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Nov. 17, 2022

Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy
Ontario Legislature

Chair, Vice-Chair and Members

This submission is on behalf of the Hintonburg Community Association (HCA), an inner city community in Ottawa and an active member of the 70 associations forming the Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa (FCA).

The Hintonburg Community Association has very many concerns about Bill 23 "*More Homes Built Faster Act*" and we ask you to delay the vote on this bill and provide more time for much needed and broader consultation. Our newly elected City government has just been sworn into office two days ago; and in Ottawa this includes a new Mayor and almost half of Council that is also new. We all need more time to consider the significant and long term implications for city development contained in Bill 23.

Our community has undergone significant intensification over the last several years. For example, two years ago the zoning was changed to allow up to an eight unit apartment on a very small 10m x 30m lot.

The 2021 census shows 4971 residential dwelling units in our small Hintonburg community. There are also another 4760 units that have already been approved in our neighbourhood but are not yet built even though some of these unbuilt developments were approved close to ten years ago. The development industry has not been in a rush to build these units despite historically low interest rates over this period of time. Indeed, one developer just recently cancelled a major development in our area because of lack of demand for condo tower residential units with limited bedrooms. In other words, certainly within our community, there already exists unused potential for significant intensification in an area that already has services in place.

We also believe this is the situation in many other areas of the city. We understand that over the last decade in Ottawa 48,000 units have been approved through rezoning: but again only 7,000 of those have been built or even started. Clearly regulations, Nimbyism

and the approval process have not been the reasons that these 41,000 units have not been built over this long period of time. Bill 23 as it currently is drafted simply does not deal with the key issue for the form of residential construction required to meet the city's intensification goals or the Province's affordable housing targets.

Development Charges:

Once these units are built we will need more parks, libraries and recreation facilities with a doubling of the density. Eliminating development charges will take away the funds needed to build/increase these needed amenities that we and all communities need as the population increases. Amenities and services are important for healthy communities. The implications for our residents is clear, higher property taxes and/or reduced services. Even if we accept that existing home owners will subsidize new home buyers, the Bill contains no provisions to ensure savings will be passed on to buyers. Please reverse this part of the bill, it will devastate the finances of municipalities.

Increasing the development boundaries will also lead to increased property taxes for existing home owners. It has been well demonstrated that providing services in Greenfield developments is much more expensive than in already developed communities. Thus, each such new unit of housing will raise the average cost of providing services and thus will require either increases in property taxes or a further reduction in services.

Affordability and Social Housing:

We are very concerned about the proposed recent changes that will severely limit inclusionary zoning. The clear need is to expand this approach, which is used in cities across North America, rather than reduce it. Affordability, as well as social housing to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, is the biggest issue that we see in our area as well as the city. Over the last decade we have lost very many affordable units – units that have been kept vacant for years for possible redevelopment or replaced with very expensive units. We believe it is just wishful thinking that this legislation will bring about a reduction in prices. The Bill also does not address the very serious shortage of funding for social housing that must be in place if the needs of the homeless and the least economically secure Ontarians will be met.

We are also concerned this Bill will limit the city's ability to create a rental replacement by-laws to prevent "renovictions". This will further reduce affordability and will increase homelessness.

Minor Corridors: Allowing 6 storeys on minor corridors does not take into account the width of some of these minor corridors and will have a huge impact on the abutting areas. This should not be a one size fits all change.

Urban Sprawl:

These proposed changes will result in a greatly expanded urban boundary. The Official Plan that Ottawa developed worked to reduce the sprawl by focussing on intensification

within the already built up areas and ensuring that at least 50% of new units would be built here. As outlined above, increasing the boundary will increase the costs of servicing, with the reduction in development charges.

Public engagement:

Public engagement on developments is essential and many times has led to far better developments for both the developer, the City and the community. Restricting time limits, limiting Site Plan Control to more than 10 units and eliminating third party appeals will eliminate those positive benefits and we are concerned that it will increase problems.

Much of the delays that currently take place are a function of developers seeking rezoning to significantly increase heights. Through the Planning Process, cities have developed - and many are now reconsidering zoning and alternatives to zoning – well considered City Plans. Encouraging development that works within these plans rather than spending considerable resources and time going around limits will greatly speed up the development process.

Finally, prohibiting municipalities from commenting on landscaping features except on health, safety and accessibility is a problem – landscaping can reduce the impact of developments and help provide more mitigation.

At this point in time, we ask that you put aside this flawed Bill 23, and begin an intensive consultation to address the issues we have outlined above.

Sincerely

Emily Addison
President

cc: Minister Steve Clark
Premier Doug Ford
MPP Joel Harden
Mayor Mark Sutcliffe
Councillor Jeff Leiper