



Kingston Home Builders
ASSOCIATION
Building a Better Kingston

June 20, 2024

Councillor Cinanni

Chair, Planning Committee
216 Ontario Street
Kingston, ON

**RE: Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Application D35-002-2024
Housekeeping and Administrative Amendments**

Dear Councillor Cinanni,

The Kingston Home Builders Association (KHBA) is the voice of the residential home building industry in Kingston and the surrounding region. KHBA represents local builders, developers, professional renovators, trade contractors, professional services, and many others within the sector. Our industry creates over 5,800 local jobs, pays over \$410 million in wages and injects over \$860 million dollars into our regional economy. KHBA members will ultimately build the housing supply that Kingston needs to help restore attainability for individuals and families looking to call our region home.

KHBA has been monitoring the housekeeping amendment since the public pre-application in January 2024 and we note that the applications are scheduled to come before the Planning Committee on June 20th with a staff recommendation for approval. KHBA is encouraged to see City Staff proposing amendments to the official plan and zoning by-law that are aimed at harmonizing provincial legislation and the municipal policy and regulatory framework. KHBA has been working with City staff in this current, ever-changing planning policy environment to help reduce complexities, improve efficiency for Staff and applicants, and ultimately help get homes built and families living in them faster.

We are encouraged by the overall approach reflected in the housekeeping and administrative amendments. What we mean by this, is that Staff have been working diligently to monitor the implementation of the new zoning by-law and they are proposing adjustments and improvements based on feedback they have received in the past two years since the zoning by-law was approved by Council. They have vetted the feedback that has been received and proposed changes that will ultimately improve Kingston's zoning by-law.

KHBA is also encouraged to see Staff proposing measures to implement commitments made by this Council in support of Kingston's Housing Accelerator Fund application as well as the following Strategic Plan priorities which align closely with the interests of our members:

- 1.1 Promote increased supply and affordability of housing;
- 2.2 Support climate action and sustainability for residents, businesses and partners.

That is why we are writing to you today, to voice our support for the proposed amendments to the official plan and zoning by-law, specifically on those changes supporting the creation of all new forms of housing.

The KHBA is broadly supportive of the amendments proposed. This letter identifies specific themes or groups of amendments that we feel are of particular significance in supporting the creation of new homes.

Theme 1: Align Documents with Bill 23 and Allow 4 Units

This theme includes a number of important improvements. Revisiting the distribution of housing in Kingston to permit new forms of housing in established areas is a positive step in the direction of improving the inclusivity of our neighbourhoods. This will support the rejuvenation of existing neighbourhoods, consistent with the direction that we expect to see in new communities, where we expect to see higher overall densities and the co-existence of various forms of housing.

The KHBA also supports the re-envisioning of the low-, medium- and high-density policies in the official plan. These currently mix numerical and built-form considerations for determining density. The metric used is best applied at a neighbourhood or community scale and is not intended for evaluating density on the scale of a single site. It therefore has the effect of introducing inappropriate barriers to the creation of new housing. The approach proposed by Staff will streamline applications by directing the focus to built form, while maintaining the same locational and compatibility tests with which the community is familiar.

The KHBA is also fully supportive of the proposal to permit 4 residential units per property and to permit up to 12 bedrooms per lot. By allowing up to 4 residential units on serviced urban properties and simplifying zoning classifications to permit a range of compatible dwelling types, the changes will streamline development processes and encourage infill housing. The expansion of permissions to allow up to 4 residential units on properties currently limited to 3 units is a significant step towards increasing residential density in a compatible manner. This amendment, which aligns with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) requests, will enable the construction of more housing units on existing serviced land, thereby capitalizing existing municipal services in a cost-effective and climate-conscious manner.

The introduction of a new Holding Overlay map ensures that applications for a fourth unit will need to demonstrate adequate capacity for servicing, transportation, and other considerations. This thoughtful approach balances the need for increased housing with technical and functional requirements, ensuring sustainable and responsible development. The increase in the maximum number of bedrooms per lot for ground-oriented housing from 8 to 12 further supports the supply of housing options throughout the city.

Theme 6: Streamline Approval Process for Multi-Unit Buildings along Express Transit Routes

The KHBA is supportive of streamlining the approval process along Express Transit Routes. By prioritizing development in areas well-served by public transit, the City will be promoting sustainable growth. This framework will encourage higher density developments near transit, making efficient use of land and infrastructure in a forward-thinking action that will align housing creation objectives and policies with infrastructure and transportation planning. This framework also provides transparency for existing residents in that it identifies where height is proposed in existing built-up areas. Certainly, the possibility will continue to exist that applications will occur outside of these areas, or for greater height than that envisioned by the framework, however the framework itself represents an innovative approach to supporting housing creation by streamlining the approval process with defined parameters, which the KHBA applauds. As the proposed framework is new, we anticipate it will require refinement over time as applications are brought forward and evaluated, however we see this as a positive approach that will support the creation of new housing.

Theme 8: Implement Administrative Amendments

There are numerous administrative amendments that will support KHBA members and their efforts to create new housing. Among these, the reduction in minimum walkway width to align with the Ontario Building Code (OBC) introduces a beneficial standardization. Permitting greater driveway widths at the lot line instead of at the front yard setback is another improvement that will facilitate construction of ground-oriented housing where the current provisions have posed design challenges for home builders and residents. Permitting walkways and driveways to overlap in certain cases is an approach that has previously been permitted and the KHBA is pleased to see it return, as this supports the creation of infill housing on existing properties. Other amendments that the KHBA would like to highlight are the amendments to permit rooftop projections needed to house required mechanical equipment, to provide greater flexibility in the implementation of bike parking provisions, to reduce minimum visitor and car-share parking requirements, and to permit reduced setbacks for smaller accessory buildings, as these will have a positive impact to our members' ability to create new homes.

We encourage Planning Committee to vote in favour of recommending the proposed amendments.

KHBA values its partnership with the City of Kingston in building homes and communities. We look forward to continuing to build homes of all types for current and future Kingstonians.

Best regards,

Kingston Home Builders Association