



### A Plan for Development Reform in Ottawa

The City of Ottawa needs significant reform of development occurring in our communities. It is now clear that developers have more of a say than ordinary people do at City Hall. This should not be the case, and the distortions in planning policy are leading to fatigued volunteers, community cynicism and the rights of residents being trumped by the profit-making motives of a small group of company owners in Ottawa.

One need only look at the [65 storey tower](#) approved virtually overnight by a Planning Committee and City Council beholden to developer interests. The same density could have been achieved with 30 storeys. The same development could have existed without Ottawa providing \$8.2 million in taxpayer funds to subsidize the land remediation (Ottawa's brownfield policy has been used as a public developer slush fund). The hours spent by community volunteers on the Community Design Plan could have been saved for something 'more useful', seeing as how it was completely ignored. It is no coincidence that the developer in question gives handsome donations to many Council members at election time.

The 65 storey tower will stand as a monument to undue developer influence in our city, but several microcosms exist directly in our communities. Our zoning and bylaws are constantly being broken in favour of developer profit. Why have rules at all when they are so easily flouted?

Our campaign wants intensification and density in the core and a new urbanist agenda. But that agenda comes with the responsibility to respect our current residents and ensure that the rules we have in place are adhered to. There is plenty of room for new development within those rules.

#### **It's time for a change in Capital Ward and Ottawa. We need comprehensive and lasting reform:**

- 1) Re-constitute a Ward Council, previously cancelled, to ensure that the communities of Capital Ward come together regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern, and to support one another, rather than being left to defend residents in small pockets of the Ward.
- 2) End developer fundraisers at the municipal level, similar to what has been done at the federal order of government. If a person or representative of a company is registered as a municipal lobbyist, then they shouldn't be allowed to host, attend or contribute to these fundraisers.
- 3) Planning committee members should be barred from accepting developer donations (any individual in management working for a developer). Family donations from developers should be reviewed.
- 4) Training for volunteers at the community level in advance of the Official Plan review must take place. Knowing which arguments hold the day at the Committee of Adjustment, Planning Committee and newly constituted LPAT will help to ensure respect is afforded to long-standing communities.
- 5) Further intervention in the Planning Department, the staff side of the City of Ottawa, should take place. Embedding these folks in communities and taking a 'resident-first' approach to new development must be part of the process. Staff transfers, namely the revolving door between development corporations and the Planning Department, should be against the rules.
- 6) Community Design Plans, Secondary Plans, and existing Zoning and Bylaws should have more weight afforded to them. The threshold or bar should be set high when allowing variances to occur. This will require greater scrutiny of Planning Committee and Council decisions.