



Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital
Alliance pour les espaces verts dans la capitale du Canada

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**GREENSPACE ALLIANCE ARGUES PROPERTY TAXES COULD BE LOWER,
ADVOCATES SMALLER ROLE FOR THE ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD**

Ontario is reviewing the land use planning and development charges system of the province. The Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital has responded to a long series of questions posed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

On development charges, the responses state that the principle that growth should pay for growth should be more strictly implemented. "Fair development charges would reduce the pressure on the City's capital budget and potentially on property tax increases, as the **real** cost of providing infrastructure would be reflected in the development charges," said Amy Kempster. "The significant differences in the cost of providing infrastructure between Kanata, Stittsville, Orleans, Barrhaven, Leitrim and Riverside South should be reflected in the development charges. Averaging costs over all urban areas outside the Greenbelt does no service to prospective homeowners who could otherwise profit from lower cost development."

The Alliance supports the City's position that contributing to the cost of Light Rapid Transit should not be constrained by the 10-year historical level of transit service and that the 10% statutory reduction should not apply. Going further, the Alliance believes that these amendments to the Development Charges Act should apply to all transit investments, not just LRT. "Cities can no longer afford to invest in both roads and transit," said Nicole DesRoches, co-chair of the Alliance. Transit has to be given priority, not be disadvantaged through outdated criteria."

On land use planning and the current appeal system, the responses include a statement that pre-consultation with community stakeholders should be a requirement, before applications are formally filed. Planning staff should be as available to provide advice to communities as it is to developers. All applications related to a given property should move together through the review and approval or rejection process.

"The quality and quantity of dialogue at the local level should be significantly strengthened," said Sol Shuster, summarizing several of the Alliance's responses. "Both the City and developers should engage far more in genuine public consultation. An ongoing consultation process such as exists in cities like Vancouver would avoid many an OMB appeal."

The role of the Ontario Municipal Board is far too strong, the Alliance argues, pointing out that this actually impedes dialogue and issue resolution at the local level. The response says that the OMB should act more like a true court of appeal, giving direction on interpretation of policy or law and then sending the matter back to the municipality for reconsideration and consensus resolution among all stakeholders.

The Greenspace Alliance was founded in 1997, works to preserve and enhance green spaces in the National Capital area, and engages with all levels of government. It believes that urban greenness is essential for a community's quality of life, contributing to personal, social, economic, cultural and spiritual well-being, and connecting us with the natural and cultural history of our region.

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Access the responses at : <http://www.greenspace-alliance.ca/MMAH>