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**Period.**

# On the record

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

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

Here is one that I think bears repeating.

The Regional Official Plan's policy for affordable housing ownership states a unit's maximum price would need to be \$368,000. Monthly payments on a twenty-five year mortgage with a three-year fixed rate of 2.14% and an \$18,000 down payment would then be \$1,505.83.

Condo fees in a new building are, say, \$200 at the lower end. Add another \$500 for property taxes, insurance, parking, heat, hydro and water, and total monthly payments become just over \$2,200. For this figure to be 30% of your income you would need to make \$88,000 per year.

Average household income in Kitchener is just under \$80,000. Don't forget to add food, clothing, transportation and other general living expenses. Is this affordable? For whom, one might ask.

Of course this is way out of reach for a full-time minimum wage earner, the precariously employed, the over 6,000 households on the affordable housing waiting list, and those on OW or ODSP.

Is this designed to meet the needs of the "missing middle"? According to studies cited by Kaitlin Webber (UW, Planning) the missing middle needs duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, bungalow courts, townhouses, live/work buildings and courtyard apartments, not unaffordable one-bedroom condos.

But wait, things get even more interesting when you consider there is nothing to stop an investor buying one or all of these "affordable" units, flipping them and selling them at market value. Neither are there any mechanisms in place to ensure purchasers meet a socio-economic threshold demonstrating a need.

Public policy designed for the for-profit private sector does not produce affordable housing. Period.