



First published  
Kitchener Citizen  
"Notes from City Hall"  
January 2021

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# On the record

Every month, the Kitchener Citizen publishes "Notes from City Hall" which Kitchener City Councillors can use to communicate with residents.

In addition to highlighting upcoming community events, I often use this as an opportunity to present my position or invite discussion about issues that pertain to citizens.

Here is one that I think bears repeating.

The basic underlying principle of Housing First is that people are better able to move forward with their lives if first housed.

We have an affordable housing crisis in the Region. The fact that Kitchener would consider collaborating with the Region to address this crisis is honourable.

Staff and residents did a great job in finalizing the Housing For All Strategy. But in my view there is something missing.

Let's look at rental units in this City. Market rent is over \$1,200 for a one-bedroom apartment, while there are not enough rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units available. The jump from RGI to market rents is unreachable for many. The biggest housing deficit is at that place on the continuum where people no longer qualify for subsidies, but can't afford market rents.

The strategy looks at the whole continuum, which it should, but there is a gap; namely it lacks a definition of what is meant by "affordable". I trust we would all agree that affordability means different things to different people.

Defining affordable has three very important purposes. First, it would give the City, developers and the public a clear understanding of what inclusionary zoning would look like. Second, it would provide a clear understanding of what affordability means in the strategy document itself. And third, it would give the Region and the other municipalities a starting point – a way to advance the discussion and ensure that the right to housing for all is met across the Region.

That is why I suggested to council that we put a hold on the strategy until we are able to include a clear definition of "affordable". Unfortunately, others didn't agree.