

# Carp River Conservation Area

## **Background Report**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Carp River Conservation Area (CRCA) is a 31.4 ha. site located in suburban Kanata in the City of Ottawa. The conservation area was established in 2018 as a result of a collaborative effort between Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA), the City of Ottawa, and local community partners<sup>1</sup> that began in 2016. The conservation area forms part of a large-scale restoration project that transformed a heavily degraded flood plain into a naturalized wetland and river system. The restored site includes an engineered waterway and stormwater facilities that serve surrounding communities, and provides 4 km of accessible pathways and unique wildlife habitat within an urban setting.

The entirety of the restored lands, including the conservation area, are owned and maintained by the City of Ottawa. In September 2020, the City updated the License of Occupancy that allows MVCA to use the site for conservation and educational purposes including the placing of interpretive signage along recreational pathways to allow the public and schools to learn about the site history, wildlife, and habitat and stormwater and watershed management.

As the surrounding neighbourhoods are developed and partners work to enhance the site for educational purposes, there is a need to prepare a plan to guide development and management of the conservation area. A Master Plan will guide and facilitate site resource management, enhancements and interpretation of the site, and clarify roles and responsibilities.

This Background Report represents the first step in the master planning process, and outlines the history of the site, its current features and functions, and other information that is relevant to planning for its use. The objective of the master planning project is to ease future decision-making, approval processes, and investments as MVCA, the City and community partners collaborate to enhance and manage the conservation area for public use.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The idea for a wetland park was the brain child of John Almstedt, one of the founders of the Ottawa Riverkeeper. In 2016 he worked with Friends of the Carp River, former Kanata mayor and Ottawa city councillor Marianne Wilkinson, and Paul Lehman (former MVCA General Manager) to form a volunteer Steering Committee to oversee its development. Approval for creation of the conservation area was endorsed by the MVCA Board of Directors in May 2018 and the first license of occupancy signed that year.

## 2.0 PROJECT SCOPE

Where MVCA owns or has full management responsibilities over a property, a Master Plan will address all assets and programming at the site. Because the CRCA is under the management of the City, one of the first questions to be addressed will be the scope of the Master Plan. If the Plan was to align strictly with the terms of the License of Occupancy, it would only focus on educational programming and directly-related site enhancements. However, the CRCA is being supported and enhanced through a number of partnerships in addition to the City of Ottawa, including:

- Friends of the Carp River (FOCR), a not-for-profit group engaged in furthering the health of the Carp River Watershed provides support through promotion and collaboration in fundraising and program planning.
- **The Ottawa Stewardship Council** (OSC) promotes and furthers development of education programs tied to the Carp River Restoration Project and Conservation Area.
- The Kanata West Owners Group Inc. (KWOG) is a group of surrounding landowners (developers) who shared in the cost of the restoration and supporting studies. While not linked to the Conservation Area itself, this group funded portions of the Carp River Restoration project to enable reconfiguration of the flood plain, which improved the flow and function of the river while enabling the landowners to undertake development in previously constrained lands.

It is recognized that people visiting the site are largely unaware of these divisions in contributions and responsibilities and want the property to be managed as a cohesive unit for the benefit of those that use it. Therefore, a key step in this project will be to consult with the City and other partners to confirm the scope of matters to be addressed by the Master Plan and their involvement in its development.

#### 3.0 **PROPERTY OVERVIEW**

Shown in **Figure 1**, the Carp River Conservation Area is 31.4 ha and located within the suburban area of Kanata. It is currently bordered by Richardson Side Road to the northwest, Terry Fox Drive to the northeast and the future extension of Campeau Drive to the southeast. The boundaries shown here are those recognized in the City and MVCA License of Occupation Agreement. Consideration may be given to expanding the boundaries of the conservation area to Hwy. 417 in the southeast once pedestrian and related works are completed as part of ongoing land development. Lands south and west of the conservation area include a new residential subdivision and rural farm lands. The Carp River meanders through the center of the Conservation Area, flowing generally from the southeast to the northwest.



Figure 1: Carp River Conservation Area – Location Map (Aerial Image 2019)

#### 4.0 CARP RIVER

The Carp River watershed, as shown in **Figure 2**, is an important ecosystem that is located entirely within the City of Ottawa. The river is 44 km long and drains a relatively flat area of 360 km<sup>2</sup>. From its headwaters in the community of Glen Cairn, the river flows through urban and rural landscapes in Kanata and West

Carleton areas before it outlets to the Ottawa River at Fitzroy Harbour. The river's upper reaches are fed by several tributaries, including Poole, Feedmill and Huntley Creeks, that flow through a mix of urban and rural landscapes.



#### Figure 2: Carp River Watershed

The river and watershed have undergone many changes over time. The river started as a naturally meandering watercourse flowing through forest and wetland. Indigenous peoples, the **Omàmiwinini** Algonquins of Ontario, occupied the region long before being displaced by European colonization, that largely began in the late 1700's - early 1800's. During the 1800s and early 1900s, forest was removed to make way for farmland, and the river was channelized to drain wet areas. For many decades this and the upper sections of the Carp River were managed as Municipal Drain, with ongoing dredging to clear the straightened channel. In the 1960s, the southern reaches of the watershed started to undergo development; and urban expansion has continued ever since. In 2018, 4 km of the river was restored to a natural state in accordance with the Carp River Restoration Plan.

Evolution of the area surrounding the Carp River Conservation Area can be seen in **Figure 3**. In these aerial images, the area transitions from an agricultural landscape as seen in 1976, where Highway 417 has not yet been constructed, to the beginning of suburban development north of the site in 1999 along what would become Terry Fox Drive. Subsequently, development begins expanded to the south of Highway 417 with the first development along Campeau Drive, west of Terry Fox Drive. In 2008, the site preparation

works have begun for the residential subdivision west of the Conservation Area. The implementation of the Carp River Restoration can be seen in 2017 where the Carp River, previously a straight channel surrounded by agricultural and fallow land, now has naturalized meanders and habitat ponds along the eastern banks.



#### *Figure 3: Historical Aerial Images of the Area Surrounding the Carp River Conservation Area*



1976

1999



2008





## 5.0 THE CARP RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

The Carp River Restoration is the result of a long-standing partnership between the MVCA and the City of Ottawa. Recognizing the degraded condition of the river and in response to urban growth within the upper reaches of the watershed, the City and the MVCA partnered in preparing a Carp River Watershed

Subwatershed Study. The Study, which received Council approval in 2004, provides environmental direction for land use decisions in the Carp River Watershed. A key recommendation of the Study was to undertake restoration and enhancement of the Carp River, Poole Creek and Feedmill Creek.

As a part of the Kanata West Class Environmental Assessment, a restoration plan for the Carp River was approved. The historic straightening of the river channel to accommodate agriculture and development created a much degraded, slow-moving, sediment filled river with a broad flood plain. The restoration plan was designed to enhance the river with a narrower low flow meandering channel that improves sediment transport. The design included enhanced vegetation along the river banks, and the addition of habitat features, such as fish habitat pools and wetlands. The study was vetted through a Schedule B Municipal Class Environmental Assessment in order to develop, evaluate and recommend preferred alternatives for the restoration.

The full restoration of the Carp River includes a reach of approximately 4 km extending north from Hazeldean Road to Richardson Side Road. The restoration is located within the lands designated by the City as the *Kanata West Concept Plan*<sup>2</sup> area. Shown in **Figure 4**, the Carp River Conservation Area occupies the downstream end of the restoration project, which was largely completed in 2018. The features created within the Conservation Area, including the habitat pond located at the northwest end and wet meadows in the east, are all connected to the realigned river channel. Riparian plantings and riffles were also included in the new meandering channel. An existing stormwater management facility, located in the north central part of the site, was retrofitted during the restoration project but is not part of the conservation area. Following the restoration work, a recreational trail was constructed to connect the restoration area to the surrounding communities. Portions of the recreational trail are still under construction in 2021.

## 6.0 CARP RIVER CONSERVATION AREA - SITE FEATURES AND AMENITIES

The site includes the natural features that were part of the full restoration design, a pre-existing stormwater feature and some initial recreational amenities that may be expanded over time.

## 6.1 River Restoration Features

The reconfiguration of the river channel and floodplain included the following design elements:

**Realigned Channel:** a meandering channel helps to prevent shoreline erosion by slowing the water's flow rate. Recreating a narrowed meandering channel has allowed the river to achieve a more natural stable condition by increasing the distance that water travels and lowering the channel slope. This reduces the water's velocity and tendency to erode the river banks and bed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In 2002, the City of Ottawa expanded the urban area to include the lands known as Kanata West and in 2003 approved the general land use and development principles of the Kanata West Concept Plan (KWCP). The Plan provides for a population of approximately 17,000 persons in 6,300 households, and for 24,000 jobs and approximately 1 million square metres of commercial space. <u>http://webcast.ottawa.ca/plan/All\_Image\_Referencing\_OP\_Amendment\_Application\_Image\_Reference\_Kanata\_West\_Implementation\_Plan (Section 2-2-1-1\_Floodplain\_Policies)\_D01-01-11-0006.PDF\_</u>

**Riparian Zone:** extending from waters' edge to top of bank, provides a buffer to protect the quality of stream water from adjacent runoff, and to reduce river bank erosion. A vegetated riparian zone is essential to the health of aquatic life and the river. This area has been seeded with a mix of native grasses and wild flowers.



#### Figure 4: Carp River Restoration with the Carp River Conservation Area

**Habitat Pond:** located near the intersection of Richardson Side Road and Terry Fox Drive, one of several features designed to convey and store water, mitigating flooding and erosion, and improving the natural function of the river. It also creates a more varied aquatic habitat. It has both shallow and deep cells that are permanently connected to the new river channel in a way that promotes both summertime and wintertime circulation in the pond and provides overwintering habitat for resident fish.

**Wet Meadows:** a type of wetland with soils that are saturated for at least part of the year. Here, the ground fluctuates between brief periods of inundation and longer periods of saturation. The water in a wet meadow is too shallow for fish, so it provides safe breeding sites for frogs and salamanders. They are also designed to increase water storage capacity in the corridor during major storm events. The wet meadows have been seeded with a wide variety of wetland plant species to attract a variety of birds, mammals and insects and to improve water quality by filtering sediments and removing nutrients, such as phosphorus.

## 6.2 Stormwater Management Ponds

The upper portion of the Carp River flows through the suburban communities of Kanata and Stittsville which generate urban water runoff from businesses, residences and streets. Stormwater management ponds are engineered structures that have been designed to receive this runoff for temporary storage before releasing it at a controlled rate back to a natural watercourse. These ponds offer numerous benefits: they allow heavier contaminants to settle out of the runoff before the water is released; they protect land downstream from erosion and flooding; they enhance water quality through UV radiation from the sun; and, because they are designed to be surrounded by natural vegetation, they provide habitat for wildlife.

## 6.3 Songbirds, Shorebirds & Waterfowl

The Carp River CA provides a natural sanctuary in a largely urban/suburban landscape and offers varied habitats for a range of bird species. The restoration was specifically designed to provide habitat for a variety of aquatic birds, a number of which have been spotted at the site since the restoration work took place.

Shorebirds, such as herons, egrets, bitterns, plovers and sandpipers make use of the site. Waterfowl, such as ducks, geese, cormorants, loons and swans are typically found swimming and diving in deeper water. Many shorebirds and waterfowl will also use this area as a stop-over during migrations.

The site is becoming an attractive destination for birders and wildlife photographers and has been identified as a "Hotspot" on eBird – an online platform developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology that enables people to report and share bird sightings. An osprey tower, bat boxes and duck/bird boxes are currently being planned for the site and are proposed to be located at strategic locations on the property.

## 6.4 Fish & Turtles

The restoration also incorporated elements designed to create suitable fish habitat. This included adding fish friendly riffles and pools to the re-channelized river, creating the habitat pond, planting a variety of trees, shrubs and riparian plants to shade and cool the water and providing fish spawning and nursery areas. It is anticipated that fish and other aquatic organisms from Poole Creek, Feedmill Creek and the rural part of the river downstream of Richardson Side Road will repopulate the new channel and habitat pond.

Early monitoring of fish species within tributaries to this reach of the Carp River (including Poole Creek and Feedmill Creek) and the section of the Carp River south of Highway 417 indicate that the fish are successfully using and navigating the restored habitat. Of note, northern pike was not found in the area before or during the restoration, however in 2019 after the restoration, young northern pike have been observed in the outlets of both Poole and Feedmill Creek. Additionally, in 2018, an American eel (listed as an endangered Species at Risk in Ontario) was recorded near the outlet of Poole Creek.

Turtles are making use of the property with both snapping turtles and painted turtles observed on site.

Adult and hatchling snapping turtles have been observed at several locations, and painted turtles can also be seen making use of the most easterly wet meadow where they bask on woody debris (logs and tree stumps) located in the open water area. There is potential to provide for enhanced turtle habitat throughout parts of the property. Blandings Turtle habitat lies within the vicinity of the property.

## 6.5 Access Points, Pathways & Signage

The Carp River Conservation Area has a paved four-kilometer "River Walk" path that will eventually encircle the site (once construction work at the south end of the site is complete). On the northeast side, the path can be accessed from Terry Fox Drive at three locations: Kanata Avenue, between Kanata Avenue and Tillsonburg Street, and at Richardson Side Road. On the south side, the path can be accessed from Campeau Drive. There is a footbridge crossing the river where the path loops to the south close to the Kanata Drive access. A second footbridge has been constructed south of Campeau Drive near Highway 417 but the path system in the south west is not complete.

The Arcadia residential development that is currently under construction to the immediate southwest of the Carp River CA, will include the development of a city owned park and stormwater management facility. The park and stormwater management facility will directly border the Conservation Area, and could provide an additional access to the site.

The site currently has two trailhead signs that orient visitors to the site: one located at Terry Fox Drive and Kanata Drive and the other at Terry Fox Drive and Richardson Side Road. In 2021, eight interpretive signs were installed at strategic locations along the pathway. They highlight aspects of the site's flora, fauna, physical features, and services to the community. The locations of the signs are shown on **Figure 5**. As the site is built- out, new trailhead signage will be needed at key access points that are opened up by Campeau Drive and at the Arcadia subdivision City park site. Additional interpretive signage will also be needed along the pathway south of Campeau Drive and at other locations throughout the property.

## 7.0 OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES and CONSIDERATIONS

The site has the potential for a variety of uses. The most obvious are the traditional recreational activities associated with trail use, wildlife viewing, and general enjoyment of the outdoors. The site could also be used as a monitoring and research centre for learning about wetland and river restoration function and design. It is also a place where people can learn about water resources and ecosystems through self-guided learning or through more formalized educational programs.

There are a number of site limitations, management challenges and logistical constraints that will have to be considered in the development of the Carp River CA Master Plan. Some relate to the geography of the site itself, some reflect its infancy as a naturalized area, and some pertain to questions about how the site is to be promoted and used. The following sections summarize opportunities and challenges identified to date.

#### Figure 5: Signage at the Carp River CA



#### 7.1 Monitoring & Research Centre

As one of the largest wetland and river restoration projects to have taken place in the City, the site could be used as a centre for long-term monitoring and research to measure and learn about the hydrologic and ecosystem conditions in a restored environment. There is opportunity for research and monitoring partnerships with the academic community (universities and colleges) to provide learning for the environmental sector.

Monitoring (pre and post restoration work) was a key component of the required approvals for the restoration project. The site could be used to facilitate ongoing monitoring and research of flow/erosion dynamics, the long-term efficiency of the hydrologic design, and the condition of the ecosystem (habitat quality, species survival and reproduction, species response in an urban landscape, etc.).

## 7.2 Educational Opportunities

The combination of natural and restored features and storm water elements at the site offers an ideal venue to deliver educational programming that highlights MVCA's watershed management objectives such as flood mitigation, managing the impacts of climate change and urban development, and the protection of water quality.

In 2017, several community members involved in promoting the conservation area formed a committee to provide leadership in developing a "living classroom" at the site in partnership with MVCA. The "Carp River Living Classroom" (CRLC) Committee envisions an urban wetland education and discovery experience for schools, residents, visitors, and researchers where people enjoy learning about watershed science, green

infrastructure, and living in unison with nature in a high intensity development area. The Committee is developing a "Carp River Living Classroom Program" aimed at creating and promoting a variety of tools to enable school groups to use the site for outdoor education; and has established a Fundraising Committee and a Schools Engagement Advisory Committee<sup>3</sup> to support and assist in their development.

As noted in **Figure 5**, a series of informational signs were planned for the site and have been installed as development and funds permit. As well, the FOCR have set up a Carp River Conservation Area project in *iNaturalist*<sup>4</sup> to promote citizen science at the site. And, MVCA in partnership with the CRLC Committee and Mississippi Valley Conservation Foundation has developed "EcoTrekr" a downloadable mobile app that uses GPS reference points to guide on-site visitors with smart-phones, through games, quizzes and informational prompts.

## 7.3 Flood Plain

The Carp River Conservation Area is within the flood plain of the Carp River. The 1:100-year flood line extends to the outer boundaries of the property, meaning that during extreme flood events the entire site would be under water. Each year, during the spring freshet, the river will overtop the channel bank, inundating a large area and making pathways and parts of the park completely inaccessible. The impacts of seasonal and periodic inaccessibility during flood events must be taken into consideration in planning and designing conservation area programming and facility amenities. Development within the flood plain will require approvals under MVCA policies and Regulations.

Provincial planning policy restricts development in flood plain areas. The *Provincial Policy Statement* (PPS, 2020) requires that, "development shall be directed away from areas of natural or human-made hazards where there is an unacceptable risk to public health or safety or of property damage, and not create new or aggravate existing hazards". Passive recreational uses may be permitted along with low-impact amenities, such as trails and park benches. Any permitted uses would have to be designed so that they are not vulnerable to damage during a flood event (e.g. park benches anchored to the ground). Details about such planning considerations and restrictions are presented later under the section Planning Context.

## 7.4 Invasive Species

As part of the restoration design, the site has been seeded and planted with a wide variety of carefully chosen native grasses, sedges, wildflowers, shrubs and trees. Native species are organisms that have lived in an ecosystem long enough to have established a beneficial role in the local web of life and are dependent on each other for survival. Unfortunately, numerous invasive species<sup>5</sup> are already present and are rapidly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Schools Engagement Advisory Committee, that draws on the expertise of representatives from the local education community, is working on developing a Carp River CA Schools Engagement Strategy. <sup>4</sup> https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/carp-river-conservation-area

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> An invasive species is an introduced organism that becomes overpopulated and negatively alters its new environment. Although their spread can have beneficial aspects, invasive species tend to spread aggressively, choking out the desired native species, and causing problems for the local plants and wildlife.

taking hold throughout the site. Terrestrial invasive species, such as Wild Parsnip, Purple Loosestrife, Burdock, and many more, appear to be proliferating mostly in the higher-ground drier areas. In addition to pushing out native plants, Wild Parsnip poses a public health risk and requires the posting of notices and in some cases active control measures.

The lower areas that remain damp in the wet meadow and around the habitat pond, appear to have more native vegetation with fewer invasive species, however aquatic invasive species including non-native Phragmites, Flowering Rush and Purple Loosestrife are present in many of the wetter parts of the site. Both of these species are of particular concern as they spread very rapidly and are difficult to remove once established. Non-native Phragmites and Flowering Rush will not only out-compete the native species, but will also rapidly fill and choke watercourse channels; slowing flow and counteracting the desired hydrologic benefits of the restoration design.

The presence and proliferation of invasive species will be a major challenge in preserving the biological and hydrologic integrity of this site. While there are no easy solutions, planning considerations will need to be assessed in ways to combat the problem to the greatest extent possible.

## 7.5 Lack of Shade Trees, Rest Spots and Shelter

An overall lack of shade and shelter has also been identified as an issue within the site. The vegetation along the pathways currently offer very little protection from the sun. With the restoration in its infancy, it will take time for planted trees to grow large enough to provide shade. It is also noted that few trees have yet been planted close to the pathway itself. There may be opportunity to provide for more shade trees, while still providing site viewing opportunities, by planting clumps of fast-growing trees at staggered and strategic locations.

There may be opportunity to also add trees along Terry Fox Drive in order to provide acoustic buffering from the busy roadway. The location of hydro lines, sanitary lines, and city roadway maintenance requirements are key considerations that may limit the location and extent of roadway buffer plantings.

The site also currently has no facilities that provide rest spots along the pathways. This could be easily addressed through the addition of some permanent benches at appropriate locations. Benches would have to be anchored to the ground to protect against vandalism and flooding. In the event that outdoor education programming for school groups is identified as a recommendation of the Master Plan, other amenities to provide gathering areas, sit-down areas and shelter for larger groups may need to be considered. Other amenities for potential consideration include a gazebo near the habitat pond and viewing platforms at strategic locations along the pathway.

## 7.6 Lack of Parking and Public Facilities

The Carp River CA currently has no formal parking area directly tied to the site. The property can be easily accessed by foot or by bicycle from the surrounding communities, but visitors who are driving to the site must find parking at nearby off-site locations. The need for parking is largely dependent on how the site is

proposed to be used and promoted. The provision of drop-off locations and parking for school buses and/or larger groups will be a key requirement for school groups to use the site for outdoor education programming.<sup>6</sup>

There are also currently no public washroom facilities on or near the site. Again, the need for such facilities is dependent on the uses that are to be promoted. Public washrooms would be essential for school groups to make use of the site. The flood plain may be a limiting factor in the addition of public washroom facilities. Seasonal porta-potties at River Chase Park site and at key locations on the CRCA site could support public and student use.

## 8.0 Planning Context

The Carp River Conservation Area is located immediately adjacent to the urban boundary for the City of Ottawa. Lands north and west of the Conservation Area are rural in nature and used for agricultural practices. East of Terry Fox Drive is the existing community of Kanata North, which was developed in the late 2000s. To the south is future proposed mixed-use development along the extension of Campeau Drive. And, to the southwest is residential development within the Kanata West Concept Plan.

## 8.1 Greenspace Master Plan & Parks Planning

The 2006 *Greenspace Master Plan*<sup>7</sup> categorizes greenspace according to its purpose:

- Provision of recreation and leisure opportunities for the use and benefit of the public; or
- Preservation of the natural environment and environmental systems.

Recreational and leisure lands are managed in accordance with the City's *Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* by the City's public works and recreation & parks departments. And, natural areas are managed in accordance with policies set out in the *Greenspace Master Plan* including the following:

- Prepar(e) management plans and policies for City-owned natural lands. These will focus on the protection of environmental features and functions while accommodating public access and leisure uses where appropriate. Plans and policies for natural lands will:
  - Identify measures to preserve, enhance and manage natural lands in a manner consistent with the purpose for which the land is acquired
  - Inventory and update the City's information on the environmental assets of the land and identify potential issues and opportunities, both on and off-site, for the ongoing management of the land
  - Incorporate opportunities for public access and recreation
  - Identify the bodies responsible for the implementation of the management plans and the ongoing cost of doing so incorporate opportunities for community participation in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> River Chase Park west of the CRCA was identified as a potential location for parking buses, however, the parking lot on Winterset Road is too small. However, it may be suitable for drop-off and pick-up of school groups.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> <u>https://ottawa.ca/en/planning-development-and-construction/official-plan-and-master-plans/greenspace-master-plan</u>

preparation of the management plan and identify opportunities for community partnerships in the ongoing implementation of the plan

• The City will prepare a management plan for any newly acquired natural land where the size or management requirements warrant. Where the land does not warrant an individual plan, the City will incorporate the land within an existing management plan or common management process that addresses a number of sites with common characteristics.

Given the size of the property, its shared management and use with MVCA, and the interest of community groups in enhancing the property, it may be appropriate to have the proposed Master Plan also serve as the management plan described above.

Map 1<sup>8</sup> of the *Greenspace Master Plan* identifies a narrow strip on either side of the Carp River in its "prerestoration" state as a "Primary natural land". Map 3<sup>9</sup> of the Plan shows a strip of land immediately to the east of the river as "Connecting open space/leisure land." These, of course, do not reflect what was subsequently approved and constructed at the site. One objective of the Master Plan may be to have these classifications revised during update of the *Greenspace Master Plan*, and in related planning documents.

The only "park" in the vicinity of the CRCA is the new River Chase Park to be developed to the southwest in the Arcadia subdivision. The City's *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* identifies the River Chase site as a Neighbourhood Park which are to:

- serve as the focal point of a neighbourhood;
- provide active and passive recreation opportunities, and
- offer a local gathering space within walking distance of local residents.

Neighbourhood parks range from 1.2 to 3.2 hectares in size and typically do not house washroom facilities or the size of parking lot required for school buses.

## 8.2 Official Plan

The property is divided between the Urban and Rural areas of the City as delineated by the 2003 City of Ottawa *Official Plan,* as amended. The 2003 Plan designates the restoration site a combination of "General Urban" and "Mixed Use Centre"<sup>10</sup>, "Agricultural Resource"<sup>11</sup>, "Carp River Restoration Policy Area" on both Schedules A and B, and as a "Flood Plain" on the Natural Systems<sup>12</sup> and Environmental Constraints<sup>13</sup> schedules. The City's new 2021 Official Plan<sup>14</sup> is currently undergoing provincial review. **Figure 6** shows proposed designations, which do not provide the level of granularity needed to capture current use.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Map 1 - <u>https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/map1\_gmp\_en.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Map 3 - <u>https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/map3\_gmp\_en.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Schedule B - <u>https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/scheduleb\_officialplan\_en.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Schedule A - <u>https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/schedulea\_officialplan\_en.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Schedule L3 - <u>https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/schedulel3</u> nhswest en.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Schedule K - <u>https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/documents/files/schedulek\_officialplan\_en.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> 2021 Official Plan - <u>https://engage.ottawa.ca/the-new-official-plan</u>



#### Figure 6: 2021 City of Ottawa Official Plan Designations (Schedule B5)

## 8.3 Zoning By-law

In the City of Ottawa Zoning By-law<sup>15</sup>, the subject lands are zoned Agricultural Zone (AG), Parks and Open Space Zone (O1), Development Reserve Zone (DR), and has Flood Plain Overlay (Section 58). The portions of the property zoned DR and O1 permit both an environmental preserve and educational area as well as a park, whereas the portions zoned AG permit only an environmental preserve and educational area.

As per the definitions of the zoning by-law an environmental preserve and educational area means a natural area used for environmental research, observation and education that does not include a building, but may include weather protection shelters, boardwalks, observation platforms, pedestrian bridges, educational displays as well as other similar outdoor structures provided for incidental or complementary leisure activities, such as hiking and bird watching. Whereas a park includes a playground, sports field, botanical garden, outdoor public swimming pool or parkway, and may also include accessory buildings or structures, such as a maintenance building, washroom or canteen.

The flood plain overlay takes precedence over the provision of the underlying zone and applies to lands in order to restrict development in a flood plain to minimize the threat of injury or loss of life; or where flooding may cause unacceptable risk of property damage. Development is prohibited within any area subject to a flood plain overlay, with the exception for an accessory building or structure to a use permitted in the underlying zone which does not exceed a gross floor area of 50 square metres and a height of one storey.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> <u>https://ottawa.ca/en/planning-development-and-construction/maps-and-zoning-0/zoning-law-no-2008-</u> 250/zoning-law-2008-250-consolidation

#### 9.0 Next Steps

The following are key next steps in the planning process:

- 1. **Table the Draft Background Report** with MVCA's Policies & Priorities Committee and Board of Directors for information (by the end of March 2022.)
- 2. **Confirm scope of the Master Plan.** The City will need to decide whether it wants this plan to also serve as its management plan per Ottawa's *Greenspace Master Plan*.
- 3. **Circulate and Finalize a Community Consultation Plan.** The City will need to determine how involved it will be in the consultations.
- **4. Circulate and finalize the Background Report.** An earlier version was previously circulated to both the City and members of the CRLC Committee. This version reflects comments received from the Committee, but no comments have been received from the City. The amount of changes required will likely be tied to the agreed upon scope of the Master Plan.
- 5. Finalize and implement the Consultation Plan.
- **6. Receive and review comments.** This may take several weeks depending upon the scope of the Plan and the need to involve several groups at the City of Ottawa.
- 7. **Draft Master Plan and submit** to MVCA's Policies & Priorities Committee and Board of Directors for approval to release.
- 8. Circulate/publish Draft Plan for comment.
- 9. Finalize Plan and submit to MVCA's Board of Directors for approval.