

Thank you for the opportunity to send a written delegation. My name is Kimiko Shibata. I would like to voice my strong support for implementing inclusionary zoning in Kitchener as soon as possible as an essential tool to address our growing housing affordability crisis.

Kitchener is a city that prides itself on being welcoming, innovative, and future-focused. Yet right now, too many residents are being priced out of the very community they help sustain... I've spoken with seniors on fixed incomes, young families, newcomers, and essential workers in the community who are all struggling with housing affordability.

We know that market forces alone will not correct this gap. Inclusionary zoning gives the City a responsible, predictable, and evidence-based way to secure affordable homes when new development happens, rather than relying on one-off negotiations or hoping that the private market will deliver affordability on its own.

Inclusionary zoning works because it pairs growth with fairness. As our city continues to intensify—especially around major transit—we have a unique opportunity to ensure that prosperity is shared. Requiring a modest percentage of affordable units in larger developments helps create mixed-income communities where people of all backgrounds can live near jobs, schools, transit, and services. That's not just good planning; it's good city-building and good community-building.

I want to acknowledge what developers often raise: concerns about viability. Municipalities across Ontario and across North America have shown that inclusionary zoning, when designed with clear expectations and stable rules, does not stop development. Developers adapt just like with any other requirement—whether that's parking, sustainability standards, or parkland contributions.

What it does do is prevent the long-term social and financial costs of deepening inequality. The cost of inaction is far greater.

By adopting inclusionary zoning as soon as possible, Kitchener sends a clear message: growth will continue, but it must be inclusive growth.

Affordability cannot be an optional add-on. It has to be built into the very foundation of how our city develops.

Inclusionary zoning reduces displacement, gives residents access to walkable and transit-oriented neighbourhoods, and helps ensure that Kitchener remains a city where people can build their lives—not just a place they pass through.

I urge you to adopt a meaningful inclusionary zoning framework and to implement it without delay. Housing affordability is one of the defining issues of our time, and this is one of the most effective tools we have to shape a fairer future for everyone.

Thank you for reading, and for your continued leadership during a challenging time.

Kimiko Shibata