

VEOC Discussion Highlights

for

Long Island to Ottawa Locks Reach

It is generally acknowledged that the approximately six kilometer stretch of the Rideau Canal from Dows Lake to the eight Ottawa Locks descending to the Ottawa River is the best profiled portion of the two hundred and two kilometer length of the Canal. The remaining two and a half kilometers of this Reach of the Canal from approximately the Hogs Backs locks to Long Island Locks is lesser known and predominantly a recreational waterway for area residents.

The Ottawa Locks are perhaps the most iconic image and attraction within this urban Reach providing exceptional viewing opportunities for land based guests from the surrounding parks and heritage building lands, including the Parliament Buildings and the Chateau Laurier. The 6.4 kilometer long excavated channel connecting these locks with Dows Lake and the Hartwell Locks is the second most iconic image of the Canal and perhaps given its association with the Winterlude festival and skaters use of the Rideau Canal Skateway, is to some potential guests the more profiled image.

Via the excavated channel length, the Canal passes through historic and modern portions of the City and is bounded by an extensive parkland corridor of pathways and scenic driveways. As it exits the City's business core, it passes through the green spaces of the Experimental Farm and Carleton University.

In close proximity to this length are located many of Canada's and Ottawa's cornerstone museums and entertainment attractions.

The By Town Museum situated adjacent to the Ottawa Locks provides insight into the Canals design, construction and operation and relates the importance of the Canal to the social and economic evolution of the City of Ottawa and its people.

The defensible lock masters house at the Hartwell Locks and related out buildings present a more intact expression of the buildings normally associated with lock operations and are similar to those found throughout the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor lock stations.

The Hogs Back Locks are located at the junction of the man-made canal and the natural Rideau River course.

The current falls are man-made replacing the Three Rock Rapids which were flooded during the canal construction. The flooding resulted from the construction of a 98 meter long earth embankment, the second highest within the Corridor.

Mooney's Bay to Black Rapids stretch is a well-used recreational waterway surrounded by park lands and residential development.

Both the Black Rapids and Long Island lock lands are popular park land retreats for city residents.

In summary, the Urban Reach is a combination of historic and modern city settings blending into suburban park land settings.

Exploration Themes

Participants felt that that this Reach possesses a diversity of cultural and natural heritage resources and experience opportunities uniquely set within an internationally significant city, the Nation's capital city. The locks and canal are cornerstones of the Capital city's image - a contrast of heritage and vibrant cosmopolitan lifestyle.

The Canal and the city are stages of Canada's diverse heritage; the national museums lining the Canal celebrating the nature and history of the Nation.

The outstanding urban parkway lands surrounding the Canal lead into equally valued recreational waterway landscapes.

In combination these urban and suburban environments are thought to be capable of welcoming and supporting the full range of explore types and leisure travelers

In general participants identified a number of exploration themes which they felt would be of interest to Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers and the array of leisure travelers and recreationalists. These included exploring and discovering places which feature:

Canal Heritage

- Insight into urban and corridor long design and development challenges builders
- Lock operations – evolution through time
- Slackwater technology - Human modification of watersheds
- Canals of the world and the place of the Rideau
- Economic and industrial significance of canal & corridor
- Canal's military and political significance
- Canal linking two capitals – Ottawa and Kingston

Community Heritage

- Founders of Ottawa and the Corridor - settlers, canal builders, industrialists
- Economic implications of canal on Ottawa's evolution
- Capital's Political & Municipal Heritage - evolving social & economy
- National Museums & Living Heritage places
- Rideau Canal - a unique piece of Canadiana

Connecting with People of the Rideau

- First Nations heritage
- Ottawa and Rideau Canal Corridor lifestyles – yesterday and today
- Rideau Corridor artisans - arts, food, music, sport fishing

Natural Resource Heritage Exploration

- Natural and modified Rideau river and lake systems
- Harnessing the river's power
- Canal geological challenges

- Corridor's evolving terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems
- Confluence of three heritage rivers, Rideau, Ottawa and Gatineau
- Corridor forests, plants - land and water ecosystems
- Corridor wildlife - resident and migratory
- Marshes, wetlands, and backwaters
- Bird watching and sanctuaries

Human Heritage in Natural Environments

- Canal's recreational legacy for Ottawa
- Rideau River versus Rideau Canal characteristics
- Ecology and geologic heritage of Corridor & Ottawa
- Experiencing the solitude of remote lakes and streams
- Canal waterways and parklands - diversity of natural environments
- Biodiversity of plants and explore species at risk
- Urban escape to Rideau Canal and Corridor's natural serenity

Participants identified the following lists of 'must experience opportunities' within the Reach and Corridor. They felt these are locations and perspectives through which explorers and leisure travelers can connect with the significance and personalities of this special piece of Canada.

Compelling Opportunities within Reach

- Ottawa locks & surrounding national icons- Parliament and museums
- Overcoming engineering challenges- Hogs Back and Ottawa locks
- Countryside lock station areas - Long Island and Black Rapids
- Urban locks: Hogs Back & Hartland
- View of Ottawa from Quebec shore and Nepean Point
- National Museums & local heritage museums & places
- Heritage festival & special events - multi-cultural and historic event / people festivals
- Pathways and parkways along the Canal and floating the canal itself
- Aquatic habitats & green spaces - serenity & beauty
- Agricultural and artisan heritage and contemporary lifestyles – markets and studios
- Evening and night natural & social places

Corridor's Compelling Opportunities

- Locks, blockhouses, fortifications, lockmasters houses.
- Architecture & community life- Merrickville, Perth, Kingston
- Agricultural and farming events - Perth, Merrickville farmers markets and cultural countryside
- Industrial heritage of Corridor - Merrickville and other mill ruins
- Canal heritage reflected in landscape & communities - Perth, Merrickville, Kingston Mills
- Places of Engineering accomplishment - Newboro, Jones Falls locks,
- Mills and small heritage villages throughout Corridor
- Every lock stations unique story and evolution of history
- Kingston and Ottawa - capital cities and nation building
- Settlement pattern of Rideau waterway
- Outstanding natural places along the waterway
- Rivers and lakes of two watersheds - Rideau and Cataraqui

Desired Images for this Reach and Corridor

Participants were first asked how they thought this Reach and the Canal as a whole are currently perceived, and subsequently how they would like them to be perceived in the near future.

It was revealing that the participants in this discussion currently share many of the same perceptions and frustrations with those of other Reach discussions, albeit sometimes from a different perspective, as often the image of the Ottawa Reach is inappropriately applied to the Corridor as a whole.

All agree that the Canal and Corridor beyond Ottawa has little or no image and profile nationally, which in some ways permits the erroneous assignment of the Ottawa image to the Corridor,

They concur that the limited image of the Ottawa portion of the Canal, that of “boats and skaters”, is incorrect and undesirable for both this Reach and the Corridor as a whole.

Participants felt that the urban component of the Reach is better known internationally, nationally and locally with, unfortunately, much the same images being prevalent: those relating to boating and skating.

Currently held tourism Images of Reach & Corridor

Reach:

- Skating and Winterlude
- Boats and boating
- Ottawa locks to Dows Lake is the visual image
- Modern city with historic canal and green space

Corridor as a Whole:

- Unknown or little to no image
- Historic and natural
- Small town Ontario and countryside

Desired Image:

In the near future, and particularly in regards to the 150th anniversary of Canada and the expected focus upon the Nation's capital, participants desire a more comprehensive and accurate image of this Reach and the Corridor as a whole will be conveyed.

Reach:

- Significant natural & historic corridor within an urban setting
- World class city & heritage area, unique experience opportunities
- A dynamic element of Canada's Capital City - city's travel image
- Stage for variety of cultural heritage festivals and events
- Multi-modal opportunities for both land & water based explorers
- An engaging place for both active and passive explorers
- Variety of ways to connect with City and Canals nature & history
- Unique aquatic and terrestrial environments & green spaces
- Closely connected to Canada's best natural & historic museums

- Source of municipal pride and identity
- A respected heritage resource with continuing authenticity and integrity
- A significant Canadian heritage place and experience opportunity

Corridor:

- An important piece of Canadiana - element of our history
- Remarkable Canadian engineering achievement
- Living heritage place - much more than an historic canal
- Diverse natural landscapes characteristic of eastern Canada
- Sustainable nature & culture experience opportunities
- Year round destination , diverse array of opportunities
- Accessible safe day tripping – land and water
- Popular with many types of travellers – land & water based
- Great hosts, vibrant places , producing great memories
- Canal & communities are viable and compelling tourism places

Desired Outcomes of Contributing to the VEOC Discussions

Discussion participants expressed the following desired outcomes and/or opportunities for change:

Recognition of the uncommon living heritage experience opportunities

It was a shared desire that the scope of the historic significance of the Rideau Canal will be better appreciated; combined with the recognition that this set of historic resources are living heritage, unlike many other pieces and places of Canadian history, and thus afford exceptional opportunities for people to connect with and comprehend these special places. This special set of historic resources permits engaging exploration and enjoyment; whereas, many others demand passive observation.

To this end, programs and services to support engaging appreciation of this heritage Corridor as well as its recreational enjoyment will be an increasing priority.

Historic as well as a recreational waterway experiences

It was also a desire that guests exploring the Canal within this Reach and throughout the Corridor will have a heightened awareness and appreciation of the historic resources as a piece of Canadiana. In future, the images relating to boaters and skaters enjoying the waterway will be equally complemented by explorers and leisure travelers appreciating the engineering ingenuities and the people who achieved them.

Investment and support for heritage appreciation programs and services will be balanced with investment in recreational and leisure travel services and infrastructure improvements.

Celebration of the full breadth of cultural heritage

Participants felt that much greater presentation and appreciation of the full scope of peoples who lived within and shaped the natural and cultural landscapes of the Corridor should be prominently celebrated.

Beginning with First Nations people, the first explorers, travelers and harvesters of the Corridor and subsequently the arrival of people from other continents, who shaped the cultural landscape with farms and mills and communities and industrial developments and social and economic ways of life – all of these sequential and significant chapters of the Corridor’s human heritage should be effectively and coherently conveyed to interested explorers and leisure travelers.

A strategic approach to this celebration of heritage throughout the Corridor is the desire; building upon the current array of historic presentations.

Assurance and restoration of heritage resource integrity

Appreciation and enjoyment of this special heritage Corridor must be achieved in ways which simultaneously ensure the continuing integrity of the historic, cultural and natural resources. In some cases, it was recognized that this will demand investment in the restoration of aquatic habitats, historic places and infrastructure.

These investments are a shared responsibility of hosts and guests and the communities, businesses and residents who derive benefits from this outcome. All must be given opportunity to contribute.

Sustainable tourism activities and support

The recreational and heritage appreciation use and enjoyment of the Reach and the Corridor must be achieved through sustainable tourism practices, which simultaneously assure ecological and cultural integrity and economic viability.

Heightened economic vibrancy of communities and attractions along the Corridor and within this Reach was desired; and to this end innovative and enhanced means of transportation, accommodation, recreation and heritage appreciation should be applied.

The vision was expressed that this World Heritage Site would be a model of sustainability for others.

Collaborate and complement – work together

Both in terms of experience opportunity innovation and enhancement and the subsequent marketing of these opportunities, it was the desire of participants that in the future these goals would be achieved in a more coherent and cohesive manner within this and all Reaches and the Corridor as a whole.

It was recognized and desired that a shared direction and coordinated approach will be increasingly essential to realize the heritage tourism potential of this Reach and the Corridor.

Competition amongst Corridor entities is misguided, as the competition for guests is global rather than local.

Partnerships and packaging both within the Reach and Corridor–long was seen as most desirable and effective.

Enhance awareness of our opportunities

Participants felt that there was a need for greater shared awareness of our natural, historic and community resources as opportunities for guests, hosts and residents to enjoy and appreciate this special

place. It was suggested that the understanding of current and potential experience opportunities and their requirements for conservation and appreciation by guests was not adequate. Sharing knowledge was seen to be essential.

Balance focus on boaters and land based travelers

Participants expressed concern that the economics of the Canal and Corridor's tourism and heritage operations were too dependent upon and focused upon boaters. Discussions suggested that there seemed considerable potential to grow the number of land based explorers and leisure travelers by diversifying the experience opportunities and spreading them throughout the Reach and Corridor. Greater focus on locks within this Reach but beyond the urban core was desired.

Adjust Reach and Corridor image

The recognition that the perceived image of the Reach and the Corridor is narrowly focused on boaters and skaters or non-existent caused contributors to desire an adjustment of the image and branding of the Reach and Corridor. The desire was an image equally focused upon the appreciation and enjoyment of the array of heritage resources and the collective sense of this Corridor as a unique piece of Canadiana as well as a safe and readily accessible natural and cultural corridor for water and land based leisure enjoyment.

Paradigm Shifters

With these outcomes and objectives in mind, participants shared some fundamental changes in how guests could be hosted and the tourism industry enhanced with related benefits to local communities and residents.

Adopt “hosting / guest concept”

Participants supported an adjustment of the tourism industry, communities and heritage experience facilitators towards serving more like hosts than traditional travel suppliers; and correspondingly viewing travelers as guests warranting support and guidance, more than customers of travel services.

They envision hosts having a greater understanding of the travel values and traits of their guests and being oriented towards finding ways to accommodate and support guests in their explorations and enjoyment – finding a way to say yes.

Approach destination marketing as a collective

Building upon the desired outcome of a shared sense of direction and collaborative commitment to the growth of tourism throughout the Corridor and within this Reach, it was suggested that a single body comprising members of the private, public and non-profits sectors of the tourism industry be established to lead and manage the enhancement and innovation of tourism products and services and their marketing and promotion.

The desire was expressed that the Corridor and this specific Reach be marketed under a single strategy coordinated by a single tourism marketing organization drawing upon marketing resources from throughout the Corridor and benefiting operators and communities alike.

Capitalize upon WHS recognition

The world has anointed the Rideau Canal and by association the heritage Corridor as one of the special places in the world and participants felt that “we’re not using that for ourselves, we haven’t thought about how important this place is and we live here”.

The positioning of the Canal and Corridor as a welcoming and engaging world heritage site, where hosts facilitate guests in innovative ways to connect with this outstanding natural and cultural corridor will elevate this special place from its current ‘little known’ status to a world class experiential tourism destination.

With this focus, the direction for product development and marketing should be through innovation and enhancement of traditional practices.

Thinking beyond 2017 in creating a Rideau Canal legacy project

It was suggested that while taking action in the short term is essential, it is equivalently important that there must be a living legacy of our heritage appreciation and enjoyment actions.

The ways and means through which we celebrate and conserve the heritage of the Corridor must be sustainable and go beyond this to be a source of pride and achievement – an expression of our hosting values and what we value and wish to share with our guests.

Shuttle service within Reach and throughout Corridor

Responding to the desire to make it more convenient for guests and residents to explore the Reach beyond Dows lake by bicycle, foot, boat, etc. and to get between points of interest, exploration facilitators and Corridor communities, it is envisioned that a shuttle service could be established to convey people and goods. The service might include specially designed taxis and other vehicles to support recreationalists exploring by water and land. It might include conveyance between communities and might be designed to be a hop on hop off service throughout the Corridor.

Rideau Corridor website

It was suggested that a single website be established to herald the Reach’s and the Corridor’s array of natural and cultural heritage attractions and related service providers, This full capacity site and service would be able to inform, influence and support guests in their connections with all leisure travel and heritage experience opportunities within the Reach and Corridor.

It would be a collective and coordinated way to get the word out and to strategically heighten and manage the image and brand of the Corridor.

Enhancement & Innovations

For

Reach Specific Experience Opportunities

Improving Experience Opportunities

Having identified the potential exploration themes and subjects of interest for the explorers and having assessed the desired exploration opportunities and their current quality and availability, the VEOC discussion participants

- First turned their attention to enhancing existing opportunities, programs, services and infrastructure provided by host communities and tourism attractions and services;
- Then focused their attention on identifying innovative experience opportunities and related support programs and services.

Each of the nine explorer types was considered separately, although it was recognized and noted that many of the suggested improvements would be valued by a number of the explorer types. Tweaking an idea or improvement had the potential to make it of value to more than the explorer types it was identified to facilitate.

It is anticipated that the following “enhancements and innovations” will be approached in a collaborative manner involving complementary action and investment by all sectors of the tourism industry.

An Integrated Set of Enhancements and Innovations

A review of the enhancements and innovations identified for this Reach reveals the following framework of ideas for improving guest experience opportunities and the service offered by their hosts. These enhancements and innovations are gathered under a framework of improvements respecting:

- Guest Information, Welcome and Sense of Arrival
- Cultural Heritage Connection Opportunities
- Natural Heritage Connection Opportunities
- Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities
- Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities
- Accommodation Services and Related Experience Opportunities
- Transportation Services

Guest information, welcome and sense of arrival

Discussion participants recognized the importance of communicating a clear sense of welcome and arrival; a welcome which would communicate the diverse array of natural and cultural heritage experiences opportunities afforded throughout the Reach.

Welcome and exploration launch

Participants felt that a network approach to the strategic provision of information and orientation would encourage guests to more thoroughly experience the diversity of the Corridor and a specific Reach. These facilities should seek to perform ‘concierge-like’ services, more than simply informing, rather welcoming and customizing information and guidance to launch explorer’s minds as well as their activities.

The network would be a series of major multi-purpose centres and smaller secondary support information outlets.

To provide guests with information on a 24/7 basis throughout the year, it was suggested that a network of information terminals or smart boards be positioned at the most popular gathering points and in all tourism oriented communities and attractions.

Gateway role

Ottawa and Kingston were recognized for potentially playing a greater role on behalf of the Corridor as a whole and their Reach specific experience opportunities and leisure travel services and attractions; with perhaps Ottawa playing an even more significant role given guests may arrive by air from across Canada and internationally.

It was envisioned, that in a location within sight of the Canal, a Corridor welcome, information and explorer launch complex consistent with the heritage character of the Canal and the Corridor would be established. This facility would use contemporary technologies to provide guests with remote connections with the array of experience opportunities, places and people they will be able to connect with along the Corridor. The complex could be an attraction in itself, providing an overview of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor.

The complex hosts would have the capabilities to connect guests with experience facilitators along the Corridor and perhaps provide a central booking service for packages, programs and services. In this regard, the complex would be an actual offer of similar support provided via the Corridor web site.

Encouraging use of this Canal-side complex, it was envisioned that a greater awareness of the Canal and its Corridor of opportunities would be achieved at the Ottawa airport and train station.

This complex might serve as the centre point of 'hub and spoke' explorations of the Corridor emanating from Ottawa.

Well-informed Information Staff

Contributors identified that consistent training of guest information and service staff was essential to convey coherent and consistent information in friendly and effective ways.

They suggested staff be provided with opportunities to acquire first-hand knowledge of the experience opportunities and knowledge of the tourism services afforded throughout the Reach. To this end, season-opening and special weekend arrangements might be made to familiarize staff with the guest opportunities throughout this Reach and the Corridor as a whole.

It was also suggested that training be offered to enhance hosting capacities and to enhance their awareness and understanding of how to support various types of guests. A Rideau specific 'super host' training program was mentioned.

Network of support services

To support guests and their orientation and exploration launch, it was seen that 'networking' of support services throughout the Reach and the Corridor was essential. In this regard, it was suggested that two types of networks be created. First, alliances of like attractions and services, such as museums, nature areas, festivals and services such as inns, rental equipment providers, touring and outfitting operations on

a Corridor-long basis. Second, networks of closely located attractions, opportunities and services within a Reach, community or special experience opportunity setting.

This approach efficiently supports guests in trip planning and may also provide a basis for efficient marketing of service offer and bulk purchase of equipment and supplies by linked hosts.

Rideau quality assurance

Participants felt that guests would appreciate a system which advised them of people, places, programs and services recognized for providing consistent and high quality experience opportunities.

Discussions revealed an interest in establishing a program / service recognition to motivate the enhancement and innovation of compelling experience opportunities and support services and to assist guest in trip planning and service selection.

The concept envisions the creation of a set of criteria recognizing the type and quality of opportunities and services, by which the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor wishes to be identified.

It was envisioned that this might lead to a RQA certification of the leading experience opportunities and experience facilitators.

Hosts and ambassadors

It was recommended that there be a host certification program designed to enhance the quality of our traditional front line and special information services; and to go beyond traditional services to create a 'concierge-like' quality amongst our hosting network of people.

It was discussed that a common or integrated look to information providers working from guest information centres throughout the Corridor and Reach and roaming in communities and popular gathering places would contribute to the effectiveness of the service.

An ambassador program from Ottawa to Kingston would integrate a network of quality, trained hosts creating a consistent sense of welcome and arrival, Corridor- long.

Website and web communications

The Ottawa area tourism web site is the rich's and most compelling within the Corridor. It is a foundation to build upon.

Participants felt the Reach's heritage attractions and service providers need to be a part of a Reach-wide and Corridor-long website to communicate their service offer and unique experience opportunities. This web-site will support networking amongst hosts to better welcome and support guests travelling throughout the Corridor.

It was recognized that guests' abilities to receive and request information prior to and during their travels are evolving quickly through the use of web based services and personal communication devices. It was accordingly noted that investment in enhancing the reach of our messages and information services must be responsive to our guests' requirements, as well as enhancing traditional information outlets and services.

- Establish a web-based network of information with front-line terminals throughout the Reach to support the dissemination of accurate and up to date travel and experience opportunity information
- Equip front-line staff with the information and capacities to create travel experience packages and to cross-sell, refer guests to other experience opportunities and service providers

Rideau “App” – An extension of the Website would be an “app” which guests could use throughout their travels to connect with the Corridor website or to connect with a specific Reach attraction, service provider or experience opportunity. These are desired by Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, No Hassle Travelers and Free Spirits.

Signage – The participants suggested that the existence of a collage of signing at the Corridor, county, municipality and attraction / service level creates confusion. They recommended a common-look and messaging be used throughout the Reach and the Corridor. They felt a Corridor-long shared branding and marketing strategy would assist in this regard.

Please note – Following the title of an enhancement or innovation, there is a forecasted indication of which explorer types may be attracted to this type of opportunity or service. The types in bold are likely most attracted, and others are identified as having some interest.

Enhancement and Innovations of Cultural Heritage Experience Opportunities

Discussion participants identified the following innovations and enhancements to support guests in connecting with the authentic character of this Reach’s people, places, communities, history and heritage.

“Locking through” (AE, CE, B, PHT, NHT, GE, FS,)

Participants felt that the experience of “locking through” a set of locks would prove a most meaningful experience for land-based explorers and leisure travelers.

Many guests visiting Ottawa simply must stand and observe boaters passing through the Ottawa Locks.

It was suggested that Parks Canada in collaboration with others could facilitate more meaningful experiences for some guests by providing water crafts with which these land based travelers could lock through. Recognizing the demands upon the popular Ottawa Locks, it was suggested that perhaps less heavily used locks, perhaps the Black Rapids or Long Island Locks might be alternate opportunities for this special experience within this particular Reach.

Remote connection to a virtual lock design and operation (AE, CE, B, NHT, PHT, FS, GE,)

In an earlier discussion respecting the Rideau Canal Museum in Smith Falls ii had been suggested that perhaps a “simulation program and room” in the Museum might provide an opportunity for guests to acquire insight into the challenges faced and overcome by lock designers and builders. If this facility came into being, it might be connected to a remote experience opportunity within the Ottawa Locks to Dows Lake stretch of the Canal; perhaps in conjunction with an existing museum or the earlier noted exploration launch complex.

Programming would provide guests with opportunities to assess the natural challenges posed by rapids and other river flow conditions in a specific reach of the Corridor. The guests would then have the

opportunity to design a locking system and water control system to permit passage of a vessel through this particular set of river conditions.

Similarly, the challenge could be to design the full canal system of locks; thereby acquiring an understanding of the full array of conditions and challenges experienced by Colonel By and his team of designers and lock builders.

Animation of locks (GE, NHT, CE, AE,)

It was suggested that a greater sense of theater might add to the experiences achieved by both land based and boating guests at lock stations. In this regard, it was suggested that lock staff might be costumed in the period dress. The Ottawa Locks environment might provide an exceptional stage for this animation; especially given its surrounding viewing opportunities and the population of guests drawn to this location.

It was also suggested that scheduled performances be added to the normal operations. These might be provided by local performers. These performances would be revenue generating opportunities.

As feasible and appropriate, the performers might lead guided explorations of the locks and related structures. These walks might include introductory explorations of nearby museums and historic places; and be linked to a network of Ottawa historic walking tours.

“Lock staff for a day” (B, CE, AE, NHT,)

Periodically some guests have opportunity to take a turn at the “crank” with lock staff.

Discussions suggested that at lock stations such as Hogs Back, Hartwell and Black Rapids, perhaps for Cultural Explorers, Authentic Experiencers and canal heritage Buffs, the opportunity to be a lock staff member for a day would be a most engaging and insightful opportunity.

Add to this the donning of a period costume and the opportunity to go behind the scenes and explore the less visible aspects of locks operations and the lifestyles of locks masters would prove truly memorable experiences.

Locks become launch points for explorers (ALL)

Whereas the Ottawa Locks currently serve this role, it was suggested that other lock stations and lands in this Reach and along the Corridor as a whole could increasingly serve as launch points for explorations of surrounding landscapes and communities.

The concept envisions information being available to inform and motivate guests to travel beyond the lock to connect with other natural and cultural heritage places and resources – in effect becoming an epicentre of explorations. In a complementary vein, this location could also serve as a distribution and drop point for bicycles, canoes and kayaks used to explore nearby waterways, wetlands and cultural landscapes.

Walking tours (GE, CE, B, AE, NHT,)

It was suggested that guided walking tours would be popular ways for Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travelers to experience the cultural heritage highlights along the length of the excavated channel portion of the Canal. These tours could be connected to nearby museums, which could expand the reach of their programs by interconnecting these with Canal walking tours.

A self-guided version of these tours could be provided with either printed guidance or GPS based guidance devices. These independent tours leave the guest more time to linger and contemplate what they have discovered.

The self-guided tours could be further segmented with a network of QR Coded heritage information posts at key vantage points along the Canal walkways.

Expand reach and programs of museums and historic places (CE, AE, NHT, B, GE,)

Participants felt that there may be opportunity for many museums and historic places throughout Ottawa and particularly those located along the historic Canal, to extend their experience opportunities beyond their facilities and lands.

It was envisioned that perhaps the Canal walkways and bike paths could host an array of museum experience outlets, with information and insights respecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Canal, which also relate to the larger programming and experience afforded within the Museums and specific historic places.

In effect, the popular Canal walkways would serve as motivating experience opportunities for explorers to discover other heritage venues, places and programs which would be capable of more in depth insights into the history of Ottawa, its natural environments, political and economic heritage – which had affect upon the history of Canal development and use.

The linear nature of the Canal was seen as a means to physically and mentally link the network of special experience opportunities offered by these existing attractions.

Network of Rideau chairs & vantage points (All)

The Rideau Canal parkway and paths comprise a network of special places from which to observe and connect with the surrounding living history. Some are at the canal's edge, some are in surrounding park lands and the lands surrounding museums and historic buildings; some are at the more remote lock stations, with more serene natural conditions.

Drawing upon 'local knowledge' of valued sites, it was suggested that a network of benches and contemplation points be developed at these special places throughout the Reach and connected to a similar network of vantage points throughout the Corridor. In some cases, augmenting some with QR coded information posts might motivated wider exploration of the Reach and longer stays.

Menus of opportunities (All)

Linked to the concept of strategic vantage points, discussions led to the suggestion that for each priority EQ type, a menu of experience opportunities could be developed as a motivation and guide to expanding their enjoyment and appreciation of the Canal and surrounding historic and modern city.

These menus could be supported by themed maps and guide books prepared for each explorer type.

Culinary experiences of heritage (CE, AE, PHT, FS, NHT, GE, R,)

It was suggested that the best way to connect with a destination is to taste it. The Ottawa Market experiences were suggested as a foundation to build upon. Perhaps a stronger connection could be developed between the foods and producers of the Market and the heritage of such markets in the history of Ottawa and its culinary history.

For example, a wild meat festival might provide opportunities to eat heritage foods from throughout the Corridor. The foods of the corridor could be brought to the Capital and the ingenuity of chefs of the Capital brought in return to the Corridor.

This same concept of 'field to plate' was suggested in supporting heritage picnics in community parks, at lock stations and heritage museums. It was also referenced in opportunities to have heritage dining experiences on canal boats, perhaps at times in costume celebrating heritage events and people of Ottawa.

Culinary guide books and access to expertise in food production, processing and fine cuisine would add to the real of experience opportunities.

Enhancement and Innovations of Natural Heritage Experience Opportunities

Whereas, cultural heritage discussions were most often focused in the city core component of the Reach, discussions respecting natural heritage experience opportunities tended to be more focused upon the component of this Reach beyond Dows Lake.

Network of waterside trails (All)

Beginning in the area of Dows Lake and the Experimental Farm and park lands adjacent to the Canal, it was suggested that a network of natural heritage and contemporary nature and outdoor experience trails be developed along the waterside between Dows Lake and Manotick.

This network of trails would lead guests to experience the natural challenges overcome during canal building and to the modified natural features and areas which resulted from the flooding and diversion of natural flows.

The network would include natural highlights as Hogs Back Falls and locks, the Mooney's Bay aquatic environment, the Black Rapids opportunity to simultaneously observe the natural river channel and the canal, and the Long Island lock lands and surrounding natural areas.

It was mentioned that an effort should be made to find innovative means to assure that residents and guests have a pathway of variable types to explore the length of this portion of the Reach, a challenge given residential development.

Network of natural vantage points (All)

It was suggested that the above noted trail concept could be augmented and complemented by a network of land based and floating vantage points from which to observe special natural and cultural resources and conditions along the water's edge.

This system would allow non-boaters to perhaps achieve the experiences achieved by kayakers and canoeists. It would take guests into areas not presently available to them. It would be available in all seasons.

This Reach trail network could be linked with similar trail concepts suggested in other Reaches. The exploration experiences could be augmented with guidance systems; and the network could be a resource for guide explorations facilitated by Reach expertise.

Water Based Exploration Routes (AE, CE, NHT, FS,)

It was suggested that themed maps and guidance could be developed for explorers of this portion of the Reach's waterways and be linked with similar guidance suggested for neighbouring Reaches. These guides would be of value to both boaters and land based travelers renting equipment to explore this and other reaches.

The concept could be extended to the excavated canal portion of this Reach providing insight into the natural challenges addressed through the canal construction and the cultural heritage places and resources visible to canal paddlers and walkers.

Long Island and Black Rapids Lock can be more compelling outdoor recreation areas (NHT, GE)

Participants felt that the lands of these two lock stations have unique natural and cultural resources and heritage experience opportunities to share. Further they can be introductory opportunities for Ottawa residents, who may be subsequently motivated to explore other Reaches and lock stations throughout the Corridor.

It was suggested that at these locations, the rental of canoeing and kayaking and bicycling equipment could be enhanced with the opportunity to drop this equipment at a related lock or venue and be supported by a shuttle service.

The cultural heritage of Long Island, in particular its buried ruins, could be made more visible and interpreted for guests looking into life along the Canal and of lock stations.

Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities

Animation of heritage settings (NHT, GE, CE, AE, PHT,)

Given the growing demand for heritage experience opportunities, particularly for Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travelers, who prefer to observe rather than explore and discover, it was suggested that there is opportunity for small and medium size enterprise to use historic venues as stages for bring history to life through their animation of events and activities.

The lands along the Canal within the City and lands associated with museums and historic places might serve as appropriate venues. These performances could be revenue sources for the presenters and the land owners.

Festivals (GE, NHT, CE, PHT, FS,)

Interest was expressed in expanding and diversifying festivals within Ottawa and linking these to Corridor-long cultural heritage themes such as boat building, agriculture, multi-cultural and settlement history, community history and heritage lifestyle events.

Building on the festivals hosted by communities, it might be compelling to convene new festivals celebrating natural heritage events or historic events associated with the canal, lakes and rivers in locations associated with the theme, such as at lock stations or in natural settings.

Corridor long themed festivals and performances (CE, AE, GE, R, NHT, FS,)

Many of the communities within the Corridor host small events with themes similar to larger events hosted in the City of Ottawa. It was suggested that perhaps these currently individual events could be gathered into a network or series of simultaneous gatherings. This might have the results of diversifying the venues

and meeting the needs of different types of audiences; and at the same time enhancing the scope and scale of the festival, by combining anchor and satellite venues.

Celebrating founding peoples (CE, PHT, NHT, GE, AE,)

Cultural Explorers and Personal History Travelers are drawn to opportunities to connect with and/or experience the heritage lifestyles of the array of peoples who launched the City of Ottawa and the communities and cultural heritage of this Reach and the Corridor in general.

Celebrations of millers and their achievements, navigators and boat builders, canal builders and operators, founding community families or landowners might be unique events – the themes of which could vary from year to year.

Rideau stories and storytellers (NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE, R,)

It was noted that the By Town Museum, perhaps other museums, has amazing number of volunteers who might be brought into a network of personal guides.

It was further suggested that people who have been long-time residents of the Reach and Corridor, or those who can relay in detail their community's heritage might be willing to contribute to a "human library" or "speakers bureau".

These knowledgeable and quality speakers could be hired by individual guests or by gatherings of special interests to convey their heritage or that of the Reach and Corridor.

They could use special heritage places such as Canal lock stations, heritage museums and other special places as stages and backdrops for their stories.

Symphony in the locks amphitheater (CE, NHT, GE, PHT – AE, B, R, FS)

Some participants felt that the acoustical properties of some lock station areas might provide unique opportunities for small symphony experiences. These included the Ottawa Locks, the Jones Falls Locks, and perhaps some of the more sheltered smaller lock areas. These might host smaller musical performances, for example quartet presentations.

Sound & light recreations of canal building (CE, NHT, GE, PHT – AE, B, R, FS)

With virtual animation technologies in sensory rich environments and natural outdoor amphitheaters, it was suggested that performances could recreate the sounds and stories associated with the building and subsequent operation of the Canal and individual locks.

The surrounding walls below the Chateau Laurier Hotels and parklands to the east and west could be used to screen a depiction of the lock building and subsequent passage of commercial vessels.

Enhancement and Innovations of Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities

Water is at the core of the Canal's history and the heritage lifestyles of its peoples and communities and it is the anchor attractions for the largest percentage of Corridor guests. With this in mind, participants suggested a number of enhancements and innovations designed to "get guests onto the water".

These ideas apply to either that portion of the Reach in a more natural setting – up stream of Hogs Back Falls, or the Excavated Channel portion, or in some cases both.

Reach specific water tours (NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE,)

While canal touring is readily available in the Channel, it is anticipated that within this Reach, like most reaches of the Corridor, a compelling water tour could be designed to take land based travellers to water only accessible experience opportunities above Hogs Back.

Dining on the water (FS, NHT, GE, AE, CE, PHT)

These outfitted opportunities would offer Free Spirits, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers unique opportunities to connect with the natural and cultural heritage of the Reach, its guides and fishermen. Beginning perhaps at Dows Lake the dining experiences could take guests up stream through a series of locks. Similarly, a more historic themed dining cruise and tasting menu could convey guests towards the city's centre.

Outfitted charters and day adventures (FS, NHT, AE)

Residents and guests may revel in the opportunity to explore the waters of this Reach with the support of captain and crew to navigate them through the locks to the most attractive components of the Reach and facilitate their exploration and dining experiences.

Guided outings (NHT, GE, PHT, CE, AE)

The growth in use of small non-powered boats will have the potential to bring a growing market of experience seekers to this most spectacular Reach. No Hassle Travellers and to a lesser extent Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers will look to guided tours of waters above Hogs Back or perhaps between Black rapids and Long Island Locks and ventures into wetland environments. The guidance is more for understanding the habitats being traversed rather than for security, yet some will rely upon the leader for orientation and direction.

“Geo-caching” (NHT, FS)

In selected lock areas and perhaps park lands such as those adjacent to the Experimental Farm, geo-caching routes and free roaming based geo-cache programs could be developed with support guidance and facilities. These activities could be linked to resource and Reach exploration and discovery programs

Linking Winterlude and skate the lake festivals (FS, NHT, AE,)

Growth in visitation during the winter months is a shared desire throughout the Corridor. To this end, it was suggested that perhaps winter festivals could be linked into a series of either simultaneous events or a chain of opportunities throughout the season.

The extremely popular Winterlude events might have a series of satellite events and opportunities such as at Portland, with the Skate the Lake event.

It was also imagined that perhaps a challenge might be designed requiring participants to employ a multi-modal approach to travel the waterway in winter, recognizing the variance in ice, snow and water conditions. This might involve skis, snowshoes, skates, and kayaks or canoes.

Amazing race with heritage experience challenges (NHT, FS, PHT, AE, VE,)

The concept was advanced that families or special interest groups and individuals might be interested in the learning experience opportunities of taking on Reach-long or Corridor-long challenges to discover the life skills and lifestyles and achievements of the people of the Rideau Corridor.

“Red bull crush” challenge through the locks (NHT, FS,)

Perhaps in winter or prior to the boating season, it might be feasible to host a high profile skills challenge using a series of locks, for example the Ottawa Locks, the Jones Falls Locks or another smaller set of locks.

Enhancement and Innovation of Accommodation & Experience Opportunities

Overnight in historic setting (CE, AE, B, R, NHT,)

Initially the suggestion of facilitating guest opportunities to overnight in a canal related historic building or natural setting was focused upon a lock station location, perhaps using the lockmasters house or related structures or the surrounding park-like settings of some locks. The idea then expanded to the use of other built heritage settings and structures in communities, such as the network of historic mills.

Networks of Inns (CE, AE, B, PHT, R, NHT, GE,)

For those exploring the Corridor and Reach, as a part of multi-day trips, being presented with the services of booking multiple nights of accommodations through a network of quality heritage inns and bed and breakfast would be of assistance. If these bookings were linked to a Corridor – long shuttle service of goods, boats, bicycles and people, multi-day adventures would be even easier to plan.

Enhancement and Innovations of Transportation Services

Shuttle service within Reach (All)

It was suggested that a “hop on, hop off” shuttle service be put in place to link the attractions along the length of the Canal within the City and beyond Mooney’s Bay. The service was referenced to respond to the needs of guests to exploring the Reach by bicycle, foot, boat, etc. to get between points of interest, exploration facilitators and travel services. The shuttle service could simultaneously be a traveler’s information source with informed drivers giving information and touring programs

This Reach’s specific shuttle service could be interconnected with similar shuttle service concepts identified for other Reaches. Collectively, they could make Corridor and Reach explorations by pedestrians and other land based travelers, that much more compelling.

Corridor-long Shuttle Services (AE, CE, FS, NHT, R,)

Complementing the above, it was recommended in other Reach Discussions, that a “Cinque Terra - Italy” shuttle concept could be developed to support land and water based guests exploring the trails, roads and waterways of the Corridor. This shuttle service which dropped them off or would picked them up at where their feet, bicycles, kayaks, cross country skies, etc. took them. It was further suggested that perhaps such a service might carry their luggage and gear between the networks of overnight experience opportunities.

Short Term and Medium Term “Doables”

During the Reach discussions, participants were asked to identify actions which they felt might be undertaken to realize the enhancements and innovations they had put forward. The following highlights those “doables” related to Reach-specific doables”

Top Priority EQ Types

Current Guests

The participants were asked to speculate in EQ type terms, who were their current guests and who in the foreseeable future were their desired guests. This was intended to provide a part of the foundation for moving forward.

It was speculated, for example, that those most often visiting the following areas or types of attractions may be:

- By Town Museum – Gentle Explorers, Cultural Explorers and Personal History Travelers
- Victoria Island – Cultural Explorers, Buffs, Personal History Travelers
- Winterlude – Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travelers, Cultural Explorers, Buffs
- Black Rapids, Long Island locks - Gentle Explorers, Cultural Explorers, Buffs
- Water Tours / Taxis – Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers and Rejuvenators
- Friends of Rideau services – Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Buffs
- Cycle Touring – Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, No Hassle Travelers

It might be speculated that a majority of current guests are regionally high repeat guests, who may, owing to their familiarity with the Reach and perhaps being nearby residents act as they are Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators.

In sum, the current guests may be best hosted by responding to the values and traits of Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travelers, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural explorers.

Future Guests

The participants believe that this Reach has a rich array of cultural heritage experiences which are capable of attracting guests from afar. They also believe that the waters and landscape beyond the urban core (Ottawa Locks to Dows Lake) are capable of affording safe and accessible escapes for local urban dwellers.

With this in mind, the participants indicated an interest in growing the number of guests from both near and far, who are Authentic Experiencers (nature experience biased), Cultural Explorers (culture experience biased), and for those escaping to outdoor activities and serenity, No Hassle Travelers and Gentle Explorers.

The focus of enhancements and innovations relating to exploring and discovering the Canal's and waterway's cultural and natural heritage resources are prominently a response to Authentic Experiencer, Cultural Explorer, No Hassle Traveler and Gentle Explorer values and interests.

By 2014

Participants identified the following types of enhancements and innovations, which they felt were feasible. The listing is provided as food for thought for others.

- Develop an inventory of currently available experience opportunities in this Reach and Corridor-long as a basis for developing menus of opportunities for priority and then all EQ types
- Guest information services can contemporize its guest information services with “tablet” capacities and have more complete information base to advise guests regarding experience opportunities, events and attractions. (Friends of Rideau Depot may serve as pilot).
- Provide space for a café / kiosk along Canal to welcome and launch explorers and leisure travelers in a more full set of experience opportunities – a gathering space (NCC).
- Group and self-guided touring services can customize their websites to respond to priority EQ types, and tweak tour descriptions to respond to guests information desires (Ottawa Cycle Tours).
- Share with other organizations, the thinking behind enhancing the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor in becoming a more diversified experiential tourism destination, and adopting a culture of hosts supporting guest explorers and leisure travelers.
- Share VEOC project thinking and approach with committees planning for 2017 celebrations.
- Expand the canoe / kayak rental service at Long Island launched in 2013, and augment with support shuttle service and app with pre-programmed exploration routes (Long Island Locks).
- Develop basic walking tour suggestions emanating from each lock in Ottawa Reach, with guidance for priority EQ types.
- Inquire of lock station guests (both land and water) as to what experience opportunities and related services they would desire in future.
- Continually work towards integrating or cross-referencing experience opportunity information web sites.
- Better integrate Canal lock management and operations with neighbouring guest attractions and services in an effort to work together and collaboratively achieve more. Make this a priority throughout the Corridor.
- Museums and other non-profit attractions can become better hosts welcoming guests to their experience opportunities, yet going beyond to be concierge-like advisors of related or complementary experience opportunities.
- Address the image that the Canal is closed in winter by continuing to tell its stories beyond the boating season and facilitating winter perspectives not achievable or appreciated in summer. Heighten profile of Canal experience opportunities in winter, throughout the Corridor.

- Heighten the profile and value assigned to viewing the Ottawa locks from the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. This is a value added perspective.
- Mentor and sponsor innovation and enhancement by sharing information and experience of established entrepreneurs in launching action to realize the opportunities identified in these discussions.

By 2017

- Ensure the heritage of the Rideau Canal within this Reach and throughout the Corridor is a prominent element of 2017 Canada anniversary celebration themes and events.
- Inventory current expertise and grow this capacity in support of welcoming guests to the 150th anniversary celebrations of Canada with profile given to the Canal heritage
- Demonstrate support for sustainable tourism by profiling electric powered touring boats and water taxis within this Reach and where feasible throughout the Corridor.
- Recognize and motivate partnered and collaborative approaches to supporting guests, rather than current competitive perspectives. The competition is not ourselves but rather other destinations and experience opportunities. The business culture should be to grow together and network in responding to guests.
- Interconnect the information / hosting services throughout this Reach and the Corridor as a whole. Through contemporary technology and a single web base, guests will be able to gather the information they require from all of us and all of us will be profiled.
- In the minds of guests and hosts, and in actuality, extend land based canal use experience opportunities throughout the year. Walking, biking, interpretive programming, picnicking, etc. should not be perceived to end with the closure of the locks, and should not have a brief profile during Winterlude. Reposition Canal related experience opportunities in this Reach and Corridor-long as all season opportunities; and take necessary actions to support guests in all seasons.
- Heighten the profile of the Algonquin and other First Nations people's heritage in this Reach and where appropriate throughout the Corridor.
- Support and contribute to the establishment of a single direction and leadership body for the Canal experience opportunities throughout the Corridor.
- Support the development of a 'shuttle service' for Canal guests throughout this Reach; and link this to a similar shuttle service for guests throughout the Corridor.
- Strategically profile all new and enhanced experience opportunities offered within this Reach and Corridor-long.