

October 31st 2019

via email

City of Clarence-Rockland
1560 Laurier Street
Rockland Ontario K4K 1P7

Mayor Guy Desjardins and Municipal Council

Proposed Development Charges By-law 2019-85

This is to follow-up on the public meeting held October 22nd. The purpose of this letter is to express opposition on behalf of the Morris Village home builders to proposed fee increases under development charge by-law 2019-85.

Commercial

The proposed 34% increase in commercial rates should have limited impact. Growth projections should remain weak until residential growth achieves sustainable levels for business. Retail studies such as those commissioned for secondary master plans are already obsolete. Projections are based on highly populated urban regions, overlooking upsurges in local online shopping.

Residential

The proposed 24% increase in residential rates has adverse effects on cost-sensitive new-home sales and profitability. Increases should be scaled back. Perhaps phasing-in a more reasonable increase might be beneficial. Builders are seeking out opportunities elsewhere. Builder departure translates into local job loss, less consumer selection as well as potential reduction in the growth rate.

DC Projects

The development industry understands the need to fund growth. However, there are concerns over questionable engineering projects. Some DC projects should either be excluded as being ineligible or scaled back or phased over time.

Example: St-Jean Street Reconstruction

St-Jean Street reconstruction is a recent example. Proposed design contains costly options and features that should be scaled back. It seems that conclusions presented in the transportation study were not questioned.

Four Lanes

Four lanes seem unnecessary at least for now. If needed in future at build-out, perhaps two lanes can be built initially with an additional two lanes added much later.

Round-A-Bouts

The only location where round-a-bout design is a practical solution is where St-Jean makes an awkward bend at Bronze Avenue. The other locations are unnecessary and should be changed to conventional intersections with stop signs and perhaps traffic signals in future if needed.

5.0m Concrete Median

The 5.0m concrete median should be deleted as being an unnecessary expense.

It was confirmed this morning that city staff is now looking into this example. This approach when implemented together with phasing works should help reduce costs for DC works. Hopefully City staff can confirm whether other DC projects are necessary or over-designed. Project studies, reports and findings by outside consultants should be questioned.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,



Bruce Geerts, general manager
Spacebuilders Ottawa Ltd.

Copy: Morris Village home builders