

# Downtown Revitalization

**Vision: A vibrant, resilient downtown that attracts investment, is home to a diversity of residents, and invites people to shop, gather, and explore.**

## Strategic Areas of Focus



### Rebalance Uses

Modernize the mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and tourism uses to create a vibrant downtown from day to night.



### Diversify and Strengthen Ottawa's Downtown Economy

A more diverse and resilient downtown economy driven by job and sector growth and supported by a strengthened small business ecosystem.



### Improve Community Safety & Well-Being

A safer, more welcoming downtown supported by strengthened policing, improved streetscapes, and coordinated outreach and social-service responses.



### Transform Places and Spaces

Elevate the downtown experience through enhancements to public spaces, gateways, and key destinations.

## Downtown Revitalization Framework and Toolkit – Action Plan

**Vision: A vibrant, resilient downtown that attracts investment, is home to residents, and invites people to shop, gather, and explore**

<b>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit (MOTION)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Analysis and development of downtown incentives program                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Evaluate additional discretionary development charge incentives within select Hubs, Mainstreet Corridors, and Special Districts within the Downtown Core Transect</li> <li>○ Assessing the value of a Community Improvement Plan to incentivize downtown renewal</li> <li>○ Redevelopment and conversion incentive programs</li> <li>○ Expedited approval process for office-to-residential and other conversion projects</li> <li>○ Evaluate the alignment of the Official Plan and Secondary Plans to the objectives of the Downtown Revitalization Framework and Action Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Package and launch small business sector supports                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Storefront activation program to animate vacant retail spaces</li> <li>○ Small Business Navigator to streamline access to supports and services</li> <li>○ Business Improvement Area (BIA) capacity building support</li> <li>○ Commercial Heritage Façade Improvement Program</li> <li>○ Evaluate waiving city-wide Right-of-Way patio fees for April 2027</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve Community Safety and Well-being                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coordinated outreach and support services (ex: ANCHOR, UHOM, OPS CORE)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

AREAS OF FOCUS	Rebalance Uses	Diversify and Strengthen Ottawa’s Downtown Economy	Improve Community Safety & Well-Being	Transform Places and Spaces
<b>SHORT-TERM 12 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evaluate redevelopment incentive programs as a component of the <i>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit</i></li> <li>● Establish Federal-City partnership table on redevelopment of federal assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Package and launch small business sector supports as a component of the <i>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit</i></li> <li>● Launch a downtown-focused investment attraction program</li> <li>●</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coordinate outreach services as a component of the <i>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit</i></li> <li>● Implement the Unsheltered Homelessness Outreach Model (UHOM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advance the redesign of Sparks Street and seek partner government funding for implementation</li> <li>● Launch ACE District</li> <li>● Advance the Ottawa 200+: Portraits, Places, and People</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce Additional Residential Unit (ARU) and Missing Middle accelerator programs</li> <li>• Implement an office-to-alternative conversion incentive program</li> <li>• Prioritize underutilized municipal lands for mixed-use and residential development</li> <li>• Advance 1010 Somerset redevelopment implementation</li> <li>• Propose a Bayview Yards redevelopment concept</li> <li>• Advance expedited conversion and approval processes to accelerate adaptive reuse</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand ANCHOR to broaden service coverage for individuals experiencing mental health and substance use challenges across downtown</li> <li>• Advance the Positive Alternatives to Drug Use Pilot</li> <li>• Enhance downtown specific safety measures on public transit</li> <li>• Implement the Readiness, Resiliency and Responsiveness framework</li> <li>• Street safety enhancements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinatown streetlighting project</li> <li>• Laurier Street W. streetlighting, trees, pavers, planters</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expand OPS CORE services into new areas of downtown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Canadiana Block project</li> <li>• Expand Street Seats program expansion to Chinatown</li> </ul>
<p><b>MEDIUM-TERM</b> <b>2-3 years</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively undertake site preparation and identify other incentives to advance redevelopment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance diversification initiatives in life sciences and clean tech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of OPS district policing model (2027)</li> <li>• Identify spaces for the delivery of coordinated social &amp; health services (e.g., Campus of Care, HART Hubs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Laurier Street W. enhancements (lighting, trees, pavers, planters)</li> <li>• Enhance wayfinding throughout and between districts (review City-NCC-Ottawa Tourism study)</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UHOM Dashboard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the feasibility of a new outdoor destination space at the Museum of Nature lands/City ROW</li> </ul>
<b>LONG-TERM 4+ years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bayview redevelopment implementation</li> <li>• LeBreton Flats redevelopment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Business Incubation District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a data governance model to improve data sharing among community organizations</li> </ul>	
<b>Analyses &amp; Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess and optimize uses by evaluating existing mix</li> <li>• Evaluation of availability/distribution of amenities per sub-neighbourhood (Heat Map)</li> <li>• Vacant property visioning in central business district</li> <li>• Potential development of a municipal service corporation for downtown</li> <li>• Meaningful Indigenous engagement and partnership development</li> <li>• Local community engagement</li> </ul>			

<b>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit (MOTION)</b>			
<b>Strategic Initiative</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>
Analysis and development of downtown incentives program	Development charge incentives for priority corridors within the Downtown Core Transect	Assess opportunities to introduce targeted development charge incentives for priority corridors within the Downtown Core Transect to encourage redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use intensification. These incentives would help improve project feasibility, attract private sector investment, and accelerate redevelopment by reducing upfront development costs that supports increased housing supply, street-level activity, and economic vitality in the downtown core.	Planning, Development and Building Services
	Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP)	Assess targeted financial incentives to stimulate private investment, redevelopment, and economic revitalization. These incentives would be cost-recovered through the municipal tax base; analysis of their potential application and financial impact is currently underway.	Strategic Initiatives

	Redevelopment and conversion incentive program	Develop a process to expedite review and approval stream to simplify planning requirements, reduce applicant costs, and accelerate approvals by lowering the overall complexity of the process. This includes a range of incentive programs, including those for family-sized units, hotels, and ground-floor activations.	Planning, Development and Building Services
	Expedited approval process for office-to-residential and other conversion projects	The City will streamline planning and permitting processes for projects that convert underutilized office buildings and commercial spaces into housing or mixed-use developments. By reducing approval timelines and regulatory barriers, the initiative encourages adaptive reuse and helps address office vacancy while increasing residential activity downtown.	Strategic Initiatives
	Alignment of the Official Plan and Secondary Plans to the objectives of the Downtown Revitalization Framework and Action Plan	Undertake a review of the Official Plan and applicable Secondary Plans to ensure alignment with the objectives and priorities of the Downtown Revitalization Framework and Action Plan. This work will identify opportunities to update policy direction to support a more balanced mix of uses, enable intensification in strategic locations, and facilitate redevelopment and investment.	Strategic Initiatives
Enhance small business sector supports	Storefront activation program to animate vacant retail spaces	A storefront activation program to animate vacant retail spaces in downtown will provide temporary, flexible retail opportunities to local entrepreneurs and businesses to build their brand and assess a longer-term lease commitment. Activating vacant storefronts will contribute to improved street level vibrancy and help shift perceptions of safety downtown.	Strategic Initiatives
	Small Business Navigator to streamline access to supports and services	A website navigator that provides a one-stop source for practical tools and reliable local support programs for businesses. It offers resources to help businesses plan and start a business, launch operations, grow, and eventually transfer or transition their business. The eventual establishment of an expanded Small Business Centre will meet the high and largely unmet demand for small business support services.	Strategic Initiatives
	Business Improvement Area (BIA) capacity building support	Provide tools, resources, and strategic support to help BIAs implement revitalization initiatives, attract businesses, and activate public spaces. Enhanced BIA capacity enables local business districts to play a stronger role in economic development and community programming.	Strategic Initiatives
	Commercial Heritage Façade Improvement Program	Expand the Centretown Heritage Façade Improvement Program to other heritage designated areas and buildings in the downtown core, to directly support storefront improvements and reinforce the historic character and visual cohesion of the district.	Planning, Development and Building Services

	Waive Right-of-Way patio fees for April 2027	Evaluate waiving Right-Of-Way (ROW) patio fees citywide for one month in April 2027 as a business-friendly incentive in the Patio Fees program to support animation in the Downtown and assess administrative operational efficiency.	Planning, Development and Building Services
Improve Community Safety and Well-being	Coordinated outreach and support services (e.g. ANCHOR, UHOM, OPS CORE)	Improve coordination among outreach and support programs that address homelessness, mental health, and social service needs in the downtown core, to provide proactive outreach, connect individuals to services and housing, and improve safety and wellbeing in public spaces.	Community and Social Services

**Short-Term Actions (12-months)**

<b>Strategic Area of Focus</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>
Rebalance Uses	Package and launch redevelopment incentive programs as a component of the <i>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit</i>	Package and launch a suite of redevelopment incentive programs as a component of the Downtown Revitalization Toolkit to encourage private sector investment and accelerate redevelopment activity as outlined above.	Strategic Initiatives
	Federal-City partnership table on redevelopment of federal assets	The City and the federal government will work collaboratively to identify priority sites, align planning and investment decisions to accelerate redevelopment opportunities that support housing, economic growth and revitalization objectives.	Strategic Initiatives
	Introduce Additional Residential Unit (ARU) and Missing Middle accelerator programs	Introduce Additional Residential Unit (ARU) and Missing Middle accelerator programs: support the development of additional residential units and “missing middle” housing forms such as duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings, by simplifying approvals, reducing barriers, and providing communications and outreach tools to help homeowners understand opportunities and navigate the development process. These initiatives aim to support increasing the housing supply, gentle density, and more diverse housing options in established neighbourhoods, including the downtown core.	Strategic Initiatives
	Implement an office-to-residential conversion incentive program	Transform buildings previously used for commercial purposes and converting a portion or the entirety of the building for residential uses. New measures were designed to streamline and incentivize these conversions. Following the successful pilot program in Ward 14, the program will be extended until April 2027.	Strategic Initiatives
	Prioritize underutilized municipal lands for mixed-use and residential development	Identify underutilized or surplus municipal properties and evaluate opportunities to redevelop them for housing, mixed-use development, community amenities, or public spaces.	Strategic Initiatives
	1010 Somerset redevelopment implementation	Advance the redevelopment of the City-owned site at 1010 Somerset Street West to deliver new housing, community services, and public space improvements.	Strategic Initiatives

	Propose a Bayview Yards redevelopment concept for consideration early in the next Term of Council	Develop a redevelopment concept for Bayview Yards for Council’s consideration that explores the potential to transform City-owned lands into a mixed-use, transit-oriented district, including opportunities for future infrastructure investment, public realm enhancements, and a balanced mix of uses to support long-term growth and economic activity.	Strategic Initiatives
	Advance expedited conversion and approval processes to accelerate adaptive reuse	Advance streamlined approval processes for office-to-residential and other conversion projects to reduce timelines, improve certainty, and lower barriers to adaptive reuse. Simplifying review processes and prioritizing eligible projects will help accelerate the repurposing of underutilized buildings, support increased housing supply, and contribute to a more diverse and resilient downtown.	Planning Development and Building Services
Diversify and Strengthen Ottawa’s Economy	Package and launch small business sector supports as a component of the <i>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit</i>	The toolkit will consolidate financial incentives, process improvements, and program supports to facilitate redevelopment, investment, and economic activity. It will contain an accessible suite of tools to support property owners, developers, and businesses, while enabling the City to advance priority projects, respond to market conditions, and accelerate revitalization efforts across the downtown core as outlined above.	Strategic Initiatives
	Launch a Downtown-focused investment attraction program	This program will proactively attract private investment, businesses, and new industries to downtown Ottawa by promoting development opportunities, supporting redevelopment projects, and strengthening partnerships with investors and economic development agencies. The initiative will help diversify the downtown economy and increase long-term economic activity.	Strategic Initiatives
Improve Community Safety and Wellbeing	Coordinate outreach services as a component of the <i>Downtown Revitalization Toolkit</i>	Coordinate outreach and support services as part of the Downtown Revitalization Toolkit to enhance service integration and responsiveness across the downtown core.	Community and Social Services
	Implement the Unhoused Homelessness Outreach Model (UHOM)	A coordinated and streamlined street outreach system that better connects people who are unsheltered to the housing and supports they need with an enhanced role in responding to businesses, housed residents, and community associations through a public engagement strategy.	Community and Social Services
	Expand ANCHOR to broaden service coverage for individuals experiencing mental health and substance use challenges across downtown	A community-led, culturally sensitive, and equity-focused alternative to a police response that operates 24/7 to respond to mental health and substance use (MHSU) crises. The program dispatches skilled response teams to support individuals experiencing such crises and will expand to serve the ByWard Market, Lowertown, Sandy Hill, Lees Towers, Vanier, and Overbrook areas.	Community and Social Services

	Advance the Positive Alternatives to Drug Use Pilot	Launch a Safe Spaces pilot project, focused on implementing peer-led daytime recreational programming. This program aims to provide alternatives to street engagement, reduce pressure on public spaces, and ease demand on over-capacity day services.	Community and Social Services
	Enhance downtown specific safety measures on public transit	Increase safety measures through targeted interventions such as improved lighting, enhanced security presence, coordinated outreach, and real-time incident response to create a safer and more comfortable transit experience.	Transit Services
	Implement the Readiness, Resiliency and Responsiveness framework	Led by the Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction, the framework will strengthen Ottawa's coordinated response to the toxic drug crisis by combining federal resources, City expertise, and national policy leadership. It will give the City and its partners the tools to respond more effectively to this complex and rapidly changing crisis. The framework focuses on creating measurable outcomes and improving collaboration to build a safer, healthier, and more resilient downtown.	Community and Social Services Department
	Street safety enhancements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinatown streetlighting project</li> <li>• Laurier Street W. – streetlighting, trees, pavers, planters</li> </ul>	Streetscaping enhancements such as upgraded lighting in Chinatown and Laurier Street W. will increase visibility, enhance pedestrian comfort including perceptions of safety, and encourage greater public use. These measures help create a more welcoming environment, reduce opportunities for crime, and support a safer, more vibrant public realm.	Planning, Development and Building Services
	Expand OPS CORE services into new areas of downtown	A community-oriented approach focused on reducing crime and safety issues to enhance public safety through community engagement and collaboration with local interest-holders.	Ottawa Police Service
Transform Places and Spaces	Advance the redesign of Sparks Street and seek partner government funding for implementation	As outlined in the Sparks Street Public Realm Plan, the redesign of Sparks Street will include upgrades that beautify the area and enhance the pedestrian environment. These improvements will add new amenities that encourage public lounging, social interaction, and a more vibrant, welcoming streetscape. The City will also seek funding partnerships with other levels of government to support implementation of these improvements.	Planning, Development, and Building Services
	Launch ACE District	Reimagines the downtown as a connected cultural corridor and creative destination through public art, creative placemaking, programming, and wayfinding.	Strategic Initiatives
	Advance Ottawa 200+: Portraits, Places, and People	An immersive outdoor gallery led by the Bytown Museum and Ottawa Art Gallery, transforming storefronts and public spaces along Rideau Street and the ByWard Market with large-scale archival images, animated projections and bilingual stories celebrating Ottawa's communities.	Strategic Initiatives

	Implementation of Canadiana Block project	Implement a Canada-themed decorative pavement artwork, representing each of Canada's 10 provinces and 3 territories. The installation will be located within a block of Ottawa's pedestrian promenade, Sparks Street, between Kent Street and Lyon Street within the Parliamentary District of downtown Ottawa, celebrating Canadian identity and keen interest in bringing more decorative, culturally meaningful artworks to the downtown core. Placemaking and public realm initiatives in Centretown, including beautification through public art, will elevate the downtown experience for all.	Planning, Development and Building Services
	Street Seats program expansion to Chinatown	Following the successful pilot program, expand the program, which temporarily repurposes short sections of local streets into welcoming pedestrian-first spaces, to Chinatown.	Planning, Development and Building Services

### Medium-Term Actions (2-3 years)

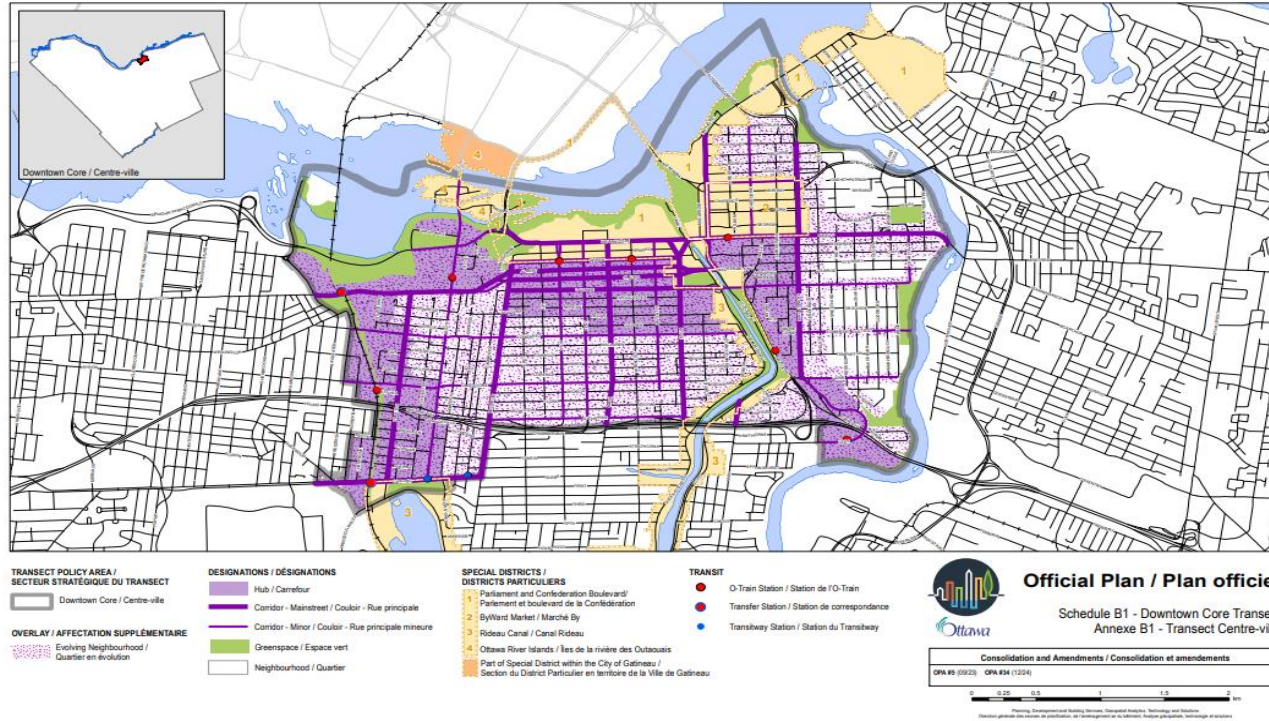
Strategic Area of Focus	Action	Description	Lead Department
Rebalance Uses	Proactively undertake site preparation and identify other incentives to advance redevelopment	To support broader downtown revitalization efforts such as the redevelopment of federal assets, office-to-residential conversions, and major infrastructure projects like Bayview Yards, the City will prepare the site to advance future redevelopment.	Strategic Initiatives
Diversify and Strengthen Ottawa's Economy	Advance diversification initiatives in life sciences and clean tech.	Building on other downtown revitalization initiatives, the City will seek additional opportunities to diversify development across various sectors, alongside external partners.	Strategic Initiatives
Improve Community Safety and Wellbeing	Launch of OPS district policing model (2027)	Ottawa Police Service (OPS) will transition to a 4-district policing model (South, Central, East, West) to improve response times, increase visibility and strengthen community relationships.	Ottawa Police Service
	Identify spaces for the delivery of coordinated social & health services (e.g. Campus of Care, HART Hubs)	To address the shortage of primary care providers, the proposed Primary Care Hub would combine an academic training site, an interprofessional primary care model, and potentially a community hub offering priority City services within a centrally located facility. Identifying spaces to deliver this Campus of Care model and Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs would build on the Province's investment in a Primary Care Teaching Clinic under Ontario's Primary Care Action Plan.	Strategic Initiatives
	Unsheltered Homelessness Outreach Model (UHOM) Dashboard	Launch the UHOM dashboard, which will display outreach data related to community-based health and social services provided in the downtown area.	Community and Social Services
Transform Places and Spaces	Implement Laurier Street W. enhancements (lighting, trees, pavers, planters)	Implement public realm enhancements along Laurier Street West, including improved lighting, street trees, upgraded paving, and the introduction of planters to enhance the pedestrian environment. These improvements will contribute to a more attractive,	Strategic Initiatives

		comfortable, and accessible streetscape, supporting increased foot traffic, safety, and vibrancy in the surrounding area.	
	Enhance wayfinding throughout and between districts (review City-NCC-Ottawa Tourism study)	Implement clear, intuitive wayfinding that guides visitors into and through downtown and neighbouring districts along safe, well-defined routes, supported by lighting, signage, and animation.	Strategic Initiatives
	Review the feasibility of a new outdoor destination space at the Museum of Nature lands/City ROW	Undertake a feasibility review to assess the potential for a new outdoor destination space on lands adjacent to the Museum of Nature and within the City right-of-way. The review will consider site conditions, programming opportunities, partnerships, and design considerations to inform the creation of a vibrant public space that supports community use, cultural activity, and increased visitation to the area.	Planning Development and Building Services

#### Long-Term Actions (4+)

Strategic Area of Focus	Action	Description	Lead Department
Rebalance Uses	Bayview redevelopment implementation	Implement the redevelopment plan to convert City-owned lands at Bayview into a mixed-use, transit-oriented district for future infrastructure investments and public-realm opportunities.	Strategic Initiatives
	LeBreton Flats redevelopment	Advance the redevelopment to deliver new housing, public amenities, cultural and recreational spaces and enhanced transit connections.	Strategic Initiatives
Diversify and Strengthen Ottawa's Economy	Develop a Business Incubation District	Develop a dedicated area in the downtown district for programs, and support services for entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses. This will strengthen downtown's economy and support job creation across diverse sectors.	Strategic Initiatives
Improve Community Safety and Wellbeing	Develop a data governance model to improve data sharing among community organizations	Develop a data governance model to improve how community organizations share, collect and use data to help service providers respond more quickly to community needs, reduce duplication and support decision-making across downtown.	Community and Social Services

## Downtown Core Transect (Official Plan)



**West** → roughly **Bronson Avenue**

**East** → roughly **Rideau River / King Edward Avenue** depending on the sub-area

**North** → **Ottawa River**

**South** → **Highway 417 / Gloucester Street areas** depending on the block

It includes:

- **ByWard Market**
- **Rideau / Sandy Hill (north portion)**
- **Parliamentary Precinct**
- **Centretown (north portion)**
- **Downtown (financial district)**
- **Lebreton Flats (in most planning interpretations)**