



Greenbelt Coalition of Canada's Capital Region

Coalition de la ceinture de verdure de la Région de la capitale du Canada

WHO IS PROTECTING THE GREENBELT? PART 2 Federal Government Is Letting Legacy Slip

Ottawa, October 12, 2010 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In 1958, a Conservative Government, under John Diefenbaker, set out to create a greenbelt around inner city Ottawa, in accord with the Gréber Plan. Today this legacy is in danger of being lost, through lack of effective action by the current government to protect the Greenbelt.

The Airport Authority, which claims to be “environmentally responsible,” is in the process of sub-leasing 33 acres to the Shenkman Corporation, land that the Airport Authority has on long term lease from Transport Canada. Development of this 220,000 sq. ft. facility will result in the destruction of a treed wetland.

At the same time, the Province will be determining, probably by early November, whether this area qualifies to be part of what will likely be a Provincially Significant Wetland. But no-one is waiting, as the Shenkman Corporation is poised to destroy this Greenbelt wetland.

The Greenbelt Coalition has sent a letter to the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, urging him not to approve the Airport Authority's sublease to the Shenkman Corporation. The letter calls for the Minister to refer the matter to the NCC for review under the conditions of the Airport Authority's 2008 Land Use Plan.

“Over the years, sightings and roadkilled specimens of Blanding’s Turtles in the area have been reported to the authorities,” says Cheryl Doran, a Coalition member. Blanding’s Turtles are a Threatened species on both Provincial and Federal lists.

The Federal Policy on Wetland Conservation, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the Species at Risk Act all apply to this Shenkman/Airport Authority/City project. “The Airport’s Land Use Plan as approved by the NCC and Transport Canada explicitly calls for “detailed environmental studies” if any development is proposed on this land. Unfortunately, the Airport Authority has chosen to ignore this requirement and the NCC is not enforcing the provision.

Furthermore, no other federal authority, including Environment Canada, has intervened. The NCC is reduced to begging the City and Shenkman for attention to the long list of deficiencies in the Site Plan. (Ottawa City Council approved the Plan on October 6 anyway, requiring only that shoulders of the adjacent roads be paved for bikepaths.)

“So who is protecting the Greenbelt?” asks Nicole Desroches, Vice –Chair of the Coalition. “The bulldozers could be out there any day to prepare the ground for foundations before the frost sets in.”

The Greenbelt Coalition is taking a stand. The public has spoken repeatedly and clearly: ***Hands off the Greenbelt!*** Residents are encouraged to contact their MP and Ministers Prentice (Environment), Baird (House Leader), Strahl (Transport) and Cannon (with Strahl jointly responsible for the NCC).

Greenbelt Coalition web site:

<http://www.greenbeltcoalition.ca/2010/10/who-is-protecting-the-greenbelt/>

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For further information, please contact:

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Cheryl Doran - phone 613 - 290-9968 (English)

Background

Coalition Letter to Minister Strahl, 12 October 2010 (PDF attached)

Results of the NCC’s consultations about a Vision for the Greenbelt:

http://canadacapital.gc.ca/data/2/rec_docs/24759_2010-P41e_Greenbelt_Final_combined.pdf

Report by Albert Dugal and Dr. G. Clarke Topp on plant and soil conditions
and

Letter from the NCC with comments on the Site Plan
and

Coalition's media release of 3 October 2010

are available at:

<http://www.greenbeltcoalition.ca/2010/10/who-is-protecting-the-greenbelt/>

Information on Blanding's Turtles by Prof. Gabriel Blouin-Demers:

<http://greenspace-alliance.ca/node/318>

Greenbelt Coalition member profiles:

<http://www.greenbeltcoalition.ca/member-profiles/>