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November 11th, 2022

To the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy

Whitney Block
Room 1405
99 Wellesley Street W
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Introduction

The Federation of Citizens Associations of Ottawa (the FCA) is a non-partisan, volunteer-driven, federation of community associations and other like-minded organisations, with 70 members from across urban, suburban, and rural parts of the National Capital region.

Our focus is on issues related to good planning; transportation; sustainable development; affordable housing; well-informed decision-making; and good governance, all of which is related to provisions of Bill 23 and its associated policies and regulations.

The Bill is highly complex; with many impactful, province-wide, urban, suburban, and rural implications. Our priority asks, but by no means our only ones, are:

(1) that the Committee take the time needed to listen to more affected stakeholders, up to 3 months, if need be, and

(2) that the Committee hold hearings in more cities outside the GTA, including Ottawa.

More housing supply provided more quickly and at more affordable prices is urgently needed. The FCA welcomes the Provincial government's determination to speedily remedy the housing supply and housing affordability crises facing many Ontarians.

Our members support and prefers development through intensification within current urban boundaries, but want that intensification done right.

If Intensification is done right, it need not come at the expense of a compromised public consultation process, of circumscribed appeal rights, of environmental protection, of more urban sprawl, of renovation protection for renters facing displacement, of sound urban design principles, of parkland and green spaces, and of the revenues that cities need for the infrastructure and amenities needed to make them more liveable habitats.

The Details:

The FCA fully shares the concerns identified by the City of Ottawa. We recommend that:

To minimize the impact on the city's ability to collect the revenues needed to support growth, the province offset the loss of Development Charges; Community Benefit Charges; Parkland Dedication fees as a result of Bill 23.

Continue to allow Conservation Authorities to comment on development applications if requested by the city.

Minimize the risk of negative impacts on renters by allowing municipal bylaws aimed at protecting evicted renters.

Minimize risks of environmental degradation by requiring municipalities to establish criteria for development in conservation areas to better protect wetlands, natural habitat systems, woodlands, and farmlands.

Streamline the Site Plan Control process but provide an exemption to allow municipalities to retain/introduce High Performance Development Standards (HPDS).

Contain urban sprawl. Do not permit reduce greenbelts.

Extend permitted Inclusionary Zoning areas to include hubs and high frequency transit routes when requested by the city.

To better address the housing affordability and homelessness crises, allow the city to develop an Inclusionary Zoning bylaw with up to 10% affordable units (or more subject to Provincial approval).

Summary &Conclusions

Bill 23 is well-intentioned but needs improvement. A few more months of public consultations would not affect the pace of development but could produce a better outcome with wider public acceptance.

Committee hearings in cities beyond the GTA, including Ottawa, is a high governance related FCA priority, one that would serve to demonstrate the Government's commitment to meaningful engagement with all Ontarians.

Best regards

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Cc: Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing; Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; Ottawa MPPs, Mayor of Ottawa, Ottawa City Council, FCA Board.