

CITY OF HAMILTON MOTION

Planning Committee Meeting: March 18, 2025

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. WILSON.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

Permit Reform Process

WHEREAS, the Government of Ontario has set a goal of building at least 1.5 million homes by 2031 and has assigned the province's 50 largest municipalities, including the City of Hamilton, with housing targets to help meet this goal;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton has a 47,000 new homes target;

WHEREAS, the Government of Ontario's Housing Affordability Task Force found that Ontario parents and grandparents are worried that their children will not be able to afford a home when they start working or decide to start a family and that too many Ontarians are unable to live in their preferred city or town because they cannot afford to buy or rent;

WHEREAS, the Government of Ontario's Housing Affordability Task Force found that more density is needed across the province, that cities and towns need to end exclusionary rules that block or delay new housing and municipal councils need to work to prevent abuse of the housing appeals process;

WHEREAS, the Smart Prosperity Institute's report "Who Will Swing the Hammer" (May 2023) reported that Hamilton is struggling to attract young workers and retain young families and will have increased difficulty competing with cities like Ottawa and Calgary for talent due to a lack of attainable housing;

WHEREAS, the Smart Prosperity Institute's report stated that without significant reforms, the problem of a lack of attainable housing for families in Hamilton is likely to get worse;

WHEREAS, a municipality's development approvals process and building permit process impact the ease and cost of building housing;

WHEREAS, a 2024 municipal benchmarking study of land-use planning policy-related factors prepared for the Canadian Homebuilders' Association by the Altus Group ranked the City of Hamilton last out of 23 municipalities in estimated land use approval times;

WHEREAS, annual reporting on housing activity would uphold City Council's commitment to communicate in an accessible and transparent manner;

WHEREAS, a review of the City of Hamilton's land-use planning approval system is part of Council's commitment to continuous improvement and an effort to get housing built.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Planning and Economic Development and Public Works staff be requested to develop an action plan to improve the timeliness, efficiency, customer service and accessible navigation of the development approvals and building permit processes to facilitate the construction of new housing supply;
2. That this action plan be informed by stakeholder participation from the development industry and other community stakeholders tasked with an assessment of lessons learned from the All4One Bloomberg pilot and other municipal best practices with terms of reference determined by the Mayor and City Manager;
3. That the Mayor of Hamilton and City Manager be requested to report back to members of Planning Committee with information on these said terms of reference and stakeholder membership by Q2, 2025
4. That the scope of this review and action plan include but not be limited to:
 - a) The formal consultation process and the completed application requirements
 - b) The site plan control process
 - c) The subdivision process
 - d) Engineering reviews, and
 - e) Conditional building permits
 - f) A review of the number and type of submission requirements including consultant reports, plans and studies that are required by the City through the planning approval process and the material impact on project outcomes;
 - g) An assessment of Hamilton's current official plan and zoning frameworks in terms of Council's commitment to continuous improvement and an effort to get housing built.
5. That Planning and Economic Development staff be requested to compile and report on housing activity as part of the Planning Division's annual Market and Land Supply Monitoring report including but not limited to:
 - a) The number of planning approvals issued for new low-density, mid-rise and high-density units and their locations in Hamilton;
 - b) The number of building permits issued for new low-density; mid-rise and high-density units and their locations in Hamilton;
 - c) The average size of units;
 - d) The achieved timelines for housing application and permit approvals and how these timelines compare with neighbouring GTHA, Brantford, Niagara, Kitchener, Waterloo and Guelph municipalities.

6. That future annual reports on housing activity include any additional KPIs identified by the forthcoming work of the Mayor's task force on the development approvals and building permit processes.