

Federation of Citizens Associations report – Ron Rose

The **new chair** of the FCA is Alex Cullen, a former MPP and City Councillor. The vice chair is Robert Brinker.

The FCA **meets** virtually on the third Wednesday of the month (January 20th) and the Planning Committee of the FCA meets the second Wednesday (January 14th). The Planning Committee of the FCA is the most active of the Federation's committees, and provides the majority of material for the General Meetings.

Planning issues have been the major focus of the Federation over the past two months, especially discussions about the various aspects of the draft Official Plan. However, there have also been a number of other issues reviewed by the Federation.

Environmental issues are a major concern of the FCA, and the Greenspace Alliance is an active member. Over the past two months, the Federation reviewed documentation on Environmental Justice from a Planning Perspective, and how to create more green spaces within Ottawa's urban areas.

The Federation also had a report from the **Ottawa Neighbourhood Study**. <https://www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca>. The study reports on a range of socio-economic and demographic data by neighbourhood. The Study had approached the FCA to ask its members to check the boundaries of their respective organizations. Approximately three years ago, we approached the Study to include the Riverdale, Avenue Road, Main St triangle within Old Ottawa East, which they have done. According to the Study, the population of Old Ottawa East in 2016 was 7,350, vs 6,210 in Old Ottawa South.

Affordability of housing, particularly within Transit-Oriented-Development (TOD) areas is also an area of concern for the FCA, and special attention was paid to a two-tower 500 unit development at Bayshore that Council recently approved which included 45 units for affordable housing.

The FCA wrote to the Mayor concerning the **Mid-term Governance Review** of Council suggesting changes to Committee representation, citing the overwhelming majority of Urban and Suburban Councillors on the Planning Committee. The suggestion were rebuffed by the Mayor.

The November meeting heard a presentation from **Walkable Ottawa**, an organization dedicated to making Ottawa a more pedestrian friendly, walkable community. Their position paper is available at https://ca848991-4ec8-4632-81f2-2c8909ac971f.filesusr.com/ugd/f7ac66_b10419b8c50040e89dbf4a13c5ec637b.pdf

Planning issues that also consumed the FCA's attention included discussions of the use of **Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZO)**, which allows the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs to directly zone land for a particular purpose. The Minister does not have to give notice nor consult with the public prior to issuing or revoking a zoning order. The use of these MZOs has grown exponentially in the past year, mainly in the area around Toronto. Protected wetlands have been rezoned to allow warehouse development for example. The Federation feels that this excessive use of MZOs is an abuse of the Minister's power.

The Federation has been made aware of a recent initiative by the Mayor to impose a **tax on vacant property**. This has been welcomed by communities such as Vanier and Hintonburg. Vacant and derelict buildings are probably not such an issue in Old Ottawa East, other than the building on the NW corner of the Greenfield/Concord N intersection.