



Building homes. Building community.

June 28, 2024

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

Mayor and Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to share comments, and for your thoughtful consideration.

We all understand the housing challenges facing our community today. The “housing crisis” has become an all-too-common refrain, from our living rooms to our council chambers. For those living in need of housing, however, this issue rightfully remains front and centre.

Habitat for Humanity Guelph Wellington (Habitat GW) would like to applaud Council and Staff for their efforts to date – for answering the call from the community to explore what more might be done to catalyze new housing solutions.

Perhaps more specifically, we are here discussing *Mayoral Direction B3 - Strategic Real Estate Partnerships on Underutilized City-Owned Assets*. I would contend that the underlying principle of this endeavor is in and of itself good – the exploration of public lands suitable for residential development that would facilitate action on affordable housing. It’s encouraging to see the City embracing this kind of leadership role, and it is an effort that finds you in good company in the Province, with cities like Kitchener, ON and Windsor, ON already stepping up to this plate.

To bring meaningful impacts on housing affordability and availability in Guelph, a wide range of solutions brought forward by a wide range of partners are needed; the allocation of City lands can help bring these partners and these projects together.

As but one of many local housing champions invested in finding multi-faceted collective housing solutions, Habitat GW is actively building, with projects that promise to bring over 200 units online in the next 3 years – and ambitions to grow to 2000 units by 2030. This type of expansion, however, is not easy and locating viable land for development remains one of our biggest and most expensive hurdles.

As we come together to explore the pros and the cons of taking action, I believe we can all acknowledge the need for care and diligence in planning the communities we live in. At the same time, however, should we all come to see a common goal – namely, affordable housing – perhaps we can all sit down together to explore these proposals from the perspective of “how can we work together to make this happen?” as opposed to “why this won’t work”.

What can we achieve if we all, truly, pull in the same direction?

Let us all remain grateful for the lands we call home today. Let us all recognize the history of our presence on these lands and those who took care of these lands before us. Let us all acknowledge the opportunity that lies in front of us – the opportunity to provide some immediate relief and long-term solutions for our neighbours in need of housing.

Sincerely,



Ryan Deska  
Director, Community Engagement & Development  
Habitat for Humanity Guelph Wellington