

Proposal Discussion to Increase Affordable Housing Supply – By R.M.

My proposal is for the Task Force to table and hopefully vote to propose to Council and planning staff, an amendment or exception/variance to the parking by-law for residential new construction or major renovations that would allow the developer/builders to include new residential units in an application with zero parking requirements if the following criteria are met:

1. The project is within 100 metres of a public transit stop/pick up.

This supports affordable housing demographic and allows for means of transportation. This also piggy backs of existing services that the town provides that are under-utilized.

2. The unit(s) being applied for are less than 25% of the total units being supplied at the property.

This provides protection from a whole development being proposed with no parking or it being abused by developers. An example would be if four (4) units are being proposed in a development, 1 of the 4 units does not need to meet the parking requirement. If the bylaw for that zoning required 2 parking per unit, the total spots required would be 6 parking spots, not 8 as would have normally been required. This would also limit this benefit to 4 plex units and up, which would leave triplex and single-family dwellings unchanged. I am open to discussion on this if the task force thinks that it would be beneficial for basement apartments and triplexes, and the like to also have this benefit. It's my opinion it would help increase adoption of those because not many people have 4 parking spaces in their residential house, mine only has 2. Maybe if your below 4 units the % changes to 50% of units could be applicable to this benefit.

3. The “affordable unit” is deemed an extra unit to the proposal from a parking perspective and wouldn't be applicable to impact the average parking limitations on a property.

For example, if there was precedent set in an area that variances had reduced previous developments parking requirements that are similar with a variance to reduce from 2 to 1.5 units, the affordable units wouldn't and couldn't be used to sway the average parking spots per unit to detriment of either the builder or planning. The goal is that the parking proposal increases supply that wouldn't have been able to be proposed otherwise and vice versa it's not a way for planning to limit the overall precedent being set with some developments by including that as part of the average.

4. No development fees for any “affordable units” being proposed.

This is not a lost cost to the town as these units wouldn't have otherwise been produced. It further incentivizes the builder to produce more “affordable units”. My argument that ZERO parking would by default make the units more affordable is because units that don't offer parking automatically trade both in sale and lease for far lower prices. The market would make it affordable.

Furthermore, the supply increase of units would drive prices (both up market and downstream) down. It would allow developers to produce a mixed variety of unit buildings because they could produce more desirable 2–3-bedroom units. They have further economic benefit being produced by more units (the affordable ones) that would be added to the project, theoretically 25% more units, this makes them build more projects.

A rent cap could also be legislated for more control, but it would in my opinion detract from the overall incentive and my argument above is the units would by default become affordable.

Further Comments:

The benefit to the Town beyond the obvious improvement to supply and affordable housing, is density and increased utility of public transportation. If everyone has two parking spots per unit there is less motivation or incentive to utilize public service beyond costs.

Another economic benefit is increased property taxes, better land utilization increases the amount that can be yearly returned to the town by way of property taxes or alternatively lowering the burden on the other homeowners.

There is zero downside other than potential tweaking that I'm sure planning or members might like to see in what is being proposed, its low hanging fruit, its costs the town nothing, it incentivizes builders, increased housing supply, automatically by way of free market makes those additional units more affordable versus 2 parking units. It is a simple amendment to a by-law, which can be passed by council and from information gathered, it is already in some capacity being reworked and could theoretically be included in that same effort. This could be a blanket residential by-law for Orangeville included as exemption to existing zonings. Makes it easier to deal with.