

April 10, 2025

Dear Council,

On behalf of the Guelph & Wellington Poverty Elimination Collaborative (PEC), I am writing to express support for the Downtown Community Planning Permit (CPP) By-Law and the opportunity it presents to shape more inclusive growth in our city.

The CPP is an important planning tool to streamline approvals and enable more housing to be built more quickly. It also allows the City to attach conditions to development, such as affordable housing, within a clear and predictable framework.

This is significant. **CPPs are one of the few tools municipalities have to directly secure affordable housing, without relying entirely on limited public funding.** When designed well, they can create a predictable and scalable pipeline of affordable housing over time, ensuring that as our city grows, that growth delivers community benefit.

We support the direction and the City's efforts to align the CPP with the Housing Affordability Strategy. At the same time, we are concerned that the proposed flat 5% affordable housing requirement may not fully realize the potential of this tool.

Downtown is a strategic growth area where land values, access to transit, proximity to jobs, and public investment are high. These conditions make it one of the most appropriate places to secure affordable housing as part of new development. Ensuring a meaningful proportion of affordable homes in this area supports not only social outcomes, but also broader economic and city-building goals.

A strong approach to affordable housing within the CPP would help:

- Ensure that workers across a range of incomes can live near jobs, services and transit,
- Support a vibrant and economically resilient downtown by enabling a diverse mix of residents,
- Maximize the return on public investments in infrastructure and growth,
- Create opportunities for partnership with the non-profit and community housing sector, especially if financial contributions can be leveraged toward deeper affordability.

While we recognize that achieving the right balance is critical to ensuring development proceeds, it's valuable to note that this tool is being introduced in a context where additional height and flexibility are included.

We also note that the affordable housing secured through this tool may not meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness or living on very low incomes. This highlights the importance of maximizing the impact of the CPP, while continuing to

advance complementary solutions in support of deeply affordable and supportive housing.

With this in mind, we urge Council to consider whether a flat 5% requirement, strikes the appropriate balance between feasibility and community benefit, and to adopt a stronger approach that more meaningfully leverages this tool to deliver affordable housing.

Establishing clear and consistent expectations through the CPP will provide certainty not only for developers, but also for the community – ensuring that growth contributes to a more inclusive community and strengthens economic and community wellbeing.

This is a critical opportunity to leverage one of the few tools available to the City to advance housing affordability. We encourage Council to ensure that the CPP is structured to deliver meaningful and lasting impact.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,



Dominica McPherson

Director, Guelph & Wellington Poverty Elimination Collaborative

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