

# Rockcliffe Park Secondary Plan

## Section 1: Overview

### 1.1 Introduction

The Rockcliffe Park community has played a unique and important role in the national capital since it was founded in the 1830's by Thomas MacKay. McKay was one of the principal builders of the Rideau Canal lock system and was a leading industrialist in Ottawa.

Much of the existing street and lot pattern in the community was established in 1864, when Thomas Coltrin Keefer subdivided the former MacKay estate. This street pattern was strongly influenced by the topography and woodland areas yielding a neighbourhood pattern of large and small lots, a winding street network, natural and park-like surroundings.

In 1921 the Village of Rockcliffe Park was incorporated as an independent municipality. In 2001, Rockcliffe Park was amalgamated with the City of Ottawa. The entirety of the former Village of Rockcliffe Park was designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by the former village Council in 1997. In 2016, the City of Ottawa adopted the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan, which includes a statement of heritage value and attributes, as well as policies and guidelines for the management of the district, which was approved by Local Planning Appeal Tribunal in 2019. The Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan, in addition to this secondary plan, guides development in Rockcliffe Park.

### 1.2 Context

Throughout its history, Rockcliffe Park has been a primarily residential community, comprised of large single-detached homes on generously sized lots. Nevertheless, Rockcliffe Park also includes small enclaves of more modest residences as well as apartments, schools, a community hall with library, a skating rink, tennis club and large, interconnected park areas. West of Mackay Lake the neighbourhood has developed in a park-like setting with many trees.

Because of its architecture, heritage, and unique setting, many diplomatic missions have located their official residences in Rockcliffe Park. Stornoway, the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition, is also located in Rockcliffe Park.

The Rockcliffe Park community provides a complementary setting for adjacent major national capital elements, including the Governor General's residence and estate, the

residence of the Prime Minister of Canada at 24 Sussex Drive, the National Capital Commission's Sir George-Étienne Cartier Parkway, and parklands adjacent to the Ottawa River. The prominent homes, parks and schools have created a community distinctive from any other in the capital and one that is recognized nationally. It is the intent of this secondary plan to maintain the prominence, history and character of the Rockcliffe Park community in the City and in the nation.

Careful planning and a slow rate of change has allowed Rockcliffe Park to retain its historic landscape with its canopy of mature trees, open spaces, historic vistas, the Lake and the Pond, a system of narrow streets, and treed lots with well-designed and maintained homes. Unlike other residential neighbourhoods in the urban area, Rockcliffe Park has successfully retained a relatively good ecological condition.

It remains the City's intent to protect the present environment, to permit modest change and to conserve, restore and maintain the quality of the landscape and built form according to the policies set out in this secondary plan, the policies and guidelines in the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan and the federal Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places.

## Section 2: Principles for Conservation, Growth and Change

### 2.1 A Stable Population

Rockcliffe Park has fully developed, and population changes will occur only through replacement or renovation / restoration of existing buildings and through development of secondary dwelling units and coach houses. The population of Rockcliffe Park is expected to remain stable over the planning period.

### 2.2 Conserving the Character of Rockcliffe Park

In accordance with the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan, development in Rockcliffe Park will have regard to such matters as:

- Residential use;
- Density;
- Lot size and patterns;
- Lot coverage;
- Building height, massing;
- Parking;
- Location, type and scale of accessory uses and structures;
- Landscaping;
- Tree coverage;
- Parkland;

- Natural features; and
- Lighting.

Policies:

- 1) All new development and construction in Rockcliffe Park must respect the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan, as amended from time to time.
- 2) New buildings on interior lots shall be sensitively sited in relation to adjacent buildings.
- 3) Existing road widths and patterns shall be maintained.
- 4) Dead-end streets shall not be extended.
- 5) All internal roads shall be local roads, with a maximum vehicular speed of 30 kilometres per hour.
- 6) The ground floor elevation of new construction shall be designed so its height above grade is compatible with that of buildings in the associated streetscape.

### 2.3 Conservation of Natural Heritage and Cultural Resources

The City will ensure that new development will be undertaken in accordance with accepted principles of sustainable development. This will ensure the conservation of natural heritage and cultural resources in Rockcliffe Park.

### 2.4 Conservation of the Heritage Conservation District

The entire former Village of Rockcliffe Park is a heritage conservation district. The City is committed to conserving Rockcliffe Park's heritage resources, including buildings, structures, sites, landscapes, areas and environments by, among other matters:

- Having regard to the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan when considering an application under the *Planning Act*; and
- Protecting the continuity of the unifying landscape by ensuring that soft landscaping continues to dominate individual properties and the public realm, such as including the use of Eastern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) hedges and low stone walls instead of fences, retaining grounds, gardens, trees and plantings.
- Any development on or changes to the publicly owned portions of the Village Green / Jubilee Garden and other parks within the Heritage Conservation District will require an application to alter under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

### 2.5 Environmental Principles



The preservation of the environment, particularly where forest or wooded areas exist, requires special consideration when new development and public works are proposed.

It is the City's intent that the natural landscape amenities of Rockcliffe Park be preserved or enhanced. Buildings, municipal services, site development, parking and streets can adversely affect densely vegetated areas. Depending on the density of the development and its proximity to these areas, new development, including public works, should involve the inventorying and safeguarding of these natural assets.

### Section 3: Goals and Objectives of the Secondary Plan

The goal of this secondary plan is to ensure that future development maintains the integrity of the community by:

1. Maintaining Compatible Form, Density and Character in Rockcliffe Park

Maintaining the neighbourhood and heritage character and the public, institutional and conservation uses that characterize the community.

Development of multi-unit residential development is permitted in specific areas located east of the Pond and in an area adjacent to Beechwood Avenue.

No commercial or industrial developments are, or will be, permitted within the Rockcliffe Park.

2. Encouraging Quality Design and Consistency within Rockcliffe Park

Guidelines for the design of new Infill Housing can be found in Section 7.4.2 of the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan. These guidelines are intended to encourage high quality of design and consistency with predominant housing forms.

3. Ensuring Public Services, Infrastructure and Streets are maintained and enhanced

This secondary plan is intended to ensure that adequate public services are available for the health, safety and convenience of the residents. These services will be enhanced over time to ensure the preservation of the environment and to provide efficient and economical infrastructure.

All streets interior to Rockcliffe Park will remain local streets and will have speed limits set of 30 kilometres per hour.

## Section 4: Designations and Policies

Schedule A - Designations, of this secondary plan identifies the land designations of Rockcliffe Park where different types and densities of development will be permitted.

- 1) Illustration of any lands within Schedule A does not imply that the lands are available or open to the public.
- 2) The City will determine when to purchase lands for public benefit. The inclusion of privately-owned lands within any designation on Schedule A does not in any way obligate the City, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority or Province to acquire, compensate or purchase these lands.
- 3) Nothing in this secondary plan shall prevent the construction of any structure required to provide public utility services. Such public utility shall be located, designed, and maintained in a manner in keeping with the surrounding area, and where possible limit the impact on the natural environment and the existing residential character by restoration, the provision of buffering areas and / or landscape enhancements for mitigation.

### 4.1 Residential Areas and Density

Schedule A identifies the different residential neighbourhoods.

- 4) Residential areas permit single-detached dwellings, secondary dwelling units, coach houses, home occupations and accessory uses.
- 5) Residential Multi-Unit areas permit single-detached, semi-detached, duplex and row dwellings as well as apartments. The height, massing, setbacks and parking areas of any development in the area shall be compatible with the adjacent development and will be established in the City's Zoning By-law.
- 6) New development shall incorporate provisions to protect and conserve the existing landscape and natural features of Rockcliffe Park and shall be consistent with policies and guidelines regarding lot creation in the Rockcliffe Park Heritage Conservation District Plan.

### 4.2 Parks and Open Space Areas

Schedule A identifies land as Open Space that is used for public parks, playing fields, gardens, walkways and municipal recreational facilities.

- 7) All Open Space areas shall be kept free of buildings except for structures accessory to a recreational activity on the land. Such buildings shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding residential area both in design and materials.



- 8) As part of development, the City may pursue the acquisition and creation of new parks in addition to the parks identified without amendment to this secondary plan. New parks and improvements to existing parks to focus on providing passive and/or active recreation amenities.

#### 4.3 Conservation Area

Schedule A identifies those areas with special environmental quality, including MacKay Lake, the Pond and physical conditions such as steep slopes, erosion, flood susceptibility, organic soils and subsoils with poor drainage.

- 9) Conservation areas are to be maintained to protect them from adverse environmental impacts and from the continuing impacts of the surrounding development.
- 10) No residential or accessory use buildings shall be permitted in areas designated as Conservation area.
- 11) Public utility installations and minor structures which allow access to and interpretation of Conservation areas are permitted, provided that they are designed and located to enhance the natural environment.
- 12) Placing or removal of fill of any kind, whether originating on the site or elsewhere, is not permitted without the approval of the City and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.
- 13) Public and private recreational activities may be permitted in areas designated Conservation, provided such uses will not adversely affect natural heritage or the physical landscape.
- 14) Where a Conservation area designation applies to part of a lot or block in which the remaining portion is subject to the residential area; the area designated Conservation may be used in the calculation of the permitted residential density for the lot or block. Conservation areas below the high-water level will be excluded from the calculation of permitted residential density.
- 15) The City is committed to protecting and conserving significant natural and recreational amenities within Rockcliffe Park. When considering applications for development in proximity to MacKay Lake and the Pond abutting or =adjacent to these water bodies, the City will:
  - a) Require the naturalization of lands within 10 metres of the shoreline in order to create natural wildlife habitat and to act as a natural filter to storm water runoff. This naturalization may include the planting of natural, indigenous plant species;

- b) Prohibit the cutting of trees or the disturbance of existing natural vegetation within 30 metres of the shoreline;
  - c) Ensure runoff volume and quality to the waterline is maintained; and
  - d) Discourage manicured lawns on private property within 10 metres of the shoreline.
- 16) No development will be permitted on the land that is identified as having unstable slopes, and which is located at the outflow from MacKay Lake to the Ottawa River, without the design being undertaken and certified by a professional engineer and approved by the City and Rideau Valley Conservation Authority.
- 17) The land located north-east of Crescent Road and designated Conservation area forms part of the Rokeries, which functions as a pedestrian path and a nature interpretation area. The area designated Conservation area adjacent to the Sir George-Étienne Cartier Parkway provides a natural edge with intermittent outcroppings of limestone. These edges to the community are sensitive and prone to damage from man-made or natural causes. As part of a complete application, any development proposals on land adjacent to these areas shall submit the required environmental, geotechnical and engineering reports that demonstrate that the necessary measures will be taken to mitigate or avoid any impacts on these Conservation areas.

#### 4.4 Special Use Areas

Lands identified as Special Use areas permit non-residential uses that are compatible with and serve to support the area's residents and the wider community. Special Use areas include schools, institutional uses and the community hall.

- 18) Any future enlargements or changes to public and private school facilities or the community hall will be located and designed in a manner complementary to the residential character of the surrounding area.
- 19) In the event of the redevelopment of any of the sites or buildings on lands identified as Special Use areas, the City may consider the following uses:
- a) Open Space; and
  - b) Conversion of the existing buildings to other public, institutional or cultural uses provided that the architectural character of the buildings and the character of the existing surrounding natural and open space areas are conserved and maintained.

#### 4.5 Water Infrastructure

20) All new development will be connected to the public water and sanitary sewer systems.

#### Schedules

Schedule A - Designations





Rivière Outaouais River



# Rockcliffe Park

SECONDARY PLAN - Volume 2  
Schedule A - Designations

PLAN SECONDAIRE - Volume 2  
Annexe A - Désignations

Secondary Plan Boundary /  
Limite du Plan secondaire

## DESIGNATIONS / DÉSIGNATIONS

- Residential / Utilisation résidentielle
- Residential Multi-unit / Habitations à logements multiples
- Open Space / Espace vert
- Conservation / Conservation
- Special Use / Utilisations spéciales

Consolidation and Amendments /  
Amendement au plan directeur approuvé



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 km

Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department,  
Geospatial Analytics, Technology and Solutions  
Services de la planification, de l'infrastructure et du développement économique,  
Analyse géospatiale, technologie et solutions

