**Inclusionary Zoning Recommendations for the Town of Perinton: The Challenges and Opportunities**

**Executive Summary**

On March 29, 2023 leaders and elected officials from New York’s Finger Lakes Region addressed the continuing Housing Crisis in Monroe County and beyond following a roundtable discussion with Governor Hochul. (see: <https://www.greaterrochesterchamber.com/2023/03/29/leaders-and-elected-officials-from-new-yorks-finger-lakes-region-address-housing-crisis-following-governor-hochuls-roundtable/>)

Participants included City Mayor Malik Evans, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce Executive Bob Duffy, and Henrietta Town Supervisor Stephen Schultz among others. Schultz stated *"Homes that are affordable, either as starter homes or for downsizing in retirement, are a big need in Henrietta and across the State. Unfortunately, there has been a push from the industry to build larger, more expensive homes, so I am happy to work with the Governor's Office on ways to incentivize developers to build more affordable homes that also align with our comprehensive land use plans for the Town."*

The Town of Perinton community is not insulated from this view and other observations mentioned at the Roundtable. To its credit, Perinton has publicly stated its own affordable housing goals as outlined in the Town’s current Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2021 (see the next page for some of the Plan’s Vision Statements).

The actualization of these goals would not only help address our region’s housing crisis, but also provide numerous benefits to property owners, Town/Village government, seniors, young adults, and the overall community. These benefits are outlined later in this proposal.

Furthermore, Perinton is to be congratulated for the development of the “Pines of Perinton’ in the 70’s which has provided housing for thousands of low-income families and individuals over the decades. However, this is a concentrated, high-density community and stands distinctly apart and segregated from the community-at-large.

Based on this and other initiatives, Perinton could take the view that it has already pulled its weight with multi-family development as compared to its fellow town neighbors within Monroe County. But the question is “can we do better?” This proposal offers some ideas as to how the town can move to another level by taking full advantage of its developed and remaining undeveloped space for the benefit of the entire community.

In that regard and in spirit of the common good, ensuring affordable housing is not just a goal but a moral imperative. Accessible and affordable housing not only uplifts individuals and families, but also strengthens the fabric of communities, fostering stability, dignity, and the opportunity for all to thrive. The proper use of Inclusionary Zoning techniques is a key method to accomplishing this goal.

Lastly, please see the article written in the September 7, 2023 edition of the ‘Rochester Beacon’ titled *“Affordability in the Suburbs”* highlighting Perinton’s continuing leadership re: housing affordability projects in the town (Link: <https://rochesterbeacon.com/2023/09/07/affordability-in-the-suburbs/>).

1. **Per the Perinton 2021 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement:**

*“The Town of Perinton is a close-knit, inclusive community which celebrates and preserves its rich historic and agricultural heritage through innovative preservation, sustainability, and land use practices. We envision a* ***diverse*** *resident population with access to a* ***variety of housing options,*** *a connected parks and open space network, and unique natural and scenic resources such as the Erie Canal. Our community is a* ***desirable place to live and work*** *because of our support and attraction of businesses, which contribute to a strong local economy and job opportunities, as well as our excellent public services.”* (pg. 62)

*“Overall, with* ***fewer lower cost housing options****, the Town may be challenged in remaining viable to young singles, new families, and seniors on a fixed income.”* (pg. 12)

*“Overall, the housing market in Perinton is facing a* ***shortage****, where high occupancy rates and a limited supply keep housing costs high and act as a* ***barrier*** *to entry for younger families and those on a fixed income.* ***Introducing multi-family units*** *into the market would help expand and* ***diversify*** *supply by creating new housing type and price range options that can appeal to a* ***broader range*** *of potential residents.”* (pg. 14)

*“The Town should continue to* ***diversify*** *its housing stock to ensure that Perinton is a livable community for* ***all****.”* (pg. 14)

*“The Town’s residential zoning districts allow for a* ***variety*** *of housing types. The Town should encourage* ***diversified*** *residential development that appeals to and attracts a* ***broader range*** *of potential residents.”* (pg. 22)

*“Special consideration for the provision of housing to meet the needs of* ***first-time home buyers*** *… should be given by the Town.”* (pg. 49)

*“Over the past twenty years, the Town of Perinton has experienced an increase demand for* ***multi-family and higher density*** *residential development.”* (pg. 53)

Also, per the Fairport Village’s 2021 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement:

“When planning for future housing/residential development, a majority of respondents (50%) noted that the Village should prioritize a “**mix** of housing types and price points to attract and accommodate individuals and families with a **variety** of income levels.” (pg. II.7). See Page 8 of the Village Comprehensive Plan Update re: specific goals for the Affordable Housing Initiative.

Developing a more comprehensive inclusionary zoning framework in Perinton can have several potential pros and cons when it comes to broadening home ownership diversity. Here are some key points to consider:

1. **Possible Advantages of a more Comprehensive Inclusionary Zoning framework:**

* **Increased Housing Diversity and Availability**: Inclusionary zoning can help promote a diverse range of housing options, including affordable housing, thus expanding access to homeownership for individuals and families from various income levels. One example is to broaden the scope of Perinton’s Zoning Laws to specifically include a Residential District category titled ‘Accessory Dwelling Units’ (ADU's). This would offer numerous benefits to property owners, Town/Village government, seniors, young adults, and the overall community (see the appendix for an ADU benefit summary).
* **Enhanced Social Integration**: By encouraging mixed-income neighborhoods, inclusionary zoning can foster social integration, reduce socioeconomic segregation, and create a sense of community.
* **Economic Benefits**: A more diverse community can stimulate local economies, support and attract small businesses, and draw a wider range of residents, contributing to a vibrant and sustainable local economy.
* **Improved Equity**: Inclusionary zoning can address historical inequalities by providing opportunities for traditionally marginalized groups to own homes in desirable areas, thus reducing disparities and promoting equity.

1. **Possible Disadvantages of Inclusionary Zoning:**

* **Potential Market Constraints**: Broadened inclusionary zoning may increase development costs for builders and developers, potentially leading to reduced overall housing supply and increased prices for non-inclusionary units. However, there are ways that other locales and states have developed that can offset or neutralize this situation.
* **Administrative Challenges**: Establishing and managing inclusionary zoning programs requires coordination, monitoring, and compliance enforcement, which can be resource-intensive and burdensome for local governments.
* **Opposition and NIMBYism**: Some residents may resist inclusionary zoning efforts due to concerns about property values, neighborhood character, or perceived strains on infrastructure and services, leading to opposition and challenges during the implementation phase. Important note: see *‘Just Action’* pg. 177 where it states *“NIMBY (‘not in my back yard’) fears are often unfounded or exaggerated. New affordable-housing developments in higher-income neighborhoods usually have no effect on surrounding property values and neighbors may even be unaware of their presence.”*
* **Risk of Concentration**: Inclusionary zoning programs may require planning to avoid creating concentrated pockets of affordable housing, which may inadvertently perpetuate socioeconomic segregation; e.g., Pines of Perinton.

1. **Inclusionary Zoning Recommendations:**

The following recommendations would foster implementing policies that promote the development of affordable housing and increase housing diversity. While the specifics can vary depending on Perinton’s unique context and needs, here are some key components that could be considered:

* **Affordable Housing Requirement:** Establish a requirement for developers to include a percentage of affordable housing units in new residential developments or major redevelopment projects. This requirement would mandate a certain proportion of units to be priced at affordable levels based on local income guidelines.
* **Incentives for Developers:** Offer incentives to developers to encourage compliance with the affordable housing requirement. These incentives can include density bonuses, expedited permitting processes, tax abatements, fee waivers, or other financial or regulatory benefits.
* **Flexibility in Implementation:** Provide flexibility in meeting affordable housing goals. Developers could have options such as building affordable units within the same development, constructing them off-site, contributing to a housing trust fund, or entering into partnerships with affordable housing providers.

For example, expand the use of **‘Accessory Dwelling Units’ (ADU)** such as in-law units, backyard/garage dwellings, studio and one-bedroom stand-alone structures. These would provide many benefits to property owners, Town/Village government, seniors, young adults, and the overall community. Note that the Town currently allows for people to build in-law apartments onto single-family homes with only a building permit. See the appendix for an ADU benefit summary.

* **Income Targeting:** Specify income targeting criteria to ensure that affordable units are accessible to a range of income groups, including low-income, moderate-income, and workforce households. This would help cater to the diverse needs of the community.
* **Development Standards and Design:** Establish design guidelines and standards to ensure that affordable units are integrated seamlessly into the overall development, maintaining the same quality and architectural standards as market-rate units.
* **Monitoring and Compliance:** Develop a monitoring and compliance mechanism to ensure that developers adhere to affordable housing goals. This may involve regular reporting, inspections, and enforcement measures to guarantee long-term affordability and prevent potential violations.
* **Community Engagement:** Engage the community and stakeholders in the development and implementation of these recommendations. Seek input, address concerns, and encourage public participation to foster a sense of ownership and collaboration.
* **Affordable Housing Funding:** Identify and explore funding sources to support the development of affordable housing, such as federal, state, or local grants, loans, tax credits, or public-private partnerships. This would help provide financial assistance for the creation and maintenance of affordable units.
* **Data Collection and Analysis:** Establish mechanisms for data collection and analysis to monitor the effectiveness of these recommendations. Regularly evaluate the impact on housing diversity, affordability, and community development.
* **Review and Revision:** Commit to periodic reviews to assess effectiveness, identify any necessary adjustments, and ensure that inclusionary zoning remains aligned with the evolving needs of the community.

It is understood that these recommendations would have to consider current town regulations, legal frameworks, and other community priorities. Consulting with housing experts, stakeholders, and legal advisors would help tailor it to the specific needs and circumstances of the community.

Requirements: Metrics, Data Points, Measurables, Benchmarks, and specific, targeted Goals; e.g., demographics today and projections for five years

Closing note: These recommendations provide a plan for the Common Good of all in Perinton and could perhaps serve as a model for the region; it also responds to the overall Greater Rochester housing crisis as outlined in the Executive Summary.

References: ‘The Color of Law’ and ‘Just Action’ (Rothstein)

**Appendix**

1. **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)** can offer various benefits to property owners, governments, seniors, caregivers, and younger people. Some of these advantages are as follows:

**Benefits for Property Owners:**

* Rental Income: Property owners can generate additional rental income by renting out the ADU, helping to offset their mortgage or other housing costs.
* Increased Property Value: Adding an ADU can enhance the property's value, making it a more attractive investment for potential buyers.
* Multi-generational Living: ADUs provide flexibility for families to accommodate multiple generations, allowing elderly parents or adult children to live independently while remaining close by.
* Aging in Place: Property owners can build ADUs to age in place, allowing them to stay in their homes even as their needs change over time.

**Benefits for Governments:**

* Affordable Housing: ADUs can contribute to increasing the supply of affordable housing options, especially in high-cost housing markets.
* Efficient Land Use: ADUs promote efficient land use by utilizing existing infrastructure and underutilized space in residential neighborhoods.
* Diverse Housing Stock: Encouraging ADUs helps diversify the housing stock, providing a range of housing options that cater to different demographics and household sizes.

**Benefits for Seniors and Caregivers:**

* Aging in Place: ADUs can provide seniors with a safe and independent living space, enabling them to age in place while maintaining proximity to their families or caregivers.
* Close Family Support: ADUs allow caregivers or family members to reside nearby, providing support and assistance to seniors when needed while respecting their privacy and autonomy.

**Benefits for Younger Adults:**

* Affordable Housing Options: ADUs can provide affordable rental opportunities for younger individuals and families, especially in areas with limited affordable housing stock.
* Flexible Living Arrangements: ADUs offer flexibility in living arrangements, allowing young adults to live close to family or friends without compromising on privacy.

**Other Benefits:**

* Sustainable Development: ADUs can contribute to sustainable development by promoting infill housing and reducing urban sprawl. Note: Suburban infill is the development of land in existing suburban areas that was left vacant during the development of the suburb.
* Community Building: Encouraging ADUs can foster a sense of community by facilitating multi-generational living and promoting neighborhood connections.
* Economic Boost: The construction and maintenance of ADUs can generate employment and stimulate the local economy.

It is important to note that the benefits of ADUs may also be accompanied by potential challenges, such as parking constraints, increased demand on local infrastructure, and ensuring that ADUs are constructed and operated safely and within zoning regulations. To maximize the positive impacts of ADUs, thoughtful planning, community engagement, and collaboration among property owners, governments, and residents are essential.

1. **Possible Perinton Diversity Statement:**

“The Town of Perinton commits itself to equality not only because it is legal, but because it is right; not only because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and our children. Our goal is for people of widely differing backgrounds to do more than live next to one another. Through interaction, we believe we can reconcile the apparent paradox of appreciating and even celebrating our differences while at the same time developing consensus on a shared vision for the future.” (Adapted from *‘Just Action’* pg. 226-7)