



December 12, 2020

Planning and Housing Committee
% Nancy Martins
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

PH19.4: Expanding Housing Options in Neighborhoods - Garden Suites Review

Attention Planning and Housing Committee Members,

I am Ontario Environment lead for Environmental Defence, a leading national environmental organization that works at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to safeguard our freshwater, create livable communities, tackle climate change and build a clean economy. I lead Environmental Defence's policy development and advocacy regarding natural heritage, smart growth and sound land-use planning in Ontario.

Environmental Defence strongly supports the implementation of as-of-right "garden suite" installation within the existing built-up area of the City of Toronto, for two main reasons, which we look forward to expanding on through the course of consultations.

First, it is essential that the City of Toronto and other inner GTA municipalities identify as many as-of-right (or nearly as-of-right) locations as practical for new housing within *the existing built up area*. It is only by accommodating housing in existing Toronto and GTA neighborhoods, that we can avert the rapid conversion of our remaining farmlands and natural spaces to residential sprawl. Particularly in view of recent, ill-advised changes to the Provincial land use planning regime, it is important that these as-of-right permissions include ample ground-related housing, and garden suites could be one very efficient and relatively straightforward way of accomplishing this.

Second, it is time for Toronto to acknowledge and grapple with the fact that many of its outlying suburban neighborhoods have densities, land use patterns and street networks that are far from optimal for promoting active transportation and pedestrian-oriented businesses, and thus reducing carbon emissions. Garden suites offer an excellent way of improving densities, and an opportunity to catalyze a better mix of uses and more permeable street grid without undermining the positive qualities of Toronto's post-war neighborhoods. Environmental Defence would



welcome the opportunity to participate in Garden Suites consultations with a view to helping Toronto capitalize on the opportunity to make its neighborhoods more liveable and sustainable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Pothen', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Philip Pothen
Ontario Environment Program Manager,
Environmental Defence