



Sainte-Anne-  
de-Bellevue Canal  
National Historic Site

# CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

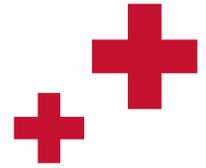


PREPARED BY



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# 1. CONTEXT

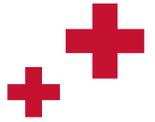
## 1.1. SAINTE-ANNE-DE-BELLEVUE CANAL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Located at the western extremity of the Island of Montreal, the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal is the gateway to navigation toward the Ottawa River. Long before the canal was built, the Ottawa River was first used by Indigenous Peoples for their intertribal trade, and then served as a fur trade route. Established in 1843 for commercial activities, the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal was used to transport timber and various types of merchandise before becoming a recreational boating canal in the 1970s.

Today, in addition to its nearly 500-metre-long waterway, the Canal benefits from the great recreational and tourism dynamic of the adjacent Sainte-Anne Historic Village. Visitors take advantage of the area around the Canal, Lake Saint-Louis and the Lake of Two Mountains for relaxing, walking, picnicking, and watching boats go through the lock. In 2019, over 125,000 people visited the site and more than 5,500 boats passed through the lock, making it the busiest of the canals managed by Parks Canada.

Map 1. Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site





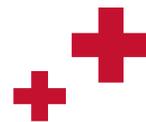
The Management Plan is a strategic document that establishes long-term priorities for the management and operation of this historic site and suggests a vision, strategies, and key objectives for the next 10 years. Several objectives of the last Management Plan, published in 2005, were achieved through major investments in the infrastructure of the site that are scheduled to be pursued until 2021. In this context, the development of a new plan tailored to the challenges, opportunities and expectations of current visitors will enable the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site to position itself in terms of the issues and opportunities that the site offers today. Therefore, the new Management Plan aspires to achieve the site's full potential, by reflecting its role in history, in the local community and for visitors, as well as in the network of navigable waterways in Quebec.

To ensure that the new plan reflects the aspirations of Canadians, visitors, local partners and neighbouring communities, the Draft Management Plan was released to the public and the population was invited to comment on its contents.

## **1.2. MANDATE OF HILL+KNOWLTON STRATEGIES**

Hill+Knowlton Strategies was mandated by Parks Canada to elaborate and implement a public consultation process focused on the Draft Management Plan of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site.

As part of this mandate, Hill+Knowlton Strategies developed consultation tools, facilitated an Open House activity, analyzed the data, and drafted this report that presents the results of the consultation activities.



## 2. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Draft Management Plan first benefitted from a vision activity conducted in October 2018 with various local stakeholders. The activity made it possible to guide the development of the new plan and define a consensual vision of what the Canal should be in 2030. Then, Parks Canada announced that consultations on its Draft Management Plan for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal would take place in February 2020 and invited the public to participate.

The tools developed for collecting comments and the consultation activities implemented as part of the public consultation were designed to maximize the participation of the residents of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue and the neighbouring towns, visitors, partners and community organizations in order to collect comments on the proposals contained in the Draft Management Plan.

### 2.1. CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

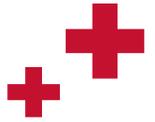
Two ways to participate in the consultation on the Draft Management Plan were proposed:

#### **Online consultation**

A website presenting the consultation process, [consultationcanal.ca](http://consultationcanal.ca), was created to facilitate citizen participation. A backgrounder on the Draft Plan as well as information on the consultation activities were made available on the site. From February 12 to March 2, 2020, website visitors could also complete the questionnaire used during the Open House activity (see below) to identify their priorities among the elements suggested in the Plan.

#### **Open House Activity**

An Open House activity, intended for the general public, took place on February 26, 2020, between 3 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Some 40 representatives of various interest groups, citizens and other stakeholders took part in this activity. Upon their arrival, participants were asked to examine the information panels on the Draft Management Plan and to share their views with Parks Canada representatives. The Draft Management Plan was presented and followed by a brief question period. The participants were able to ask questions and get answers directly from Parks Canada representatives, in addition to sharing their comments on the strategies and proposals of the Draft Management Plan. Finally, the participants were asked to complete the questionnaire designed to identify priorities among the proposed elements.



## 2.2. PROMOTION OF ACTIVITIES

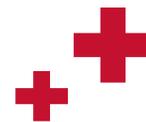
Information on the consultation activities was communicated through various means. First, a press release announcing the consultation was published and sent to local media on February 12, 2020. Email invitations were sent to partners and key local stakeholders. Information on the consultation was posted online and shared on Parks Canada's social media (Facebook and Twitter) and on the websites of several Parks Canada partners, such as the City of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. Additional posts were made on social media to broaden the scope of the messages. Parks Canada also took specific steps to reach out to recreational boaters, citizens and other stakeholders who use the site, such as promoting the information through the social media accounts of boating partners and mailing of a newsletter directly to its 749 subscribers. Finally, posters announcing the consultation and inviting the public to participate by consulting the website were distributed to partners and displayed in various public places in towns neighbouring the Canal (e.g., city hall, public library, tourism sites).

## 2.3. COLLECTION OF OPINIONS AND COMMENTS

A questionnaire was developed to collect participants' opinions on the Draft Management Plan. This questionnaire was used during the Open House activity and online at [consultationcanal.ca](https://consultationcanal.ca). This consultation was also available on the "Consulting with Canadians" website of the government of Canada. It focused on the level of appreciation of the vision and objectives contained in the Draft Management Plan and included a section reserved for comments. About 30% of the participants who filled out a questionnaire made additional comments in the section provided for that purpose.

The Parks Canada representatives also took notes of comments made during the Open House activity through their discussions with participants.

Out of a total of 742 fully or partially completed questionnaires, the rate of completion was about 80%. This means that 600 questionnaires were completed in full, while others were only partially completed. The results presented in the following section of the report are calculated based on the total number of answers received for each question, and not on the total number of questionnaires.



### 3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This section presents analysis of the consultation results using the data from questionnaires and Open House feedback. First, a profile of questionnaire respondents is presented. This profile is followed by the analysis of the quantitative data from the questionnaire. Finally, the analysis of the qualitative data from the comments section of the questionnaire and the Open House activity is presented.

#### 3.1. PROFILE OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

##### Place of residence

The respondents' place of residence was analyzed using the first three alphanumeric characters of the postal codes indicated on the questionnaires.<sup>1</sup> These were grouped according to the following categories:

- Residents living in towns neighbouring the Canal, including those on the Island of Montreal (Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Senneville, Baie-d'Urfé), those in the vicinity of the site on the South Shore, located on L'Île-Perrot (L'Île-Perrot, Pincourt, Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot), as well as those located on the opposite shore of the Lake of Two Mountains (Vaudreuil-Dorion, Vaudreuil-sur-le-Lac, L'Île-Cadieux).
- People living elsewhere on the West Island of Montreal (Beaconsfield, Kirkland, L'Île-Bizard–Sainte-Geneviève, Pierrefonds-Roxboro, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Pointe-Claire, Dorval, L'Île-Dorval).
- People living elsewhere in Montreal or Laval.
- Other South Shore residents.<sup>2</sup>
- Residents of the North Shore,<sup>3</sup> and
- People living elsewhere in Quebec and Canada (including six persons from outside Quebec, the majority of whom live in Ontario in the vicinity of the Ottawa River).

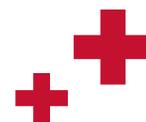
Roughly 25% of respondents live in a municipality neighbouring the Canal, within a 6 km radius.

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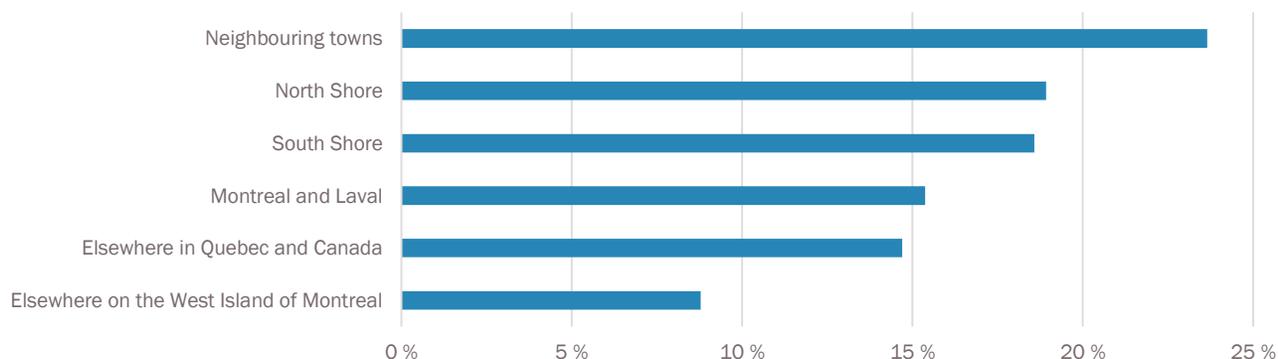
<sup>1</sup> It was noted that 20% of the questionnaire respondents did not provide a postal code.

<sup>2</sup> Municipalities on the South Shore (excluding L'Île-Perrot, Pincourt, Notre-Dame-de-l'Île-Perrot, Vaudreuil-Dorion, Vaudreuil-sur-le-Lac, L'Île-Cadieux), as defined by the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM): Beauharnois, Beloeil, Calixa-Lavallée, Candiac, Carignan, Chambly, Châteauguay, Contrecoeur, Delson, Hudson, La Prairie, Léry, Les Cèdres, McMasterville, Mercier, Mont-Saint-Hilaire, Otterburn Park, Pointe-des-Cascades, Richelieu, Saint-Amable, Saint-Basile-le-Grand, Saint-Constant, Sainte-Catherine, Sainte-Julie, Saint-Isidore, Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Saint-Lazare, Saint-Mathias-sur-Richelieu, Saint-Mathieu, Saint-Mathieu-de-Beloeil, Saint-Philippe, Terrasse-Vaudreuil, Varennes, Verchères.

<sup>3</sup> Municipalities on the North Shore, as defined by the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM): Blainville, Boisbriand, Bois-des-Filion, Charlemagne, Deux-Montagnes, L'Assomption, Lorraine, Mascouche, Mirabel, Oka, Pointe-Calumet, Repentigny, Rosemère, Sainte-Anne-des-Plaines, Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, Sainte-Thérèse, Saint-Eustache, Saint-Joseph-du-Lac, Saint-Sulpice, Terrebonne.



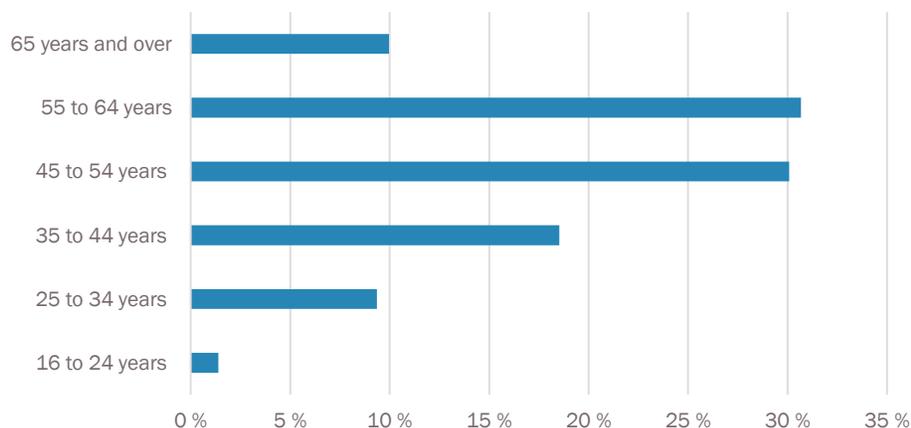
**Chart 1. Place of Residence of Participants who provided their Postal Code**



### Age groups

People from all age categories completed the questionnaire. Most respondents (61%) are between the ages of 45 and 64.

**Chart 2. Participants' Age Groups**



### Main reasons for visiting the site

Among the many answers given to the question on the main motivation for visiting the site, the most frequent answer was "boating" (59%) followed by "walking and relaxation" (31%). Therefore, most respondents are boaters.

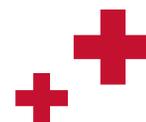
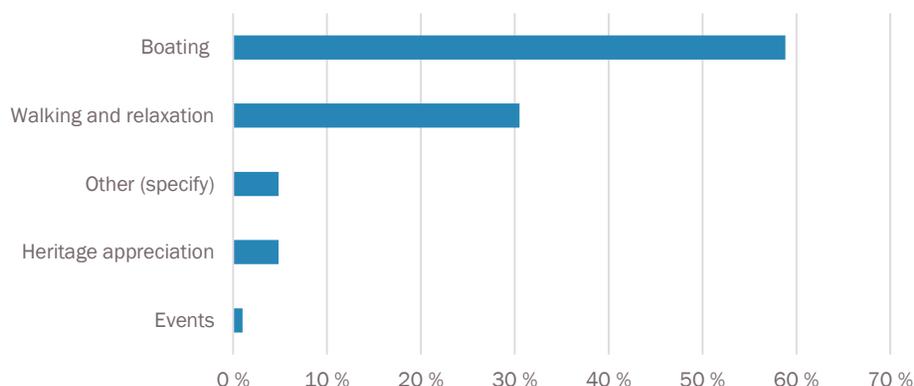


Chart 3. Main Reasons for Visiting the Site



The analysis shows the connections between the reasons for visiting the site and respondents' age groups. For example, 70% of the people who visit the site for boating are aged between 45 and 64 years old, while 56% of the people who visit it for walking and relaxation purposes are 65 years old and over.

Trends were also noted regarding the main reason for visiting the site by place of residence. Respondents living in neighbouring towns and elsewhere on the West Island of Montreal use the site mainly for walking and relaxation purposes (55% and 52%, respectively) rather than for boating (29% and 23%, respectively). Among these neighbouring respondents, a significant number visit the site for its heritage (17% of respondents who live on the West Island).

Moreover, 11% of respondents living in a municipality neighbouring the site indicated that they visit the site for other reasons than the options presented in the questionnaire, mainly for all the reasons listed rather than for one specifically.

On the contrary, respondents who live on the North Shore and on the South Shore visit the site mainly for boating (86% and 75%, respectively), compared to respondents living in Montreal or Laval.

Thus, two main profiles of questionnaire respondents emerge: people living near the site who visit it mainly for walking, relaxation and heritage appreciation purposes, and people living in the Greater Montreal Area who visit the site mainly for boating.

### 3.2. LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSED VISION

86% of respondents "agree" or "completely agree" with the proposed vision for the future Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal, described as follows in the [Backgrounder](#) :

*"Through the enhancement of the site and the development of recreational and tourism activities in partnership with the community, the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal will offer a renewed visit that will showcase a site that is emblematic of its history and landscapes."*

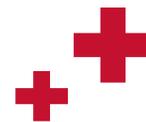
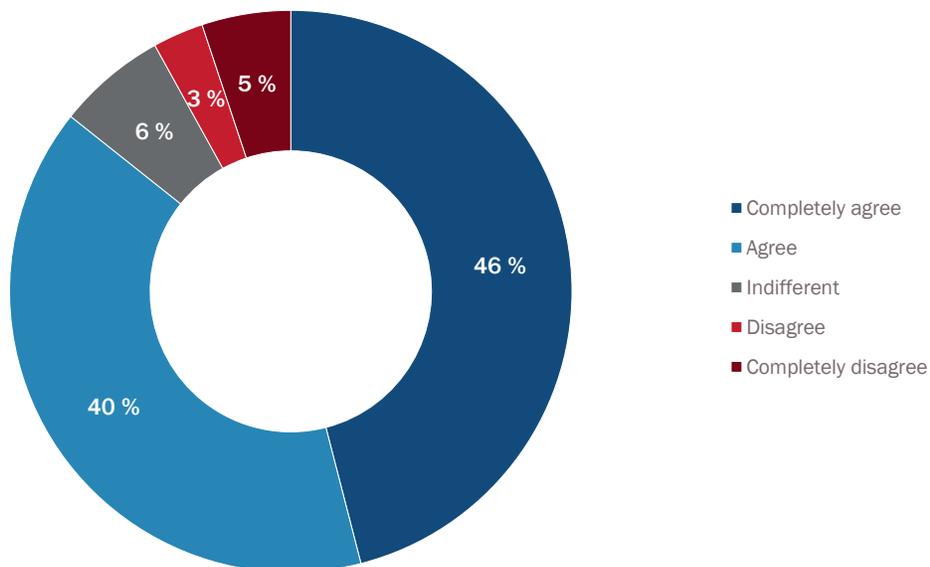


Chart 4. Support for the Proposed Vision for the Canal



No significant difference was noted for the appreciation of the vision according to age groups, reasons for visiting the site or place of residence.

### 3.3. LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE ATTRIBUTED TO THE PROPOSALS OF THE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The participants indicated the level of importance they attribute to 10 proposals related to the stated objectives for the site, on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being “very important” and 1 being “not important”). In the following chart, the proposals with a level of importance of 4 (“important”) and 5 (“very important”) for respondents are presented according to the response rate.

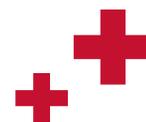
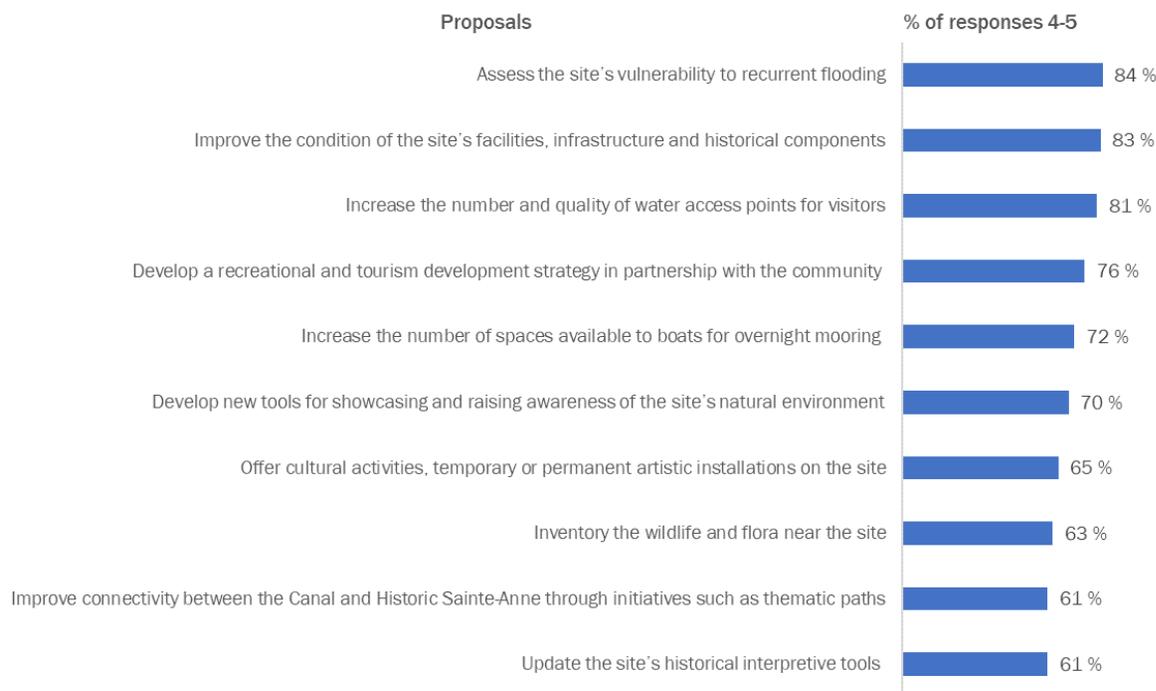


Chart 5. Proposals by Order of Importance



Based on the results, all the proposals put forward for the Management Plan in the questionnaire were favourably received by the respondents. However, the proposals that the respondents deemed to be the most important are those designed to adapt the site to the risks associated with recurrent flooding, to improve the condition of the engineering works and the historical elements of the Canal, as well as to increase the number and quality of water access points. The first two proposals were strongly supported by all participants, regardless of their place of residence and reasons for visiting the site.

However, there are significant differences in the level of importance attributed to the proposal regarding water access and the other proposals related to boating, such as increasing the number of overnight mooring spaces, depending on the reason for visiting the site and respondents' place of residence. These two proposals are extremely important for people who visit the site for boating. However, people who live near the site and who use the site mainly for walking and relaxation deem them to be of much lesser importance. The following charts, in terms of the two proposals related to boating, present this differentiation, according to the place of residence and reason for visiting the site.



**Table 1. Proposals Related to Boating – Level of Importance by Place of Residence**

	Level of Importance (4-5) by Identified Place of Residence	
	Increase the number of spaces available to boats for overnight mooring	Increase the number and quality of water access for visitors
Neighbouring towns	55%	72%
Elsewhere on the West Island of Montreal	41%	71%
Montreal and Laval	67%	81%
North Shore	91%	86%
Other South Shore	76%	88%

**Table 2. Proposals Related to Boating – Level of Importance by Reason for Visiting**

	Level of Importance (4-5) by Reason for Visiting	
	Increase the number of spaces available to boats for overnight mooring	Increase the number and quality of water access points for visitors
Boating	93%	88%
Walking and relaxation	41%	72%

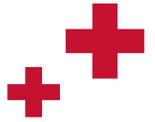
The following two proposals were deemed to be less important, even though they were given a support rate of 61%:

- Improve connectivity between the Canal and Historic Sainte-Anne through initiatives such as thematic paths.
- Update the interpretation tools for the history of the site.

However, these two proposals were subject to many comments emphasizing their impact on the appreciation of the site, especially by people who live in the vicinity. An analysis by place of residence indicates that the levels of importance of these two proposals increase for respondents living in the vicinity, as the following table illustrates:

**Table 3. Level of Importance of the Two Proposals Deemed to be of a Lesser Priority by Place of Residence**

	Level of Importance (4-5) by Identified Place of Residence	
	Foster connectivity between the Canal and Historic Sainte-Anne through initiatives such as thematic paths	Renew the interpretation tools for the history of the site
Neighbouring towns	64%	68%
Elsewhere on the West Island of Montreal	75%	78%
Montreal and Laval	58%	59%
North Shore	71%	56%
Other South Shore	51%	59%



Thus, these proposals are much more important for people living in the vicinity of the site.

The analysis of the level of importance of these proposals by the place of residence and reason for visiting the site makes it possible to assert that there is a consensus on the importance of the proposals related to the integrity of the site across all respondent profiles. However, as shown in the above tables, the level of importance attributed to several proposals of the Draft Management Plan varies according to respondents' primary use of the site and place of residence. The next section presents an analysis of the comments received in order to better understand the different perspectives of the consultation participants regarding the proposals of the Draft Management Plan to guide the future of the site.

### **3.4. ANALYSIS OF ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

All participants' comments collected through questionnaires and discussions with Parks Canada representatives during the Open House activity were analyzed. Several recurring major themes were identified through this analysis.

#### **Preserving the integrity of the site**

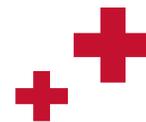
The participants greatly appreciate the proposals aimed at improving the physical condition of the site, particularly with respect to its rehabilitation after the damage caused by recurrent flooding and ensuring its adaptation to climate change. These comments reflect the content of the interventions suggested by the second strategy put forward in the Draft Management Plan, namely improving the engineering works and the Canal's historic elements.

The discussions between participants and Parks Canada representatives during the Open House activity focused on the physical condition of the site and the impacts of flooding. Several participants emphasized that they hoped the repair work on the upstream jetty would be completed as soon as possible. Other participants suggested additional interventions should be planned to mitigate the impacts of flooding in various locations along the Sainte-Anne Historic Village and Boardwalk, which would increase the connections to local businesses and encourage local economic development. For example, the proposal to increase the height of the retaining wall along the Boardwalk on the Historic Sainte-Anne Village side should be noted.

Several comments make a connection between preservation of the environment and protection against recurrent flooding. Many respondents also stressed the importance of protecting existing flora and fauna on the site, as proposed in Strategy 3. In particular, the presence of turtles and various species of birds was identified as an element to be highlighted in order to increase users' awareness of the site's natural environment.

*"It is vital that the site be protected against future flooding and that it be made accessible to local residents and visitors for recreation. It is also important that the existing flora and fauna be protected."*

*"Flooding and the environment must be a first and top priority."*



*“It is vital to develop resource conservation tools, both cultural and natural for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal. This is the busiest canal, but it is also the one where the impact of conservation measures (especially on Sterns and Common Map Turtles) can be the most significant. Enhancement and resource protection measures are essential to the vision we must have of the site!” (free translation) <sup>4</sup>*

### **Ensuring better cohabitation between various users of the site and waterfront residents**

Several participants indicated that a better balance and a better cohabitation between various site users would be desirable. Many comments referred to irritants for waterfront residents related to temporary site uses, especially boating. Among the cohabitation issues, the noise associated with boating activities (i.e., music, motors, generators) was often mentioned. Most of these comments were made by residents living in the vicinity of the site who visit it regularly, as well as by people living across from the site who are also affected by the volume of visitors.

Other participants believe that promoting the site as a recreational and tourism area could attract too many visitors and that this would have a negative impact on the quality of life of the residents of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, for whom the site is an integral part of their living environment. For these participants who visit the site for relaxation and walking purposes, as well as for the appreciation of its natural environment and its history, it is important to preserve a certain level of tranquility on the site.

Thus, it appears essential to find a balance among the various activities that take place on the site to enable all types of users to appreciate it.

*“We have been residents of Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue for 40 years. The Canal is part of our DNA, but we hope that it will not become a marina. We completely agree that it should be accessible and educational. This magnificent Canal must not become overcrowded.” (free translation) <sup>5</sup>*

*“Create an atmosphere that is conducive to relaxation and in harmony with the natural environment.” (free translation) <sup>6</sup>*

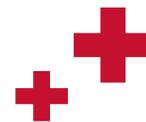
*“If you increase the number of boats that can be moored overnight at the Canal, please be sure that there are noise regulations consistent with town bylaws.”*

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<sup>4</sup> Original quote in French : « Il est primordial de développer des outils et conservation des ressources tant culturelles que naturelles pour le canal de Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue. Ce canal est le plus achalandé, mais est aussi celui où l'impact de mesures de conservation (notamment sur les sternes et les tortues géographiques) peut être le plus important. La mise en valeur et les actions de protection des ressources sont essentielles dans la vision qu'il faut avoir du site! »

<sup>5</sup> Original quote in French : « Nous sommes résidents de Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue depuis 40 ans. Le canal fait partie de notre ADN, mais on ne souhaite pas qu'il devienne une marina. Qu'il soit accessible, éducatif, nous sommes tout à fait d'accord. Il ne faut pas que ce magnifique canal devienne surpeuplé. »

<sup>6</sup> Original quote in French : « Favoriser une ambiance à la détente et en harmonie avec le milieu naturel. »



## Enhancing the boating service offer

Some 60% of the questionnaire respondents visit the site for boating, which generated many comments on waterway use and recreational boating. Most comments focused on the enhancement of existing services and facilities intended for boaters, as suggested in the first strategy of the Draft Management Plan. Requests for adding public washrooms and showers on the site were noted, as well as the addition of electricity and drinking water at moorings spaces. Some boaters also raised the issue of security on the site and asked for more effective supervision of this use, particularly overnight.

Regarding the recurrent spring floods and access to the waterway, several participants suggested that floating docks be installed as they can better adapt to fluctuating water levels, to ensure that the beginning of the boating season is not delayed. Other respondents raised the possibility of having more access points for non-motorized watercrafts, such as canoes and kayaks; this item was also raised during the Open House activity. Others said that they wished that the hours of access to and operation of the lock be extended. The possibility of having different mooring spaces during the day, which would not be used for overnight mooring, was also suggested as a way to increase the service offering.

These proposals are in line with the objectives of the first strategy of the Draft Management Plan, which aims to promote the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal as a distinctive stopover along the navigable waterway between Montreal and Ottawa by improving the facilities, the boating service offering and access to the waterway.

*“Technically, because of the water levels, it would be necessary to rebuild and raise the height of the upstream dock on the restaurant side [Boardwalk] so that boats can be moored for a longer period of time during the boating season.” (free translation) <sup>7</sup>*

*“Many local boaters come for dinner, but they do not stay overnight, so perhaps there could be a space aside from overnight moorings.” (free translation) <sup>8</sup>*

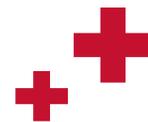
*“As I am actually a boater from Montreal’s South Shore who often uses the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue site as a destination or a refuelling stop, I believe that the project will be beneficial to all the economic and cultural partners of this magnificent location. Increasing access to moorings would be desirable because I often have to turn back because of a lack of space!” (free translation) <sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Original quote in French : « Techniquement, avec les niveaux des eaux, il serait nécessaire de reconstruire et rehausser la hauteur du quai aval côté restaurant [promenade] afin d’être en mesure de s’y amarrer pour une plus grande période de temps durant la saison de navigation. »

<sup>8</sup> Original quote in French : « Beaucoup de plaisanciers locaux viennent souper, mais ne restent pas pour la nuit alors peut-être qu’il pourrait avoir un espace autre que des emplacements de nuit. »

<sup>9</sup> Original quote in French : « Pour être actuellement un plaisancier de la Rive-Sud de Montréal qui utilise fréquemment le site de Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue comme destination ou arrêt de ravitaillement, je trouve que le projet sera bénéfique pour l’ensemble des partenaires économique[s] et culturel[s] de cet endroit magnifique. L’augmentation de l’accès à l’amarrage sera souhaitable, car je dois rebrousser chemin à plusieurs reprises par manque d’espace! »



### The visitor experience and the site layout

Several participants indicated that the historic and heritage aspect of the Canal should be better reflected in the presentation and interpretation of the site. In addition to renovating the existing facilities, some participants suggested the addition of outdoor public furniture, picnic and relaxation areas, and specialized equipment such as playgrounds for children and garbage bins to dispose of the charcoal used for barbecues. During the Open House, participants pointed out that such additions would be important because of the heavy traffic on the site during the summer, particularly the development of more relaxation areas.

Other participants expressed their interest in improving access to the site, either by adding parking spaces or by providing better access through active transportation or mass transit. Several comments stressed the importance of making the paths and access links to the site more pleasant and safer for all visitors, including universal access for people with reduced mobility. Moreover, several participants expressed their interest in the entire site being made accessible all year round.

With respect to the heritage and history of the site, some respondents indicated that visitors would appreciate interpretation tools and references to Indigenous cultures associated with the history of the site. Commemorative works on the history of the site were also suggested by participants. Moreover, some participants proposed that, in addition to staff dedicated to the operation of the lock, staff dedicated to the interpretation of the site should also be present. Other participants confirmed their support for the idea of adding interpretation panels and creating paths to showcase various aspects of the site.

Moreover, a few participants felt that it was necessary to enliven the site and provide services and activities all year long. In this regard, some respondents felt that the lack of activities to attract visitors outside the summer had an impact on the vitality of the local economy. Thus, interventions to attract visitors throughout the year, such as a skating rink on the Canal, were suggested.

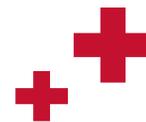
These comments coincide with the objectives of the third strategy, which is to enhance the historical aspects and landscapes of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal with new equipment and facilities on the site, to contribute to increasing visitors' feeling of attachment to the Canal.

*"The recreation areas must be open to everyone. Cultural activities must be free of charge. Basic facilities (drinking water fountains, accessible washrooms), maintained at all times, must be provided." (free translation) <sup>10</sup>*

*"Better integration with public transit (commuter train, REM) and active transportation networks (cycling, walking paths) with a focus on making these links pleasant and safe to use for visitors of all abilities and ages. There is limited access to parts of the site for people with mobility issues... More emphasis on the complete history of the site including Indigenous historical/cultural information."*

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<sup>10</sup> Original quote in French : « Les aires récréatives doivent être ouvertes à tous. Les activités culturelles doivent être gratuites. Les commodités de base (fontaine d'eau potable, toilettes accessibles), entretenues en tout temps, doivent être offertes.»



*“I really enjoy walking on the site. It feels like being on vacation! Obviously, the facilities are starting to look dated, they need to be renovated.” (free translation) <sup>11</sup>*

### **Communication and collaboration with partners and the community**

Several participants mentioned the need to rely on collaboration with local partners and stakeholders. The presence of certain key players and discussions held with them during the Open House activity highlighted their commitment to the future of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal. Comments received on this topic related to both the implication and contribution of partner organizations and associations and the promotion of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site and the Historic Sainte-Anne Village as destinations. Some respondents believe that better collaboration with the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Commercial Development Corporation,<sup>12</sup> as well as with local restaurant owners, is necessary. Other comments underline the economic potential of collaborating with the partners of the *Triangle bleu*<sup>13</sup>, a concept that fits within a development project focused on the synergy among the recreational, tourism and nautical uses of the waterways that make up the “triangle” linking Montreal (Quebec), Kingston (Ontario) and Ottawa (Ontario) through the St. Lawrence River, the Ottawa River and the Rideau River.

These results reflect the interventions proposed in the second strategy of the Draft Management Plan, namely to work in partnership with the community in order to enhance the visitor experience for boaters and visitors and to diversify the service offer so as to contribute to the recreational and tourism dynamic of the surrounding areas.

*“An economically viable plan is needed. It is possible to combine history, fauna and the economy; all that is needed is stakeholders with all these skills for a winning solution for everyone.” (free translation) <sup>14</sup>*

*“Also counting on waterfront restaurants. (...) This would attract visitors.” (free translation) <sup>15</sup>*

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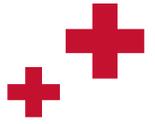
<sup>11</sup> Original quote in French : « J'aime beaucoup me promener sur le site. On se sent en vacances ! Évidemment, les installations commencent à être vieilles, elles ont besoin d'un renouveau. »

<sup>12</sup> The Société de développement commercial (SDC) de Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.

<sup>13</sup> Plan stratégique de développement et de marketing du réseau nautique québécois. Final Report – August 2002. Nautisme Québec.

<sup>14</sup> Original quote in French : « Il faut un plan économiquement viable...Il y a moyen d'ajouter l'histoire, faune et économie, il faut juste avoir des intervenants de toutes ces compétences pour une solution gagnante pour tous. »

<sup>15</sup> Original quote in French : « Miser sur les restaurants riverains aussi (...) C'est ce qui attirerait les visiteurs. »



## 4. OBSERVATIONS RELATED TO THE PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PLAN

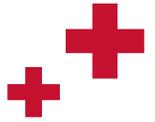
The analysis of the questionnaire results and the comments received confirms participants' support of the strategies proposed in the Draft Management Plan for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site. Support for the Draft Management Plan is expressed by the fact that 86% of the questionnaire respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with the proposed vision for the future Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal. This section presents an analysis of the appreciation of the Management Plan strategies.

### 4.1. STRATEGY 1: A DESTINATION AND A MUST-SEE MEETING PLACE

The first strategy of the Draft Management Plan was strongly supported by the participants. The two interventions proposed as part of this strategy, namely to increase the number of spaces available to the overnight mooring of watercraft and to also increase the number and quality of points of access to the water for visitors are considered important by 72% and 81% of the respondents, respectively, and these percentages increase significantly for boaters. Also, many comments collected from the questionnaires and the Open House activity underlined the importance of navigation and recreational boating for this site, as well as many people's wishes that existing facilities and services be enhanced for this use. Thus, the consultation made it possible to demonstrate the importance of this Management Plan strategy to recognize the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal as a distinctive stopover and must-see destination along the waterway. However, the consultation also identified the presence of current cohabitation issues between the navigational use of the site and walking and relaxation activities, as well as between visitors and residents living in the vicinity of the site. It would therefore be important to ensure that any intervention designed to enhance the offer in terms of overnight moorings or access to the water also proposes measures to improve cohabitation on the site.

### 4.2. STRATEGY 2: FACILITIES AND A VISITOR EXPERIENCE THAT EXPRESS THE ESSENCE OF THE PLACE

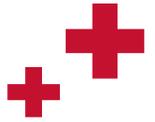
The proposals related to the second strategy also received considerable support from the participants. The proposal to evaluate the vulnerability of the historic site with respect to recurrent flooding was identified as the most important in this strategy, with 84% of respondents identifying it as important, and it was the subject of many comments both in the questionnaires and in person during the Open Door activity. With a comparable proportion, 83% of participants found that it was also important to improve the condition of the engineering works and the Canal's historic elements. This aspect was also identified in the comments which support the ongoing repair work and suggest additional interventions to improve the integrity of the site in the context of climate change. The consultation thus indicates a consensus regarding the importance of these two proposals.



The development of a recreation and tourism strategy in collaboration with local partners was also supported by the participants, with a rate of importance of 70%. Furthermore, throughout the consultation, several local stakeholders indicated their wish to collaborate with Parks Canada. The other proposals related to the visitor experience – such as the addition of cultural activities and artistic installations on the site, and the interventions to foster connections between the Canal and the Historic Sainte-Anne Village – are also supported by the participants. Diversification of activities on the site was also the subject of participants' comments. Thus, the second strategy proposed in the Draft Management Plan meets participants' expectations and needs with respect to improving the visitor experience.

### **4.3. STRATEGY 3: A SITE EMBLEMATIC OF ITS HISTORY AND LANDSCAPE**

The third strategy, designed to showcase the history and landscapes of the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal through new tools and a redesigned site layout, is also supported by the respondents, although as a lower priority. Of this strategy's three proposals, the one that was given the highest level of importance relates to the development of new tools for raising awareness and showcasing the natural environment; this was considered important by 70% of the respondents. The two other proposals –to inventory the flora and fauna along the site and to renew the tools to interpret the history of the site – were considered less important by the respondents (63% and 61%, respectively). However, the people who live in the vicinity of the site and who visit it often for walking and relaxation purposes deemed these two proposals to be more important. In addition, several comments from participants indicated that they would like the history of the Canal to be better reflected in the presentation and interpretation of the site, as the strategy suggests. Although these proposals are considered a lower priority than those concerning the integrity of the site and the visitor experience, these results show that the participants also support the third strategy.



## 5. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

### 5.1. CONCLUSION

The in-person and online consultations facilitated the participation of numerous residents of towns located in the vicinity of the Canal as well as elsewhere in the region. Many participants are very familiar with the Canal since they visit it regularly or live nearby. Consequently, the consultation reached a population that is very aware of the realities of the historic site.

The process demonstrated a strong consensus (86%) regarding the vision proposed by Parks Canada and on which the Management Plan is based. This support, although nuanced, was also expressed for the various strategies proposed in the Management Plan.

Interventions designed to improve the physical integrity of the site and adapt it to climate change, particularly in view of recurrent flooding, remain the highest priority issues for those who participated in the consultation. There also seems to be an emerging consensus regarding the enhancement of the facilities and the service offering on the site, both to facilitate better access to water for all users and to showcase the heritage and history of the site.

The importance of making the site both pleasant and accessible for different types of users was mentioned on several occasions. While many respondents visit the site as boaters, cohabitation issues between this use and, more generally, between visitors and people living in the vicinity of the site were raised. These issues must be taken into consideration with respect to the ways in which the proposals of the Management Plan are to be implemented in order to ensure everyone's appreciation of the site.

### 5.2. NEXT STEPS

The Draft Management Plan will be finalized in light of the comments expressed during this consultation and then it will be presented to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, by the end of 2020. Once approved, the new Management Plan for the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue Canal National Historic Site will be published on the Parks Canada website. Its implementation will be subject to an ongoing dialogue to report on progress made and adapt the priorities over time.

