



## Waterloo Region Yes in My Backyard Statement in Support of Rental Replacement Rules

December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Waterloo Region Yes in My Backyard (WR YIMBY) urges the province of Ontario to allow for the maintenance of strong tenant protections such as those provided through Rental Replacement rules. Indeed we would like the province to strengthen them and other tenant protections.

We understand and appreciate the need for more housing. In fact, advocating for more housing is a big part of what we do as a YIMBY organization. We frequently delegate and advocate in the media and directly to planners in favour of more housing.

However, it is also crucial to protect existing affordable housing and rental housing. For one thing, it is already there, it doesn't need to be built. Protection of already existing affordable rental housing fills a particular need that adding to the housing stock doesn't fulfill at the pace any of us would like. We believe, along with many other pro-housing advocates, that tenant protections are a vital part of a package of policies to make housing more affordable and secure for people.

We are not alone in feeling that way among pro-housing voices. For example, prominent pro-housing academic Shane Phillips argues that supply, stability and subsidy based solutions to our housing crisis work best in complement to each other. He calls for "displacement compensation and right of return" in *The Affordable City* (2020), writing "the purpose of these displacement compensation programs is not just to give tenants their due but also to direct development towards sites that have the least negative impact on residents --- to align the financial cost of redevelopment with the human cost" (pg. 129-130).

As housing advocates we are often frustrated by the relatively trivial concerns that housing opponents raise such as shadows, relatively ambiguous concerns such as "neighbourhood character" and the relatively narrow concerns such as localized traffic (when in fact, denser housing types allow for less car-dependency, and therefore less traffic overall). However, there is absolutely nothing ambiguous, narrow-minded, or trivial about worrying you will lose your housing due to redevelopment. If you really want to build more housing, you need to make it so that new housing isn't at the expense of existing tenants. Rental replacement rules are one way to protect tenants and mitigating harms is one way to make any strategy more viable as well as more desirable.

With that said, such an approach works much better in combination with broad up-zoning, which allows for much more supply in areas not already situated with much needed older, more affordable rental housing. Creating more room to protect existing renters and to protect nature is one of the reasons it's



important to allow for more infill housing development within cities. This is why we also urge the province to use their powers to go further in addressing exclusionary zoning and to call for cities to allow for multi-tenant homes city wide and to allow for at least four story fourplexes throughout our cities as called for by the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force.

We urge the province not to remove or water-down the ability of municipalities to enforce 1 to 1 rental replacements in the cases of redevelopment or condo conversion. This would both undermine broader attempts to increase the supply of housing, and hurt some of the most vulnerable segments of our society. Meanwhile, the province has not yet come close to exhausting all of its avenues to allow for more housing through eliminating exclusionary zoning. Ensuring that cities allow for four story fourplexes and multi-tenant homes would be a further step in that direction.

Sincerely,

Martin Asling

Waterloo Region Yes in My Backyard