

To: City of Kitchener Councillors

Date: March 13, 2024

Re: Inclusionary Zoning and Council Meeting on March 18, 2024

I live at [REDACTED] in the Cedar Hill neighbourhood. Since last summer I've been part of the Rainbow Row working group in support of the tenants who are now facing demoviction as they await the decision of the Ontario Land Tribunal. My partner and I are very fortunate to own our own home. However, this experience has opened my eyes to the staggering lack of affordable housing in the City of Kitchener and some of the reasons behind this alarming and dangerous deficit in affordable and attainable housing stock.

I was excited to see that Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) was being considered in conjunction with Growing Together and that both would be presented at the January 29th Planning and Strategic Initiatives Committee meeting.

However, as I watched the proceedings, I was shocked by the glaring absence of any representation from those in support of affordable housing in the IZ portion of the meeting. Delegations were dominated by the development community members whose presentations were unconscionably dismissive of IZ. They blamed it for stifling development and increasing rents but failed to acknowledge the tremendous financial gains offered by the up zoning. In response, Adam Clark, Growing Together Project Manager said: "Unfortunately there were many omissions and mischaracterizations from the various delegations that spoke tonight". Also in response, IZ Project Manager Tim Donegani was very confident about the rigorous analysis that had been applied: "increased density permissions, reduced risk and increased certainty, reduced timing requirement for entitlements all have significant value."

And yet despite the response from key staff, Councillors for the most part, seemed convinced of the developers' concerns with little regard for other viewpoints.

The City of Kitchener Inclusionary Zoning is a conservative version of that of other cities and the province's guidelines. But if allowed to proceed it has the potential to offer 800+ affordable homes over the next 10 years. How can that be ignored?

I ask that City of Kitchener say "yes" to Inclusionary Zoning to the full extent permitted by law or at the very least to the standards outlined in Staff Report DSD-2024029 immediately. Show other cities in Waterloo Region and Ontario that we are committed to housing our residents regardless of their income. Please stop the depletion of affordable housing in Kitchener and take positive steps to add to that dwindling inventory. Simply focusing on housing supply alone will not fix the problem. Each year Ontario loses 20,000 units on the private market through both renovictions and demovictions. Here is one piece of the puzzle that could help reverse that trend.

Yours truly,  
Leslie Macredie