



9 July 2018

Mayor & Councillors
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Re: Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment - 900 Albert Street

Dear Mayor & Councillors,

The Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa (FCA) is an incorporated, non-profit, volunteer-run organization that acts as the forum for community associations and similar non-profit volunteer groups across Ottawa. Member associations share information about issues facing their communities and, when appropriate, take joint action.

The FCA generally does not comment on individual development applications but feels compelled to do so in this case for the following reasons:

1. Failure to comply with the applicable secondary plan

The proposed development deviates significantly from the recently completed Bayview Station District Secondary Plan. Secondary plans are adopted following significant public consultation and must be upheld. This proposal moves away from decisions that were made through extensive community and industry consultation both in terms of height and active street facades.

The secondary plan identifies a maximum height of 30-storays for this site but the proposal seeks to more than double that height. The proposed development also literally turns its back on the neighbouring community rather than connecting to and enlivening it. The south side of the building needs to be redesigned in order to ensure that it will not inhibit future growth of the neighbourhood.

For tall buildings it is critical that the public realm is well designed to ensure that it is welcoming and safe for pedestrians, and amenities are offered to residents and the surrounding community. Given this, the approval of this proposal would undermine the area planning process that the city should be defending. To permit such dramatic changes to this secondary plan just a few years after it was adopted by Council would send entirely the wrong message.

2. Insufficient Section 37 community benefits

The Section 37 benefits identified for this site are paltry by comparison with the uplift the developer is requesting. The entire process for negotiating Section 37 benefits needs to be re-examined by Council as the draw downs that staff are agreeing to often result in significant reductions to any community benefits. In this particular case, the proposed community benefits are dwarfed by the additional demands that this proposal would put on existing services in the neighbourhood.

3. Excessive parking which undermines Transit-Oriented Development

The proposed development, which is situated next to the future Bayview LRT station and is identified as a transit-oriented development, includes an excessive amount of parking. If LRT use is to be encouraged, and the modal-share for private vehicles decreased, then the City needs to establish maximum permitted parking levels. Indeed, the number of parking spots for cars should always be equal to or less than proposed bicycle parking. The rationale for increased density and height at this location is based entirely on its proximity to the future Bayview LRT station, so why does it need so much parking? This is not in line with the TOD policy adopted by the City.

4. Affordable housing and urban accommodation of families

The City needs to start to force large-scale developments such as this one to accommodate families and affordable housing. The City could do this by requiring that substantial percentage of units in all major new developments must be 2 and 3-bedroom units. To accommodate families, proposed developments also need to have a safe and animated public realm and amenities, such as parks, community meeting spaces and childcare facilities. As per the Official Plan, 25% of units should be affordable to the 30th and 20th percentile to ensure affordability near transit.

Conclusion

As the proposal fails to comply with the applicable secondary plan, provides insufficient section 37 community benefits, undermines the nature of transit-oriented development by proposing excessive parking, and does not make sufficient effort to accommodate families or provide affordable housing, the FCA must strongly oppose these applications and encourages planning committee and Council to refuse them.

We also believe that is not in the public interest for these matters to be heard by Council the day after planning committee and ask therefore that they be deferred to the next Council meeting.

Best regards,

Sheila Perry
President, FCA