



City of Guelph
Mayor Cam Guthrie, City Council
1 Carden Street
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1

October 13, 2023

Re: City of Guelph Special Meeting – Housing Workshop Recommendations

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Council,

The Guelph & District Home Builders' Association (GDHBA) and Guelph Wellington Development Association (GWDA) appreciates the City of Guelph is looking at proactive ways to build more housing within the City which includes continuing to have meetings to address the housing crisis. We would like to draw your attention to point 17 on the housing agenda for your Special Council Meeting on October 17th, 2023.

Specifically, we would like to address the item that states, "That the Development Advisor work with the Guelph and District Homebuilders Association and Developers Association to advance outstanding sites that have approvals in place but have not been built and that the City maintain the list of approved and unbuilt sites."

The collaboration between our organizations and city staff in this regard is already well underway. A joint effort exists to maintain an accurate list of approved but unbuilt sites that can help guide decision-making in the future. In fact, Guelph used to maintain a "Development Priorities Plan" which outlined what it was expecting for applications and developments next year, and into the future. The Development Priorities Plan allowed decision-making on many necessary parts of housing, including infrastructure spending and budgeting. This current list could also provide guidance beyond its current necessity.

The current list of "Zoned and Approved Housing Units" and the corresponding map are reflective of only a single moment in time (December 31, 2022) and do not accurately reflect what is needed to achieve the targeted 18,000 housing units by 2031. Our early research indicates approximately only half of the 6,000 units identified by the housing map are part of active developments or in files actively progressing toward becoming permit-ready projects, which means our inventory is actually very tight. The publicly available statistic provided to date does not represent the actual number of sites in the short term development pipeline nor the time it takes to go from approved, or zoned, to permit ready and onto construction. We agree there needs to be a better methodology to track this inventory to meet the targets adopted.

The task before us is more significant than ever. In order to accomplish affordability of any kind, on either side of the housing continuum, we need to increase supply to meet the demands of our community. To accomplish the provincial target of 18,000 housing units within the next eight years, council must transition from being mere gatekeepers to becoming facilitators of growth in the development of housing units of all kinds. The need for a substantial increase in permit-ready housing of all types, across the entire housing continuum, is paramount in achieving this ambitious goal.



It is crucial that we expedite the process of bringing development sites to the permit-ready stage. Without a substantial change in how we approach our short-term and long-term housing supply, we will fall short of the provincial housing target.

As an association, we are committed to working closely with city staff to expedite the development of as many of these sites that are physically and financially feasible to be developed, but we also need your support and the city's dedication to streamlining the process. This includes all processes required to get developments permit-ready including those steps that require council approval (e.g., zoning) and those that do not (e.g., site plan approval). It is important to recognize that Council approval of zoning is only one milestone in the development process and a streamlined process that seeks collaboration to minimize the number of engineering and site plan submissions is important.

Furthermore, we recognize that there are many more sites in various stages of developer planning and preparation for applications. With continued collaboration, we are eager to assist city staff in bringing these sites to the permit-ready stage, contributing to our collective success in meeting the provincial housing target.

GDHBA and GWDA wholly believe in the goal to ensure housing affordability and choice remains within the City of Guelph. This will be done so through balanced market driven housing supply, which includes all forms of housing, and making the best use of land throughout the City.

In 2022, the Canadian Home Builders' Association calculated that in Guelph new home construction represented 1,478 jobs, \$105 million in wages and \$255 million in investments. The new home building industry continues to be essential to Guelph's economic strength and prosperity. It is vital that the City take the necessary steps to streamline approval processes to get sites truly permit-ready and that Council receive and approve all viable applications in a timely manner that will put shovels in the ground to bring on the much needed housing units.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in relation to the City of Guelph Special Meeting/Housing Workshop.

Sincerely,

Josh Kaufman, GDHBA President

Carson Reid, GWDA President