**Forest Park: New Development**

In 2024 the mayor assembled a task force to outline impediments and bring forth ideas for how to:

* Kick-start development in today’s challenging market and get them built more quickly and affordably
* Streamline processes to make it easier to build in Mississauga
* Create the incentives needed to deliver homes for a wide-range of Mississauga families

**Questions and Answers:**

**Q: Please explain the difference between intensification and the objectives of the mayor’s plan**.

**A:** Intensification is defined in our Official Plan means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

a. redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;

b. the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;

c. infill development;

d. the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

The goal of the Mayor’s Housing Task Force is to find ways to make it easier to building more homes by bringing together government and development industry professionals. The Task Force has identified action items that various levels of government could implement to facilitate the delivery of more housing.

**Q: Does the mayor’s plan differentiate between affordable housing versus just building more homes and cutting costs for the developers to make the units cheaper to build?**

**A:** The goal of the Mayor’s Housing Task Force is to find ways to make it easier to building more homes by bringing together government and development industry professionals

Many of the action items stemming from the Mayor’s Housing Task Force are geared towards incentivizing more affordable housing developments. These action items include, but are not limited to:

* Financial incentives to get more affordable purpose-built rental housing built (i.e. Affordable Rental Housing CIP)
* Making it less expensive to build more units on your own property (i.e. garden suites, secondary units, fourplexes)
* Lowering costs for non-profit developers
* Streamlining development processes (e.g. 3 strikes you’re in)
* Reforming government taxes and fees (e.g. Development Charge reductions and payment deferrals, elimination of Community Benefit Charge, new tax subclass for new rental)

**Q: What type of incentives (dollars) would a developer give to the city if a large development is approved by council?  For the community?**

**A:** Previously, the Province allowed municipalities to request the payment of Section 37 fees, which were fees calculated at 20-40% of the uplift in property value resulting from the approved development. These s37 contributions were spent on improvements either on the development site, within the community or in the broader area.

 In 2022, the Province replaced the s37 contribution with the Community Benefit Charge (CBC) which applied to all development approvals and was calculated based on 4% of the value of the land after the approval of a development application. The monies collected through the CBC would go into a general fund and Council would vote on what the money was spent on each year. This money would not necessarily be spent in the area of the proposed development. As a result of the Mayor’s Housing Task Force and the goal of facilitating the development of more housing and affordable housing, the City’s by-law allowing for the collection of CBC for all development applications was repealed. We therefore no longer collect CBC money from developments.

**Q: What weight, if any, will the city planners and their comments have with Council, when they approve a development plan, particularly if the plan does not meet the standards of the official plan but has been approved by the Committee of Adjustments.**

**A:** The Committee of Adjustment is a committee of Council and comprised of appointed members of the community.

Comments from Planning are provided to Council for development applications (Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning applications) and to Committee of Adjustment for Minor Variance and Consent applications. Council and Committee of Adjustment generally place a significant amount of weight on staff comments, however there are instances where other factors outweigh staff’s position.

 A variance allowing a 25-storey rental building which will sit less that 10 feet from the curb has been approved, even though the planning department was against the height, stating that:

* In fact, the proposal maintains a similar intensity of development for the site, with the two previously approved 15 and 12-storey buildings being combined into a single building. Notwithstanding this, **the Special Site Policy for the subject property stipulates the maximum heights permitted for the subject parcel are to be capped at 15-storeys and does not contemplate a scenario where the approved buildings are combined into one.**
* As a result, **Planning staff are of the opinion that the proposed height is inconsistent with the intent of the official plan or zoning by-law as it is not consistent with the vision of the special site policy or site-specific zoning by-law established previously**.
* **Variance 4 is not minor in nature and will not maintain a built form as originally envisioned by the exception zone schedule**.

**RRA: In a letter you wrote to our community, you advised that:**

*The project will deliver new rental housing which supports Council’s housing priorities Ultimately, the Committee of Adjustment will consider whether the application satisfies the four tests and will make a decision on the minor variance application***.**

**Q: Do you agree that this building meets the criteria for a minor variance?**

**4 tests of a Minor Variance:**

1. Does the variance meet the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan?
2. Does the variance meet the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law?
3. Is the variance minor in nature?
4. Is the variance desirable for the appropriate development of the property?

A, That is for the committee to decide not me

**Q: Have you no concerns that this building will be situated less than 10 feet from the road with a cycle path and sidewalk in between?**

**A:** It is not uncommon for buildings to be located closer to the abutting roadway to better define the street edge. There are no concerns with the reduced front yard setback.

**Q: Do you support building a 25-storey building that the city planners have stated is does not conform with the official plan?**

**A:** Councillor Fonseca – did not respond

**Q: Do you agree that the developer used a variance, which in the opinion of the planning department was NOT minor, to avoid the planning process to open the door for more 25-storey building on the property, while at the same time submitting a plan for 2 more units of the same size?**

A: The Minor Variance application process is more cost effective and faster than the alternative approach of Official Plan Amendment and Rezoning applications. Any landowner has the right to apply for any development application or Committee of Adjustment application that they wish and as long as the required information is provided, the City is obligated to process the application.

**Q: Are these actually affordable homes suitable for families and seniors or is the cost savings from permits and incentives just going to the builder?  Will these units rent for less per square foot or more than the current rental buildings?**

**A:** The developer has not provided information to the City on the affordability mix for the proposal.

**Q: What percentage of each building will support low-income housing?**

**A:** The developer has not provided information to the City on the affordability mix for the proposal.

Since the variance passed, we have no recourse to appeal other than to OMB, which we cannot afford and hope that part two of this plan is not approved.  Part two refers for a new application already proposed to DARC.  This plan would replace the plan approved by council in 2018, which was for two condo buildings on this property of 12 and 15-storeys and replace it with a plan for three 20-25-storey rental buildings.  We are assuming the building for which the variance was approved was for one of these three buildings.

**Q: Since the official plan was ignored at the committee of adjustments what are the chances that this will also be rubber stamped in the need to gain the favor of the province in meeting the million-home goal?**

**A:** It is premature to take a position on the future applications for the lands. Without the benefit of having received the applications and the accompanying technical studies to support the proposal, we cannot comment on staff’s position on the proposal.

**Q: While we are being told all the studies point to no problems moving forward with this new proposal, how will the amenities handle the influx of at minimum a 300% increase in the number of residents in these buildings?  Will they be parking at Longo’s again?**

**A:** The applicant will describe what amenities are proposed as part of the justification for any future proposal. The Zoning By-law establishes minimum amenity area requirements for developments. The Zoning By-law also establishes minimum parking requirements. If the applicant is seeking a reduced parking rate that is greater than 10% from the by-law requirement, then they will need to submit a parking study justifying why the rate is appropriate.

**Q: In 2018, the community received a benefit of $750,000 from which we were allotted around $350,000 for a splash pad.  What will the community receive with this benefit which should be three times that which we received in 2019.  We believe at that time Forest Park received the rest of the benefit.  What will they receive if this new plan is approved?**

**A:** At the time of the previous application, the Province allowed municipalities to request the payment of Section 37 fees, which were fees calculated based on 20-40% of the uplift in property value resulting from the approved development. These s37 contributions were spent on improvements either on the development site, within the community or in the broader area.

In 2022, the Province replaced the s37 contribution with the Community Benefit Charge (CBC) which applied to all development approvals and was calculated based on 4% of the value of the land after the approval of a development application. The monies collected through the CBC would go into a general fund and Council would vote on what the money was spent on each year. This money would not necessarily be spent in the area of the proposed development. As a result of the Mayor’s Housing Task Force and the goal of facilitating the development of more housing and affordable housing, the City’s by-law allowing for the collection of CBC for all development applications was repealed. We therefore no longer collect any money from developers for community benefits.

**Q: Although we know that public consultation will be held, if an application is made for this second part, we also know what happened in 2016 when the original plan was approved.  How will you support our community while already stating that you will support the mayor’s housing plan?**

Councillor Fonseca did not respond

**RRA:** We are not opposed to affordable housing; we are already past the fact that there will be two new purpose-built rental buildings on the property.  Our issue is that these structures do not conform with the surrounding area.  Even a 1st year civic planning student would agree.

There are other options for housing on this property.  Reverting to the builder’s original plan, with updates to the current market would be one way to build homes faster, but the developer has waited 9 years to put a shovel in the ground.  Now they believe they can leverage municipal, provincial and federal incentives to maximize their profits and cut the red tape.  It took 7 years to clean up the Landlords property but now the are prepared to build in a few months, in a very different location than the original plan.

**Q: We note that even in areas of identified intensification, those building are only a maximum of 15-storeys. Why here? Why now? Intensification areas allow for a range of building heights, depending on their location in the City. 15 storeys is not the maximum building heights in intensification areas.**

**A:** According to the applicant, although approvals were granted in 2018, the project did not move forward due to a number of factors, including:

* Market conditions
* The owner’s decision to prioritize underground parking repairs for the existing rental buildings
* Broader construction costs and interest rate challenges
* COVID-19 related delays

The applicant has indicated that, based on current market conditions, and with the recent, time-limited changes that City Council made to the Development Charges By-law and new Rental apartment building incentives, the owner is able to construct a new rental apartment building on site.

The applicant has advised that this approach is more economically feasible for them at this time and that they are aiming to begin construction later this year.

**Q: You have indicated that you support the mayor’s initiatives.  It may surprise you but so do most of us.  What we do not support is building skyscrapers in the midst of a predominantly low-rise community.  Based on your commitment to the mayor’s action plan, what role will you play in supporting our community to convince Council that they should not approve an application to approve a 3-building proposal of 20-25 storeys in our community**?

**A:** Councillor Fonseca did not respond

**RRA:** We believe that this planned application, in its current form and proposed configuration, presents serious issues that contravene sound urban planning principles, strain existing infrastructure and services, and negatively impacts the surrounding community.  We also believe that you, Councillor Fonseca, have the means and opportunity to bring all parties together prior to any further actions being taken and find a reasonable solution to:

* the developers request to build;
* the city’s plan to get more affordable homes built,
* and the neighborhood’s need to be reassured that while change is coming, it will not compromise the ambiance of the community.

It will take work on your part Councillor to bring the parties together and agree to something less egregious as 78-stories of additional apartments, but this is something we need you to do to for us, your constituents, to ensure our neighbourhood does not just fill in the box for the biggest new development in Rathwood. Ever.

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**Questions from the floor**

**Question:** Was the new infrastructure, storm sewers etc., built based on existing density or with new development in mind or will we be flooded again once the Forest Park development is finished?

**Answer**: The Masterplan from the City will be send to the RRA to be posted on the RRA website

**Question:** Who can appeal the decision made by the Committee of Adjustment

**Answer**: For Forest Park the appeal period has been closed. The City or the school Board would have the option of appealing a variance.

**Question:** Did the City appeal and if not why?

**Answer:** The response was that the City did not appeal but no reason was provided.

**Question:** Was the new infrastructure, storm sewers etc., built based on existing density or with new development in mind or will we be flooded again once the Forest Park development is finished?

**Answer**: The Masterplan from the City will be send to the RRA to be posted on the RRA website

**Question:** How can the Councillor ensure that the voices of the community are heard?

**Answer:** The Councillor advised that she has been doing everything in her power to listen to the community as long as she has been responsible for Ward 3. This was confirmed by the Planning Staff member. Councillor Fonseca will continue to hold Community meetings for any new development. She is happy to talk to community members individually or receive e-mails.

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