

October 27, 2021



Re: Agenda Item PH28.1 Inclusionary Zoning

Junction Triangle Community Action Network (JT-CAN) is a community-led network connecting, collaborating and co-conspiring to improve affordability and livability in the Junction Triangle and ensure public spaces are accessible to all. We envision a community where neighbours old and new can flourish and meaningfully participate in decisions affecting their lives, and where no one is left behind.

We are encouraged by the City's efforts to bring an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) policy forward, which could create more affordable homes for some Torontonians. We are writing to ask that you strengthen the policy - we want a minimum 20-30% of all new residential developments with 60 or more units are set-aside for permanently affordable rental housing; affordable units to be kept affordable forever, not just for 25 years; and the policy to apply to all parts of Toronto, not only near transit hubs.

We are aware that the Committee and planners are worried that a stronger IZ policy will drive away developers and landowners and slow the building of new housing. However, we remind you that the City's first priority should be to its residents, not to developers and land owners. In the context of a housing crisis, a five-year phase in period, arriving at full IZ requirements by September 2026, is a reasonable amount of time to make land vendors adjust to the new normal land market.

We know there will be some financial costs to creating housing that are absorbed by land owners, developers, and home buyers. We are here to remind you of the personal and public health and social costs of unaffordable housing. For too many people, unaffordable housing costs them their lives. This year, 300 people are entering homelessness in Toronto each month, and so many more are precariously housed.

The City's 2021 feasibility study shows that **right now**, requirements could be set nearly twice as high as the City is proposing to raise them to by 2030, while still leaving developers a 15% profit margin and landowners 10% above the current value of their land.

In keeping with the City's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, we ask that you meaningfully commit to having this policy meet a wider vision of "a people-centred plan developed with the objective of improving housing outcomes for current and future residents of Toronto." This includes prioritizing the human right to housing; the basic need for a safe, secure place to live.

Of all the thousands of new units being proposed and built in the Junction Triangle which is a significant transit hub, not one is planning to include affordable units. They will all be market-rate housing, and the vast majority are condos being marketed and sold as luxury homes and investment properties.

Today, over half of Toronto's households are renters. There was only one new purpose-built rental unit built for every 9 condo units over the past decade. Only one-quarter of those purpose built rentals were actually priced affordably for the poorer half of renters. That's just over 4,000 affordable units created over the past 10 years for over a quarter-million lower income renter households.

If 20% of the 247,000 proposed new units in Toronto were required to be affordable under a strong IZ policy, 49,000 affordable units could be created within the next 10 years.

In the future, we'll have a significant amount of new housing at market rate in the Junction Triangle, but who will be able to afford to live in our neighbourhood? Only households who earn more than \$106,000 per year can actually afford payments on a newly built 1-bedroom condo. Only those who earn more than \$160,000 per year can afford a 2-bedroom unit. More than 90% of renter households in Toronto can not afford a new or resale bachelor condo.

Our community group's efforts to advocate for affordable housing have been divided and diminished by current City policies and processes, as well as developers' actions. The current process requires community members to have the capacity to attend multiple meetings and negotiate for each individual development. We are led to compete against each other for community benefits, while developers continue to collect record profits. We are forced to choose between affordable housing in a new development or contributions to a park or a community centre or public art or other.

We believe that meeting everyone's basic need for a safe home should not be negotiable, it should not compete with other community needs. We support using a strong IZ policy tool to contribute to housing justice, in which "affordability" is not only for middle income residents.

This housing crisis is dire and bold action is necessary to prevent the people of Toronto from falling further behind.

We are joining Progress Toronto, ACORN, Parkdale People's Economy and other community advocates in asking this Committee to choose housing as a human right, rather than a commodity.

Please develop a stronger IZ policy that will:

- Require that a minimum of 20-30% of all new residential developments with 60 or more units are set-aside for permanently affordable rental housing;
- Have a faster five-year phase in period, arriving at full IZ requirements by September 2026;
- Ensure affordable units be kept affordable forever, not just for 25 years;
- Apply to all parts of Toronto, not only near transit hubs.

Sincerely,

Katie German on behalf of the Junction Triangle Community Action Network

JT-CAN

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