

March 31, 2021

To: Planning Committee

Re: Secondary Dwelling Units – Item 9.4 on Agenda for April 6, 2021

Following the marathon General Issues Committee on March 29, 2021 and clear direction from Councilors to look more thoroughly at ways to accommodate future growth without taking over lands in the “food belt”, aka “white belt”, it’s clear that we need to find new ways of doing things in Hamilton if we are going to address the climate crisis and the need for affordable housing.

I applaud the City for taking the initial steps toward allowing secondary dwellings in separate built structures on existing residential lots. This is a great step toward providing more housing options.

Cities like Vancouver have achieved considerable success in allowing for this. One of the prime drivers was to find ways to **provide affordable housing**, something that is very much needed in Hamilton too.

Gone are the days of the majority wanting to live in big sprawling homes. More and more people recognize the value of living within their means. Introducing SDUs into the residential fabric means **providing real ways for people to reduce their carbon footprint**, live in walkable locations, use public transit and **feel more connected to their neighbours** and neighbourhoods. SDUs are also well suited to the aging population allowing for more to age in place within proximity of a watchful neighbour.

Given the smaller size of SDUs, reduced development charges make sense and note the fee charged for a residential dwelling typically much larger and requiring a more lengthy review. This will help encourage current property owners to take the step toward building an SDU.

To reduce the anticipated number of Minor Variances staff and property owners would need to navigate I encourage increasing the maximum size up from the proposed 50 m², saving time and staff resources while allowing to build something practical and desirable for prospective residents. Encouraging **gentle density in this form while maintaining character and providing affordable options is a win-win**.

It is also significant regarding future growth targets for SDUs to be recognized in the provincial Growth Plan not as “apartments” but instead as the single dwelling units they genuinely are.

I am eager to watch how this unfolds and see results from the pilot. I’m confident that more affordable, **ground-based housing choices** will be well received by many current and prospective residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these written comments.

Regards,

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