
April 20, 2020

Hon. Steve Clark
Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON, M5G 2E5

Re: Proposed regulatory matters pertaining to community benefits authority under the Planning Act, the Development Charges Act, and the Building Code Act (ERO 019-1406)

Dear Minister Clark,

The North York Centre, located within the Willowdale community I serve as a member of Toronto City Council, is designated as a Provincial Growth Centre. As a result, an enormous amount of new development has been built in this area, so much so that we are approximately 25 years ahead of the Province's growth targets for this area.

With such rapid population growth, it has been a challenge to build the hard and soft infrastructure to meet the rapidly-growing needs of the new Willowdale population, especially at a time when City capital funds are required for such urgent other projects as affordable housing and TTC state of good repair. That we have been somewhat successful in addressing local needs is entirely related to the levels of Section 42 and Section 37 funds that have been provided by developers in the North York Centre.

These funds have been used not only to build much-needed new parks, child care centres and community centres but also to build infrastructure, such as direct subway connections and service roads, required to support the provincially-required density levels. Currently, we are also actively planning to use Section 37 benefits to help build affordable housing in Willowdale.

In the North York Centre, it appears that the proposed new Community Benefit Charge will generate far fewer dollars than the combined Section 42 and Section 37 funds. This is contrary to assurances the community was given by Willowdale's Member of Provincial Parliament, presumably acting on information he had been given.

In one financial comparison done by City staff for a site at Yonge and Sheppard, the CBF would generate approximately \$7.6 million less than the combined Section 42 and Section 37 amounts for the site. The reduction in funds available to meet local needs is almost 50%. In this comparison, the new development charge would also have a reduction of approximately \$1.5 million.

In addition, any rules that centralize the funds or require them to be spent or allocated within a specified time would certainly reduce the ability and flexibility to address rapidly-changing local needs. I could provide many examples of cases where the flexibility to bank unallocated funds has allowed the city to respond quickly when an unforeseen local opportunity presented itself.

I hope I am correct in giving the Province the benefit of the doubt that it was not its intention to provide fewer funds to areas, such as the North York Centre, where the Province itself requires very high levels of intensification. That being the case, I am confident that solutions could be found.

In general, I would suggest that no Growth Area receive fewer funds through the Community Benefits Charge than it does now through combined Section 37 and Section 42 benefits. I would further ask that the Community Benefit Charge continue to be used in the areas that generated them as a result of new development, and that there be greater flexibility in the timing of their use so that the City can continue to respond to opportunities.

It would be my pleasure to discuss any of the contents of this submission with provincial political or staff representatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Filion". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "F".

John Filion
Toronto City Councillor
Ward 18 - Willowdale

cc: Stan Cho, MPP for Willowdale, stan.cho@pc.ola.org
John Ballantine, Manager, Municipal Finance Policy Branch, john.ballantine@ontario.ca