**Policies & Plans -** **“We haven’t got a plan, so nothing can go wrong?”**

It has been a busy year for the LCA Planning Committee, but with many vital issues still unresolved. Warts and all, our new city Official Plan was submitted to the Province for approval in December 2021. The target date for Provincial approval was April 2022, but under Bill 109, the Minister can now suspend its approval timeline for official plans. Bill 109 also allows the Minister to refer an Official Plan approval, in whole or in part, to the Ottawa Land Tribunal. Referral can be for a recommendation or for a decision by the OLT. For Lowertown, neither decision should  likely result in dramatic changes, since most of the arguments are over suburban sprawl, but fail to address downtown issues. The Provincial election returned the same government that promised Ottawa wider  highways, so we can only guess their direction.

The City of Ottawa is also developing a new comprehensive Zoning By-law for approval by Council in 2024. The by-law will implement the policies and directions in the [new Official Plan](https://engage.ottawa.ca/the-new-official-plan/news_feed/council-approves-new-official-plan-2). The city promised to consult with communities but we still lack any clear idea of what approaches they will propose. Over the summer we expect discussion papers outlining rezoning approaches. To sign up for news and updates on this important rezoning project, please email [newzoning@ottawa.ca](https://mail.google.com/mail/?view=cm&fs=1&tf=1&to=newzoning@ottawa.ca(External%20link))

April 2022 city announced a new Community Benefits Charge (CBC) By-law and strategy replacing the current Planning Act, Section 37.  In September 2022, provincial legislation will end the City’s ability to collect Section 37 revenues. Instead, municipalities can enact a community benefits charge by-law to collect fees and fund a range of community services required as a result of new growth. The proposed by-law and strategy will be submitted to City Council in June 2022. However we have still not received any draft of the bylaw, and when we sent queries to the city Planning Department about potential for community conflict and competition over scarce funds, the boss Steve Willis said he agreed with our concerns, but the city had no answers, and anyway have very little power to address our concerns under the new Planning Act. To send your views email [cbcstrategy@ottawa.ca](https://mail.google.com/mail/?view=cm&fs=1&tf=1&to=cbcstrategy@ottawa.ca)

Also in April, we attended city consultations on the Transportation Master Plan, which still makes no commitment to remove trucks from downtown. What will provide the needed incentive to remove trucks, and why isn't that incentive in the master plan? The City is now expanding on proposed funding criteria and are inviting the public to provide feedback on the methodologies that will be used to score future road and transit projects. Go to <https://engage.ottawa.ca/transportation-master-plan> to have your say.

**Projects under review**

At 253-257 York St, 78-80 Nelson St. LCA objected that these apartments were aimed at short-term rentals, and we noted unclear garbage storage, landscaping, and exterior finishes fitting the character of the street. In response, all but the first issue were (at least partially) addressed. But a lack of multi bedroom longer term rentals remains a problem for retaining families throughout our community.

Behind 385 Sussex will remain a “temporary” paid parking lot for another two years. The city appears unable or unwilling to enforce its agreement with the Archdiocese to develop the site where 18 years ago, heritage buildings were demolished without any site development plan.

At 641 Rideau, both Planning staff and the developer pretend that the secondary plan never intended 25 stories should be conditional on all requirements being met, but say the 25 stories are really all that matters, and requirements can be waived. Council agreed and we await the Site Control application.

At 126 York a heritage permit was issued for restoration work to convert the Major building into a hotel, in advance of construction of the adjoining apartment on 151 George St. LCA supports the proposal.

June 9 is the deadline for comments on 109 - 115 Dalhousie, where a 4 story apartment is proposed behind two existing historic houses. Even if the deadline has passed, it is still important to send your comments to Nader Kadri <[nader.kadri@ottawa.ca](mailto:nader.kadri@ottawa.ca)>