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FCA-Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa
207 Bank Street, Suite 146
Ottawa, ON K2P 2N2

Attn: Alex Cullen

Dear Mr. Cullen:

Thank you for your letter of March 1, 2021 regarding the FCA's request for the City of Ottawa to delay the current Official Plan process and timeline for more than a year. Appreciating that your stated reason by this request is to allow for a discussion to take place at Committee on the timelines, we will remind you that Committee and Council has already had that discussion this term, with full public input on the timelines and process for the City of Ottawa's New Official Plan.

Specifically, the "Ottawa Next: Beyond 2036" report was presented to Planning Committee on February 14, 2019. There were 6 delegations at that Planning Committee meeting, including Sheila Perry, FCA's president at the time, and yourself, representing the FCA's Transportation Committee. The report was amended at Committee to provide further direction to staff and the amended report was approved by City Council on February 27, 2019.

Based on the direction provided, the "Revised Workplan for the New Official Plan" report was presented and carried by Planning Committee on March 28, 2019, with no delegations presenting, and carried by City Council on April 10, 2019.

Given the above, we will not be placing your request on a future agenda. The matter has been decided this term. We were concerned throughout the process about ensuring that the public could have their say, and we were mindful of the potential impact of the pandemic on consultations. We are very, very pleased to say that our experience throughout this New Official Plan process is that the Council-approved approach that has been undertaken has not only provided opportunities for meaningful consultation well beyond the legal requirements of the *Planning Act*, it meets what residents and community groups were looking for in the Public Engagement Strategy and allows for a fulsome review of public feedback by planning staff as they prepare for each next phase, even with the pandemic.

You may recall that, when developing the City of Ottawa's Public Engagement Strategy in 2013, residents said that the recipe for a successful consultation would include:

- Providing ample information early in the process — participants wanted a solid knowledge-base before the engagement activity, with as much detail as possible (not a 'primer'), as early as possible.
- Starting engagement early in the process — participants wanted real opportunities to participate at the 'conceptual' phase and didn't want staff to present pre-conceived decisions that are too far developed to review;



- Allowing for a diversity of opinions and being clear on where public input can have a real influence in the process, and being clear about the project timelines and how it will unfold;
- Creating the conditions for meaningful dialogue, with consultation questions that are relevant to the project and tied to a decision-point (i.e., so that responses are clearly related to the subject matter/outcome);
- Planning for frequent and several phases of consultation;
- Ensuring equal weight is accorded to all input (community, rural, developer, businesses, etc.); and
- Reporting back in a detailed fashion how public input influenced the project outcome.

We are proud to be able to say that the thorough public engagement process that has been undertaken at each stage of the development of this Official Plan not only meets the objectives articulated above, but has successfully engaged over 100,000 residents to date. You will know from your previous time here that this level of engagement is exceptionally high and surpasses, by any objective measurement, the level of public engagement of any previous OP review in the City of Ottawa's history.

This has been made possible because staff listened to feedback on previous consultation efforts regarding timing, tools and tactics, and they undertook a new approach to stakeholder engagement for the New Official Plan. As you will recall when you were our colleague, previous consultations involved staff holding a limited number of large events at City Hall; with this Official Plan process, staff is meeting residents where they live by attending over 100 activities such as community meetings and pop-ups.

An innovative new website was created, as well as a toolkit to help communities hold their own discussions.

To ensure traditionally under-represented communities are engaged through every stage of the New Official Plan, the Ambassadors Working Group was created to inform tools and tactics, as well as provide feedback on policy direction, with respect to engaging those communities. Alongside this working group, there are also targeted engagement plans for Indigenous communities and rural residents.

Stakeholders were engaged early, with the preliminary research project Beyond 2036 beginning in October 2017. Since then, the New Official Plan has conducted several phases of stakeholder engagement to inform each new draft policy development.

In Spring 2019, a second series of discussion papers were posted for feedback and a public survey was launched to solicit input. This enhanced early engagement informed the development of the 5 Big Moves, which also had a public consultation phase in Fall 2019. What was heard throughout that fall informed the Preliminary Policy Directions brought to Council in December 2019 and the Growth Management Strategy brought to Council in May 2020 and February 2021 – both of which went through the committee process to facilitate general feedback and to hear from the public and stakeholders.



Additionally, in 2020 there was targeted engagement on key areas such as Economic Development, 15-minute Neighbourhoods and Transects. These phases of engagement further informed the draft New Official Plan released in November 2020.

The draft policies are currently undergoing engagement through 21 subject-specific feedback forms and via submissions to the newop@Ottawa.ca inbox. This feedback is being tracked and reviewed by the Planning Department.

So, and as noted earlier, the engagement on the New Official Plan using diverse tactics across all phases of the project has now reached over 100,000 residents, even during the pandemic, and staff are continuing to consult right up until the plan comes to Council for consideration in the fall 2021.

Moreover, Joint Committee discussions on each stage of the New Official Plan process have been robust and well-informed by many public delegations, in spite of (or perhaps even because of) the pandemic-related virtual meeting format we have had to use since last March. The “Preliminary Policy Directions” report was considered by the Joint Committee on December 9, 2019, with 23 delegations (including Sheila Perry for the FCA) and approved by City Council on December 11, 2019. The “New Official Plan – Growth Management Strategy” report was considered by the Joint Committee on May 11, 12 and 19, 2020, with 93 delegations (including Sheila Perry for the FCA), and approved by City Council on May 27, 2020; and the “New Official Plan: Growth Management Report II – Lands Proposed for Residential and Industrial Urban Expansion” report was considered by the Joint Committee on January 25 and 26, 2021, with 40 delegations (including yourself for the FCA), and approved by City Council on February 10, 2021.

The New Official Plan process is not over, and, as a result of the February 10, 2021 City Council meeting, Council, staff and the community will have more time to provide input on the next phase, as the draft New Official Plan will be brought forward in the fall rather than this June.

In the coming months, staff will continue to receive input. They will need to be allowed time to assimilate that input, balance requests and prepare a new draft. There will be further public consultation on the next version of the Official Plan, starting with a Public Open House in late August and leading to a Joint Committee (PC-ARAC) on Sept. 13-14-15. That meeting will be the Statutory Public Meeting and will serve as another opportunity for residents and stakeholder groups to make presentations to Joint Committee. That meeting and its delegations could lead to Joint Committees giving staff direction to make final modifications to the plan before it is considered and adopted by Council.

To see details of these phases of engagement, please see the following appendix. The appendix also includes an overview of the previous Official Plan review for additional context.

We are happy to see that your own organization, one of many, has taken advantage of the opportunities to participate at each stage, with all of the information available to Members of Council. We also very much appreciate the quality of feedback provided by your volunteer members and all of the other citizens and stakeholders groups.

Of course, this feedback is diverse. The challenge and the honour that we have as elected officials is to listen to staff’s professional advice and the feedback, we receive from everyone,



including the FCA and make the best decisions we can for the good of the City of Ottawa as a whole.

Finally, as you know well and we would hope you will convey to your members, this Official Plan, like all the others, will be a living document. As soon as the one is completed, work begins to bring this one to life on a neighbourhood scale and to prepare for the next. It is a dynamic process that all members of the public are welcome and invited to participate in, whether through zoning by-laws, official plan amendments or Official Plan policy refreshes and reviews.

Sincerely,

Jim Watson
Mayor
City of Ottawa

Jan Harder
Chair, Planning Committee
Councillor, Barrhaven

Eli El-Chantiry
Chair, Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Councillor, West Carleton-March



Appendix: Official Plan Engagement

2014 Official Plan Review	
Activity	Engagement
Project Launch (2 events)	258
- Comment Sheet	14
Developer Forum	31
Community Forum	110
Panels (6)	N/A
Online Form	7
Email	19
Organization's Submissions	14
Online Engagement Tool	8063
Total	8,516

The New OP Completed/Upcoming Stakeholder Engagement		
Stakeholder	Activity	Engagement
City Councillors	Councillor Sponsors Group Training and support for Councillors Staff	Sponsors Group meetings: 11 Regular Councillor Workshops Training for Councillors Staff on the Toolkit and Engagement HQ completed on June 17, 2019.
City of Ottawa	Committees and Boards Committee of Adjustment Joint Committee Meetings City Council Advisory Committees	Ottawa Board of Health: 2 Committee of Adjustment, June 26, 2019. Joint ARAC/PC Meetings with public delegations: 3 meetings with 156 delegates Council: 3 Advisory Committees: 8
Ottawa residents	Beyond 2036 Project	80 Stakeholders held 4 meetings 1 survey reached 302 residents
	Public Events (Community meetings, pop ups, City-wide events)	Held 109 Events with a total of 4,921 individuals



The New OP Completed/Upcoming Stakeholder Engagement		
Stakeholder	Activity	Engagement
	Engage Ottawa page	73,900 visitors with a total of 327,676 page views
	Surveys/Polls	29 different surveys have been conducted with a total of 9,710 responses so far
	City Builder Newsletter	Regularly provide updates to the 9,112 subscribers
	newop@ottawa.ca	726 feedback submissions to date 128 questions submitted to date
	Notification list	Circulate updates to 1513 residents
Targeted Equity and Inclusion Outreach	Ambassadors Working Group	Working group of 29 members has met 9 times so far
	Indigenous meetings	Presented to Aboriginal Working Committee Attended Community Conversation Event Met with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition Met with Algonquins of Ontario Presented Official Plan to Algonquins of Pickwanagan First Nation, Algonquin Anishinabeg Nation Tribal Council, Algonquin Nation Programs and Services Secretariat
	Rural Outreach	Members of Ambassadors Working Group Rural 15-Minute Neighbourhood survey reached 22 residents. Article in the Rural Connections newsletter reaching 300 residents. Attended Ottawa Farmers Association AGM



The New OP Completed/Upcoming Stakeholder Engagement		
Stakeholder	Activity	Engagement
	Youth Outreach	Presented to Ottawa Youth Engagement Committee Grade 5 students engagement activity 3 events with post-secondary students.
Total number of public events		109
Total number people reached		100,797