November 13, 2023

Dear City Councillors,

I am writing you to voice my concerns and opposition to the City of Winnipeg approving the Housing Accelerator Fund for our city.

The Fund will remove citizen input on proposed development projects. It is very concerning to me and hopefully to you too, if governing bodies remove the voice of their citizens on issues that affect these citizens.

Increasing affordable housing is very important. This will not be done by giving carte blanche to developers to build 4 stories buildings anywhere in the city. Allowing 4 stories buildings to be build will increase density of housing, it will not improve affordable housing, that depends on the rent being asked, which will depend on the owner of the building and the area of town the property is built in.

A fund affording 4 stories buildings to be built anywhere in the city within 800 metres of a bus corridor will increase the spread of the city, rather than densification.

While increasing affordable housing, the city should also incorporate sustainability and reduction of impact on climate change. Allowing 4 stories as-of-right will reduce green space around the buildings and will increase dwarfing of lower buildings around these tall buildings. This will significantly reduce the possibility of vegetation to grow around buildings. Removing vegetation/trees growth will aggravate heat dome effects due to global warming.

I do recommend the city to look into maxing out the use of parking lots/empty lots downtown to increase density in housing and affordability of housing. While developing these properties, I do recommend to oblige green spaces to be incorporated into the development to make the buildings livable. Nature is important for everyone, for mental health, to improve physical health and to reduce the impact of global warming. Access to nature should be available from someone's home, even just by having a tree to look at. Having to walk a couple of blocks to get to a small park is not feasible for everyone. By maxing out current empty spaces in an area with already higher developments will reduce spread of the city.

In conclusion: input of citizens is important and should not be removed in a democracy. If looking into increasing affordable housing, also incorporate livability for citizens by incorporating green spaces. Reduction of our cities impact on climate change should be incorporated into future developments.

Kind regards,

Els de Gussem