

Consolidated Development & Heritage Standing Committee Meeting Agenda

Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026

Time: 4:30 o'clock p.m.

Location: Council Chambers, 1st Floor, Windsor City Hall

All members will have the option of participating in person in Council Chambers or electronically and will be counted towards quorum in accordance with Procedure By-law 98-2011 as amended, which allows for electronic meetings. The minutes will reflect this accordingly. Any delegations have the option to participate in person or electronically.

MEMBERS:

Ward 1 – Councillor Fred Francis

Ward 4 - Councillor Mark McKenzie

Ward 7 - Councillor Angelo Marignani

Ward 9 - Councillor Kieran McKenzie (Vice Chairperson)

Ward 10 - Councillor Jim Morrison (Chairperson)

Member Anthony Arbour

Member Joseph Fratangeli

Member John Miller

Member Charles Pidgeon

Member Robert Polewski

Member Khassan Saka

Member William Tape

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item # Item Description
1. CALL TO ORDER

READING OF LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We [I] would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, which includes the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi. The City of Windsor honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

3. REQUEST FOR DEFERRALS, REFERRALS OR WITHDRAWALS

4. COMMUNICATIONS

5. ADOPTION OF THE *PLANNING ACT* MINUTES (*previously distributed*)

5.1. Adoption of the Development & Heritage Standing Committee (*Planning Act*) minutes of its meeting held March 2, 2026 (**SCM 83/2026**)

7. *PLANNING ACT* MATTERS (*previously distributed*)

DELEGATIONS: (5 MINUTES)

7.1. Zoning By-law Amendment for 1141 and 1175 Cabana Rd W.; Applicant: Homes by Artisan; File No. Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338] - Ward 1 (**S 27/2026**) *Author: Justina Nwaesei, Planner III – Development*

a) Justina Nwaesei, Planner III – Development (in person)

b) Tracey Pillon-Abbs, Principal Planner, Pillon Abbs Inc., available for questions (via Zoom)

c) Anna Lanoszka, Area Resident (in person)

d) Rino Licata, Area Resident (in person)

e) Fulvio Valentinis, Area Resident (in person)

Clerk's Note: The following written submissions are **attached**:

- a) Olivia Curti Durocher, Area Resident
- b) John Moynahan, Area Resident
- c) Dan Coccimiglio, Area Resident
- d) Sheri & Corey Livingston, Area Residents
- e) Catherine Archer, Area Resident
- f) Anna Lanoszka, Area Resident

7.2. Zoning By-Law Amendment - Z 004/26 (ZNG-7356) 654 Capitol Street - Ward 10
(S 21/2026) *Author: Averil Parent, Planner II - Development Review*

- a) Averil Parent, Planner II - Development Review (in person)
- b) Saksham Sharma & Sital Garha, Agents for the Applicant, available for questions (in person)

8. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES (previously distributed)

8.1. Adoption of the Development & Heritage Standing Committee minutes of its meeting held March 2, 2026 **(SCM 82/2026)**

9. PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS (COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS)

10. HERITAGE ACT MATTERS (previously distributed)

DELEGATIONS: (5 MINUTES)

10.1. Notice of Intent to Demolish a Heritage Listed Property – 8150 Riverside Drive East, House - Ward 6 **(S 25/2026)** *Author: Tracy Tang, Planner III - Heritage (Acting)*

- a) Hunter Weir, Property Owner, available for questions (in person)

11. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS (previously distributed)

DELEGATIONS: (5 MINUTES)

11.1. Demolition Control – 672 Langlois Ave - Ward 4 **(S 20/2026)** *Author: Simona Simion, Economic Development Planner (Acting)*

- a) Saksham Sharma & Sital Garha, Agents for the Applicant, available for questions (in person)

12. COMMITTEE MATTERS (*previously distributed*)

- 12.1. Minutes of the International Relations Committee of its meeting held February 24, 2026
(SCM 86/2026)

13. QUESTION PERIOD

14. ADJOURNMENT

Development & Heritage Standing Committee
Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Item 7.1 - Written Submission

From: Olivia Curti <>
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2026 1:39 PM
To: clerks <clerks@citywindsor.ca>; Nwaesei, Justina <jnwaesei@citywindsor.ca>
Cc: Francis, Fred <ffrancis@citywindsor.ca>
Subject: Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338]

Good Day City of Windsor,

I am looking to include a statement of **Opposition** to be accounted for in the public record for the proposal of File# Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338] that is scheduled for Council on April 7, 2026.

I strongly oppose the proposed rezoning amendment to By-law 8600 for the lands described as Part of Lot 19 Plan 1478 (PIN 01576-0193 LT and PIN 01576-0194 LT), which seeks to change the zoning from RD1.4 to RD3.1 to permit a 3-storey, 29-unit multiple dwelling.

This proposal is fundamentally incompatible with the established character of Roseland and the surrounding neighbourhood, which is defined by quiet streets, mature trees, unique single-family homes, and a long-standing reputation for safety and tranquility. Introducing a development of this scale, along with 37 parking spaces accessed via Casgrain Drive (which is already a main artery to access Roseland, and can get quite busy already with vehicles turning left onto Cabana throughout the day, especially seen during peak morning and afternoons), would dramatically increase traffic, congestion, and noise on a street that currently serves as a residential connector. The requested zoning change represents a significant and unjustified intensification that is wholly out of proportion with the low-density context intended under the existing RD1.4 designation. This neighbourhood should continue to remain low-density. Further, the applicant's request for additional site-specific reductions—including the north side yard width and the parking area separation from habitable room windows—demonstrates that the proposal cannot reasonably meet the standards designed to protect neighbouring properties.

Granting such exceptions would set a troubling precedent and erode the planning principles meant to preserve the stability of established residential communities. This has been seen all over the city, and the quaintness, safety, calmness of the Roseland neighbourhood continues to be threatened with these large scale buildings, with landowners trying to squeeze every square inch of property to house as many people as possible. This method does not work in established neighbourhoods that were not designed for high density living. Perhaps the Landowner should take note of approved developments that have been welcomed by the community previously, such as a row of Townhomes.

The Roseland neighbourhood is and continues to be a highly sought after area precisely because of its quiet streets, unique character, proximity to the golf course, walkability to nearby shops/restaurants and cohesive single-family residential environment—qualities that would be irreparably harmed by this development. For these reasons, I strongly urge the City to REJECT this requested zoning amendment and protect the integrity of this valued residential area.

Thank you,

Olivia Curti Durocher

Development & Heritage Standing Committee
Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Item 7.1 - Written Submission

From: John Moynahan <>
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 12:54 PM
To: clerks <clerks@citywindsor.ca>
Cc: Francis, Fred <ffrancis@citywindsor.ca>
Subject: Opposition to Proposed Rezoning at 1141 & 1175 Cabana Rd W

Good afternoon,

My name is John Moynahan and I am a resident of Ward 1 living at [REDACTED] Morris Drive in Windsor. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed rezoning and development at 1141 and 1175 Cabana Road West.

As someone who lives just one street north of this site, I am directly impacted by what is being proposed. I want to be very clear that I oppose this application in its entirety.

This proposal represents a significant and inappropriate intensification within a stable, low-density residential neighborhood. The requested rezoning from RD1.4 to RD3.1 is not a minor change—it is a fundamental shift that does not respect the existing character of the area. Introducing a 3-storey, 29-unit apartment building into a neighborhood of single-family homes is not compatible development.

What is particularly concerning is that the applicant is unable to meet standard zoning requirements and is requesting reduced setbacks and separation distances. This strongly suggests the site is being overdeveloped. If the proposal cannot function within established planning standards, it raises serious concerns about its suitability for this location.

I am also concerned about the real-world impacts on surrounding streets. While access is proposed via Casgrain Drive, it is unrealistic to expect that traffic and parking pressures will remain confined there. Spillover into nearby streets, including Morris Drive, is inevitable. This will negatively affect safety, parking availability, and overall quality of life for residents.

Approving this application would also set a troubling precedent for further intensification in established neighborhoods without appropriate transition or consideration for existing residents.

I want to emphasize that I am not opposed to growth or development in Windsor. However, it must be appropriate, balanced, and consistent with the character of the surrounding area. This proposal does not meet that standard.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you oppose this rezoning application and advocate for its rejection in its current form.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Moynahan

Dear Development and Heritage Standing Committee:

Interest: I am an area resident with an engineering degree and someone that owns and operates a commercial real estate development company. Over the past 2 years, I have taken a neighbourhood lead gauging our community's interest in the several proposed developments along Cabana Road West. I've held a neighbourhood town hall where hundreds of people showed up to oppose developments that don't resemble the existing character of our beloved Roseland neighbourhood.

Position: The proposed development at 1141/1175 Cabana Road West does not conform with the purpose and intent of the City of Windsor OP, does not conform to good Zoning principles, and would set a harmful precedent of over-intensification on Cabana Road West being the first major "big block" multi-family development along Cabana Road West under the new Corridor Designation. My position is to reject the RD3.1 site specific (singularly designed) rezoning application with its requested reductions. My position is that the requested amendment to Zoning Bylaw 8600 via Section 91.1 is not consistent with the PPS 2024 and is not in conformity with the City of Windsor Official Plan. It represents uncontrolled intensification and undermines neighbourhood character. For these reasons, I respectfully request that the rezoning application for 1141/1175 Cabana Road West is denied.

Land use impacts/Reasons: There are issues in relation to Provincial policy directives, City of Windsor Official Plan directives, City of Windsor By-Laws and the contradictory Planning Rationale Report provided by the developer/applicant. I have also read the "unintended consequences" Financial Post article the neighbourhood has shared with the City of Windsor in relation to placing guardrails on number of units and the impact developments such as the proposed have on neighbourhood character.

Commercial style Flat Roofing, Over Massing extent, and façade orientations which due to the number of units at play can't all face Cabana Road, all contradict the blending of the existing character in an effort to over-intensify, with the blatant disregard for this neighbourhood.

Provincial Directive: 4 plexes (which would allow these units to be larger and family oriented) have less compatibility impacts than medium and high density proposals within existing neighbourhoods.

Provinces New Planning Policy Statement started Oct. 2024: Building up around Transit Hubs and Retail/Shopping Nodes – Neither are on Cabana Road West, thus reasonable intensification is justified.

As shown by another development proposal along Cabana Road West with the 475 address, this proposal is a perfect blend of adding responsible density to the neighbourhood while visually making it fit its character.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Dan Coccimiglio

Development & Heritage Standing Committee
Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Item 7.1 - Written Submission

From: Sheri-Lynne Livingston < >
Sent: April 1, 2026 3:47 PM
To: jnwaessei@citywindsor.ca; clerks <clerks@citywindsor.ca>
Cc: Francis, Fred <ffrancis@citywindsor.ca>
Subject: FILE NUMBERS Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338]

Hello,

I am looking to include a statement of **Opposition** to be accounted for in the public record for the proposal of File# Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338] that is scheduled for Council on April 7, 2026.

I strongly oppose the proposed rezoning amendment to By-law 8600 for the lands described as Part of Lot 19 Plan 1478 (PIN 01576-0193 LT and PIN 01576-0194 LT), which seeks to change the zoning from RD1.4 to RD3.1 to permit a 3-storey, 29-unit multiple dwelling.

This proposal is fundamentally incompatible with the established character of Roseland and the surrounding neighbourhood, which is defined by quiet streets, mature trees, unique single-family homes, and a long-standing reputation for safety and tranquility.

The proposed development is so large for this size land, parking, traffic and congestion will become an issue for the tenants and existing residents, as well as flooding when all the green space on these properties are turned into concrete structure and parking lot.

I feel strongly that our neighbourhood character will be significantly impacted negatively.

We implore you to vote NO on this rezoning for this property and keep our neighbourhood quality and character in tact.

Sincerely,

Sheri and Corey Livingston,

Development & Heritage Standing Committee
Tuesday, April 7, 2026
Item 7.1 - Written Submission

From: Catherine Archer <>
Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2026 2:52 AM
To: clerks <clerks@citywindsor.ca>
Subject: Fw: City of Windsor Zoning By-Law 8600 File Numbers Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338]

From: Catherine Archer <>
To: cityclerks@citywindsor.ca; jnwaesei@citywindsor.ca
Cc: Fred Francis <ffrancis@citywindsor.ca>; ffathers@citywindsor.ca; ragostino@citywindsor.ca; mmckenzie@citywindsor.ca; esleiman@citywindsor.ca; joagignac@citywindsor.ca; amarignani@citywindsor.ca; gkaschak@citywindsor.ca; kmckenzie@citywindsor.ca; jmorrison@citywindsor.ca
Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2026 at 02:40:29 a.m. EDT
Subject: City of Windsor Zoning By-Law 8600 File Numbers Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338]

April 1, 2026

To: Development & Heritage Standing Committee

Attn: Fred Francis
Frazier Fathers
Renaldo Augustino
Mark McKenzie
Ed Sleiman
Jo-Anne Gignac
Angelo Marignani
Gary Kaschak
Kieran McKenzie
Jim Morrison
Justina Nwaesei
City Clerk

Reference: Notice of Public Meeting

Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 4:30pm

File Numbers Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338]

Dear Committee Members;

This meeting is to give the public an opportunity to comment and for the DHSC to make recommendation to Council, on the proposed amendments to the City of Windsor ZONING BY-LAW 8600. I am looking to include a statement of **Opposition** to be accounted for in the public record for the proposal of File# Z-033/25 [ZNG/7338] that is scheduled for Council on April 7, 2026 @ 4:30pm.

I strongly **oppose** the proposed rezoning amendment to By-law 8600 for the lands described as Part of Lot 19 Plan 1478 (PIN 01576-0193 LT and PIN 01576-0194 LT), which seeks to change the zoning from RD1.4 to RD3.1 to permit a 3-storey multiple unit dwelling containing 29-units. 37 on-site motor vehicle spaces are proposed with access on Casgrain Dr. The Applicant also proposes to add a site - specific zoning provision that would permit a reduction in the required minimum north side yard width (from 6.0m to 4.57m) and a reduction in the required minimum parking area separation from a habitable room window (from 4.5m to 2.13m).

This is the Third time I have seen a Proposal from this Developer for this property or a portion there of, over the past 3 years. The first was July 6, 2023 1175 Cabana/1190 Kennedy - a Zoom meeting Conducted by Pillon Abbs Inc Consulting firm, which 140 South Windsor Residents attended, expressing their dissatisfaction with the 3 storey Combined use-**12 dwelling/ 45 Parking space**, with access on Casgrain being proposed. I was able to generate a **Door to Door Petition** which 200 neighbourhood residents signed, all were adamantly opposed the Proposal based on size of building, flooding, shadowing, parking, light pollution, noise, garbage and traffic concerns. That petition became null and void when the Developer conducted a 2nd Zoom Meeting through that same firm and changed the Proposal on July 16th, 2024 to include Lots 1175/1141 Cabana Rd W increasing the size and scope to a 4 Storey - Combined Use -**24 dwelling/61 parking space** Condominiums access on Cabana and Casgrain, which 50 residents attended and voiced extremely valid concerns. Now it appears we are skipping the Zoom and going straight to DHSC, only now the Developer is requesting a 3 Storey multiple dwelling containing **29 units with 37 on-site motor vehicle parking spaces** with access on Casgrain Dr., as well as site specific zoning provision that would permit a reduction in the required minimum north side yard width (from 6.0m to 4.57m) and a reduction in the required minimum parking area separation from a habitable window (from 4.5m to 2.13m)

It seems ludicrous that developers can go beyond existing by-laws and be given special privilege to change the character of established mature neighbourhoods. City Council stood firm two years ago, against accepting MILLIONS from the Federal Government to build 4plexes by right on a city lot even though Provincially a law had been passed to build "3 plexes by right" anywhere on any lot size. Which the North Side of Cabana has plenty, also appears some are expanding with no notice give to their neighbours, perhaps better to beg forgiveness than ask permission. An alternative plan was developed to protect the "rights" of homeowners when 8 out of 10 voted for a "**Made in Windsor Solution**" – our Mayor clearly stated in the plan "**respects the homes of Windsor Residents, as the biggest investment most will ever make**" then explain how does a 3 storey 29 Unit Condominium in a mature single residential neighbourhood make more sense than a 4 plex, City planners and some Councillors are now supporting the **DEVELOPERS** instead of the residents that voted for them.

City of Windsor is allowing the Developers to determine where they want to build, where it is most profitable and then the City is putting Policy in Place to allow them to build there, as a result the housing being created will never be affordable – because it will not be Profitable. Meanwhile our entire downtown is full of abandoned buildings and overgrown cement pads in desperate need of revitalization, that housing just may be affordable – whatever that looks like these days. For some reason we are building low density **Townhouses** downtown on a completely cemented parking lot that is surrounded by and is likely already zoned for high density. While tearing down perfectly good \$600 thousand next level houses, that has a green space, mature trees, a place for a family to grow, with churches and schools a block away ~ to build **29** – \$600–800 thousand dollar Condominiums with a paved parking lot for only 37on-site motor vehicle spaces. Question: Where are the other 30 plus cars going to park? Don't tell me they will take the bus - that is not our lived experience. I can tell you as people that have to deal with this dilemma everyday we know exactly what is going to happen, our side streets are already lined with the cars that belong to St.Clair Students and overcrowded rentals. This area is a FLOOD ZONE and already has issues with storm drains backing up into residents basements. This proposed project would eliminate green space, which reduces the ability to absorb water. This project will increase noise and light to the community especially with the parking lot being adjacent to a residential area. This amount of density on two City lots in an established mature City Neighbourhood is Greed – plain and simple – there is absolutely nothing "Affordable" about this housing. I hear from so many other communities, a note from a west end resident noticing many empty lots and condemned buildings which could be developed and the community as a whole would welcome this kind of building which would work well with their neighbourhood that is already zoned High Density. Adding density to established neighbourhoods will draw mixed use development away from neighbourhoods that are in need of investment. Developers, investors and builders are attracted to mature neighbourhoods they can make more **Profit** for the same output. But the result is "**less affordable**" housing.

Increased Traffic on Cabana – as it has become the quickest route from LaSalle to all points Windsor and the New Hospital whenever that happens has made this small 1.1 stretch of Cabana a very dangerous one. With all the traffic calming that has been put in place to make it safer – why on earth would you want to add all of this density, it is a recipe for disaster. The recent widening of Cabana has been needed for many years, just to accommodate already existing traffic. Now there is so much traffic, that exiting from Casgrain and McGraw has become even more dangerous, particularly so if you are attempting to head west. There was a collision just this past weekend, sadly I see accidents at both streets on a regular

basis. Local residents will know that Kennedy Dr. W may provide a safer alternative and result in more traffic there going up to Roseland at Dougall , also a dangerous intersection but at least there is a traffic light. More traffic calming measures will be needed to slow speeding cars on Kennedy which at times travel double the speed limit. Casgrain traffic has already increased significantly, with Casgrain being a significant roadway into and out of the Roseland area, this proposed rezoning and development would significantly impact access to this area for residents, Roseland Golfers and emergency vehicles. With proposed building of 38 Luxury Condominiums at Roseland Golf Course and the additional density at the old St. James sight this area will become very congested. Residents within this area south of Cabana use it as a walking/biking for active lifestyle and a path to schools. Adding multi-unit building at this corner would increase traffic and negatively effect the safety to pedestrian/bike traffic including children.

City should protect an established Mature Neighbourhood like Cabana, Roseland and Roselawn – they should not be rezoning to add density, they should ensuring its integrity is kept. Neighbourhoods are fragile and need to be nourished. Neighbourhoods either get stronger or they get weaker and decay. If the City wants to protect and established neighbourhoods like Roseland, downzone and encourage a trend toward less density, if the City wants a neighbourhood developed or redeveloped, upzone and add density. Very little has been said about the destructive force of density. There are many ways that adding density to an established neighbourhood, like Roseland, diminishes and ultimately destroys the neighbourhood. These Developments are not beneficial to people that want to raise families with a backyard and green space. That is what this area of Cabana is – Family Orientated, single residential with multiple Schools, Churches and parks close by to grow. These people are trying to pretend that are trying to alleviate the housing crisis but they are just building more expensive, smaller dwellings for profit. Making it harder for young families to afford and changing the essence of this mature established community forever.

This is not just a South Windsor issue, it is a City Wide issue – you see opposition to developments all across the city, because people want their voices to be heard. There is a disconnect between City Hall and the Residents of these communities. People have concerns about traffic issues, parking issues, flooding issues, when big developments move into their neighbourhood. If Neighbourhoods are going to change then it stands to reason that the residents in those neighbourhoods should have a say in what that change looks like. This is perfectly normal because the changes can have a negative impact on many. This is not a NIMBY matter, instead, it's about residents working with developers to ensure developments fit into what's already in the neighbourhood, that's good cooperation and good planning. You as Elected officials represent **us** and you should listen to us, not just discount our concerns. We live here and have invested our money here, we pay taxes here and we **should be listened** to. If Changes need to be made at the Provincial Level regarding zoning and housing rules then City Council should be advocating for those **CHANGES** on our behalf at Queens Park, not just throwing up their arms and saying there is nothing we can do about it. I would also like the City to explain to me about how much development charges they may give away here and how will they make that up in the future and what development charge projects would be at risk.

I wish to be notified of the decision to any proposed amendments.

Sincerely,

Catherine Archer

Notes for the Meeting for the Development & Heritage Committee

on April 07 2026

Delegation Confirmation: Dr. Anna Lanoszka

Considering amendments to the City By-Law 8600

1. I am here today because I love this city, and Windsor can only thrive and prosper when established rules and regulations are respected.
2. I am pleading with you today to reject the proposal for amendments to City Bylaw 8600 concerning the properties 1175/1141 on Cabana Rd. Please note that it is not just a rezone from RD1.4 to RD 3.1 to construct a 3-storey dwelling containing 29 Units and 37 on-site vehicle parking spaces with proposed access to be on Casgrain Dr. The applicant also proposes to add a site-specific zoning provision that would permit a reduction in the required minimum north side yard width (from 6.0 m to 4.57m) and reduce the minimum parking area separation from a habitable room window (from 4.5m to 2.13m). This is not acceptable as it will completely change the character of this residential neighbourhood, create traffic safety hazards, and destroy the green space.
3. Without doubt such far-reaching and appalling changes should be rejected because if allowed they would completely change the character of this historic neighbourhood. And it would do that for no good public purpose. The proposal aims to create a not-needed monstrosity with units too small for families and individuals to settle. The proposal would result in an atrocious dwelling like a cheap hotel and hence ultimately useless blot on the landscape that could only serve as a temporary accommodation. We do not need a motel in this neighborhood. Most importantly, its creation would lead to the destruction of green space and healthy environment. It would exacerbate pollution by the increase in traffic in this residential area that already is congested on days when Golf Club is open.
4. Ontario needs homes for people. Windsor needs proper sizes units where individuals and families can settle for a long time. We, the neighbors, want this land to be developed as a reasonable residential place. A place where several individuals and families can live and stay for a long time. However, this is not

what is being proposed. The current rezoning proposal suggests building an eye-hurting architectural monstrosity (motel) with 29 ridiculously small units squeezed on an inadequate plot of land with a sole aim at a quick profit.

5. Look what is happening in Toronto - the condo market flooded by progressively small units has collapsed! Some apartment condo buildings are full of empty units, new units are not being sold. If the idea was to build for students, that market is no longer viable. The international students' programs turned out to be problematic and the government recognized those problems by significantly and permanently curbing international students' visas. I know because I work at the university. Hence, please stop building these useless units across Ontario.

6. **Families and individuals (retirees) need homes and proper-size apartments, not prison-like cells-units.** Such useless monstrosities only destroy the neighborhoods by inviting a transient population or staying empty (please see the article included).

7. **The committee members. You are the city guardians - so be up to the task. Reject this destructive proposal and compel the developers to be mindful of people's needs and the true needs of this wonderful city.**

The unintended consequences of 'gentle density' development

Multiplex zoning can unintentionally create unregulated clusters of transient accommodation

Author of the article:

By [Murtaza Haider](#) and [Stephen Moranis](#)

Published Mar 18, 2026 | Last updated Mar 18, 2026 | 4 minute read



A fourplex in North Central Edmonton, Alta. Photo by David Bloom/Postmedia files

City governments across Canada are promoting what planners call “gentle density.” The idea is straightforward: replace single-detached houses with duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and, in [Edmonton’s](#) case, eightplexes to increase [housing supply](#) without dramatically altering neighbourhood character.

In principle, gentle density is a sensible policy. In practice, however, its unintended consequences are proving detrimental to some nearby residents.

A recent report in the Edmonton Journal exposed concerns that many residents had quietly dreaded. Certain properties approved and built as multiplex housing are not being used exclusively for long-term rental purposes. Instead, they now serve as rooming houses or [short-term rentals](#), effectively functioning as boutique hotels embedded into residential neighbourhoods.

This outcome clearly diverged from the initial planning objectives. Advocates for increased density argued that expanding the availability of smaller units in established neighbourhoods would attract new

residents, including small families, students and workers seeking long-term accommodation, who would benefit from existing community resources and infrastructure such as transit systems, roads and sewerage networks.

When these units are converted into short-term rentals or rooming houses, the policy goal is compromised. The neighbourhood attains the density but not the housing stability that originally justified the policy.

This mismatch between intent and outcome calls for regulatory adjustments rather than abandoning the concept of gentle density altogether. In Edmonton, the city is reviewing multiplex regulations, including reducing the maximum number of units on residential streets from eight to six, but strict enforcement is needed to ensure conformity in their use.

Municipal governments need to update their short-term rental regulations to ensure that the new multiplexes do not become commercial lodging businesses operating in residential neighbourhoods. A practical and oft-implemented solution is to mandate that short-term rentals be allowed exclusively in owner occupied principal residences. When the owner lives onsite, neighbours have a clear point of contact and accountability should guests cause noise disturbances, parking issues or other nuisances.

Without such safeguards, multiplex zoning can unintentionally create unregulated clusters of transient accommodation. This was also the case in [Toronto](#), before the city imposed restrictions ensuring certain types of properties could not be used for short-term rentals.

There are other legitimate concerns about negative externalities, a concept well understood in urban economics. When properties operate as de facto hotels, with guests arriving and departing daily, the surrounding residents experience impacts that were never part of the social contract of residential zoning. Increased noise, parking pressure and unfamiliar transient occupants can alter the perceived stability of a street.

In economic terms, these are negative externalities imposed on neighbouring properties.

If such impacts depress property values or reduce neighbourhood desirability, municipalities should, at a minimum, measure and monitor these outcomes. Cities routinely regulate land use to protect public welfare; they should be equally willing to track whether some policy changes inadvertently erode neighbourhood value. Where demonstrable harm occurs, municipalities must be prepared to reconsider regulatory frameworks or provide appropriate mitigation.

Transparency and enforcement are also essential steps.

Cities should maintain public registries of short-term rental properties and rooming houses, allowing residents to see which properties in their vicinity are licensed for such uses. This information empowers communities to report illegal or unregistered operations.

Enforcement must also be credible. If penalties for violations are trivial compared with the profits generated from illegal short-term rentals, compliance will remain elusive.

Meaningful enforcement requires penalties that are large enough to serve as genuine deterrents.

Ultimately, the purpose of urban planning is not merely to maximize density. The goal is to create and protect value — economic value, certainly, but also cultural and communal values.

Neighbourhoods derive their identity from a delicate balance of permanence, familiarity and social cohesion. When residents know their neighbours and share a sense of place, those neighbourhoods become desirable places to live. That desirability, in turn, generates value for the entire city.

Gentle density remains an important tool for addressing Canada's [housing shortages](#). But its success depends on aligning policy design with policy outcomes. If multiplex zoning increasingly produces short-term rental properties rather than long-term rental homes, cities will have solved the wrong problem.

Good planning requires not only bold reforms but also careful guardrails.

Cities must ensure that gentle density delivers what it promised: more homes for residents, stronger neighbourhoods and growth that enhances rather than erodes the character of the communities people call home.

[Murtaza Haider](#) is the executive director of the [Cities Institute](#) at the University of Alberta and the [Radhe Krishna Gupta Executive Chair](#) in Cities and Communities at the Alberta School of Business. [Stephen Moranis](#) is a former president of the Toronto Real Estate Board and an industry veteran providing strategic market insights.