

Notice of Motion re: Exploring the potential for affordable housing units to be built above parking spaces in city-owned parking lots

Moved by: Councillor Hamilton

Seconded by:

WHEREAS ensuring residents have a supply of adequate and available affordable housing is of great importance to the City of Cambridge, the Region of Waterloo, and all jurisdictions and levels of government;

WHEREAS the City of Cambridge, like other municipalities across Ontario and Canada, is in the throes of a crisis of a lack of affordable housing, due to a variety of intersecting factors including (but not limited to) the rising costs of goods and construction materials, disruptions in local and global supply chains, a lack of skilled labour, a rise of inflation and interest rates above historical averages, skyrocketing housing prices, and the importance of intensifying residential development within core areas with access to services to meet daily needs;

WHEREAS both residents, and an appropriate number of parking spaces for automobiles and bicycles, are essential to the viability and liveability of every urban core, and parking is required for many forms of housing;

WHEREAS city parking lots cover wide areas of prime urban space in cities and their urban cores, which might be utilized for other purposes due to the proximity of many lots to businesses, restaurants, parks, and key areas where growth and density may be gently intensified;

AND WHEREAS between 2021 and 2022, population growth in the Region of Waterloo grew at twice the rate of the Canadian average, with rental prices rising 141 percent, placing 6500 families on the waitlist for affordable housing, with 1500+ in Cambridge, with an average wait time for housing at more than 7 years,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT council request staff investigate the possibility of building affordable housing units above city-owned parking lots by providing Council with a list of potential locations for an above-parking-lot affordable housing pilot project or prototype, thereby preserving important urban parking spaces in core areas while also creating structures containing affordable units above such parking lots;

AND THAT the property or properties provided as options for a prototype of pilot project remain owned by the City of Cambridge;

AND THAT since affordable housing sits under the jurisdiction of the Region of Waterloo, and because the City of Cambridge does not itself directly engage in the building of affordable housing, staff be directed to contact the Region of Waterloo to determine if such a project could fall under their Affordable Housing Plan to develop up to 500 new homes per year, determine if there is any funding for a prototype or pilot project currently available, as well determine if there are any current potential housing providers to carry out such a project;

AND THAT staff report back to Council with their findings;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this motion be sent to the Region of Waterloo.