Social and Physical Infrastructure Support Density

Phased Implementation of the ZBL Supports Infrastructure that Supports Liveable Density

Motion

Whereas a **Zoning Bylaw** is the principal **legal tool** a municipality uses to implement the policies and vision established in its broader **Official Plan**, to directly integrate all elements of livability including physical infrastructure, social infrastructure, urban planning, and design;

Whereas the City of Ottawa, in its Official Plan and supporting documents, made the **commitment to** its citizens to implement a process of **progressive gentle intensification**, respectful of the existing neighbourhood contexts and mixed building form requirements, social equity and climate change adaptation and mitigation;

Whereas equity and inclusivity across the city can only be ensured if it accords with each community's unique geographic and physical constraints, and existing social and physical infrastructure;

Whereas Zoning creates **immediate *rights* to build density**, while **infrastructure planning** in Ottawa has been **reactive** and subject to budget cycles;

Whereas without a legal link (like a Holding provision), density inevitably outpaces capacity – as has already happened in parts of Ottawa where parks, schools and the social infrastructure that supports livability are inadequate or lacking, and the physical infrastructure is inadequate or failing;

Whereas the ongoing and increasing impact of extreme weather events due to climate change have made it critical that physical infrastructure replacement and/or upgrades are completed before adding density within communities;

Whereas, while Zoning defines what can be built and Master Plans define how it is supported, the critical - and current - issue is the serious lag between density (now) and infrastructure (later);

Whereas the FCA has proposed a "Phased Implementation" resolution to legally tie density permissions to measurable social and physical infrastructure benchmarks for (including but not limited to) schools, parks, community amenities, green infrastructure, transit, roads, sewers….;

Whereas Phased Implementation protects existing taxpayers from the certainty of infrastructure failure by ensuring growth pays for itself in real-time, rather than accruing a deficit of services;

Whereas the unintended consequence of not doing Phased Implementation prioritizes regulatory streamlining and market certainty for developers over service guarantees and resident safety;

Be it resolved that the new zoning by-law will:

- Require that the "As of right" Provisions will be applicable only when the physical and social infrastructure to support the proposed density in neighbourhoods, are planned for concurrently and funded, that design and planning guidelines have been addressed; and,
- Undergo reviews to monitor progress within five year progressive implementation timelines, to coincide with the Official Plan content and direction, applicability reviews; and,
- Include the required regulatory bridge wording to support the ongoing requirements for the above provision and process.

And, be it resolved that communities will be active participants:

- In the ongoing monitoring and review process for the Zoning By-law; and,
- In consultations on new development proposals that affect their neighbourhoods.

Term of Council Priorities, 2023-2026

- A city that has affordable housing and is more liveable for all
- A city that is more connected with reliable, safe and accessible mobility options
- A city that is green and resilient
- A city with a diversified and prosperous economy

The Ottawa River is creeping back along and above the storm drains into the north end of our neighbourhood.

The woods right across from these houses and the school is great habitat for beavers right now.

I would need well-above-the-knee boots to walk there.

Ottawa's Official Plan:

Intensification is about more than just numerical targets. It is about:

- Renewal that keeps up with population increases.
- Urban planning that results in liveable complete, safe, green, healthy, equitable neighbourhoods.
- Adopting robust measures to adapt to and mitigate the increasingly dire impacts of climate change.

To achieve this, Social, Physical and Green Infrastructure must be planned for in tandem with planning for population growth:

- Social Infrastructure - parks, schools, community centres, transit, fire and police services and all other amenities and services that create liveable neighbourhoods;
- Physical Infrastructure – roads, sidewalks, sanitary sewers, robust means to control stormwater, including green infrastructure, must be present, in good repair, sufficient and have reserve capacity to handle the increases in population. This is particularly important wherever infill is contemplated for existing neighbourhoods.
- Green Infrastructure is the bridge between social and physical infrastructure. It mitigates the city heat island effect (buildings last longer), improves residents' health and well-being (reduces health care costs), reduces the impacts of wild weather events on property, roads and sewers (physical infrastructure lasts longer; insurance claims go down), and more.

Social Infrastructure

Urban Infill occurs lot by lot. Projects are undertaken by many unrelated builders.

The amount of land is finite. None is being reserved for the services and amenities that make a city liveable.

This leads to:

Social Inequity:
Failing to plan for social infrastructure in tandem with planning for high-density residential zones, reduces the quality of life for residents.

- Where will the schools go? The community centres? The parks, recreational facilities, the grocery stores?

How will people of all ages and abilities stay active and healthy when extreme heat or cold make the streets un-walkable?

Where will the children play?

Those who can afford it may choose to pay the private sector for services that their taxes are supposed to cover.

Many cannot.

Uncoordinated Growth and Hot Spots of development:
Sprawl: it is expensive to provide necessary public services (like transit, waste collection, and police/fire services) to far flung developments.

Gentle density is a myth if not tied to infrastructure adequacy:

- Development “Hot Spots” have been the norm for many years.
- Construction equipment grinds up neighbourhood streets and endangers residents.
- No planning for social infrastructure means that the added density strains existing social and physical infrastructure.

The result:

Major costs to residents when funds are lacking to provide the services they need – and already are paying for with their taxes.

Major costs to the city when social infrastructure is absent or in poor repair and breaks down.

Transportation, housing, greenspace, recreational facilities, or any other number of City services cost residents more when infill is not accompanied by planning for and implementing social infrastructure.

Physical Infrastructure

Section 201 (3) and (7): despite comprehensive engineering reports and studies to confirm that infrastructure adequacy exists before development proceeds, redevelopment will continue.

Urban Infill occurs lot by lot, one builder by one builder.

Will these individual studies by individual builders take into account the cumulative impact on communities, including:

- The increase in the volume of wastewater produced by the higher population density;
- The inevitable decrease in the amount of land for stormwater infiltration;
- The impact of the loss of greenspace and trees, which are so effective at capturing and controlling stormwater runoff.

Zoning confers an immediate right to build.

Our aging roads and sewers are overwhelmed and failing. Residents and the city bear the costs: repairs, displacement and grief.
How many years will it take to:

- Develop the Infrastructure Capacity Management Program,
- Begin the evaluation process,
- Identify where capacity upgrades are needed,
- Allocate the funds for the upgrades,
- Hire the firms to make the upgrades and start working on them?

Neighbourhoods need protection now.

Building-in Green infrastructure

- Retain natural features like wetlands and forest,
- Green the city by preserving and sustainably planting and caring for trees, building rain gardens, and bioswales,
- Build climate resiliency and save the city and residents money. Green infrastructure:
  - Extends the life of “grey” infrastructure;
  - Supports biodiversity,
  - Supports mental and physical health.
  - Reduces insurance and other costs due to now-normal extreme weather that causes buildings and grey infrastructure to fail.

The ZBL is the set of regulations that enables the policy direction in the OP and Master Plans.
These regulations, judiciously applied, reviewed and updated as needed, in consultation with residents, should ensure that the City and all its residents reap these benefits and savings.