicle fleet



- Winterlude recycling: 3 cubic tonnes
- Re-use of signage panels
- No-idling policy
- Promote public awareness of recycling
- Re-use of Christmas trees; then transformed into mulch



Adaptation of Winterlude programming

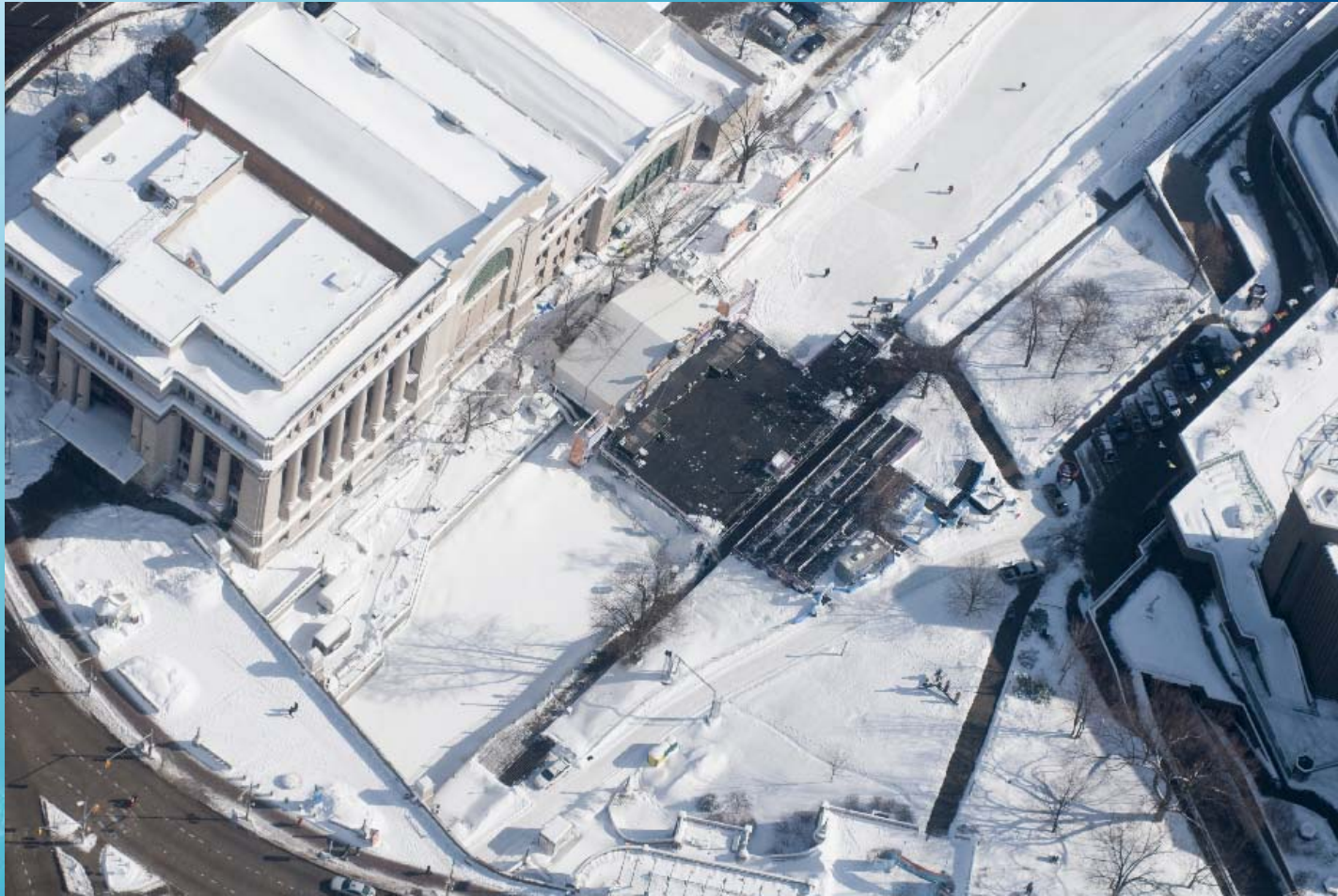
- 2002 Winterlude:
 - norm is now 1.5 degrees warmer than 1940s
 - 2001-2 was 5.1 degrees warmer than average
 - Skateway opened only on 3 Feb
 - 50% fewer skaters during Winterlude
 - 34 day skating season (e.g. 70 days in 2001)
 - Attrition of ice and snow carvings
 - Ground frost insufficient to sustain visitation in all areas
 - Some programming elements cancelled
- By 2050 (estimated):
 - 12 of 20 days projected to be above 0 degrees
 - 1 in 4 days above +5 degrees
 - Skateway season range: 7 to 36 days

Adaptation of Winterlude programming

Strategies:

- Enhanced contingency planning:
 - extra snow-making
 - staggered ice carving events to refresh each weekend
 - refrigerated trucks to conserve ice until use
 - move events to dry land where possible
 - plan for cancellations and substitutions
 - communications plan
- 3 weekends rather than 10 consecutive days
- Create the Snowbowl as a 'weatherproof' venue
- Install boardwalks
- Install shelters for ice carvings
- Enhanced Snow and Ice Control (increasing precipitation)
- Weed control in canal to improve ice quality

Snowbowl



Winterlude Sound and Light Show

- “Ukiuk”
- 11 evenings, 2-3 shows/evening, 27 shows
- 20 minute automated sound and light show



Confederation Park boardwalk and shelters



Winter and Canadian Identity

It is in Ottawa that you get the essence of the Canadian winter. Winnipeg is too miserably cold; Toronto too damp; Montreal too given to thaws; but Ottawa is the typical Canadian winter city one used to read about long ago

Kit Coleman, ca. 1890s

A heavy snowfall in December meant that winter had come,--the deepest reality of Canadian life.

Willa Cather, 1931

Winter...gives the country a fifth dimension.

Jacques Ferron, 1975

We have hot summers and resplendent autumns, but it is winter that establishes character of our country and our psychology. The Canadian mood.

Robertson Davies, 1991

Cold Capital? Future Considerations

- The cold as a scarce commodity:
 - *Mon pays, c'est encore l'hiver ?*
 - How is climate change altering our perception of ourselves?
- Performance indicators:
 - What should we measure? Are zero-footprint targets feasible?
- Adaptation and conservation:
 - Can they form a symbiosis?
- Operational versus systemic greening:
 - What are the best micro and macro strategies?
- NCC programs are powerful communications tools:
 - What is our message?