



May 7, 2016

Dear Mayor and Council,

We write to you as the Gibson and Landsdale Community Planning Team at its meeting May 7, 2016 received and endorsed Mayor Eisenberger and Councillor Collins' motion for the Initiative to Increase Affordable Housing and Reduce Poverty by Investing in People.

As the Hamilton Spectator's Code Red report highlighted the need for the Neighbourhood Action Strategy partnership that gave our community a table where residents and community partners could begin discussions of how to better our neighbourhood, The Social Planning Research Council released its neighbourhood profiles report illustrated some shocking findings: Almost six out of ten renters live in unaffordable housing in GALA, and close to a third of homeowners also live in unaffordable housing. GALA is also home to one of the largest concentrations of non-profit owned social housing dwellings out of the identified "Code Red" neighbourhoods. One provider alone has 400 units within our borders, 265 of which are single-family dwellings.

Over the last few years since that report was released, we have seen bidding wars and inflated home prices squeeze people out of our community. We have seen homes add assessment values of between fifty and sixty-three percent in less than five years. Four in ten of our residents live in poverty. Forty-three percent of our children and seniors live under the poverty line, compared to the city-wide average of twenty-six percent and seventeen percent respectively.

One of the last vestiges of "affordable" apartments have become the commercial spaces on the ground floor units along Barton Street, although in many instances these units are not up to code and are quickly becoming more desirable as businesses are priced off of James North and Ottawa Street.

All of these things highlight how, in the Gibson and Lansdale community, the booming real estate market and renaissance of Hamilton, while mostly positive, endangers our most vulnerable community members. It emphasizes the need to do more, not less, as the gaps begin to widen and people are displaced.

We fully support this motion, as the community planning teams and asset based community development have taught us all that investing in your people is the wisest choice of all.

Sincerely,

The Gibson & Landsdale (GALA) Community Planning Team