

Written submission in support of 12.1 City Land for Affordable Housing – For March 10 Committee of the Whole.

Re: Support for Indwell in Burlington

Dear Madam Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing in support of the reports brought forward by City of Burlington Community Planning and Legal staff recommending use of municipal land for affordable housing development by Indwell.

I write to you as a current resident in Aldershot Burlington. Affordable housing helps ensure people in our community are cared for, because everyone deserves a safe place to call home. Our family has witnessed school friends go through difficult times, sometimes even without enough food, and it has opened our hearts to understand the challenges some families face and the importance of taking care of our neighbours. A strong community is one where we look out for each other and make sure everyone has the chance to live with dignity.

Indwell has a strong track record of working with communities across Southern Ontario to create well-designed, long-term affordable housing buildings. Indwell supports 1,300 people in buildings in Hamilton, Woodstock, Norfolk County, London, Waterloo Region, Mississauga and St. Thomas. Locally, this includes 550 apartments operated by Indwell in Hamilton.

Recent data illustrates the scale of the affordable housing crisis in our community. There are 319 individuals experiencing homelessness in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or other temporary accommodation across Halton Region, according to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, a 10% increase compared to the 2021 enumeration. Halton Region's community housing waiting list has over 8,000 households. Locally, 45% of the 18,000 renter households in Burlington are paying unaffordable rents, according to the 2021 census. Rents are increasingly out of reach for low- and middle-income households, including people receiving social assistance, retail and service workers, seniors, students, and young families.

In the context of the overwhelming need for affordable housing, I urge you to support the proposal to enter into a long-term land lease with Indwell on 1022-1030 Waterdown Road and to provide funding from the city's Housing Accelerator Fund to support the development of 75 units of deeply affordable housing. I commend Burlington councillors and staff for your leadership in using all the tools at your disposal to address this pressing need in our community.

Thank you for noting my support as you consider this matter.

Sincerely,

Tanya Burmaster