



**MORE NEIGHBOURS
TORONTO**

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

RE: PH 1.8 - Finding New Tools to Secure Affordable Housing and Deliver Complete Communities

About More Neighbours Toronto

[More Neighbours Toronto](#) is a volunteer-only organization of housing advocates that believe in building more multi-family homes of all kinds for those who dream of building their lives in Toronto. We advocate for reforms to increase our city's ability to build more homes in every neighbourhood. We are a big-tent organization with members across the political spectrum who are committed to counterbalancing the anti-housing agenda that has dominated Toronto's politics, created an affordability crisis, and cost burdened a new generation of aspiring residents. We are firmly committed to the principle that housing is a human right and believe Toronto should be inclusive and welcoming to all.

Position

More Neighbours Toronto supports exploring new tools to secure affordable housing and community infrastructure. We recommend that city planning consider the following tools, among others:

- Density bonusing
- Exemptions from restrictive zoning and urban design guidelines
- Expedited approvals
- Financial incentives
- The Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator, as proposed in PH1.7

We cannot ignore the economic realities of building housing. Construction, operation, soft costs, and risk are through the roof, while approvals take years and are not guaranteed. At the same time, opponents of new housing developments often tout magical math, asking for reductions in height and density, while at the same time demanding affordable housing be included alongside other community benefits. The financial reality of housing development means that any reduction in density makes it difficult, or even impossible to include affordable housing. Affordable housing must be the first priority over other requests to developers. We need to allow greater density, offer expedited approvals, relax urban design guidelines and provide financial incentives for developments that include affordable housing.

We also note that with the new limits put on Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) by the provincial government, this is an opportunity to review the program and bring it in line with best practices. Mandate-only IZ does not work at delivering affordable units at the scale we need. To secure more affordable housing than the IZ minimum in the permitted IZ areas, the City should consider exemptions from restrictive zoning and urban design guidelines to make the increased number of affordable units pencil. This is an approach that has paid off in California under their [builder's remedy](#) that exempts housing projects from zoning if they contain 20% affordable units. When the cost of lengthy approvals and restrictive zoning is removed from the equation, we may find that we can build more affordable housing than we previously thought.

Regards,

Jacob Dawang
More Neighbours Toronto