

January 16, 2023

Councillor Brad Bradford,
Chair,
Toronto Planning & Housing Committee
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Ph1.7 Accelerating Approvals for Affordable Housing

Dear Councillor Bradford and Members of Toronto Planning & Housing Committee,

I am writing in support of the recommendation to explore the feasibility of the use of the province's new Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator (CIHA) tool to accelerate zoning for affordable housing projects.

Habitat for Humanity GTA was directly involved in the first use of this tool that you have referenced in your letter to Committee. We have an 84-unit project on municipal lands in Bowmanville that we will be undertaking in partnership with Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation (DRNPHC). The result will be 32 new permanently affordable ownership units delivered by Habitat for Humanity GTA and 52 new permanently affordable rental units managed by DRNPHC. Municipal staff made the request to Clarington's Planning & Growth Committee to consider the use of a CIHA. Their rationale for making this request was two-fold. First, it would accelerate much needed affordable housing in the municipality. Second, by expediting the rezoning for this site, scarce staff time would be freed up to focus on approvals relating to the other 5600 units that are slated for development in the municipality.

Habitat GTA attended the public meeting at which staff's CIHA recommendation was discussed. Several members of the public attended, in many cases expressing common concerns about increased density (stacked townhomes versus single detached homes with backyard swimming pools which characterize the area), traffic, dust, etc. The public also had the opportunity to hear more about the project, understand its importance, and understand that the CIHA only represents expedited zoning and that there will still be an opportunity for public input on matters relating to traffic, etc. during the Site Plan Application process. Ultimately, the Committee chose to recommend making a CIHA request to Minister Clark, a recommendation that was subsequently approved by Council making it the first such use of this tool in Ontario.

We anticipate the use of the CIHA will accelerate the approval process by a year. We estimate the savings to the project stemming from avoided consultant costs, staff time, and one year of inflationary pressures will be \$2.5 to \$3.0 million.

In supporting the use of this tool in Toronto, we have one request. The bullet list of eligible projects included in your letter to committee did not include permanently affordable ownership units. Income eligibility levels for many of our projects overlaps with income eligibility for affordable rental projects. Moreover, we changed our homeownership program in 2020 to tie the appreciation homeowners receive to a fixed formula (roughly inflation) and a requirement that homeowners will always sell their homes back to Habitat GTA when they choose to sell and move on. This will enable us to keep Habitat homeownership units as permanently affordable. Thus, they are comparable to affordable rental units, but with the added benefits of security of tenure and ability to build equity which can form a basis from which to move on to market housing.

We respectfully request that permanently affordable homeownership units also be included as eligible for consideration in the use of the CIHA tool – just as was the case in Clarington’s use of this tool.

In partnership,



Ene Underwood
CEO