

NS LIVE CASE SERIES 2018: CLEANING THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN: COMMUNITIES PROUDLY BEAUTIFYING OTTAWA

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NEW SYNTHESIS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this case study are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of other organizations mentioned/or identified herein.

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“It is estimated that a single item of litter may be observed by as many as 500 people”
City of Ottawa (1994).

The Context

In 1994, the City of Ottawa, Canada’s capital city, launched *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* as part of its Community Pride Program¹ titled *Ottawa Clean, Green and Proud*. The City was facing waste management and litter challenges.² Growing populations coupled with fewer services was resulting in areas that were becoming difficult to maintain in accordance to the quality standards set out by the City.³ Ottawa City officials and residents were concerned that the City’s image as a “pristine capital city”⁴ was at risk of being tarnished.

Ottawa had long been considered as a clean and beautiful city with parliament buildings, museums, waterways and several community parks. Moreover, the city had built a reputation as a tourist destination for millions of people⁵. Escalating garbage levels and shrinking government resources posed several risks, including risks to business attraction, tourism and improving the quality of life of residents.

Cleaning the Capital Campaign was launched to encourage citizens to take voluntary actions towards a cleaner, greener and a more beautiful Ottawa. The *Campaign*, now in its 25th year, encourages raising awareness about litter consciousness and fostering a sense of community through cleanup activities. The initiative began as an annual month-long campaign in the Spring to reduce litter in Ottawa. However, in 2006, due to the Spring campaign’s overwhelming success, an annual fall cleanup was added.

One of the early sources of inspiration for this initiative was PITCH-IN CANADA’s *Pitch-In Week* which involved millions of Canadians in reducing the waste they produce and “cleaning up misplaced waste from urban, rural and wilderness areas”⁶.

This case details the steps that the City of Ottawa took to foster civic pride⁷ and boost community self-organization through collective cleanup activities. It shines a light on initiating change through collaboration and learning, framing for serving a higher public purpose, leveraging the contributions of various partners, and generating “results of increasing value for society”⁸.

1 Note that the Community Pride Program consisted of a wide range of public participation initiatives, including *Cleaning the Capital Campaign*, the *Adopt-a-Park/Roadway/Gateway Program*, the City’s “Don’t be a Litter Bug” campaign, the *Graffiti Management Program* and the *Mural Program*. However, this case study focuses on *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* as it is the most recognized initiative.

2 City of Ottawa (1994). Department of Engineering and Works: ‘Ottawa Clean, Green and Proud’

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 For instance, Ottawa’s Tourism Annual Report 2017 noted that “over 11 million people visited Ottawa during 2017—an 8.8 percent increase over 2016 and the strongest growth of any Canadian city.”

6 City of Ottawa (1994). Department of Engineering and Works: ‘Ottawa Clean, Green and Proud’

7 Note that there are different interpretations for ‘civic pride’. Collins (2016) states that “Civic pride relates to how places promote and defend local identity and autonomy. It is often championed as a key value and aspiration of local government”. This interpretation is relevant for this case, which focuses on ‘civic pride’ as having and showing a sense of pride in one’s city (or community) and working together to make it better.

8 Bourgon, Jocelyne (2017). p18

Initiating Change: Collaborating with and Learning from Others

On June 7, 1993, the City of Ottawa’s Department of Engineering and Works advised Members of Council through an information report to undertake an anti-litter campaign by “expanding its existing programs and developing an education campaign regarding the subject”⁹. Prior to this, the Department had retained the services of PITCH-IN CANADA, a national non-profit organization, to “explain the benefits of the City of Ottawa becoming involved in a Civic Pride Program”¹⁰.

The Department sought Council’s endorsement of a special week during which residents would assist in clean up efforts in communities across the City. It was proposed that this week would coincide with PITCH-IN CANADA’s Pitch-In Week, which fell on the week of May 2-8, 1994.



PITCH-IN CANADA, an organization founded in 1967 by a group of Canadians, had dedicated itself to the “preservation and sustainable growth of natural ecosystems and communities”¹¹. The organization had gained a reputation for establishing and sustaining clean up programs and implementing community-based litter control programs through its Civic Pride Model. Its Civic Pride Model emphasized cost effectiveness and efficiency through expert design; finding grassroot solutions through local action and bringing people together from all sectors of the community to address common concerns.

The Department of Engineering and Works made a number of recommendations to City Council, including the establishment of a corporate inter-departmental working committee and a community-based action group; the design of a detailed action plan to implement a Civic Pride Program; the adoption of a program theme, ‘Ottawa - Clean, Green and Proud’ for the Civic Pride Program; and City Council’s proclamation of May 2-8, 1994 as “Spring Cleaning the Capital” in Ottawa. The cost for these initiatives would come from existing departmental funds and private sponsorships.

Upon receiving the City Council’s approval, the Department proceeded with its recommendations by bringing the PITCH-IN CANADA on board. As a result, the first year of *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* initiative focused on PITCH-IN CANADA’s Civic Pride Model, a model which approaches litter in the community through a systematic lens. The core components of the Civic Pride Model consisted of a Civic Pride Seminar, local government

9 Ibid.

10 City of Ottawa (1994). Department of Engineering and Works: ‘Ottawa Clean, Green and Proud’

11 PITCH-IN CANADA (n.d.). “About Us: FAQ”. Retrieved on October 17, 2018 from <http://pitch-in.ca/about-us/faq/>

endorsement, appointing a program manager to coordinate activities, training in litter reduction, establishing a Civic Pride Task Force and an Action Group, conducting research and implementing a detailed action plan. Covering the first two years and involving all sectors of the community, the action plan was meant to address technology and system analysis, program development, legislation and enforcement education, and promotions.

Collaborating with and learning from PITCH-IN CANADA in the initial stages of the program set the *Campaign* on a successful path. For example, during the first year of the *Campaign*, 2,400 kg of litter was collected through 35 registered projects, consisting of 3,000 participants. In the second year of the initiative, 5,600 kg of litter was collected through 100 registered projects, consisting of 7,000 participants. Registered projects and participants had more than *doubled* in the second year of the *Campaign*. (See Appendix 1 - *Cleaning the Capital Yearly Statistics: 1994-2018*).

Building Support

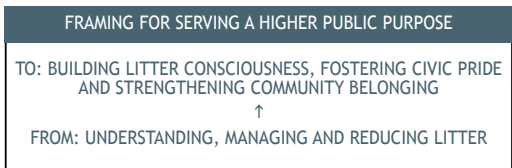
During PITCH-IN CANADA’s civic seminar with the Department of Engineering and Works in 1993, the Department invited four school boards, the National Capital Commission, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton’s Environmental Services and Transportation Departments, the Ontario Ministries of the Environment and Energy and Transportation, the Ottawa Environmental Advisory and Waste Reduction Citizen’s Committees. There were approximately 20 attendees.

Moreover, the Department of Engineering and Works consulted with other departments and established a mailing list of approximately 250 community associations, business improvement areas, malls and shopping centres, schools, recreation facilities and housing groups. These groups and several other community actors received a letter about the *Campaign* and how they could promote participation.

Furthermore, in order to maximize exposure and participation, a media campaign targeting high profile members of the community and members of City Council was undertaken. Promotional materials and activities, including t-shirts, banners, posters, print advertisement in local community newspapers were also helpful in building support for the program.

Framing for Serving a Higher Public Purpose

Program officials were keen to ensure that *Cleaning the Capital* would become an annual event whereby more residents and community groups could engage in cleanup projects with pride. The Program officials knew that in order to sustain the initiative and make long-term impacts, a broader and deeper consciousness of litter was essential. They realized early on that they



had to go beyond the traditional approaches of legislation, education and enforcement as ways of managing and reducing litter. For example, they were aware that some communities across the country had launched multi-media education campaigns to encourage resident compliance while others took the enforcement route, banning materials and issuing fines for non-compliance.

The Program Staff and Department understood that the driving force for a Civic Pride Program was the community; “*the community becomes a place in which to be proud to live, therefore, proud to maintain*”¹². Community spirit and pride of ownership were essential for success.

As a result, *Cleaning the Capital* was framed around building individual consciousness in communities and fostering civic pride. The Program Staff and Department expected that a community spirit of working with neighbours to better their neighbourhoods would grow, and municipal forces will receive much needed assistance in maintaining the city. The Department’s Operations Branch committed to providing the necessary labour and equipment required to assist volunteers during the cleanup *Campaign*.

Cleaning the Capital Campaign: Self-organized Communities in Action

Cleaning the Capital is an annual campaign that encourages community commitment to keeping Ottawa clean, green, litter-free and graffiti-free during the Spring and Fall seasons. The City of Ottawa supports and encourages neighbourhood cleanups by providing cleanup materials such as gloves, garbage bags, yard and leaf waste bags, graffiti removal supplies and campaign promotional materials to registered campaign participants. Participants are eligible to win campaign prizes through an early bird and a cleanup report draw¹³.

For a quarter of a century, this initiative has encouraged community-based self-organisation¹⁴ and citizen engagement. Although the initiative started as a Spring Campaign, an annual Fall *Campaign* was added in 2006 due to the initiative’s success since its inception (See Appendix 2 for Fall 2018’s schedule). Residents come together as a community and combine efforts to make the city clean and green. To participate, community members plan and register their projects.



12 City of Ottawa (1994). Department of Engineering and Works: ‘Ottawa Clean, Green and Proud’¹³ City of Ottawa (2018): “Cleaning the Capital 2018 Campaign: Sponsorship Guide”.

14 Edelenbos and Colleagues (2018) refer to self-organization as “bottom-up initiatives that are community-driven and aim to advance public administration and policy making via sustainable models of cooperation among citizens”.

The Planning Phase

This phase includes picking the project site, cleanup date and time; promoting the project and gathering team members; and planning for the proper disposal of compost, garbage, recycling, leaf-and-yard waste and any other hazardous items participants may collect. There are no size restrictions for teams.

The Registration Phase

The next phase is the registration process. One can “visit ottawa.ca/clean, or call 3-1-1 (TTY: 613-580-2401) to register”¹⁵ a cleanup project. An interactive map shows potential participants which locations of the city have already been claimed and the online registration form allows individuals or teams to choose their project site and indicate the cleanup supplies that they need. Participants can select location(s) of their choice, including parks, shorelines, bus stops, pathways or any public area that requires litter pickup or graffiti removal¹⁶.

The Winning Phase – Prizes and Recognition

Participants (volunteers) who register their cleanup project before the official start date in Spring or Fall (“early birds”) have a chance to win one of many early bird prizes donated by the Campaign’s sponsors. Moreover, participants who submit a final cleanup report are also eligible for prizes¹⁷. In addition to the prizes, a *Ward Award* is presented each year to the Ward with the highest rate of volunteer participation (not based on projects) in cleanup projects, as a percentage of the Ward population.

Leveraging the Contributions of Various Partners

Program Staff and Coordinator of *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* enroll the contributions of diverse sponsors and community actors, including individuals, schools (sub divided by Day-care/Montessori, Elementary, High School and Post-secondary), community/neighbourhood/ recreation associations, youth groups (guides and scouts), tenant associations, religious organizations, business corporations, family/friends, service clubs, government, neighbours and community agency/organization. For instance, over the years:

- Schools have responded to this initiative by organizing some of the most substantial cleanup projects in the city and allowing students to apply volunteer hours to students’ Community Involvement Program.

15 City of Ottawa (2018). “Early birds can register now for GLAD Cleaning the Capital” <https://ottawa.ca/en/news/early-birds-can-register-now-glad-cleaning-capital-1>.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

- Corporate and community partners have made significant contributions to the *Campaign* (See Appendix 3 for a list of 2018’s sponsors). These include financial contributions and/or in-kind services such as the provision of cleanup and graffiti removal supplies, services and participant prizes.
- Local media has played a huge role in raising awareness about the *Campaign*.

In addition to maximizing diverse community assets and contributions, the Program Staff has been able to communicate the benefits of the different categories of sponsorships to donors and supporters (See Appendix 4 - Sponsorship Benefits). For example, GLAD is currently the presenting sponsor (\$50,000+). This gives the organization a high-profile exposure (marketing opportunity) through various channels such as bus ads, logo on campaign shirts and letters, digital ads, bilingual campaign posters, etc.

Results

Over the last 25 years, *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* has attracted over 1.3 million participants¹⁸. Over 21,000 cleanup projects have been completed across Ottawa resulting in over 1 million kilograms of litter removed from public spaces.¹⁹ This is equivalent to over 103 fully loaded garbage trucks.²⁰

Sponsorship support for *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* has been extremely successful over the years, with over \$3.2 million in private sector sponsorship to date.²¹ This significant level of support demonstrates the commitment of businesses to the initiative and to supporting the public’s desire to keep the capital clean, green, litter and graffiti free.

Today, Ottawa is among the top five cleanest cities in Canada.²² The city also ranks highly as one of the best places to live in Canada.²³ Moreover, in a recent Best Cities ranking, it was noted that “Ottawa, Canada’s capital city, is quite literally one of the cleanest, brightest destinations in the world, which it showed off to the world in style during the country’s 150th birthday in 2017.”²⁴

18 City of Ottawa (2018). *Cleaning the Capital Campaign*. Yearly Statistics from 1994-2018. Public Works and Environmental Services Department (Public Outreach and Communications Unit).

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 City of Ottawa (2018): “*Cleaning the Capital 2018 Campaign: Sponsorship Guide*.”

22 <https://www.mandmservices.ca/blog/top-five-cleanest-cities-in-canada/>

23 Money Sense (2018). *Canada’s Top 25 Best Places to Live in 2018*. <https://www.moneysense.ca/spend/real-estate/canadas-best-places-to-live-25-2018/>. In 2018, Ottawa was ranked as the 2nd best place to live in Canada.

24 <https://www.bestcities.org/rankings/worlds-best-cities/ottawa/>

Benefits

The *Campaign* encourages community partnerships with the city of Ottawa; strengthens partnerships with individuals, community groups and businesses; fosters community pride and a sense of belonging; and contributes to existing quality of life and that of future generations. For example:

- The *Campaign* benefits neighbourhoods by contributing to a more aesthetically appealing city. As Canada's Capital and a key tourist destination, "Ottawa's image as a clean and green city is paramount on both the international stage, and as a caring, safe, environmentally responsible community that residents call home."²⁵
- Sponsors of the *Campaign* benefit from media exposure and enhance their corporate image by demonstrating their commitments to environmental stewardship.
- Reductions in litter through this volunteer-based and low-budget *Campaign* contributes to overall cost savings for the City of Ottawa.
- Studies on neighbourhood greening have revealed that "investment in greening yields significant economic returns, specifically, dramatic increases in real estate values."²⁶
- The *Campaign* strengthens residents' environmental citizenship by increasing pro-environmental behavioral intention.

Challenges

As a long-standing community initiative, *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* has been very successful (see trends in appendix 1 chart). The initiative has generally seen significant increases in terms of registered participants, kilograms of litter collected and registered projects. However, there have been minor decreases in a few years due to the impact of bad weather conditions, restrictions during election years (e.g., 2018 Fall) and flooding. For instance, in 2016, Ottawa was hit with record-breaking snowfall.²⁷ As result, the snow lingered and there was limited time to undertake cleanups. Also, in April and May 2017, the Ottawa and Gatineau region witnessed record-breaking flooding. The "heavy rainfall coupled with snowmelt and increasing soil saturation eventually led to the worst flooding seen in decades."²⁸ The flood affected many residents and impacted the *Campaign*. Despite these challenges, this initiative has maintained momentum for 25 years.

25 City of Ottawa (2005). Report to Planning and Environment Committee: Cleaning the City and Greening the City. p7.

26 Wachter, Susan (2005).

27 The Globe and Mail (2016): "Ottawa hit with record-breaking snowfall" <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/ottawa-hit-with-record-breaking-snowfall/article28776443/>. For example, Ottawa saw a record snowfall with 51.2 cm in one day (mid-February).

28 CBC News. 2017. "The Ottawa and Gatineau flood: A photo timeline." <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-gatineau-floods-photos-week-1.4110510>

Maintaining Momentum and Measuring Success

In the City of Ottawa's *2003 Environmental Strategy*, it was noted that "a sustainable community with the high quality of life envisioned by its citizens depends upon contributions from all of us. Our participation rate will be the most important measure of success."²⁹

Cleaning the Capital Campaign has attracted a total of **1,321,589** participants since its inception. Over the last 25 years, the number of registered participants rose from 3,000 in 1994 to 75,639 in 2018 (with a *yearly average* of 52,864 participants). This level of success speaks to the measures put in place by the Program officials to sustain momentum.

Program officials have been able to maintain momentum over the years by making changes and improvements to the initiative. They solicit feedback from participants each year through cleanup forms; make changes to the program that is better suited to the residents (e.g., flexible criteria to accommodate requests from community members); communicate the benefits of the *Campaign* to diverse stakeholders; and follow up with sponsors' service renewal agreements. They have also highlighted that this initiative has been successful due to its simplicity. Residents can organize themselves quickly and show that they care about where they live.

Program Staff and various partners continue to promote the initiative using various communications channels and diverse social media platforms. For example, Ottawa City Councillors and Campaign Sponsors often attend community cleanup events and utilize their social media platforms to promote the *Campaign*. Program staff also incorporates key messaging tools with campaign branding and looks for new ways to enhance the effectiveness of the initiative.

Beyond the Campaign

City of Ottawa residents have continued to preserve the beauty of Ottawa's parks, shoreline and public spaces for its current residents but also for future generations. The *Campaign* continues to focus on keeping Ottawa's built and natural infrastructure safe and clean.

The results achieved clearly attests to the desires of citizens to take ownership over the well-being of their communities and public spaces.³⁰

Beyond creating the enabling environment for community self-organization, this *Campaign* brings people together, fosters civic pride, alters behaviours positively and strengthens community bonds. For example, Program Staff have observed that over the years, some communities plan major events (e.g., community barbecue and picnic) as part of their cleaning activities.

29 City of Ottawa (2003). "Environmental Strategy for the City of Ottawa (Ottawa 2020)". https://documents.ottawa.ca/sites/default/files/documents/enviro_strategy_en.pdf p.14. p. 14.

30 Bourgon, Jocelyne (2017).

These events give neighbours the opportunity to connect and share ideas regarding community needs. These connections and conversations provide a fertile ground for generating ideas and taking collective action to address local problems.

The Program Staff have also observed that significant portions of registrations each year are returning registrations, and that many organizations have been participants since the inception of the *Campaign*. For instance, the 2018 *Spring Campaign* had 1,028 projects registered with 60,055 participants. Of these, 718 projects were returning registrations and 314 were new registrations. This level of dedication and numerous volunteer hours contribute to developing the capital in a sustainable direction and generating “results of higher value at lower overall cost to society.”³¹

Furthermore, the Program Staff have highlighted that some community residents no longer wait for the *Campaign* period in Spring or Fall to clean their community. They have made personal commitments to pick up litter throughout the year as proud community members.

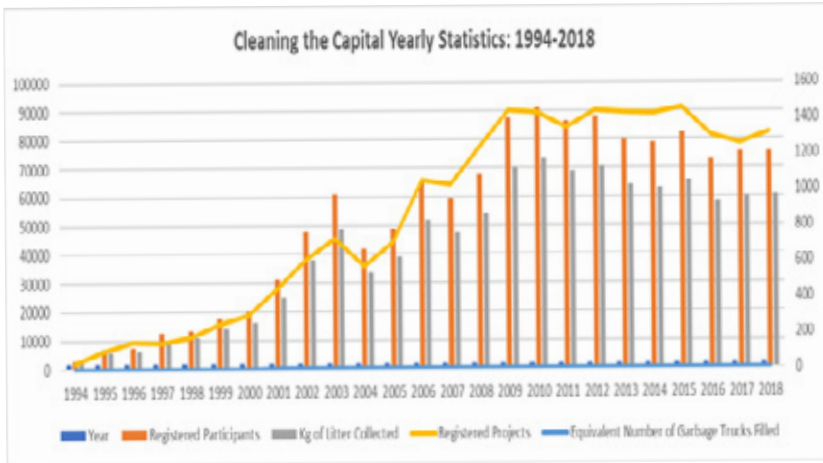
Overall, *Cleaning the Capital Campaign* highlights the value of citizens as city-makers through community self-organization and collaboration. Although “the municipal level of government provides the greatest opportunity for interaction with the community at large...what is key is that the City should not, or cannot, accomplish a sustainable [and clean] community through its own actions. It is the community - individuals, industries, businesses, government agencies, non-government and not-for-profit agencies and community groups - that can make the greatest changes in our environment. It is therefore the role of the City as a Corporation to tap into best practices established by other organizations and to continue to coordinate its efforts with these organizations.”³²

31 Ibid.

32 City of Ottawa (2003). “Environmental Strategy for the City of Ottawa (Ottawa 2020)”. p14.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Cleaning the Capital Yearly Statistics: 1994-2018



Source: Chart created by author. Yearly Statistics from 1994-2018 was provided by the City of Ottawa's Public Works and Environmental Services Department (Public Outreach and Communications Unit).

Appendix 2- Fall 2018 Schedule of Cleaning the Capital Campaign

Period	Activities
August 15, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early bird registration begins. Register your litter pickup or graffiti removal project by September 14 to be eligible to win an early bird prize donated by our generous sponsors.
September 15, 2018 - October 15, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Cleaning the Capital campaign
September 28, 2018 - September 30, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Cleanup Weekend • Note - If a project takes place during Capital Cleanup Weekend, a campaign sponsor and/or your city Councillor may visit the team during your registered cleanup!
October 15, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration ends
October 31, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline to submit your online cleanup report. After you have finished your cleanup project, please submit your online cleanup report. Submit it by October 31, 2018 and your team will be entered in a draw to win prizes donated by our sponsors. You will need your registration code to access your cleanup report.

Appendix 3- 2018 Sponsors/ Contributors

GLAD (Clorox Company of Canada)	Community Voice
1-800-GOT-JUNK?	The Ottawa Citizen
Ottawa Haunted Walk	Le Droit
ROMCO	Ottawa Sun
Coca Cola Refreshments	Giant Tiger
National Capital Commission	Gabriel Pizza / Crust & Crate
Ottawa 67's Hockey Club	Escape Manor
Ottawa Fury FC	Canadian War Museum & Canadian Museum of History
The Royal Oak	Canadian Agriculture and Food Museum & Canadian Aviation and Space Museum

Appendix 4- Sponsorship Benefits

SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS 2018



	Presenting Sponsor \$50,000 +	Major Sponsor \$25,000 +	Contributing Sponsor \$14,000 +	Supporting Sponsor \$3,500 +	Friend Sponsor \$200 +
Naming rights & exclusivity in sponsor category	✓				
Logo always displayed with campaign logo	✓				
Logo on campaign newsletters	✓				
Logo on campaign shirts	✓				
Digital ads	✓				
Bus ads	✓	✓			
Social media	✓	✓	✓		
Recognition in Community Champions Program*	Supporter Level	Supporter Level	Patron Level		
Ads in major & community newspapers	Logo	Logo	Logo	Name only	Name & link
Ottawa.ca/clean coverage	Logo & link	Logo & link	Logo & link	Name & link	Name & link
Campaign posters, displays and other collateral	Logo	Logo	Logo	Name & link	Name & link
Receive sponsor recognition certificate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity to provide media value, in-store or in-house promotion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Campaign events, photo opportunities, or other media activity	Speaking Opportunity	Display space	Display space	Display space	Invitation

Source: City of Ottawa (2018): Cleaning the Capital 2018 Campaign: Sponsorship Guide.

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