Prepared by Sustainable Living Ottawa East, a committee of the

**Strengthening Our Connection to the River:**

**A Rideau River Nature Trail for Old Ottawa East**

## Concept and Draft Plan, September 2007

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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Purpose of this Document

The detailed ideas and actions to create the Rideau River Nature Trail will be developed and implemented over a period of years. But this document is a key step in the process. With it, we are putting the following things forward for feedback:

* an overall vision for the Trail
* a picture of what exists now
* initial ideas about how we can work with what exists to implement the vision
* some next steps for getting input and support from community members and other interested parties and for gaining “political” support, necessary permissions, and funding

If you want to correct factual errors or comment on any of these ideas, or help out with this initiative, please contact us at [sustainableottawaeast@mainstreeter.ca](mailto:sustainableottawaeast@mainstreeter.ca).

### 1.2 What is the Rideau River Nature Trail, and Why Pursue It?

There is about 2.5 kilometers of Rideau shoreline in Old Ottawa East (OOE). The Rideau River Nature Trail is an initiative that focuses on this stretch in order to:

* Improve the pathway system to and along the river, using “soft” alternatives to paving and parallel bicycle routing where possible, to allow for a range of recreational and commuting uses;
* Restore degraded river edge ecology and support healthy and diverse terrestrial and aquatic habitats; and
* Develop ecologically appropriate amenities (e.g., shoreline sitting areas, a canoe/kayak launch dock) to encourage increased appreciation of this stretch of the Rideau River.

#### The Trail will therefore:

* Help protect and promote the beauty and biodiversity of the Rideau River and its shoreline;
* Better connect OOE with Old Ottawa South, Sandy Hill, Overbrook and Alta Vista, giving residents, students and employees an appealing option for walking or cycling while minimizing conflicts between pedestrian and cycling traffic;
* Strengthen the identity of the Old Ottawa East community by enhancing its beautiful eastern “spine”; and
* Provide a quiet and largely natural refuge from the streets of Ottawa.

The Trail could also help put OOE on the map in relation to a growing urban green tourism movement, and create an additional draw for businesses in Ottawa East.

**1.3 Who Are the Parties at Interest?**

#### The main parties at interest are:

* The City of Ottawa, as both landowner and planner/manager
* Other owners of shoreline property (the Oblates, Ottawa University, OC Transpo)
* The owners and managers of the Lees Ave apartment buildings and condos
* The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (responsible for watershed protection)
* Residents of OOE

#### There are many others who will likely have an interest, including:

* OOE businesses and institutions (e.g., St Paul University, schools, the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre)
* Adjacent communities and their associations
* Potential users of the trail from beyond the boundaries of OOE
* The National Capital Commission
* The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (both have responsibilities related to the aquatic environments and fish)

## 2. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE

A number of steps have already been taken to develop the concept, and to inform and engage the community. This document reflects a lot of the feedback and ideas we have received so far.

* In May the concept was presented to the Ottawa East Community Association at its May meeting. OECA endorsed the initiative, with the understanding that there will be ongoing communication and collaboration between SLOE (a sub-committee of the OECA) and the OECA board.
* In June, we presented a panel display about the trail at the two Community Development Plan open houses (one at The Green Door, the other at St Paul University). We asked for feedback, and much of what we were told at those sessions is reflected in this document. The panels were also on display at Watson’s Pharmacy throughout most of July and August.
* On June 15, we held a “walk the trail” session and follow-up discussion with some of the key institutional players. The purpose was to start to build momentum for the concept, and to share information and ideas regarding options, challenges, etc.. In addition to SLOE representatives John Dance and Rebecca Aird, the participants were:
* Father Norman Provencher from the Oblates
* Sylvio Miron, Physical Resources Service, University of Ottawa
* Jennifer Lamoureux and Grant Nichol, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
* Grant Peart, Parks & Recreation Branch, City of Ottawa
* Anthony Leaning, community rep for the Community Design Plan
* Clive Doucet, our city councillor, as well as Donna Silver and Pierre Johnson from his office.
* Throughout the summer and early fall we also held separate walks along the trail with: Dan Cooper, the forester from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority; Robin Bennett, the City of Ottawa’s cycling coordinator; and Jennifer Shepherd, a landscape architect with the City’s forestry program. City forestry staff are now working on a collaborative vegetation management plan for the OOE shoreline, based on our input.
* On October 20th we held a community walk-through of the trail, attended by about 30 residents. During the course of this walk there were a lot of ideas shared about the state and potential of the trail and the shoreline.
* Based on input to date, to further inform and engage community residents and other players, we prepared a two-page summary of key ideas and directions for the trail, and a map that highlights some initial project ideas at specific points along the trail. We also discussed the concept in numerous Mainstreeter articles and updates about SLOE. Articles fully devoted to the Trail were published in the August/September and the December issues of the Mainstreeter.
* We are scheduled to present the concept to a few key advisory committees to the City in early 2008.
* We have applied for a TREES grant from the City, for planting and maintenance work in the 2008 season. We are also developing a design concept and will seek funding for one of the identified sitting areas.
* We are working with Professor Scott Findlay at the University of Ottawa to develop a research plan and identify information sources for an ecological profile of the aquatic and riparian environment in our stretch of the river, to be undertaken by 3rd year students as part of their biological conservation course this coming term.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS AND PRELIMINARY IDEAS

Note: Appendix A provides more detail on a section-by-section basis.

### 3.1 Preliminary Overview of Current Conditions

#### Property Ownership

* The only privately owned land along the OOE stretch of shoreline is the Oblate property between Brantwood Park and Springhurst Park. This is a large property.
* The University of Ottawa owns the “Rideau Campus” (formerly Algonquin College)
* All of the remaining river edge property is owned by the city with the exception of the small portion where the transitway crosses the Rideau River.
* Currently there is public access along the whole corridor, but changes of ownership in the future could jeopardize this situation.
* Some stretches of the shoreline are currently used quite extensively, while others see relatively little use.

#### Path Conditions

* The condition of the existing path varies greatly.
* There are no paved sections within OOE, but the underpasses under the bridges at both the North (Queensway) and South (Smyth Road) ends of OOE paved.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* The dirt path is fairly wide in some sections. Some of these sections are quite muddy in the spring or in rainy weather.
* In some sections there is no path or only a very narrow footpath.
* A couple of transition points between different parts of the path are in particularly poor condition.
* For the most part, the City’s plans designate development of a “multi-use pathway” along this stretch of river, similar to the NCC path on the east side of the River. Based on the Nature Trail concept, and on the input to date from other OOE residents, this is not the community’s desired approach.

#### Ecological Conditions

* Most of the immediate riparian (shoreline) zone in OOE is treed, but there are gaps.
* In some areas, there are groves of trees that extend out from the shoreline, but in other sections, the treed strip is confined to the immediate shoreline.
* Manitoba Maple trees and thickets predominate. While not the most appealing species, Manitoba Maple can survive flooding, is also reasonably drought tolerant, helps stabilize the shoreline with its fibrous spreading roots, sprouts quickly after damage caused by ice, etc., creates aquatic habitat diversity with overhangs and snags, and provides seed for birds and wildlife.
* Other relatively common tree species include silver maple, willow, ash, and bur oak. There are also small pockets or individual numbers of other species including Norway maple, poplar, spruce, and elm. Invasive species include buckthorn and Japanese knotweed.
* Along some long stretches of the shoreline, there is mowed grass lawn right up to the current path, and often even on the river side of the path. There is also an extensive area of poison ivy in the stretch behind the Lees Avenue apartments.
* There is significant erosion in some areas including sheet and rill/gully erosion where there are gaps in tree and ground cover, and shoreline (channel) erosion, which along some stretches has already caused considerable loss of land.
* There are a total of [6?] stormwater sewers that empty into this stretch of the River.
* There are a number of long stretches with rich shoreline and aquatic vegetation including cattails, bulrushes, pickerel weed, joe pyeweed, arrowhead, bladderwort, pondweed, yellow pond lily, water lily, polygonum and tape grass.
* Bullfrogs, green frogs and American toads are common on some sections, and leapord frogs, snapping turtles and painted turtles are also commonly seen.
* Many of the fish species found in the Rideau River are present along the OOE stretch, and the far shore in particular is considered important muskellunge habitat.
* In addition to the more common species of waterfowl (mallards, black ducks, herons, etc.), wood ducks often nest in this stretch of river. During migration, goldeneye and common merganser are often seen, as well as hooded merganser, ring-neck ducks, cormorants and other waterfowl.
* Many migrating songbirds also frequent this stretch of shoreline, and various species of warblers, sparrows, woodpeckers, wrens, finches etc. nest here.
* Muskrat and raccoon are common. Beaver, marten, and otter are also seen, and there have been occasional reports of fisher sightings.
* There is some soil contamination from historic uses (coal gasification and coal tar processing, an armory, landfilling) along a significant portion of the land, from the Rideau campus through to Springhurst Park. Leakage from underground storage tanks punctured during construction of the transitway is managed by pumps that create negative pressure to prevent the contamination from migrating to the river. Vents have been put in to release the methane from old landfill. Apparently the surface contamination is not significant enough to warrant treatment.

### 3.2 Some Initial Ideas

#### Improving the path

1. Pull the path further back from the shoreline in some sections (e.g., where erosion is a problem)
2. Create a more consistent width for the path along the whole length
3. Explore options for “soft” surfacing (e.g., gravel), especially in stretches prone to muddiness
4. Explore options to create bicycle lanes on adjacent roadways in sensitive sections (e.g., Rideau Gardens, Brantwood Park)
5. Remove trees that have fallen onto the path

#### Increasing opportunities for enjoyment

1. Maintain and improve access to areas for viewing and sitting by the river (including the addition of boulders for sitting by the water)
2. Create better canoe/kayak launch area at foot of Clegg (e.g., dock)
3. Explore options for a swimming area

#### Restoring/rehabilitating environmental conditions

1. Identify locations for planting trees, shrubs and vines to: add diversity to the existing tree cover using native species; create more shade along both sides of the path and screen unwanted sightlines; improve habitat and food supplies for birds and wildlife
2. Identify where and how to plant so that mature canopy conditions will redevelop when existing trees die
3. Encourage more naturalized meadows in some areas adjacent to the path though new plantings, and reduced mowing close to the shoreline
4. Explore options to stabilize the shoreline in areas of high channel erosion
5. Restore vegetation in areas of high sheet and rill/gully erosion
6. Create current breaks if/where appropriate
7. Enhance fish habitat if/where appropriate (e.g. create embayments)
8. Monitor stormwater quality and explore opportunities to rehabilitate natural surface drainage patterns to slow runoff and increase biodiversity
9. Explore options to create bird habitat

## 4. PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

SLOE members and others in the community believe strongly in the value and feasibility of this initiative, but it will of course require perseverance over a period of years for the idea to reach its potential. Additional research is needed to understand and plan for physical and ecological conditions and sensitivities. Community engagement will be critical to gain input and support, and it will be important to address specific interests that different groups within Ottawa East will have. For example, those with homes near and along the shoreline will likely have a particular interest in maintaining the tranquility of the trail. With good collaboration, creative solutions (e.g., related to routing, pathway construction, signage, etc.) can be found to these and other concerns. Another area of challenge, and perhaps the most significant, will relate to legal, financial and ownership/maintenance issues.

Taking these challenges and associated requirements into account, here are some of the actions that SLOE is already taking, or plans to take. In the fall, a more detailed action plan and timeline will be developed.

### Communication and Consultation

We are setting up a blog to allow for an ongoing exchange ideas about the Trail amongst those with an active interest, and a web-site which can evolve based in part on ideas from the blog. These should be up and running soon.

We will also hold a community walk-through along the shoreline in October. This will be an opportunity for OOE residents to share their knowledge of the shoreline and their ideas about the Trail. Ongoing education will also be important, in part to make people aware that a “clean” landscape is not necessarily ecologically appropriate.

### Research

We will continue to work with knowledgeable RVCA and City staff and other experts (e.g., at the Museum of Nature, which recently conducted a major biodiversity study on the River) to better understand issues and options along the shoreline.

Through the director of the Institute of the Environment at the University of Ottawa (who is also a professor of ecosystem science and management in the Biology Department) we hope to have undergraduate students conducting research to increase our understanding of existing conditions and opportunities.

We will also be contributing to the development of a course to be offered as part of an environmental studies focus program at Immaculata High School in the 2008/09 academic year. There will be a field study focus related to the Rideau River Nature Trail.

Research will also be needed to strategically link with current City and regional initiatives, such as the Lower Rideau Watershed Strategy (which has identified protection and improvement of natural habitats as a priority, and has indicated the need for an inventory shoreline areas requiring rehabilitation, and for a fish habitat management plan) and the Stormwater Management Plan.

### Financial, Legal and Adminstrative Requirements

We will continue discussions with the various institutional players who own the land, and/or have some legal say in what happens along the shoreline; and when the specifics of the plan are further developed, we will bring all the parties together again.

Councillor Doucet will introduce the concept for the trail into the strategic planning process that Council is currently undertaking, and he and his staff will assist us in seeking support from the City regarding things like acquiring right-of-way, obtaining resources, and getting commitments to maintenance. As we progress with specific elements, we will need to ensure that we have any required permissions from the City, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Also once plans are sufficiently evolved, we will contact various charitable foundations to explore options for financing various elements of the plan.

### Implementation

Implementation will be incremental, so priorities will need to be defined. However, to build momentum and interest, we would like to proceed with one or two initiatives this coming fall and spring. Refer to Appendix A for some ideas.

## Contact

This SLOE initiative is being led by Rebecca Aird and John Dance. Please email us at [sustainableottawaeast@mainstreeter.ca](mailto:sustainableottawaeast@mainstreeter.ca).

## APPENDIX A:

## SECTION-BY-SECTION DESCRIPTION AND INITIAL IDEAS ABOUT WHAT CAN BE DONE

Note: The following is just some observations and ideas to get the ball rolling. It reflects only a very casual understanding of the physical and ecological dynamics along the shoreline, and is mostly limited to the terrestrial environment. More research and expertise is needed on all fronts, but particularly to help define conditions and opportunities in relation to aquatic habitat and shoreline erosion.

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| **EXISTING CONDITIONS** (very preliminary) | **SOME INITIAL IDEAS** (also very preliminary) |
| **Section 1: Rideau Campus, University of Ottawa**, (former Algonquin College) | |
| This lengthy section has no defined path. A parking lot borders the initial stretch of shoreline, and buildings border most of the rest.  The shoreline through the campus is virtually all treed. Manitoba maple predominates on the riverside of the path. Due to the sloping shoreline and dense tree growth the River is mostly not visible, though there has been some recent pruning.  On the campus side are some ash, sugar maple, bur oak and basswood.  Buckthorn seedlings and saplings are beginning to invade in some areas. Buckthorn is an ecologically undesirable invasive alien species that is hard to get rid of once established.  In terms of linking the campus path to the underpass (see Section 2), a key challenge will be the steep slope down to the River at this point. Building the path down this slope would entail significant work and cost to stabilize the slope. | The University already has plans for a shoreline path – and possibly a rowing club – as part of its planned $20 million campus renovation and upgrading. SLOE members have met with University representatives and they are very open to sharing ideas to enable with the rest of the path through OOE.  Existing trees can be pruned up to create more openness and sightlines to the River.  The trees on the campus side of the path are a potential seed source to help spread some diversity to the riverside. Turf will need to be eliminated where new trees are to be established. (Mulch mats can be used.)  The Buckthorn invasion is not too advanced, and may be possible to control by pulling up the existing seedlings and saplings, and staying on top of the situation.  One option rather than extending the path down the slope to the underpass is to connect the path to the existing stairs to the underpass, and install a metal bike rail (like the ones used near the National Arts Centre). Other ideas raised during CDP open house  * Add Park & Ride area in U of O parking lot * Create alternate entrance/exit on U of O side of Lees Ave to improve safety of crossing to campus (pedestrians often cross outside of crosswalks, and visibility is poor coming off of the Lees overpass) |
| **Section 2: The underpass under the OC Transitway Bridge** | |
| When the bridge was built, a pedestrian underpass was constructed with a guard-rail along the river. However, in recent years, the path has subsided, and access is sometimes restricted by fencing. One or more people “live” under the bridge at least some of the time. The wall of the underpass is heavily (though quite artistically) graffitied. | By letter in March, we informed the chair of OC Transpo (Alex Cullen) about the state of the underpass, but despite numerous follow-up emails to his office, we have not had a response. We will continue to pursue this.  One suggestion made regarding graffiti is to sponsor a competition amongst local street artists and select the best mural. |
| **Section 3: Behind the Lees Avenue apartment buildings** | |
| The City of Ottawa owns all of the shoreline behind the three large apartment buildings on the south side of Lees Avenue (i.e., 170, 180 and 190 Lees).[[2]](#footnote-2) This is quite an attractive stretch of the shoreline, with some substantial groves of mature trees providing a good canopy. The footpath is quite wide through this section, and paths from the apartment buildings converge with the main path. There are also a few informal paths to favoured spots on the shoreline, one of which features an attractive, mature Manitoba maple and some large boulders on the shoreline.  However, this area is not well maintained: there are fallen trees across the path, the area is strewn with garbage, and the footpath is often muddy. Poison ivy is also prolific along a substantial stretch of this segment.  Directly behind the Lees apartment building (170 Lees) there is a small “old field” clearing that is growing back into Manitoba maple. Behind this is a large mound of dirt and gravel.  There is a large (1350 mm) stormwater sewer emptying into the River in this section, just south of 170 Lees. | We will need to find out more about how to manage this forested stretch and promote desirable succession. There are a number of fairly mature Norway maple in this area. Over time these will become more predominant unless steps are taken to promote native trees.  One project that may be initiated this fall or in the coming spring would be rehabilitation of the “old field” opening. This could be a very attractive and unique feature along the trail. The Manitoba maple would need to be removed, as would the gravel/dirt pile. Planting could be tailored to encourage a showy native wildflower meadow for the short term, with succession to a sumac grove, and/or for the longer term, an ash or sugar maple grove.  Removal of trees and debris along the path could also be undertaken this fall.  Some multi-lingual signage to warn about the poison ivy would be valuable.  It would be good to monitor the storm sewer outfall and its impact on water quality in the River. This might support the idea of undertaking work to restore some of the natural drainage patterns, to slow and reduce runoff to the River. |
| **Section 4: Alta Vista Transportation Corridor Reserve Land and Springhurst Park** | |
| These lands are also owned by the City. The AVTC is still on the Official Plan, despite significant opposition in OOE and elsewhere. This could make the City reluctant to support alternative uses; although a path would in any case have to be accommodated under any future overpass.  Throughout this stretch there are trees only on the shoreline side of the path; and moving south, the trees thin out and become smaller. There are some white (American) elm and white ash seedlings coming up along the shoreline.  Approaching the Oblate Lands, there is an exposed section of shoreline with very compacted, bare soil, and evidence of erosion into the River. There is also an apparently random stretch of fencing that drives foot traffic down to the shore. The boulders and tree trunk by the water are frequently used as seats. | More research is needed, but this may be a stretch of shoreline that would particularly benefit from work to improve near-shore aquatic habitat – e.g., reducing erosion via plantings, encouraging growth that will create more overhangs to shelter fish and aquatic life.  It would be good to plant trees on the landward side of the path to maintain a more shady and intimate feeling, screen out Lees Avenue, and enhance bird and wildlife habitat.  An initial focus on the exposed section of shoreline would make sense. It would be good to maintain the visual openness and appeal for sitting – perhaps even adding some more boulders for sitting. But shoreline native plants can help stabilize this area (and others) against erosion. Recommended species include red-osier dogwood, meadowsweet (Spirea alba), shrub willow and Virginia creeper. It also makes sense to pull the path further away from the shore, which would entail moving the fence section. |
| **Section 5: The Oblate Lands** | |
| Between Springhurst Park and Brantwood Park is a large property owned by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), the order that founded not only St Paul University, but also the University of Ottawa. The administrators at the Deschalets residence allow a variety of public activities on the property, including use of the informal footpath on the river bank. As far as we know, there is no legal public right-of-way along the river.  Most of the property to the rear of the residence, including the shoreline, was built up with landfill over forty years ago. As a result, the bank is steep and unstable along much of this section, and significant shoreline (channel) erosion in this stretch has resulted in quite extensive loss of land.  There are trees along much of the shoreline (again only along the river banks, not the landward side of the path), but given loss to erosion and dutch elm disease, few are mature. Some sections of the slope are bare (exposed) from the top of the bank down to the River, with signs of rill and gully erosion.  The descent off the landfilled rise down to Brantwood Park is steep and hard to navigate, and the bare soil washes down to the River. | It will be important to ensure continued access along the river (e.g., a public right-of-way) since the land is likely to be sold for development. The resident administrator we have spoken with is open to exploring how to do this. But such decisions are ultimately in the hands of directors based in Montreal. Also, the OMI are not likely to invest in the development of the Trail, and there may be significant costs to stabilize the shoreline.  The path could be pulled further back from the edge of the riverbank, and trees and shrubs could be planted along the landward side of the path to create shade a minimize sheet erosion. At the same time, it would be important to maintain site-lines to the River.  Research is needed to further define the causes and extent of erosion, and options to address the problem.  Some work is also needed to facilitate the descent and reduce erosion on the slope down to Brantwood Park. One possibility is to cut some stairs into the slope, and install a “trough” ramp for bicycles. |
| **Section 6: Brantwood Park** | |
| This park has a lengthy river-front. A casual dirt footpath runs along the shoreline at what seems for the most part to be a good distance from the waterfront.  At the base of the slope down from the Oblate property (at the foot of Clegg Street) is a stretch of muddy “beach” that is used as an access point for canoes and kayaks. This appears to be an area of where there is significant sediment run-off into the river.  Much of the rest of the shoreline is well vegetated with a diversity of annuals including grasses, bindweed, vetch, milkweed, and joe pyeweed. However, the grass is mowed not only up to the path, but also beyond it; often very close to the river edge.  Aquatic plants such as pond lily, arrowhead and sedges – and in one area some cattails -- also create a rich near-shore environment. Large populations of toads, green frogs and bullfrogs breed here throughout the spring and early summer.  The shoreline also has a variety of fairly mature, large trees, including Manitoba maple, ash, bur oak, and willow. (And the park itself includes a number of other tree species.) But along much of the shoreline, the trees stand more as individuals versus groves, and there are more open stretches of shoreline than in most other sections.  There is, however, a grove at the southwest end of the park that includes some large oak and silver maple trees, in addition to Manitoba maple. The soil in the grove is bare and compacted from heavy traffic. The oak and maple cannot regenerate under these conditions.  There are some boulders by the water at this end of the park (just before the rise to Brantwood Drive) and these are used for sitting. The soil is also very bare and compacted in this area.  Brantwood Park is a “no-dog” park so this has implications for users of the path. | A better defined path leading to a dock would reduce erosion into the river and make for cleaner launching of canoes and kayaks. Shrubs could be planted around the path to reduce erosion.  The naturalized shoreline seems healthy and diverse, and should probably be kept as it. But while some grassy areas on the riverfront side of the path are important -- for example, for sitting and eating at the benches and picnic tables -- a larger shoreline vegetation buffer is also desirable. City staff could be directed to leave some areas beyond the path unmowed.  A succession plan for replacement of mature trees might be useful.  More thinking is needed to determine the best approach to maintaining and improving the grove at the southwest end of the park. It would not be practical to try to prevent the activities that are causing soil compaction on the land-ward side of the path, so this area of the grove should probably be left to the Manitoba maple. But it might be possible to plant additional oak and silver maple in some areas around the periphery.  One option to consider is the possibility of routing the cycling path onto roadway from the Smyth Rd bridge through to the end of Onslow Crescent. There would then need to be a diagonal connect to the Brantwood path around the tennis courts. |
| **Section 7: Brantwood Drive** | |
| There is no path here but the street itself runs along the river. The margin between the curb and the River is quite narrow, so although there are some good-sized trees, they are only one or two deep. Much of the undergrowth has been cut down, presumably by residents on the street to create a better view to the river. This means that the bank is quite exposed, although saplings have been planted to help compensate.  There is a small grassy “peninsula” in one section that extends the shoreline out into the River; and the near-shore aquatic environment continues to be quite rich in this stretch. | This stretch is perhaps the most significant “disconnect” in terms of a sense of a nature trail. Some thought could be given to understory species that would help provide better soil coverage without interfering with the view of residents across the street.  In the longer term, when road/sewer/water infrastructure work is being done, consideration could be given to narrowing the roadway and increasing the breadth of the roadside margin to allow a larger vegetative buffer and to accommodate a path. |
| **Section 8: Rideau Garden Drive** | |
| There is a stretch of houses on the southeast side of Rideau Garden Drive whose backyards open onto the city property along the river. Fences and hedges demarcate the property lines for some of these. This stretch has some of the most imposing trees of the entire length of the OOE shoreline. However, there are few thriving young trees ready to replace the mature ones when they die. The few saplings that have been planted are not thriving – e.g., red pine is not sufficiently shade tolerant to thrive here.  The path itself is often soggy, particularly in the spring or after a rainfall.  Further south, Rideau Garden Drive curves back down to the River. Here, conditions are similar to those found on the Brantwood Drive stretch. There is a relatively mature elm near the bridge. | This is a very appealing stretch of shoreline green space with a tranquil feel, and a key goal for this section would be to maintain that feeling. One option would be to explore ways to encourage “commuter” (high speed) bicycle traffic to continue around on Rideau Garden Drive, and then possibly through to Onslow Crescent, with a path connecting back down to the river near the north end of Brantwood Park. A defined bicycle lane on the roadways, and signage at either end of this section of path, might help.  Another goal would be to ensure good succession to maintain the canopy. This would involve planting appropriate species of fairly large caliper trees such as spruce, sugar maple and bur oak.  An additional possibility would be further naturalization of groundcover along the shoreline and in selected other areas (e.g., Solomon seal, ferns, woodland ephemerals). |

1. The paving continues from the Queensway along shoreline in Sandy Hill through Strathcona Park; and there is also paving along the Windsor Park section of the path in Old Ottawa South. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Interestingly, the City’s website includes a web-page of park locations, and this land – which has the address 166 Lees – is listed as a park called “Rideau River Trail”. (http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/parks\_recreation/parks/locations/east\_en.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)