

**Ottawa East  
Community  
Association**



**Old Town Hall**

December 16, 2016

The Honorable Catherine McKenna  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change  
200 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0H3

Dear Minister McKenna:

***Paddling Docks on Rideau Canal in Ottawa's Core - An Assessment***

After the first season of having paddling docks along the Rideau Canal in the heart of Ottawa (i.e., at Old Ottawa East's Clegg Street and the Glebe's Patterson Creek), the Old Ottawa East Community Association sought feedback on the new installations.

In the view of respondents, the new docks have been an overwhelming success and Parks Canada is to be congratulated on the docks' design and installation. We strongly urge that Parks Canada re-install the docks in all future years, consider minor modifications and potential provision of additional docks on the Ottawa stretch of the Canal . We received no negative feedback.

.../2

Responses OOECA received include:

- Fantastic to have them! Great for kids fishing, boating, sitting on the dock
- We rigged our canoe so that it could be easily rolled over and dropped in the water for little trips along the water. We paddled with our kids to Dow's Lake for the Tulip festival; we paddled to see the festivities on Canada Day; and several times we paddled down to Parliament Hill to show off our city to visitors. It was great to see people enjoying the water so much this year. Two of our neighbours, a dad and teenage son, even set out from our neighbourhood by canoe and paddled all the way to Montreal! Very cool
- It is difficult to measure the benefit of the dock, but we felt that beyond the practical aspects of Canal access, it brought smiles and a sense of summer fun to the area that was experienced by many people well beyond residents of Old Ottawa East
- We are thrilled with the new dock as it allows us, for the first time, to put our canoe in the Canal and to paddle to Hartwell, or Hogs Back and on one occasion, even farther upstream!
- My husband and I liked very much the new Canal dock installed this past summer. It was regularly used and enjoyed by residents and visitors from other neighbourhoods, contributing to the charm and recreational feel of the Canal and accommodating boaters and sun tanners.
- Our experience with the Clegg St. dock has been overwhelmingly positive. We have both over the last 20 years (while living in Kanata but working downtown and at Saint Paul University, respectively) enjoyed activities related to the Canal very frequently – including running, skating in winter, biking, and walking. Paddling on the Canal is a unique way of enjoying the Canal that is special in many ways. Whenever we paddled we saw many other people out, in kayaks, canoes, SUP boards, paddle boats...The benefits of convenient access for launching from docks are not restricted to those who paddle. I have heard and overheard positive comments from visitors to Ottawa when they see boats of various kinds being paddled on the Canal, and about the visual impressions of docks at points on the Canal. It is important in my view to limit water traffic to non-motorized craft (I saw sea-doo's on two different occasions, and a small boat with engine on another), but assuming that is done the docks - and paddlers they bring to the Canal - enhance the ability of all to enjoy the full wonder of a beautiful and singular feature of our city in all seasons.

In terms of suggestions, respondents wondered if there was something that could be done to reduce the “signs of frequent bird visitation”. Perhaps simply having local volunteers who periodically check the dock and sweep it off may be the solution. The Patterson Creek dock seemed not to have the same problem and one respondent suggested that its “synthetic mesh-type surface” (rather than Clegg’s wooden plank surface) may have been a factor in deterring foul fowl. Also, some kayakers suggest that if docks had a lower surface it would be easier to get into their craft.

In speaking with residents beyond Old Ottawa East, there were suggestions for additional docks, most notably for Centretown, possibly at the end of Waverly where a large set of concrete steps would tie in well to a dock. One person suggests that a dock at the top of the Hogs Back locks could be improved so kayaks can more readily use this location.

Also, we would suggest that there is a need for a paddling dock at the foot of the Chateau / Parliament flight of locks. At present, it is very difficult to get a canoe or kayak out at that point. As a sesquicentennial project OOECA is having a circumnavigation of “Rideau Island” event (Canal -Rideau River- Ottawa River - Rideau Canal - September 9, 2017) and ready access from the Ottawa River would help. Currently, paddlers must use the water taxi dock if they want to do the portage.

In conclusion, we thank you and Parks Canada for expeditiously implementing the paddling docks on the Rideau Canal. We look forward to their becoming a permanent feature of the system.



Phyllis Odenbach Sutton  
President  
Old Ottawa East Community Association  
61 Main Street  
OTTAWA ON, K1S 1B3

Via email: [Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca)  
[podenbac@storm.ca](mailto:podenbac@storm.ca)  
[Catherine.McKenna.C1A@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Catherine.McKenna.C1A@parl.gc.ca)

c.c.: Councillor David Chernushenko  
Mayor Jim Watson  
Dr. Mark Kristmanson, NCC