

**Delegation on Inclusionary Zoning  
Kitchener Citizens for Livable Development  
December 15, 2025**



Respected Mayor and Councillors: My name is Peggy Nickels and I'm presenting tonight on behalf of Kitchener Citizens for Liveable Development. We are a coalition of people from 9 different neighbourhoods including Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) that are experiencing significant development. We are committed to promoting affordable housing, adequate parks and green space, building with climate change in mind, and engaging citizens in the development process.

We are here to speak in support of the Planning Staff's recommendations, presented to you on December 1. Specifically, we urge you to implement Inclusionary Zoning starting in January 2026 and to adopt the minimum set aside rates and timelines outlined by Staff in their report.

We're aware of the developers' recommendation to further delay and weaken steps towards the already gradual implementation of Inclusionary Zoning, and of some councillors' inclination to comply with this request. I'm here to respond to the question:

**Why Approve IZ implementation Now and at the Recommended Rates?**

There was strong public support for implementation of IZ a year ago, much of it for even higher IZ rates than Staff were recommending. At that time, Council voted not to implement IZ until January 2026. Council risks losing public trust if they don't keep their commitment.

We know that, the sooner IZ is in place, the more ready we will be to benefit from new affordable housing opportunities when the market rebounds. In retrospect, implementation of IZ should have been paired with the introduction of the ION. The ION resulted, as was planned, in a substantial increase in property values, development opportunities, and a huge housing boom in Major Transit Station Areas, but little to no progress on affordability.

Kitchener Planning Staff deliberately timed the implementation of IZ to coincide with the launch of the Growing Together framework. This new framework enables unlimited height and density permissions in MTSA areas, reduced parking minimums, streamlines the approval process, reduces application and study costs, and greatly facilitates housing delivery.

In addition to the advantages of the ION and Growing Together, developers have been granted other extremely valuable benefits by the City, Province, and Federal government, including:

- the Affordable Housing Parkland Dedication Fee Exemption
- the Affordable Housing Development Charge Fee Exemption
- the Provincial Development Charge Discounts for Purpose Built Rentals
- the Removal of the HST on Purpose built Rental Construction
- the Federal Rental Construction Financing Initiative Loan Program

Despite this, and even with the delay of IZ, Kitchener's residential market has continued to experience limited activity. Thus it is debatable whether the proposed IZ, rather than general market conditions, is a real risk to sluggish housing starts.

Finally, Kitchener has a commitment, as part of its Housing Accelerator Fund agreement with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to demonstrate that implementation of IZ has created 21 new affordable housing units by September 2026. With the delay of IZ, no affordable units have been provided. If there are further delays and weakening of set-aside rates, we won't meet our target, and will risk the funding we have received

One thing that has moved forward is the increased need for affordable housing. Yes, we have many vacant units on the market, but not ones that are affordable. The IZ program enables two full-time minimum wage earners to afford a two-bedroom IZ unit, while spending less than 30% of their gross earnings on housing.

We also have a desperate homelessness problem, and while IZ won't solve that, it can at least help prevent a few more people from falling into homelessness because they can't find affordable housing. And it would provide potential space for formerly homeless people to move out of deeply affordable housing and back into the mainstream, ensuring that their vacated, deeply affordable units are freed up for currently homeless people.

Kitchener has collaborated for at least five years with the Region of Waterloo and with our sister municipalities, Waterloo and Cambridge, to design an Inclusionary Zoning strategy, and Kitchener is the current leader in its implementation. If our City sets the bar low, others are likely to follow suit. Knowing the pride we take in being an innovative and progressive leader, we don't want to be known as the leader of a race to the bottom. It doesn't seem unreasonable to expect that developers, who have profited from building in our community, should contribute in a small way to Inclusionary Zoning, starting now and at the rates proposed by Staff.