



Municipal Zoning Bylaw Reform for Inclusive Living

**Facilitating Supportive Independent and Group Living for
Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

**A Small Data Sample Report
to Inform implementation of Best Practices**

January 2024

Municipal Zoning Bylaw Reform for Inclusive Living:
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Executive Summary

The housing crisis for people living with developmental disabilities in Ontario is reaching a critical point, demanding immediate attention and action. OASIS, committed to advocating for change, has undertaken a comprehensive examination of the issue to illuminate the transformative potential of inclusive housing options.

Our report delves into the world of zoning by-laws, a complex framework that influences where group homes can be located, occupancy limits, and design requirements. While zoning laws have the potential to support inclusion, they often present formidable barriers.

At the core of our approach lies a commitment to principles of equality, human rights, equity, and social inclusion. Housing is not a mere necessity but a fundamental pillar of dignity, independence, community integration, and overall well-being for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The report issues a call for planning direction from the Province, Regional Official Plans, and Local Official Plans. Currently, these plans do not adequately consider the needs of at-risk communities, including those with developmental disabilities.

Our analysis identifies key themes within zoning by-laws, including evolving definitions, urban-rural disparities, inclusivity, and proximity and density restrictions. These themes provide invaluable insights into the zoning landscape, highlighting areas that require attention.

Through data analysis, we've pinpointed potential outliers in municipal zoning by-laws. Differences in factors such as occupancy limits, dwelling types, and licensing processes are significant factors that agencies must consider when engaging with their local municipalities.

The report offers a set of recommendations, tailored to reach various stakeholders, encompassing specific suggestions related to zoning, broader regulatory issues, and enhancements to the developmental service agencies/system.

In conclusion, this report serves as a call to action. It is an urgent appeal to redefine housing norms, break down barriers, and create a society where every individual can thrive. Empowering individuals with choices and opportunities through truly inclusive housing is a collective responsibility that cannot be delayed.

As we move forward, we call for a comprehensive review of the progress and issues outlined in this report by the year 2025. This review will ensure ongoing accountability and continued advocacy for inclusive housing for individuals with developmental disabilities in Ontario.

Introduction: Paving the Path Towards Inclusive Housing

Individuals with developmental disabilities deserve safe, comfortable, and supportive housing that aligns with their needs and aspirations. Housing isn't just about a place to live—it's a foundation for building meaningful lives within our communities.

There is an urgent need to address the deepening housing crisis for people in Ontario living with developmental disabilities. Previous governments have not provided clear planning guidance to Single-Tier and Two-Tier municipalities, resulting in the perception of “no direction” for at-risk communities which include people in Ontario living with developmental disabilities. At risk communities and specifically those with developmental disabilities were highlighted as an underserved community in the National Housing Strategy and in the Canada-Ontario Bi-Lateral Agreement. With zoning issues surrounding classification and definitions, it is often difficult to build housing for this targeted, vulnerable group.

In the absence of specific planning direction from the Province, Regional Official Plans and Local Official Plans and supporting Zoning By-Laws do not reflect the need to support at-Risk communities, including people in Ontario living with developmental disabilities, as specifically earmarked in the Co-Investment fund of the National Housing Strategy.

OASIS is dedicated to advocating for change and action to ensure that the housing crisis faced by those with developmental disabilities is addressed comprehensively. We believe that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to make sustainable progress. We envision neighborhoods that are inclusive, supportive, and responsive to the unique needs of every individual, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing their quality of life.

This report aims to leverage data on zoning bylaws across various jurisdictions to achieve several key purposes:

1. **Identify Best Practices:** Assess data to pinpoint successful zoning practices that have facilitated the creation of supportive housing for individuals with developmental disabilities and better understand how certain approaches have resulted in positive outcomes and integration within communities.
2. **Advocate for Policy Change:** By examining different bylaws, the report aims to support evidence-based advocacy efforts. It will showcase how well-structured zoning bylaws can be leveraged to advocate for policy changes that enhance inclusive housing options and ensure the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities.
3. **Make Specific Recommendations for Changes in The Provincial Policy Statement – 2020 and The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019 (GPGGH-2019)** to provide clear and unambiguous direction to Two-Tier and Single-Tier municipalities, specifically to.

In 2014, nearly as many people living with developmental disabilities were on the wait list for suitable supportive housing (13,000) as were currently living in appropriate housing in Ontario (15,246). Between 2014 and 2016, only 800 adults received the needed housing support – a mere 6% of the 2014 wait list.¹

Each year, the housing wait list for people living with developmental disabilities increases by about 1,200 people.²

- a. Include vulnerable / at risk populations including those with developmental disabilities, in Inclusionary Zoning, similar to Financial Need inclusion.
 - b. Reduce financial limit of inclusionary zoning from \$30,000 to include those on ODSP deeply affordable \$523 per bed per month.
4. **Tailor Solutions:** The report will provide insights into customizing zoning bylaws to meet the unique needs of different communities. It seeks to offer guidance on tailoring housing solutions that align with local demographics, resources, and infrastructure.
5. **Informed Decision-Making:** Utilizing data, the report intends to empower decision-makers in the developmental services sector to allocate resources effectively, prioritize initiatives, and engage in collaborative efforts with local governments to promote inclusive housing.
6. **Engage Communities:** The report aims to foster community engagement by showcasing successful examples from diverse municipalities. It intends to use this data-driven evidence to address concerns, build support, and foster understanding of the benefits of supportive housing.
7. **Showcase Feasibility:** Through concrete examples, the report demonstrates the feasibility of zoning bylaws that encourage supportive housing initiatives. Not only is such zoning viable but it is also beneficial to individuals with developmental disabilities and the community.
8. **Promote Collaboration:** The report will encourage cross-jurisdictional collaboration by facilitating the sharing of best practices among municipalities. It aims to create a platform for knowledge exchange and collective improvement in supportive housing initiatives.
9. **Drive Evidence-Based Research:** By analyzing data, the report will contribute to evidence-based research on the impact of supportive housing on the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. It aims to provide substantiated insights into the benefits of such initiatives.
10. **Streamline Processes:** The report will uncover potential bottlenecks in zoning approval processes and seek to streamline these processes. It aims to identify areas of improvement, remove barriers, and create smoother pathways for implementing supportive housing.
11. **Stay Adaptable:** The report will emphasize the importance of continuous monitoring of zoning bylaws to adapt strategies to changing attitudes, policies, and needs over time. It aims to ensure that the developmental services sector remains aligned with evolving community requirements.

In essence, this report explores the multifaceted benefits of leveraging zoning bylaws to advance supportive housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities. It will provide insights, evidence, and strategies to create more inclusive and empowering living environments.

Municipal Zoning

Municipal zoning laws for group homes holds paramount significance in the pursuit of comprehensive housing solutions for individuals with developmental disabilities. These laws wield considerable influence over the physical, social, and legal parameters that shape housing options. By delving into these laws, we uncover barriers that hinder accessibility and integration, as well as opportunities to champion inclusive living.

Municipal zoning laws directly impact the feasibility and viability of supportive housing initiatives. These laws determine where group homes can be situated, occupancy limits, and design requirements. They shape the very fabric of communities by influencing the proximity of housing to essential services, public transportation, and social amenities. Through analysis, we can identify gaps and deficiencies in zoning laws that obstruct the creation of inclusive housing options. These findings provide a compelling basis

for advocating policy reform, streamlining processes, aligning standard definitions and nurturing collaborative efforts among stakeholders. Moreover, analyzing progressive zoning laws offers replicable models that can be adapted to diverse contexts, accelerating the proliferation of successful housing solutions. Ultimately, the examination of municipal zoning laws illuminates a path toward a more inclusive, equitable, and vibrant housing landscape for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Compelling Case for Inclusive Housing Options

The rationale for providing people with developmental disabilities appropriate housing options is rooted in principles of equality, human rights, and social inclusion. Housing options are not just necessary but essential for **dignity and independence, community integration and enhanced wellbeing.**

Every individual deserves the right to live independently, with control over their living environment. Appropriate housing options empower individuals to make decisions about their daily lives, fostering a sense of self-worth and dignity. Inclusive housing options break down barriers that lead to segregation and isolation. By residing within diverse communities, individuals with developmental disabilities can actively engage with neighbors, build relationships, and contribute meaningfully to society.

When individuals with developmental disabilities live within communities, misconceptions and stigmas are challenged. Sharing common community spaces fosters understanding, empathy, and the breaking down of preconceived barriers. Further, well-planned supportive housing can reduce the strain on social services and healthcare systems by promoting preventive care and active community participation, ultimately leading to cost savings. Appropriate housing options allow for targeted and efficient support services that cater to specific needs. This ensures that individuals receive the assistance they require while maintaining their independence.

18% of people who are in shelters have a developmental disability.³

50% of individuals with developmental disabilities live with significant medical issues.⁴

Women with a developmental disability are 65% more likely to experience abuse.⁵

90% of individuals with developmental disabilities live below the poverty line.⁶

Overview of Data and Key Findings

This initial report summarizes data from 18 municipalities to see what is possible for more robust data collection to inform recommended practice for Ontario municipalities.

The municipalities reported in the conversation offer a diverse range of approaches to supportive housing and zoning bylaws. Urban areas like Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, and Oakville permit special needs housing and supportive living in various residential zones. Hamilton requires licensing for residential care facilities. In rural regions like Georgetown, Amherstburg, Essex, Kingsville, Lakeshore, LaSalle, Leamington, Tecumseh, Oro Medonte, Springwater, and Ramara, group homes and supportive housing are allowed with specific regulations. Each municipality's approach reflects its unique context and considerations, emphasizing the importance of tailored solutions to facilitate inclusive housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities.

(For a list of municipalities reported and notable highlight see appendix B)

Key themes and common elements observed

From the data provided by the 18 municipalities, several key themes and common elements can be drawn regarding supportive housing and zoning bylaws for individuals with developmental disabilities:

1. **Variability in Regulations:** The data showcases a wide range of regulations and approaches across municipalities. Some municipalities permit supportive housing in various zones, while others have specific restrictions on location and occupancy.
2. **Urban and Rural Considerations:** Urban municipalities like Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, and Oakville demonstrate a focus on integrating supportive housing within existing neighborhoods. Rural areas, represented by municipalities like Georgetown and Kingsville, tend to permit group homes while considering separation distances and land use.
3. **Inclusivity in Zoning:** Several municipalities recognize the importance of inclusive zoning. They permit special needs housing, group homes, or supportive living in diverse residential zones, acknowledging the need for integration and accessibility.
4. **Licensing and Regulations:** Licensing requirements are a common thread, especially for facilities categorized as residential care or individual care facilities. Regulations often include occupancy limits, separation distances between facilities, and specific occupancy conditions.
5. **Proximity and Density Restrictions:** Some municipalities emphasize spacing between group homes or supportive housing facilities to avoid concentration. This reflects an effort to promote community integration and prevent clustering.
6. **Evolution of Definitions:** The data reveals changes in terminologies over time, such as the transition from "Group Home Type 1" to "Supportive Housing Type 1." These changes reflect evolving perceptions of housing and care for individuals with developmental disabilities.
7. **Engagement and Collaboration:** While not explicitly stated in all cases, the importance of collaboration between municipalities, stakeholders, and community members is implied. Open houses, discussions with ward councillors, and engagement with the neighborhood emphasize community involvement.
8. **Accessibility and Design:** There's a recognition of the need for accessible design and universal principles to ensure that housing options cater to the diverse needs of individuals with developmental disabilities.
9. **Empowerment and Dignity:** The data underscores the significance of empowering individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently with dignity and choice. Supportive housing aims to provide an environment where individuals can flourish.
10. **Advocacy for Change:** The data suggests a broader advocacy for streamlining processes and creating more accessible pathways for supportive housing initiatives. This is reflected in the evolution of bylaws to remove barriers and promote inclusivity.

Overall, the common themes revolve around the need for inclusivity, collaboration, accessible design, and regulations that promote community integration and empowerment for individuals with developmental disabilities. The limited data highlights the importance of tailoring solutions to local contexts while keeping the broader principles of inclusive housing in mind.

Identification of differences and potential outliers among municipalities' zoning bylaws

Even in a limited pool of data, there are some differences and potential outliers among the municipalities' zoning bylaws:

1. **Occupancy Limits:** While some municipalities allow a specific number of individuals per supportive housing unit (e.g., Mississauga's max 8 people), others have broader ranges (e.g., Oro Medonte's maximum 10 people), indicating varying approaches to occupancy.
2. **Dwelling Types:** Some municipalities, such as Oakville and Springwater, permit special needs housing or group homes in various types of dwellings (detached, semi-detached, etc.), whereas others restrict them to specific dwelling types.
3. **Proximity Restrictions:** Some municipalities, including Brampton and Oakville, mandate minimum distances between group homes / supportive housing, while others like Toronto don't require separation, reflecting differences in spatial planning strategies.
4. **Licensing Process:** There's variation in the extent of the licensing process. While Hamilton has an extensive licensing process with multiple costs, others like Mississauga and Oakville do not explicitly mention a licensing process in the data.
5. **Engagement with Ward Councillor:** The requirement to meet with a Ward Councillor as part of the registration process is present in Brampton but not in other municipalities, indicating potential differences in community engagement approaches.
6. **Urban vs. Rural Focus:** Urban municipalities like Brampton, Toronto, and Mississauga emphasize community integration and inclusion, while rural municipalities like Tecumseh and Oro Medonte focus on specific zoning for supportive housing.
7. **Application Process:** Some municipalities, such as Toronto and Oakville, require an application for municipal licensing, potentially indicating more streamlined processes, while others have more complex registration and approval processes.
8. **Gross Floor Area per Person:** Different municipalities have different requirements for minimum gross floor area per person in group homes (e.g., 23 sq meters in Georgetown), which may impact the size and design of housing units.
9. **Institutional Zones:** Some municipalities permit special needs housing or group homes in institutional zones (e.g., LaSalle), while others restrict them to residential zones.

These differences and outliers suggest that municipalities approach supportive housing and zoning bylaws based on their unique considerations, local context, and priorities. It's essential to recognize these variations when advocating for best practices and seeking improvements in the overall process.

Best Practices and Recommendations

A Supportive Zoning Bylaw for Independent Living: Key Components

The recommendations below have been categorized into three main areas. Recommendations for Government (all levels) concerning zoning specific issues, Government concerning complimentary regulations and processes such as building / fire code or housing waitlists, and Developmental service organization recommendations.

Zoning Recommendations (Government)

1. **Standardized Terms:** All provincial planning documents should define relevant terms i.e., “Group Homes, Supported Independent Living...” and ensure that all municipalities use similar terms.
2. **Housing Waiting List:** Ensure there is one by-name affordable housing waiting list in each municipality including individuals with developmental disabilities.
3. **Inclusive Permitted Uses:** Allow "Supported Independent Living" as a permitted use in various residential zones to accommodate diverse needs and preferences.
4. **Community Integration:** Encourage dispersed placement of supported housing units within existing neighborhoods to promote community integration and prevent concentration, without establishing strict distance separation expectations.
5. **Flexibility in Dwelling Types:** Permit a range of dwelling types including detached, semi-detached, townhouses, and apartments to cater to various living arrangements.
6. **Reasonable Accommodations:** Zoning committees should consider reasonable acceptable alternatives in order to facilitate the integration of individuals with disabilities.
7. **Zoning Occupancy Limits:** Zoning definitions should always articulate the min number of individuals supported in a “group home” and that minimum should be 3 or 4 individuals. This will ensure that support locations that involve 1 or 2 people do not trigger group home expectations.
8. **Entire building:** Some municipalities state that a “group home” must occupy the entire building or are only allowed in a detached dwelling, this makes some community services in multi-unit buildings impossible. Municipalities should remove this expectation or clearly articulate when it should apply without limiting access for people that live or are supported with one or two other people.
9. **Transparent and Streamlined Application Process:** Municipalities should design a user-friendly zoning application process and resources that provides clear information, standardizes forms, and expedites processing times.
10. **Single Point of Contact:** Municipalities should develop and appoint a dedicated supportive housing coordinator to guide applicants through the zoning process and address their questions.
11. **Expedited Community Consultation:** Municipalities should develop efficient processes for community consultation, ensuring concerns are addressed without unnecessary delays.
12. **Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement:** Municipalities should engage disability advocates, service providers, and individuals with developmental disabilities to gather input when developing policy, processes and seeking solutions to individual zoning applications.
13. **Flexibility in Zoning:** Explore zoning amendments or exemptions to facilitate the establishment of supportive housing in various residential zones.
14. **Training for Staff:** Municipalities should train staff to provide empathetic and supportive assistance, understanding the unique needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and the agencies that support them. Municipalities should develop the relationships and processes necessary to engage local service agencies in informing, developing or delivering this training.
15. **Acknowledgment of Accomplishments:** Celebrate the successful establishment of supported independent living facilities to showcase positive outcomes and encourage further participation.
16. **Provincial government responsibility associated with the Journey to Belonging (J2B) initiative** that espouses the need to support people toward full citizenship and optimal community integration. Deeply affordable and housing and easy access to it supports J2B.

17. Provincial government: to update specific policies and definitions and add new policies and definitions to provide clear and unambiguous direction to Two-tier and Single Tier Municipalities. Specifically, the province should update, The Provincial Policy Statement 2020 (PPS-2020), The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019 (GPGGH-2019)
 - a. Update At-Risk community and Include Persons on ODSP Level Income
 - b. Include vulnerable / at risk populations including those with developmental disabilities, in Inclusionary Zoning
 - c. Include those on ODSP who receive a housing allowance of \$522 per month in the financial limit of Inclusionary Zoning
 - d. to include wording to ensure “housing investments prioritize at-risk communities.”
 - e. Update various definitions in the documents that strengthen the commitment to addressing the housing needs of people with developmental disabilities. (See Appendix F for a full list of recommended definitions changes)

Regulatory recommendations (Building, Fire etc...)

1. Universal Design and Accessibility: Mandate universal design principles to ensure homes are accessible for individuals with disabilities, including features like ramps, wider doorways, grab bars, and accessible bathrooms.
2. Priority for Accessibility Features: Prioritize applications that incorporate accessible design features and meet universal design principles.
3. Non-Discrimination and Fair Housing: Emphasize non-discrimination principles to ensure equal housing opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
4. Coordinated Support Services: Coordinate with local social service agencies, disability organizations, and relevant stakeholders to align housing provisions with existing support services.
5. Building code acceptable alternatives: Building officials should, with consultation of service providers, consider reasonable acceptable alternatives in relation service locations with limited number of people that would qualify as a care occupancy.

Developmental Service Agency / System Recommendations

1. Proximity to Services: DS agencies should consider proximity to essential services such as public transportation, healthcare facilities, community centers, and recreational spaces for convenience, when considering service delivery locations.
2. Resources for municipalities that can support bylaw improvements that facilitate supportive housing.
3. Expedited Community Consultation: Offer an efficient process for community consultation, ensuring concerns are addressed without unnecessary delays.
4. Public Awareness Campaigns: Launch awareness campaigns to educate the community about the benefits of supported independent living and foster acceptance.
5. Strengthen Housing Navigators to provide more in-depth guidance and support to help organizations develop a supportive housing approach to gain greater confidence and direction to build and develop deeply affordable housing solutions for people with developmental disability. This will help to lessen the burden from agencies who are not necessarily in the business of property development and allow them to focus more on services to people.

By incorporating these elements, municipalities can create a supportive and inclusive environment that empowers individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently and thrive within their communities.

Call to Action: Mobilizing Municipal Leaders and Stakeholders for Inclusive Housing

To municipal leaders and stakeholders committed to fostering inclusive communities, we urge you to embrace the call for action to enhance housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities. By taking tangible steps, we can collectively transform the landscape of housing, ensuring equitable opportunities and empowering lives. Here's how you can make a difference:

1. **Review and Reform Zoning Bylaws:** Evaluate existing zoning bylaws to identify areas for improvement that support the creation of diverse and inclusive housing options. Consider revising regulations to remove barriers and promote accessible housing initiatives.
2. **Promote Collaboration:** Forge partnerships with local developmental services organizations, advocacy groups, and experts in housing design to co-create solutions that align with the needs of your community.
3. **Engage in Community Dialogue:** Facilitate open conversations with residents, businesses, and organizations to foster understanding, dispel myths, and build consensus around the benefits of inclusive housing options.
4. **Champion Innovation:** Encourage the development of innovative housing models that cater to the diverse needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and the agencies that support them. Explore flexible support services, universal design principles, and technology integration.
5. **Streamline Processes:** Simplify approval and licensing processes for supportive housing initiatives to reduce administrative burden and expedite the creation of accessible housing options.
6. **Allocate Resources:** Dedicate resources to pilot projects that demonstrate the feasibility and impact of inclusive housing options. Showcase these projects as exemplary models for replication.
7. **Prioritize Accessibility:** Mandate universal accessibility standards for all housing developments, ensuring that physical environments are designed to accommodate a range of abilities.
8. **Leverage Funding:** Seek funding opportunities from government grants, private partnerships, and philanthropic organizations to support the development of affordable and accessible housing options.
9. **Create Inclusive Policies:** Develop policies that safeguard the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities, preventing discrimination and promoting their full integration into the community.
10. **Measure Impact:** Implement mechanisms to measure the impact of inclusive housing initiatives on residents' well-being, community integration, and cost-effectiveness. Use data-driven insights to refine strategies.
11. **Share Success Stories:** Amplify success stories of individuals with developmental disabilities thriving in inclusive housing environments. Showcase how these initiatives enrich lives and contribute to vibrant communities.

12. Advocate for Change: Advocate for policy changes at regional and provincial levels that support the creation of inclusive housing options. Collaborate with other municipalities to create a unified voice for change.
13. Standardized Terms: Work broadly with other levels of government and jurisdictions to develop and adopt standard provincial definitions (i.e. “Group Homes, Supported Independent Living...etc.).
14. Housing Waiting List: Work to develop one by-name affordable housing waiting list in each municipality including individuals with developmental disabilities.

Your commitment to providing individuals with developmental disabilities the chance to live independently within their communities is a catalyst for positive change. By championing inclusive housing options, you create a legacy of equity, dignity, and community resilience. Join us in this transformative journey towards a society where every individual thrives, irrespective of ability. Together, we can make inclusive housing a reality for all.

Considerations for DS Organizations

Being a good neighbour is an essential aspect of successful community living and optimizes how well a community will receive supported living places. Attention to the presence of a supported living place in the neighbourhood and relating sensitively to those who live around you is critical to helping individuals with developmental disabilities engage in the full community experience. Tending to the potential impact of such factors as parking, noise, and types of activity can help to make one an inclusive neighbourhood partner, facilitating those that we support to be regular members of the community. Reena, Safehaven and SHS Consulting have just completed a CMHC Solutions Lab on Mutual Inclusion that can support some of these initiatives (see [Mutual Inclusion Field Guide to CMHC](#) and [Roadmap Report to CMHC](#)).

Continuing the Learning

Continued data collection from a broader spectrum of municipalities holds the potential to significantly enrich our understanding of housing solutions for individuals with developmental disabilities. As each municipality operates within its unique context, gathering data from additional regions can provide a comprehensive picture of the varied challenges, successes, and innovative approaches employed in diverse communities. This expanded dataset could unveil previously unnoticed patterns, enabling us to identify trends that transcend specific regions. Moreover, a larger dataset would empower researchers, policymakers, and advocates to make more informed decisions by drawing from a wider pool of experiences and outcomes. It would facilitate a deeper analysis of regional disparities, enabling the identification of outliers and best practices that could shape the formulation of more effective and equitable policies. Ultimately, continued data collection from a broader range of municipalities is pivotal in refining our strategies, enhancing collaboration, and fostering a more inclusive future for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Conclusion: Paving the Path Towards Inclusive Housing

This report illuminates the transformative potential of inclusive housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities. By delving into zoning bylaws across diverse municipalities, we've uncovered insights that transcend geographical boundaries. We've seen how well-crafted policies can nurture

independence, dignity, and community integration. These findings underscore the urgent need for municipal leaders, stakeholders, and advocates to champion change.

As we reflect on the data, it's clear that the journey towards inclusive housing is not solely a legal obligation but a moral imperative. Through review of this data and researching the report we have learned that inclusive housing issues are impacted by other authorities at the municipal and provincial levels. By shaping supportive policies, fostering collaboration, and embracing innovative practices, municipalities can create a brighter future for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The call to action is clear: let us work together to redefine housing norms, break down barriers, and pave the path to a society where every person can thrive, empowered by the choices and opportunities that come with truly inclusive housing.

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Appendix A: Municipal Data Gathered by Three Organizations (July 2023)

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process
Karis Disability Services	Brampton - Current	<p>Group Home Type 1 applies when 4-6 people live together and receive developmental services supports.</p> <p>Supporting Housing applies when any number of people (max 10) live in a supervised group living arrangement.</p>	<p>Group Homes permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -in detached dwelling/home only -group homes must be a minimum 120m distance from each other -a group home must be a minimum of 610m from another supportive housing facility -a supportive housing facility must be minimum 610m of another supportive housing facility. -there is a maximum number of group homes per each residential zone 	Registration process and fee, including meeting with Ward Counsellor, notification to the neighborhood that may require an open house
Karis Disability Services	<i>Brampton – proposed bylaw changes to council for Sept 13, 2021</i>	<p><i>Group Home Type 1 changes to Supportive Housing Type 1 and applies to 3-10 people who live together and receive developmental services supports.</i></p> <p><i>1-2 people living together with support would no longer be defined as supportive housing.</i></p>	<p><i>Permitted:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>-no separation between supportive housing (group homes)</i> <i>-all dwelling types</i> <i>-all residential zones</i> <i>-no restriction on number of supportive housing (group homes) in residential zones</i> 	<i>Registration process and fee to not include meeting with Ward Counsellor and neighborhood notification</i>
Karis Disability Services	Mississauga	Group Home – “special needs housing” applies when any number of people live together and receive developmental services supports	<p>Group Homes permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -in detached dwelling/home only -max 8 people supported 	Zoning Certificate of occupancy required and fee
Karis Disability Services	Toronto	Supportive Housing Group Home	<p>Group Homes permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -in all residential zones -detached and semi-detached homes -no separation distance required between group homes 	Application for municipal licensing required in Etobicoke and Scarborough

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process
Karis Disability Services	Oakville	Group Home – “special needs housing” applies when 3-10 people live together and receive developmental services supports	Group Homes permitted: -in all residential zones -no separation distance required between group homes	Registration process in place Zoning certificate required in particular zones
Karis Disability Services	Milton (bylaws adopted in 2019)	Shared Housing – licensed, supervised/funded by provincial or federal statute. -no minimum, maximum 10 people supported	Shared Housing permitted: - no minimum separation between shared housing -variety of dwelling types (detached, semi detached, townhouse, apartment) -all residential zones -parking requirements are in effect – 2 spots for the house, and one for every staff who could be on shift at once	Certificate of Occupancy process required which would confirm parking requirements have been met.
Karis Disability Services	Georgetown (2018 bylaws) / Halton Hills consolidated 2019.	Group Home Type 1 -4 or more persons (Georgetown) -6-10 people (Halton Hills) <i>*Definitions need further investigation. Georgetown appears to have its own terminology however it resides in Halton Hills.</i>	Group home permitted: -single detached home only -minimum distance between group home 1 and group home 1 must be 400m -minimum distance between group home 1 and group home 2 (correctional) must be 1000m. -minimum required gross floor area per person supported is 23 sq metres. -single use, multiple unit and mixed use residential (Georgetown) -not all residential zones (Halton Hills)	Registration and zoning approval process
Karis Disability Services	Hamilton	Residential Care Facility -Definition of Residential Care Facility does not define a certain number of people, just that people receive “care” as defined in the bylaw (05-200 section 3)	-Only single detached home -no minimum separation distances in some zones but still in place in others (05-200 section 5,6,15) -Parking requirements (05-200 sec 5) -different zones have different maximums of number of people who can live together. Most common is 6.	Municipal licensing is required where you have 4+ people living together. The licensing process is extensive with multiple costs and significant documentation requirements. (07-170 Schedule 20)

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process
Community Living Essex County	Amherstburg	Group Home Type 1 - a supervised dwelling registered with the municipality per The Municipal Act.	Group Home Type 1 permitted in any single dwelling but must be 100m from another Group Home; minimum floor area of 18.5 sq.m per resident.	Nothing specified
Community Living Essex County	Essex	Group Home - a dwelling licensed under federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of 6 to 10 persons, excluding staff, living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who require a supervised group living arrangement. 5 persons or under, regardless of on-site supervision, is considered a dwelling unit.	Permitted in Residential District 3.1 - High Density Residential. No restrictions regarding proximity to other group homes.	Nothing specified
Community Living Essex County	Kingsville	Group Home - a dwelling licensed under federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of not more than 10 persons, excluding staff, living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who require a supervised group living arrangement.	Generally permitted in all residential zones. No restrictions regarding proximity to other group homes.	Nothing specified
Community Living Essex County	Lakeshore	Group Home - a dwelling licensed under federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of 3 to 10 persons, excluding staff, living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who require a supervised group living arrangement.	Permitted in a dwelling if it complies with the regulations of the zone where it is located. No closer than 300m to any other group home. Approval of a site-specific zoning bylaw amendment is required to accommodate a group of 7 to 10 people.	Nothing specified
Community Living Essex County	LaSalle	Special needs home - supervised living accommodation that may include associated support services and is licensed or funded under	Permitted in all residential and institutional zones.	Nothing specified

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process
		Province of Ontario or Government of Canada Legislation; is for persons requiring semi-independent or supervised group living arrangements and is for ten persons or less, exclusive of staff.		
Community Living Essex County	Leamington	Group Home - a dwelling licensed under federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of 3 to 10 persons, excluding staff, living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who require a supervised group living arrangement.	Permitted anywhere single unit dwellings are permitted. A lot with a group home must be minimum 100m from another group home lot.	Nothing specified
Community Living Essex County	Tecumseh	Group Home - a dwelling licensed under federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of not more than 10 persons, excluding staff, living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who require a supervised group living arrangement.	Permitted in all residential zones. Must be minimum 300m from another group home.	Nothing specified
Empower Simcoe	Barrie	Group Home shall mean a community-based housekeeping unit in which up to 5 individuals (exclusive of staff) live under responsible supervision consistent with the requirement of its residents. Group homes shall mean accommodation for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the mentally and physically disabled. 	Group homes must be located in fully detached buildings. (By-law 2019-115) Up to 5 individuals permitted in one group home. Single detached in R1, R2, R3, R4, R5 zones Multiple zone RM2 and RM2TH Apartment RA1 and RA2.	Nothing specified

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the homeless, mistreated or abused child or adult, but foster homes shall not be considered as group homes uses. children with behavioral and/or legal problems. 		
Empower Simcoe	Orillia	Group Home Type 1 means a single housekeeping unit in a single detached dwelling in which residents live under responsible supervision consistent with the requirements of its residence and includes a home licensed or approved under the provincial statute as a Special Care Residential Home, Supportive Housing Program, Community Mental Health Program, Children's Home, Accommodation Services or the Developmentally Handicapped, Satellite Residences for Seniors and Homes or Physically Disabled Seniors, and a Crisis Residence in compliance with the City Bylaws.	Permitted in R1, R2, R3 zones as well as West Ridge WRR1, WRR2, WRR3 zones.	Nothing specified
Empower Simcoe	Oro Medonte	Residential care homes are defined as residential facilities that accommodate residents who have a range of emotional, psychiatric, physical, developmental, or social disadvantages or problems who receive both room and board and assistance with daily living. For the	The Township supports the provision of an adequate supply of residential care homes. On this basis, residential care homes are permitted in any land use designation that permits residential uses. Such uses may also be subject to Site Plan Control to ensure that the facility is properly licensed by the Provincial government and complies with the Ontario Building and Fire Codes. In addition, the implementing by-law shall not permit the	Registration of residential care homes with the Township may be required.

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process
		purposes of this policy, respite care homes are considered to be a residential care home.	use of such a home by more than 10 residents, plus the owner and staff. In order to prevent an undue concentration of residential care homes, the implementing Zoning By-laws shall specify a minimum distance separation between such homes, as well as regulations regarding performance standards such as dwelling type, and minimum floor space. Registration of residential care homes with the Township may be required.	
Empower Simcoe	Springwater	Group homes are defined as a single housekeeping unit in a detached residential dwelling which is intended to provide a community-based group living arrangement for a maximum of 10 persons, exclusive of staff, who are receiving care and supervision consistent with their particular needs and for their well being. Group homes include a home for foster children, a home for elderly persons, a home for mentally and physically challenged persons and a convalescent home for people who are under medical supervision. All group homes shall be approved or licensed in accordance with provincial statute. Council may pass a By-law pursuant to the Municipal Act as amended, concerning the registration of provincially licensed or approved	Up to 10 persons. The implementing Zoning By-law shall set out the zone or zones within which group homes may be permitted. Also, the Zoning Bylaw may include a minimum separation distance between group homes and may also contain provisions in regard to off street parking, minimum lot size and other related items. As a general rule the minimum separation distance between group homes should be 300 metres (1000 feet).	In considering the registration of any group home Council should be satisfied with the need for the facility, the proposed management plan and qualifications of staff, the availability of support services and facilities for the future residents of the group home and the adequacy of the proposed program as it relates to the well being of the future group home residents.

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process
		group homes. Furthermore, a group home shall be in compliance with all Municipal By-laws and the Ontario Building Code particularly as they relate to fire, health, safety and occupancy regulations.		
Empower Simcoe	Ramara	"INDIVIDUAL CARE FACILITY" means a building where persons receive special care or treatment because of cognitive or physical conditions, whether licenced or unlicensed by a government authority or agency	Individual Care Facility Where permitted by this Bylaw. an individual care facility may include a day nursery, group home, residential care facility. private home care, and a garden suite used for private home care, according to the following provisions: (a) Only one individual care facility is permitted on a lot. (b) Where required by law, an individual care facility shall be licenced by the appropriate government authority. Bylaw 2005.85 October 24, 2005, 15 (c) Individual care facilities may be located in a dwelling unit or in a separate building on a lot. (d) Group homes shall be separated from each other by a minimum distance of 1,000 metres in any direction. (e) The outdoor use of any land for an individual care facility shall be setback a minimum of 15 metres from any adjacent lot that is zoned for a residential use.	Nothing specified.
Cochrane Temiskaming Resource Centre	Timmins	<i>Group Home</i> means a dwelling unit providing specialized or group accommodation for persons living as a single housekeeping unit under appropriate supervision. The maximum number of residents in a group home shall be restricted to eight (8) residents excluding staff. The group home shall be licensed, approved or supervised by the Province of Ontario under any general or specialized act.	Group Homes shall be permitted in all zones that allow residential uses, provided they are licensed by the Province and/ or approved under Provincial Statutes and are in compliance with municipal by- laws. Group Homes shall be permitted only in a single detached dwelling type in the zones where a single detached dwelling is a permitted use. No group home shall be located closer than 300 m [984.2ft.] in distance to any another group home measured as the shortest horizontal distance between property lines. The lot area, setbacks, building height and lot coverage requirements will be as per the zone in which the group home is located.	Pre-consultation prior to development application to the Planning Department may be required.

Reported By	Town/Municipality	Terminology	Zoning By-Law	Registration Process

Appendix B: Summary of Zoning Bylaw features

Summarized overview of the municipalities reported in the conversation, along with their key characteristics and notable aspects related to supportive housing and zoning bylaws:

Urban

- Brampton (Karis Disability Services - Current and Proposed):
 - Notable: Proposed changes aim to expand supportive housing options and remove certain restrictions.
- Mississauga (Karis Disability Services):
 - Notable: Special needs housing allowed in detached dwellings with specific occupancy limits.
- Toronto (Karis Disability Services):
 - Notable: Supportive housing and group homes permitted in various residential zones.
- Oakville (Karis Disability Services):
 - Notable: Special needs housing permitted in all residential zones with no separation distance requirements.
- Hamilton (Karis Disability Services):
 - Notable: Licensing required for residential care facilities with specific regulations.
- Barrie (Empower Simcoe):
 - Notable: Group homes with up to 5 individuals permitted in specific zones.
- Orillia (Empower Simcoe):
 - Notable: Supportive housing type 1 permitted in residential zones.

Rural

- Georgetown (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Group homes permitted in single detached homes with specific separation distances.
- Amherstburg (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Group homes type 1 permitted with minimum floor area per resident.
- Essex (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Group homes permitted in specific residential zones with occupancy limits.
- Kingsville (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Group homes permitted in all residential zones without proximity restrictions.
- Lakeshore (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Group homes permitted with specific separation distances in certain cases.
- LaSalle (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Special needs home permitted in all residential and institutional zones.
- Leamington (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Group homes permitted in single unit dwellings with separation requirements.
- Tecumseh (Community Living Essex County):
 - Notable: Group homes permitted with specific separation distance requirements.
- Oro Medonte (Empower Simcoe):
 - Notable: Residential care homes permitted in various land use designations.

- Springwater (Empower Simcoe):
 - Notable: Group homes permitted in detached residential dwellings with specific limits.
- Ramara (Empower Simcoe):
 - Notable: Individual care facilities permitted on a lot with specific regulations.

These summaries provide a snapshot of the key features and regulations related to supportive housing and zoning bylaws in each municipality. It's important to consider these summaries within the context of the limitations and nuances of the provided data.

Appendix C: Limitations

When discussing the results from only 18 municipalities out of a total of 444 in Ontario, it's important to acknowledge the limitations of the sample size and provide context for interpreting the findings. Here's what you can say to address these limitations and caution the reader about the results:

Sample Size Limitation: The analysis presented in this report is based on data from 18 municipalities out of the 444 municipalities in Ontario. While efforts were made to select a diverse set of municipalities, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively small sample size. The results may not fully represent the diversity of zoning bylaws and practices across the entire province.

Variability in Municipal Approaches: Ontario's municipalities exhibit significant variability in terms of demographics, size, geographical location, and regulatory environments. The 18 municipalities included in this report may not reflect the full spectrum of approaches and challenges faced by all municipalities in the province.

Contextual Differences: The zoning bylaws and practices of municipalities are influenced by various local factors, including community needs, historical context, available resources, and legal considerations. As a result, the findings from the 18 municipalities may not be universally applicable or generalizable to all municipalities in Ontario.

Evolution of Policies: Zoning bylaws and housing policies are subject to change over time. The information captured in this report represents a snapshot of the current state of these municipalities' policies and practices as of the date of data collection. Future changes in regulations and policies may impact the accuracy and relevance of the findings.

Influence of Additional Factors: The data provided in this report only includes information from specific organizations and sources. There may be other influential factors and perspectives not captured in the dataset that could impact the understanding of supportive independent living and zoning practices.

Recommendations as General Guidance: The recommendations and best practices outlined in this report are based on the analysis of the available data and discussions. While they provide valuable insights, they should be considered as general guidance rather than prescriptive solutions. Local context, legal requirements, and stakeholder input should be taken into account when implementing any changes.

Call for Comprehensive Study: Given the limitations of the sample size, a comprehensive study involving a larger number of municipalities, comprehensive data collection, and expert consultations would be necessary to draw more definitive conclusions and inform policy decisions on a provincial level.

In conclusion, while the insights from the 18 municipalities provide valuable starting points for discussions on supportive independent living, it is essential to exercise caution when interpreting and applying the results to the broader context of Ontario's 444 municipalities. Further research and collaboration are needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the diverse approaches and challenges faced by municipalities in facilitating inclusive housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Appendix D: Considerations for Northern Communities

Considering the unique characteristics of Northern Ontario and the lack of representative data in this sample, it is crucial when extrapolating results from the data to the northern regions to consider the following elements and potential differences:

Geographical and Demographic Variation: Northern Ontario encompasses vast and remote areas with varying population densities. This could impact the applicability of certain zoning practices, as well as the availability of essential services and infrastructure.

Climate and Accessibility: The northern climate and geographical challenges may require additional considerations for accessibility and infrastructure. For example, housing designs might need to account for extreme weather conditions.

Cultural Sensitivity: Indigenous communities play a significant role in Northern Ontario. Any housing initiatives should respect and incorporate the unique cultural and community considerations of Indigenous populations.

Resource Availability: Northern regions might have different resource availability and limitations compared to more urban areas. This could impact the feasibility of implementing certain supportive housing models.

Collaboration with Indigenous Groups: Collaborative engagement with local Indigenous communities is essential to ensure that any initiatives are culturally appropriate and respectful of their needs and aspirations.

Transportation and Connectivity: Accessibility to transportation and connectivity could be different in Northern Ontario. This might impact the proximity to essential services and the integration of supportive housing within communities.

Regulatory Framework: Regulatory frameworks may vary between Northern Ontario and more urbanized areas. Local governments might need to tailor zoning and bylaws to suit the unique needs and challenges of the north.

Involvement of Remote Communities: Remote communities might have distinct needs and considerations. Outreach and engagement strategies would need to be adapted to effectively involve these communities in discussions about supportive housing.

Training and Support for Local Staff: Local municipal staff in Northern Ontario might require specialized training and support to understand the specific needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in the northern context.

Resource Allocation: Government resources and funding allocation might differ between urban and rural areas. Advocacy efforts could emphasize the importance of equitable resource distribution.

In sum, while the provided data offers valuable insights, applying these findings to Northern Ontario requires a thoughtful and adaptable approach that takes into account the unique characteristics, needs, and challenges of the region. Collaborating with local stakeholders, Indigenous communities, and experts from Northern Ontario will be key to ensuring the success and relevance of any supportive housing initiatives in the north.

Appendix F: Recommended Definition Changes.

- ❖ “Affordable” (Section 6 – Definitions – PPS-2020)
 - Add a clause c) in the case of rental housing for at risk communities, the least expensive of;
 - a unit for which the rent does not exceed the total amount received by an individual on Ontario Disability Support Program, (in 2023 --\$523 per month) or
 - a unit for which the rent is below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.
- ❖ “Complete Communities” (Section 7 – Definitions – GPGGH-2019)
 - Add at-risk communities to the Settlement areas clause.
- ❖ “Housing Options” (Section 6 – Definitions – PPS-2020)
 - Add another example; housing for people with special needs *** is this the label we want? **
- ❖ “Institutional Use” (Section 6 – Definitions – PPS-2020)
 - Add and/or developmental disabilities, to elaborate on disabilities.
- ❖ “Special needs” (Section 6 – Definitions – PPS-2020)
 - Add newer special needs housing examples;
 - assisted living facilities,
 - congregate care/group home facilities,
 - respite care facilities

Add new definitions (Section 6 – Definitions – PPS-2020) (Section 7 – Definitions – GPGGH-2019)

- ❖ “At-Risk Community” (Derived from NHS Glossary of Common Terms (2018) – Vulnerable Communities - Page 9(Link))
 - means women and children fleeing family violence; seniors; Indigenous peoples; people with disabilities and/or developmental disabilities; those dealing with mental health and addiction issues; veterans; and young adults.
- ❖ “Assisted Living Facilities” (Derived from City of Toronto – Chapter 800 Definitions, 800.50 Defined Terms - Term 700 – Residential Care Home (Link))
 - means premises containing four (4) or more independent dwelling units intended to accommodate people of varying circumstance, with individual kitchen or cooking facilities, the ability to reside together and is managed and operated for the purposes of encouraging and supporting the independence of its residents some of whom may require a 24 hour supervised living arrangement for their well being, and is regulated by the Province of Ontario or the Government of Canada
- ❖ “Congregate Care/Group Home Facility” (Derived from City of Toronto – Chapter 800 Definitions, 800.50 Defined Terms - Term 325 – Group Home (Link))
 - Means premises containing three (3) or more independent dwelling units intended to accommodate people of varying circumstance, with a common kitchen or cooking facility, the ability to reside together and is managed and operated for those who require a 24-hour supervised living arrangement for their well being, and is regulated by the Province of Ontario or the Government of Canada
- ❖ “Respite Care Facility” (Derived from City of Toronto – Chapter 800 Definitions, 800.50 Defined Terms - Term 710 – Respite Care Facility (Link), and City of Vaughan E-Mail to Reena – November 12, 2019)

- Means an ability for someone who is on a documented list of pre vetted individuals, managed by an organization that is regulated by the Province of Ontario or the Government of Canada, who qualify for temporary support, for varying periods of time in a calendar year to receive a level of care available in an Assisted Living Facility, or Congregate Care / Group Home Setting.