

From: Laura Katz

Sent: April 1, 2021 9:54 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Correspondence for April 6th planning meeting

Good morning,

Can you please include the below correspondence for the April 6th planning meeting. With thanks,

Laura Katz, Ward 1

Further to my concern about a potential boundary expansion, I am writing in support of allowing for maximum flexibility with regard to Second Dwelling Units.

Some KEY BENEFITS of SDUs:

- SDUs are a form of 'gentle density' that can increase population in existing neighbourhoods – SDUs are a form of urban infill development that can generate more living spaces within existing residential neighbourhoods. This, in turn, can increase population levels in a way that justifies enhanced public transit, & makes grocery stores and other neighbourhood amenities more viable in the area. All of this helps to build more complete communities where residents can access essential services and needs often within easy walking distance. Accommodating more people in urban areas means less need to expand outwards.
- SDUs can increase the availability of rental units across urban & suburban neighbourhoods, & in rural settlement areas – SDUs increase the range of rental options available in a municipality, opening the door to enabling someone to live, for instance, in a residential neighbourhood in a house with a yard and garden access. In some Ontario municipalities (eg Toronto) incentive programs exist to encourage homeowners to rent their SDU at lower than market rents to help address housing affordability issues.
- SDUs can help people become or remain homeowners – A rental unit in or on a residential property might make a home purchase viable for a first-time buyer – with rental revenue helping to pay for a mortgage. An SDU might also be what enables a current homeowner to remain in their home by providing the revenue required to cover on-going costs.

-SDUs can enable extended families to support each other – The opportunity to establish an SDU such as a laneway suite or garden flat, can enable a primary resident to create housing for adult children or aging parents on site but in separate living space. This enables everyone to have their own living space on a family property but with supports nearby –something that might be essential in the case of elderly family members.

- Secondary suites are an affordable way to create more homes for people within our existing communities using gentle intensification. More people in our current neighbourhoods will help local businesses, schools, etc. to thrive and is an alternate response to sprawl.

- Developing secondary suites is a great way to reduce the carbon footprint of both these new homes, which will typically be more energy efficient due to their scale and location, and supports more walkable and less car-centric communities. You recognize that Hamilton has declared a Climate Emergency and Urban Sprawl is a huge contributor to GHG emissions, this is an antidote to that.

- Detached secondary suites are a great way for people to age in place in their communities, creating stronger and healthier communities. In order to support barrier free spaces and accessible design, you would support increasing the allowable gross floor area further than the draft bylaws, on lots where appropriate (see bullet point below).

- City Staff have already included recommendations for a development charge (DC) waiver to go to the finance committee later this month, which is a great way to incentivize this type of infill. Similarly, a reduced parkland dedication fee and minor variance application fee are very supportable. You can express your support for these recommendations since Council will also need to vote on them. Incentives like these will significantly help allow these types of infill developments to happen across our city.

A few more technical points that will help make this new zoning even more effective:

- The maximum areas listed in the bylaw for detached secondary suites is still more restrictive than necessary. You can request that the maximum Gross Floor Area (GFA) for these homes be increased and suggest a maximum GFA of 100m² AND a maximum lot coverage for the SDU of 25% - whichever is more restrictive as a reasonable maximum threshold. Further, the required setbacks from the rear and side lot lines and from the primary house will further limit smaller sites. However, allowing larger units on appropriate lots will reduce the number of unnecessary minor variances.

o Note: While you understand that the goal is to create small-scale infill that is considerate of the context of the neighbourhood and surrounding houses, Toronto allows laneway houses up to 160m² in their bylaw, and Edmonton allows 130m². Vancouver allows up to 83.5m². The typical SDU size in Vancouver, which has had hundreds of applications, ranges from 70-100m² GFA.

- The requirements for the 1.2m Rear Yard (4.33.1b2) with only sod could be finessed so that it works for sites accessed from a laneway through the rear yard. As it is written, the bylaw does not allow for other forms of visual barrier from the lane to the SDU which would improve privacy. We would suggest removing the requirement for only sod in the required rear yard and allowing for other permeable landscaping, fencing, or permeable surface treatment used to access the SDU.

- The requirements related to the Ontario Building Code relating to the max 40m distance from the Front Lot Line to the entrance (4.33.1b2) of the Secondary Dwelling Unit will limit SDUs on larger lots. While it is understood that this requirement is related to the Ontario Building Code, it can be dealt with at the permit review instead of being written into the bylaw. That way, if an SDU is further from the street line it can be dealt with as an Alternate Solution on a case by case basis instead of written into the zoning bylaw. For example, in Toronto there has been an allowance for sprinklers in the SDU if this 40m distance to an entry cannot be met.

THANK YOU!

Laura Katz