

Dear Standing Committee members,

Please recommend a Bill that includes only the proposed gentle intensification measures.

Give it time to see if it increases and accelerates infill housing production, the built form most consistent with the PPS and most appropriate to building for the climate emergency. Density targets, not urban expansion, is the challenge builders are most concerned they cannot attain, and where municipalities need help in overcoming local resistance to change.

Remove and defer all the other proposed changes as they run counter to successfully achieving the goal of more and faster housing in the already serviced urban area of municipalities, as outlined in the following points.

- The inflated targets for new dwellings imposed on Ottawa by this Bill would double the numbers builders said were already unachievable. An unfortunate consequence of these targets is that they will divert investment and new dwelling unit production away from intensification and toward urban sprawl.
- The new measures regarding wetlands evaluation are mostly relevant in the rural area and, when in proximity of the urban area, will only make it easier for urban sprawl to expand into previously protected areas. This will further reduce incentives for intensification.
- The new measures proposed in relation to Natural Heritage protection through offsets are also mostly relevant in the rural areas and, when in proximity of the urban area, would likewise enable more sprawl over intensification.
- The various fee and charge reductions (parkland dedication, development charges) also favour greenfield development (sprawl), over intensification.

None of these measures have been tested nor have their potential environmental and climate impacts been evaluated. A strong argument can be made that they would be ineffective in promoting more and quicker housing in the sprawling suburban additions that are the most likely consequence of this Bill.

In the case of Ottawa, especially with the changes made by the Minister to the new Official Plan, there is more than enough greenfield urban expansion land to accommodate future growth, without resorting to the types of enticements brought forward in this bill.

So start with a more focused approach. Pass the gentle intensification measures, give municipalities time and assistance in aligning their zoning bylaws to the new provisions and evaluate how successful they are in promoting residential growth in the already serviced urban areas of municipalities. Only then, perhaps on a selective basis, consider whether any of these other enticements are necessary, following careful testing and evaluation of impacts.

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Formed by concerned residents in 1997, the Greenspace Alliance works with community organizations and individuals to preserve and enhance natural areas in the National Capital area, including public and private green spaces, wetlands and waterways.