



*Ste. 146, 207 Bank Str., Ottawa ON K2P 2N2*

March 1, 2021

Mayor Jim Watson &  
Members of Ottawa City Council  
Ottawa City Hall  
110 Laurier Ave. West  
Ottawa ON K1P 1J1

Dear Mayor Watson:

### **FCA Request to delay the City's Official Plan process to 2023**

When City Council launched its Official Plan review process in March of 2019, it set a target of completion of this project by 2021. This was acknowledged to be ambitious, given the scope of this project – accommodating a 40% growth in population to 2046, combined with an aging demography, the crisis of climate change, and the arrival of new technologies, among other challenges. And that was before the pandemic of COVID-19 struck.

The Federation of Citizens Associations (FCA) represents 57 community groups across our city. Our members have been very much engaged in the draft Official Plan process, from the advent of the 5 Big Moves in 2019 to the development of Growth Management Strategies in May 2021 to analyzing the draft Official Plan document that was released this last November. In January this year our members participated in 4 FCA workshops covering Official Plan policies designed to contribute constructive comments on the current draft (which has been submitted to City staff). As well, many community groups have provided their own perspectives on the proposed Official Plan policies to City staff.

However, our members have found the current timeline to complete the City's Official Plan review process woefully inadequate. The draft OP document is large and complex - 275 pages plus maps and annexes – with significant policy changes that will impact neighbourhoods, written in language that makes interpretation difficult to determine, and without the metrics to measure how quality of life that we value in our neighbourhoods will be maintained under this draft plan. Add to this the short timeline for voluntary associations such as ours to engage in this review (mid-November to mid-March over the holiday season) and the constraints that COVID-19 has imposed on all of us, has compounded the inadequacy of the City's consultation timeline.

As a result, at our February 17 FCA General Meeting, a motion (tabled from our previous meeting in January) to request Ottawa City Council to delay this Official Plan review to 2023 was discussed and **overwhelmingly** endorsed by our members (*see copy attached*).

We believe this Official Plan review is important and needs to be done thoughtfully and comprehensively. We believe that while the current document attempts to address the challenges facing our city the significant policy changes being proposed need more refinement to ensure that as we accommodate growth we are able to maintain the quality of life that we value in our neighbourhoods.

For example, while we support the concept of 15 minute neighbourhoods, we are too painfully aware that many of our communities do not meet that standard, and fail to see policies that would, first, identify where these 15 minute neighbourhoods are and, second, provide a path to bring others to this standard. As well, we do not see policies that ensure sufficient access to greenspace and the provision of trees in communities that are targeted for transformational regeneration (aka intensification). We believe communities need to be consulted on the development of policies on managing the changes anticipated by this draft OP.

The City's current plan is to bring a **final** OP document to Planning Committee and ARAC in September. We believe that this should be treated as **another** draft of the Official Plan and be submitted for broad public consultation to ensure we are getting it right. This would bring the matter into 2022, an election year. We believe the municipal election would provide the best opportunity for public affirmation on the goals and policies for the City's revised Official Plan. That would lead to Council ratification of the revised Official Plan in 2023.

We ask that Council put the matter of delaying the Official Plan process on the agenda of Planning Committee so that Councillors can hear from the public and consider this request. The public must be assured that adequate time is being provided to consider the significant changes and how to manage them that this draft Official Plan proposes.

Yours truly,

Alex Cullen  
President FCA

Cc Mr. Stephen Willis, General Manager PIED  
Mr. Rick O'Connor, City Clerk

Motion from Feb. 17, 2021 FCA General Meeting:

Whereas COVID has greatly changed work routines, shopping routines, school routines and more and many changes will remain post-COVID, changing housing demands, etc.; and

Whereas the draft Official Plan for Ottawa is a complex document of 380 pages that requires time to digest and reflect on the implications for the next 25 years of City of Ottawa planning; and

Whereas the draft Official Plan for Ottawa was released during COVID restrictions on November 20, 2020 and PIED are requiring a deadline of February 17, 2021 (now March 12, 2021) to provide comment: and

Whereas COVID has prevented over 150 community associations and resident groups adequate time to review and to participate in the review (especially the face-to-face discussions and in-person community meetings that are the lifeblood of public consultation); and

Whereas City of Ottawa Planning (PIED) only has provided on-line access to the draft Official Plan and has provided only 12 print copies for access through Ottawa Public Library Inter Library Loan for over 150 community associations and resident groups (and the many maps and drawings are exceedingly difficult to review on-line due to complexity and scale); and

Whereas City of Ottawa policy emphasizes equity for all;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Federation of Citizens Associations of Ottawa (FCA) request that:

1. City Council delay its draft Official Plan process until such time that there can be a complete assessment made of the permanent changes to life, work and play as a result of COVID-19,
2. City of Ottawa amend its draft Official Plan planning process to seek public input on an updated draft Official Plan in the first quarter of 2023.