



**WOOD DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
*Creating Space for Life*

December 8, 2023

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**TO: Guelph City Council**

**RE: State of Housing in Guelph Report**  
Council Planning Meeting, December 12, 2023  
Report 2023-471

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Mr. Mayor, Members of Council

We are providing comment on the “State of Housing in Guelph” baseline report being received as part of the December 12<sup>th</sup> agenda, which we understand is the first step in updating the city’s Housing Affordability Strategy.

We appreciate all the data and metrics compiled to make up the report, but wanted to note an importance absence -- the report does not address the fundamental issue of supply in the city or the province. Without proper framing the risk to the strategy update work is that it remains stuck in the conventional ‘affordable housing’ sector arguments.

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has taken a proactive stance on the need for Canada to address scarcity of housing across the country<sup>i</sup>. They have published multiple papers to provide the framework for governments to try to rebalance the overall ratio of housing unit to population. They are promoting increased supply for the effect it would have on long term housing price and availability for the country.

The CMHC recommendation is for 3.5M new homes by 2030 nationally, of which 1.85M are identified for Ontario. These statistics are what has lead to the province to adopt the 1.5M target for homes in Ontario, and locally, the 18,000 unit pledge for Guelph. Achieving these targets is not replicating the status quo but actually changing the basic supply ratio in the community. This is a key policy which requires consistent implementation across the country to have an impact.

A different lens to this is using the OECD G7 Countries data<sup>ii</sup> that has identified Canada as having the lowest ratio of 424 housing units per 1,000 people. Imagine our communities if we met the G7 average of 471 -- it would mean that today, Guelph (which by my calculation is

around 400u/1,000p), would have between 8,000 to 10,000 more units for the current population. At the planning scale, using the G7 average would mean that Guelph's 2051 target for units would be 100,000, not the 85,700 currently planned.

There is a lot to consider and debate in using the G7 data to compare North American demographics and housing stock to European conditions, however as a basic metric, it provides another measure of supply-to-population absent from the "State of Housing in Guelph" report.

If collectively we don't make headway and track the structural supply issue in its role in affordability, the other recommendations in the 'State of Housing in Guelph' are destined to be continually out of reach and remain largely unsolvable without massive and unrealistic subsidy.

Please include supply metrics as part of the conversation moving forward in the development of the strategy.

Thank you for your consideration.



Ian Panabaker, VP Development  
Wood Development Group

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<sup>i</sup> CMHC, "Canada's Housing Supply Shortages: Estimating what is needed to solve Canada's housing affordability crisis by 2030", June 2022

<sup>ii</sup> Perrault, Jean-Francois, "Estimating the Structural Housing Shortage in Canada", Scotiabank Economics, May 2021