



ONE VOICE FOR ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

March 5, 2020

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Sent via email to: john.ballantine@ontario.ca

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

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) expresses our strong support of the Ontario Government's proposal to prescribe through regulation additional services eligible to be funded under the *Development Charges Act*, specifically public libraries, including library materials for circulation, reference or information purposes. Furthermore, we applaud the provincial government's proposal to include these as a fully cost-recoverable service going forward.

Public libraries depend on development charge revenue to fund new and renovated buildings, digital infrastructure, and collection growth in order to keep up with the growing demand for library space and resources in communities across Ontario. The Ontario Government's proposal is an unequivocal recognition of the role that public libraries perform as critical community infrastructure in municipalities of all sizes across the province, and the importance of ensuring that municipalities are able to collect the development charges needed to help maintain strong, sustainable public libraries for current and future residents alike.

As the collective voice of Ontario's public libraries, FOPL participated actively in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's consultation following the introduction of the *More Homes, More Choices Act* last year. In our joint August 2019 submission with the Ontario Library Association (OLA), we expressed our support for the Ontario government's objective of providing municipalities with a transparent, predictable model to fund growth-related capital infrastructure for community services. At the same time, we were concerned that transitioning

public libraries to the Community Benefits Charge model would have serious unintended consequences that could threaten the financial sustainability of local public libraries in communities across the province. We provided the Ministry with detailed insight and recommendations in our submission and through subsequent consultation meetings. We were greatly encouraged by the constructive engagement with Ministry officials throughout the consultation process.

The proposed approach outlined in the regulatory posting will provide municipalities with the flexibility to continue providing consistent revenue to support capital investments in their local public libraries, to the benefit of the people they serve. We're also encouraged by the proposed inclusion of other services, such as recreation and parks facilities, as this will support the continuing trend of co-locating public libraries with these facilities, thereby providing opportunities for mutually-supportive programming and effective use of capital investments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important matter. We look forward to continuing to work with the Ontario Government and our municipal partners throughout the province to ensure the continuing stability and sustainability of locally-focused public libraries across Ontario.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Abram". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephen" and last name "Abram" clearly distinguishable.

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