

May 25, 2019

Planning Act Review
Provincial Planning Policy Branch
777 Bay Street
13th floor
Toronto, ON
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Canada

Reference: 019-0016

Bill 108 - (Schedule 12) – the proposed More Homes, More Choice Act: Amendments to the Planning Act

Dear Minister,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Bill 108.

Coronation Park Residents Association (CPRA) is based in Oakville, Ontario and has been in existence since 2003. Since our inception, we have undertaken research and learning in areas such as the Provincial Policy Statement, the Provincial Growth Plan, the Regional Growth Plan etc., to ensure we have a good working knowledge of the legislation that affects our community and its growth. CPRA was an active participant during the process of the renewal and update of the Town of Oakville's Official Plan, now called Livable Oakville.

In reviewing the proposed Bill we note several concerns, but have limited our comments to the those which follow.

Threats to Bio-Diversity

The consequences of global heating and the need for preservation of bio-diversity are of the utmost importance to our province and our country in the 21st century. Unfortunately, instead of increasing the strength of our protections for these crucial needs, Schedule 5 of Bill 108 makes it easier for plants and wildlife habitat to be destroyed. If enacted as proposed, Bill 108 would lead to significant delays and uncertainty regarding listing of species at risk, provide for more exceptions and mechanisms for escaping the prohibitions, severely limit the government's actions to protect and recover species at risk, and remove requirements for the Minister to consult with species experts. The amendments would also allow proponents to harm some species at risk in exchange for benefitting others (through landscape agreements) and create a mechanism where proponents can pay a regulatory charge in lieu of meeting conditions on a permit designed to protect and recover species or its habitat. The new term "pay to slay" that is finding traction with constituents is an apt label.

Schedule 5 will accelerate the decline of species. This is not a trade-off voting constituents are willing to support. Schedule 5 should be eliminated from this Bill.

Shorter Timelines for Review of Applications

Setting shorter timelines for the review of development applications directly impacts the ability of municipal planning staff to deal with the comprehensive nature of applications, consult with the public, or seek collaboration with applicants. Instead of allowing for the community and parties to work together, shortened timelines will increase adversity. These are impractical timelines for staff and Council for even the most simple, straightforward applications. The result

will be even more appeals for non-decisions, thereby defeating the desire to increase housing faster.

Return to de novo Hearings

While the LPAT remains, it will no longer evaluate appeals based on compliance with official plans and consistency with provincial plans/policies. Bill 108 returns it to the more adversarial OMB process and as such, a return to de novo hearings. This is very disappointing for residents and municipal governments, as it takes final planning decisions out of elected councils' hands. Historically, the use of a de novo approach to appeals has resulted in drawn out hearings, lags in decisions and a backlog of cases. The return to this process has no positive effect to speed up housing development.

Parkland and Development Charges

A long-standing tenet of land use in Ontario, as established by the province and undertaken by municipalities is for the building of complete communities - places where homes, jobs, schools, community services, parks and recreation facilities are easily accessible. As intensification and vertical housing become more prevalent, access becomes even more important.

For decades, the province has allowed municipalities to require parkland based on number of units being built, creating a direct relationship to the number of people living in a new development. If cities choose to keep a limited version of the parkland dedication by-law, they lose the ability to collect land or cash based on units built and are limited to require 5% of the land area of the new development. A 5% requirement on a small site being used for a high-rise development does not deliver a "park" space for residents that will contribute to livability in any manner. Our parks are critical pieces of infrastructure that not only help to alleviate the effects of global heating but also play a pivotal role in creating places where people actually want to live. Further, Bill 108 compels cities to spend 60% of the money they collect each year, thus making it harder for cities to save up funds for larger park projects and land purchases.

Not only does Bill 108 severely curtail the ability for cities to require developers to provide parkland onsite, it also removes the ability for those same cities to use development charges to collect money for parks and other soft infrastructure. The proposed new development charges amalgamate many of the tools cities have used for things such as affordable housing and turned them into either/or situations. These restrictions are exacerbated by a yet-to-be identified cap the government will announce at a later date.

No Answers to Affordable Housing

Bill 108 does not provide for any mechanisms to ensure that reduced development costs are passed through to future home buyers and renters.

In large part the development industry is permitted to build the product it most wants, wherever it desires and sell it at whatever price it chooses.

Allowing municipalities to utilize inclusionary zoning as one of a suite of tools to address and increase the supply and integration of affordable housing through private development represents a more effective manner with which to create affordable housing. By doing so, municipalities maintain the flexibility to utilize the tools most appropriate to the local context.

In Summary

Bill 108 does not represent the government action voting constituents want from provincial leaders. The Town of Oakville and municipalities like it across Ontario have well planned strategies for growth with specific areas identified for intensification and new development.

Reasonable timelines are in place to ensure professional review and assessment of development applications while providing constituents with a voice.

We strongly urge you to pause Bill 108 in its entirety and work in tandem with the Town of Oakville, the Halton Area Planning Partnership and like bodies across Ontario to attain plans and policies that reflect clarity, consideration and certainty in managing growth, delivering suitable development for our population and building infrastructure that works in favour of the people and the environment.

Sincerely,

**Coronation Park Residents Association
Oakville, ON**

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