



Durham Region Home Builders' Association
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Susan Ashton
City of Oshawa
50 Centre Street South
Oshawa, Ontario L1H 3Z7

Re: October 29, 2019 BILT Meeting

The Durham Region Home Builders' Association proudly represents over 180 member companies that are involved in the construction and renovation industry, and is the voice of the residential construction industry in Durham Region.

We would like to thank city staff for inviting us to participate in the October 29 BILT meeting, which focused on accessibility, parks and downtown sidewalks. We believe that this type of open communication is beneficial to both the city and the development industry.

The Durham Region Home Builders' Association (DRHBA) has reached out to our members about the issues presented at the BILT meeting, and we are prepared to offer the City our feedback.

O.A.A.C. Built Environment Subcommittee Motion - 15% Accessible Units

The O.A.A.C. has put forward a motion: "Therefore the City require that all residential projects be designed with 15% accessible units with visitable features, including no stairs to the entrances doors as well as entrance door and washroom door widths sufficient for mobility devices."

In the meeting, committee chair Lisa Hart clarified that the committee is seeking to have homes built with no entrance stairs, exterior and interior doors that are wider and an accessible washroom on the main floor/entry level.

Even with the clarification, the Durham Region Home Builders' Association believes that clearer criteria is needed before further discussion can continue. However, we will provide you with some initial feedback on the information that was provided.

While we appreciate that the population is aging and the need for accessible housing exists, creating a mandatory "15% accessibility" requirement poses some significant challenges.

The committee chair stated that the number, 15%, was pulled from the Ontario Building Code, and stated that it is the current requirement for building accessible units in apartment buildings. With ground floor units and elevators available in most high rise buildings, it is less challenging to hit this target. When the conversation turns to townhomes and single detached houses, meeting this mandatory

requirement proves to be much more difficult. For example, current grading practices (rear to front drainage) do not allow for an entrance without steps. Many stacked and three-storey townhome designs have the garage built into the home and therefore have very little square footage on the ground floor to accommodate an accessible bathroom.

It should also be noted that many builders will work with purchasers to customize their homes to suit their needs, including building in accessibility features. Therefore, the specific needs of an individual or family can currently be met without introducing mandatory regulations.

At this time, our builders and developers are not experiencing a demand for accessible housing, and feel that mandating 15% of all residential units meet a specific accessibility criteria is unnecessary.

Parks

In regards to the City's proposal to change City policy to require developers to finish parks in new developments (parks and parkettes 0.6 - 1.8 hectares in size), our members have some concerns.

Currently, the park design and construction program is a collaborative effort between the City and its development industry partners. Developers and City staff work through the design process to ensure that all elements of park programming requested by the City are accommodated within the available park budget. Adjustments can then be made to the design of the park to ensure that there are sufficient funds to reimburse the developer under the Development Charge Credit program once construction is complete. Should the city make it mandatory for the developer to build the park, this collaborative atmosphere could be eliminated. In this situation, once the city provides a programming wish list to the developer, anything that falls outside of the City's DC amount collected would have to be paid for by the developer. As the park construction is directly reimbursable through Development Charge credits, we do not feel it is appropriate for the City to leave park construction solely to the Developers as the City ultimately holds the DC funds to pay for these new parks.

Furthermore, we understand through the conversation at the October 29th meeting that there may no longer be any DC credits available for parks not currently within the DC bylaw. We would request further clarification on this item.

Downtown Sidewalks

At this time, the Durham Region Home Builders' Association does not have any members that are developing/building in the downtown, so we do not have any feedback at this time, other than to say that we are happy to work with the City to ensure that pedestrians have safe passage near construction sites.

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Sincerely,



Stacey Hawkins
Executive Officer
Durham Region Home Builders' Association

cc:

Johnathan Schickedanz, president, DRHBA
Tiago Do Couto, chair, GR committee, DRHBA
Paul Ralph, city manager, City of Oshawa
Warren Munro, commissioner of development services, City of Oshawa
Tom Goodeve, principal planner, City of Oshawa