



Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
Fédération de l'habitation coopérative du Canada



June 27, 2024

City Clerk's Office
City of Guelph
1 Carden Street
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1

Sent by email: clerks@guelph.ca

Re: 7.1 Mayoral Direction B3 - Strategic Real Estate Partnerships on Underutilized City-Owned Assets, 2024-308

Dear members of Committee of the Whole,

The Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada would like to express our support for item ***7.1 Mayoral Direction B3 - Strategic Real Estate Partnerships on Underutilized City-Owned Assets, 2024-308***, which will be considered at the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 3, 2024. We urge the Committee to go beyond just receiving the report by also committing to expeditiously issuing an ROI for project partners. Please see our specific comments below.

Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada) is the national voice of co-operative housing, representing 2,200 housing cooperatives, home to a quarter of a million people in every province and territory. In Ontario, we represent 550 co-ops, home to 125,000 people. Co-operative housing is a well-documented success story. For over 50 years, co-ops have provided good quality, affordable housing owned and managed by the community members who live there.

The Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation (COCHF) is a federation of non-profit housing co-operatives in the cities of Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, Brantford and Guelph. The federation currently has 42 member organizations that represent roughly 3,000 homes of member-controlled co-operative housing in the five cities in Central Ontario. There are seven housing co-ops in Guelph, home to over 500 people.

The housing affordability crisis has hit hard across cities in Ontario, including Guelph. COCHF and CHF Canada have been partnering across all levels of government to build more co-op homes. Co-op housing fosters strong, affordable communities that offer the security of tenure and member ownership. Given Guelph's housing affordability and supply crisis, it's crucial that more community housing—including co-operative housing—is built without delay.

Unlike private developers, affordable housing providers, including co-ops, often do not have additional available land to grow and expand their housing portfolio. For growth of the sector to be feasible, land must be provided at little to no cost. Providing surplus municipal land to co-ops that are ready to grow ensures that the land remains a public good and a community asset. A good example is in Kingston and Whitby, where the City provided land to existing co-ops to help them build new homes. In Toronto, the HousingNow program uses City-owned land to develop affordable housing. Through this program, Ontario will see the largest affordable housing development – which includes over 600 co-op homes – built in decades.

We are pleased to see that two sites have been considered for affordable housing development and that more are currently being considered. However, timing is crucial. The co-operative housing movement is ready to build. In June, the federal government announced the launch of the \$1.5 billion Co-operative Housing Development Program. The participation of other government orders, including municipalities, can help lower the costs of a new co-operative development, which will stretch the Program dollars further.

We hope the Committee members see the benefits of co-operative living and see co-op housing as a piece of the puzzle to solving Guelph's affordability challenges. We encourage Committee members to not only move to receive the report but commit to issuing an ROI expeditiously so that more affordable homes, including co-ops, can be built without delay.

Sincerely,



Elana Harte
Executive Director
Central Ontario Co-operative Housing Federation



Amina Dibe
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