

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Support for Two-Storey ADUs as an affordable housing option

From: Emma Cubitt- Invizij Architects <cubitt@invizij.ca>

Sent: Monday, December 9, 2024 10:27 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Subject: Support for Two-Storey ADUs as an affordable housing option

Hello Clerk and Councilors,

I am writing to you as a resident of Ward 1, and principal of Invizij Architects, based in Hamilton.

I understand that you are discussing the future of two-storey ADUs at the Dec 11th Council meeting, and request that this letter be included in correspondence for that agenda item.

Prior to last week's Planning Committee discussion on this topic, I shared a video showcasing several of the two-storey ADUs I designed and others which have been constructed in various parts of Hamilton. Affordability is a key hallmark of ADUs, and particularly two-storey ADUs. The average cost of these dwellings is around \$275,000, and the rents for these homes are affordable to average Hamilton households. In each case, they have allowed families to live in a part of the city where they would otherwise be priced out of the market. These homes are near schools, have good access to local parks, and add diversity to the available rental stock of every neighbourhood.

Please leave the current bylaw in effect, allowing two-storey ADUs as-of-right. If this type of family-friendly home is not permitted, many current homeowners will be dissuaded from developing new ADUs due to the complexity and uncertainty of navigating the Committee of Adjustment process. This would result in diminished investment in our city, reduced levy growth, and most importantly, fewer affordable rental options for families.

Council is under constant pressure to address the housing crisis. Whether it's dealing with the impacts of homelessness to the many Provincial changes to planning policy, you do not need to create additional barriers to new housing options you have already supported. Hamilton's Housing Accelerator Funding includes incentives for ADUs, including grants and fee waivers. As all developments involve change to neighbours, the Building Department has already published helpful guides for supporting ADUs such as "Additional Dwelling Units: Detached" and the "Residential Infill Construction: Good Neighbour Guide" to assist homeowners achieve success. These existing resources can help address the concerns you will be discussing on the 11th. From my own experience developing an ADU, direct conversation with neighbours helped inform the design and address concerns. We reworked the plans to maximize privacy and chose materials that complemented neighbourhood character.

As architects, we know good design matters for all buildings, whether it's a multi-residential tower, infill redevelopment, or a detached ADU. But banning two-storey ADUs does not improve designs, it just limits the opportunity for good projects to deliver good results for families. ADUs are the most cost-effective way to create affordable housing, while democratizing the development process to include the thousands of Hamilton homeowners who want to contribute to solutions. I know this firsthand, as I have designed numerous ADUs for families who want to use their lots to help others achieve stable and healthy lives in the neighbourhoods they love.

In summary, I request that you leave in place the current ADU bylaw which allows two-storey dwellings as-of-right. If you are interested in touring a two-storey ADU, I would be happy to make arrangements. You can see first-hand the positive impact that family-friendly ADUs make in diversifying housing option in our city.

Regards,

Emma Cubitt MArch, OAA, MRAIC, LEED ®AP
Principal

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