



FARM POINT SPP  
VILLAGE CAFÉ – MARCH 16, 2013  
CONSULTATION REPORT

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FINAL REPORT

APRIL 2013



## 1 THE FARM POINT SPP VISION AND PLANNING GOALS

The Municipality of Chelsea is preparing a Special Planning Program (SPP) for the Farm Point sector, which is one of the municipality's two multi-purpose centres. The first version of the SPP, tabled in December, set out a vision and planning goals:

### The vision

- For Farm Point to be recognized as a liveable community bound together by the Gatineau River
- To enhance the links between the Gatineau River and Gatineau Park
- To foster the community and recreational character of Farm Point.

### The planning goals

- Foster a village-type development offering housing opportunities for a mix of clientele: young households, families with children, singles and seniors
- Support the development of neighbourhood commercial and service facilities, and recreational services
- Encourage recreational and community development in relation to the Gatineau River and to Gatineau Park
- Better connect the different areas in Farm Point together and with adjacent areas, and encourage sustainable mobility
- Preserve and enhance the natural environment areas and landscapes

This report covers the consultation process undertaken as part of the development of the SPP, with a special focus on the Village Café that took place on March 16.

## 2 THE CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION PROCESS

The Municipality of Chelsea took the necessary measures to inform residents of the Farm Point community, and to involve them in the process of developing the SPP. These measures included organizing consultation meetings and posting information on the Municipality's website.

### *Information posted on the Municipality's website*

The Municipality of Chelsea chose to keep its residents apprised of the development of the SPP from the very outset in October 2012 by posting information on its website in regard to the planning, objectives and timelines of the Farm Point SPP project.

### *Council/committee meeting of October 30, 2012*

A first consultation meeting was held October 30, involving essentially representatives of the expanded committee. This meeting took place at the Farm Point community centre, where the visions and planning goals for the SPP were presented, and participants were asked for their views on the content of the proposed SPP.

### *First consultation meeting on January 17, 2013*

A first open consultation meeting to which all Farm Point residents were invited was organized following the tabling of the first proposed SPP in late December 2012. This meeting was held on January 17, 2013 at the Meredith Centre.

This meeting was attended by several individuals from not only the Farm Point sector but also the rest of the Municipality of Chelsea. After the first version of the SPP was presented, a number of questions were asked about the following topics:

- the need for an SPP for Farm Point, and the changes that would ensue;
- the types of developments currently approved for the Farm Point sector;
- the current regulatory requirements related to permitted uses, lot sizes, environmental protection, etc.;
- the public services provided for the sector, such as the wastewater treatment plant;
- the impact on traffic in the sector; and
- the timeframe for the adoption of the SPP.

#### *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)*

Further to the meeting of January 17, in order to give residents a forum, the Municipality posted a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on its website to provide answers to the key questions raised. In addition to the questions stemming from the meeting of January 17, this FAQ provided the opportunity to shed light on a number of issues, including:

- the number of developers proposing to build in Farm Point;
- the urgency of adopting an SPP for Farm Point;
- the development proposals associated with the SPP, including the boardwalk along the Gatineau River; and
- general information and examples of SPPs in other parts of Québec.

#### *Village Café on March 16, 2013*

The Municipality then suggested organizing a Village Café style consultation meeting, where residents would have a new forum for sharing their concerns and expectations in regard to the proposed SPP. Originally planned for February 23, this session was finally held on March 16, and is the main topic of this report.

#### *Consultation on the proposed SPP (coming in August 2013)*

Finally, it should be pointed out that the Municipality plans to hold a public consultation meeting in August on the proposed SPP and concordance by-laws, in accordance with *An Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development* (sections 95, 110.4 to 110.10, and 123).

## 3 THE VILLAGE CAFÉ OF MARCH 16, 2013

The Village Café took place on March 16 at the Farm Point community centre between noon and 4 p.m.

### 3.1 CONSULTATION FORMAT

The Village Café was organized in such a way as to give participants the opportunity to express their views as freely as possible, and to provide their input on the goals and content of the SPP. The meeting included two rounds of group discussions, and one workshop session:

A first round of discussions as a group on “Life in Farm Point”, where the discussions addressed the following questions:

- What's good about life in Farm Point?
- What do you cherish the most?
- Is anything missing in Farm Point? Has the community lost assets that were dear to it?

A second round of discussions as a group on "Your concerns for the future ", which looked for answers to the following questions:

- What are your main concerns for the future of Farm Point?
- What do you want to keep as Farm Point evolves?
- What would you like to change, to add or to improve?

A workshop session (groups of 7 to 8 people) on "Your vision for Farm Point", where the following question was addressed:

- Tell us your vision for the future of Farm Point by drawing on a map and writing your comments (areas to be protected, types of housing, location of commercial establishments, recreation areas, etc.)

### 3.2 PARTICIPATION AND RESULTS

Close to 80 people took part in the Village Café, most of them residents of the Farm Point sector. The session unfolded mostly as planned with the following changes made in response to the participants' requests:

- the first and second rounds of discussion were combined because the participants alternately shared their views and their concerns;
- a question and answer period followed the round of discussions in order to shed light on a number of topics raised by the participants, including: the provisions in *An Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development* in regard to approval of SPPs, the prerogatives of residents in regard to the approval of an SPP, the timelines for the preparation of an SPP, etc. Project leader Catherine Marchand, with the Plania firm, and Chelsea Mayor Cheryl Green answered the questions raised.

Participants later gathered into discussion groups (7), and wrote their comments and proposals on sheets displaying an aerial photo of Farm Point. The maps included in the SPP proposed in January were posted all around the hall for the convenience of the participants.

## 4 SUMMARY OF OPINIONS AND COMMENTS

The next two sections of this report summarize the key comments and opinions expressed during the Village Café. It is important to understand that this report is not a detailed account of the input provided by participants during the meeting, but rather a condensation of their comments as an overview of the consultation. This summary is based on the notes taken by the consultants and those provided by the participants.

## 4.1 LIFE IN FARM POINT

As indicated above, participants were invited to share their vision for Farm Point during the group discussions, specifically what they like about this part of the municipality, and why they want to live and stay there. This subsection of the report covers the main comments on this topic.

The discussion revealed two visions about life in Farm Point. Overall, the participants indicated their attachment to Farm Point in different ways. Newcomers and younger residents expressed it as follows:

- it is a bilingual, culturally diverse community, where people help one another;
- it has pleasant areas, with natural spaces, ready access to Gatineau Park and to the Gatineau River, and a chance to engage in all kinds of sports;
- the built environment is attractive, with large lots, well-spaced houses and wooded areas;
- the “village” atmosphere is appealing, as is the light traffic and the fact that children can safely play outside; and
- the quarry has its own appeal, with its views over the River.

The following expressions were used:

- *“Jewel in the rough”*
- *“Not many vehicles – no asthma”*
- *“Beautiful, so lovely”*

Older people and long-time residents of Farm Point made the following comments:

- they like Farm Point because they were born there and are attached to it;
- they appreciate the closeness and availability of services like the IGA; and
- some people think that young families should be attracted to Farm Point.

## 4.2 CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FARM POINT

Participants were also asked about their concerns about the future of Farm Point. The discussion highlighted both common and diverging opinions. Many of the participants indicated that they were worried about the future of Farm Point and the impact of the SPP for the following reasons:

- fear of overly intensive development, which would change the sector’s character;
- the opening of highway 5, which would mean upheavals for the sector: more houses, more cars, etc.;
- the fear of creating a standard suburb, which would destroy Farm Point’s current feel;
- the fear of overly dense development;
- the impact of commercial development along highway 105; and
- the impact of heavier development on the aquifers and the water supply.

Other participants were sufficiently concerned to want to stop development of Farm Point altogether.

The following expressions were used:

- *“4 unités à l’acre c’est trop” [four units per acre is too much]*
- *“Adieu tranquillité” [farewell to peace and quiet]*
- *“No cookie cutter housing”*
- *“No growth”*

Some participants seemed less concerned, expressing opinions along the following lines:

- the SPP can help improve the image of Farm Point;
- given that the village currently has eight houses per acre, four houses per acre is not “that bad”;
- fear that the quarry will be reopened; and
- the Farm Point sector needs young families with children to replace the older people.

### 4.3 SUGGESTIONS/PROPOSALS FOR THE SPP

Following the group discussion session, the participants were invited to gather into smaller groups of seven or eight people to work around an aerial photo of Farm Point on developing proposals for the sector’s development, or to share their comments in writing. The proposals and comments were then grouped into different themes for the following paragraphs.

#### Natural environment

General comments:

- set up wildlife corridors after conducting an assessment of where they are needed;
- preserve the forest near the quarry;
- protect the Gatineau River shoreline;
- ensure minimum deforestation in the construction zones;
- encourage building in front yards to foster the movement of wildlife;
- minimize street lighting to maintain a natural feel;
- foster the establishment of conservation easements; and
- Farm Point must leave a legacy of green spaces for the Chelsea community.

Specific comments:

- protect the wetlands next to the community centre;
- prohibit development on the clay slopes of Tim Road;
- conduct an impact study before authorizing development of the quarry;
- protect endangered wildlife in the quarry;
- require controlled flow septic tanks; and
- protect the aquifer.

#### Built environment and uses

General comments:

- no more than one residential unit per acre;
- a maximum of one unit every two acres;
- promote different house styles, and discourage uniform cookie cutter styles;
- look for developers who propose certified LEED projects; and
- amend the by-laws to allow intergenerational homes or granny flats.

Specific comments:

- allow one unit every two acres along Carman Road;
- set up a seniors’ residence on the river;
- prohibit the construction of four units per acre in the quarry;

- do not allow new streets between Croissant Road and the quarry;
- do not allow new streets between St-Clément and Carman Roads;
- allow small businesses along highway 105 and at the top of St-Clément; allow the construction of a small service station with an attractive design there;
- allow businesses at the intersection of Cross Road and highway 105;
- allow businesses in the village core;
- do not allow store chains;
- require that parking be at the back of businesses;
- subject development of zone PAE 310 to an Implementation and architectural integration plan; and
- do not allow businesses around the shoreline promenade (*"boardwalk"*).

### Quality of life, recreation

#### Traffic:

- reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h on St-Clément and River Roads;
- introduce speed reduction measures on River Road instead of building a shoreline boardwalk;
- do not allow heavy truck traffic on Carman and River Roads;
- build a temporary truck lane between highway 105 and the quarry (through the woodlot); and
- do not allow trucks between Croissant and Cross Roads.

#### Shoreline boardwalk:

- to maintain free access to the River, do not build a shoreline boardwalk;
- no bike paths;
- the shoreline boardwalk could mean more garbage;
- the shoreline boardwalk would benefit people living higher up but disrupt residents along the river;
- a shoreline boardwalk could have an impact on the riparian zone; and
- the municipal dock should be retained further to negotiations with Hydro Québec.

#### Recreational and community facilities:

- develop unpaved pathways;
- develop community gardens;
- develop a small water park for the kids;
- develop a bike path on the railway right-of-way; and
- develop a Zen garden in the quarry and a municipal pool with geothermal heating.

#### Quarry zones:

- build a recreational area, pool and lookout in the quarry; and
- redevelop the Meech River delta by removing the island and restoring the wetland and the riverbanks.

### Governance

- people feel that things are moving too fast, and would like more information so that all of the options can be reviewed (*"Revoyons nos options"*);
- *"Est-ce que ça ne serait pas préférable d'attendre l'impact de la venue de l'autoroute 5 avant de faire le PPU?"* [Would it not be better to wait and see the impact of highway 5 before preparing the SPP?]
- adopting the SPP will have a significant impact, more consultation is needed, there is no rush;
- why is a zoning change needed?;
- would like more transparency on the part of the Municipality;

- *“On devrait faire un plan d’environnement pas d’urbanisme”* [What is needed is an environmental plan, not an urban plan];
- would like more time before the SPP is adopted to give residents more time to come up with creative options;
- *“Would like to see economic plan defining why and how much development is actually needed to support tax base. Don’t overdevelop past this”*;
- *“Il faudrait adopter des règlements que l’on ne peut pas modifier par la suite”* [Would need by-laws that can’t be amended afterwards];
- should retain the PAE zoning to ensure incremental project development that is acceptable to all residents; and
- all of the comments made during the meeting should be posted on the website.