

SF-25-39

From: SARAH JEYNES <sarah.jeynes@ddsb.ca>

Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 12:12 PM

To: clerks <clerks@oshawa.ca>

Cc: Bob Chapman <BChapman@oshawa.ca>; Bradley Marks <BMarks@oshawa.ca>

Subject: Request to be on agenda for June 9th City Council meeting

Hi,

I'd like to request to be added to the agenda for the city council meeting on June 9th.

I would also like to request a delegation before the committee to explain my position.

Please see the attached file with my proposal to add a bylaw for occupancy limits in Oshawa.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Sarah



Sarah Jeynes

Intermediate Science & Math

Sarah.Jeynes@ddsb.ca

Walter E Harris PS

905-728-4532

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To: Bradley Marks, Council Member, Bob Chapman, Council Member, Clerks at City of Oshawa

From:

Sarah Jeynes

M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec. 14(1)

sarah.jeynes@ddsb.ca

M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec. 14(1)

Date: June 2, 2025

Subject: Proposal to Establish Occupancy Limits for Residential Dwellings in Single-Dwelling Zoned Areas

Introduction

I am writing to propose the implementation of an **occupancy limit bylaw for residential properties** within our city. More specifically, properties located in areas zoned for single-dwelling units. The absence of clear occupancy limits is increasingly leading to overcrowded living conditions, which compromise both safety and the intended uses of single-family neighbourhoods.

Background

While our zoning regulations currently permit the conversion of single-dwelling units into two-dwelling units, they do not place any restriction on the number of occupants per dwelling. This regulatory gap allows for significant overcrowding, which can strain local infrastructure, increase traffic and parking issues, and diminish the quality of life for residents.

Comparison with Other Ontario Municipalities

Several Ontario municipalities have taken proactive steps to address this issue through occupancy limits that are tied to health, safety, and planning concerns. Notable examples include:

- **Toronto and Aurora:** Limits occupancy to one person per 9 square meters of habitable room space.
- **Brampton:** Uses a scaled system to regulate the number of occupants based on the size of bedrooms.
- **Peterborough, Kingston, Guelph & Wellington:** Allows one bedroom for every two members of a household, with additional bedrooms for odd numbers.
- **CMHC National Occupancy Standard:** States that the Standard should be a maximum of 2 persons per bedroom.
- **Ontario Building Code:** one person per 9 square meters of habitable room space.

Occupancy bylaw standards are designed to:

- Maintain safe living environments.
- Prevent overcrowding-related health and safety risks (e.g., fire hazards, poor ventilation, rodents etc.).
- Ensure that housing remains suitable for the neighbourhood's zoning designation and the city's infrastructure.

Proposed Action

I respectfully propose that our city adopt a similar bylaw to those implemented in other municipalities. The bylaw should include:

1. **Occupancy Limits Based on Bedroom Size and Number of Bedrooms** – e.g., no more than two occupants per bedroom OR a specified square footage per occupant.
 2. **Clear Definitions for Habitable Rooms** – exclusions for non-living spaces like basements without egress, storage areas, living rooms, kitchens, hallways etc. This prevents overpopulation with people sleeping/living in non-sleeping areas. In addition, this would help with fire safety requirements for exits and accessibility.
 3. **Zoning Protection** – Prevent single-dwelling zones from becoming high-density residential areas through piecemeal conversions. This means limiting the amount of homes that are approved for permits to put in separate living quarters and would therefore maintain the majority of homes as single-dwelling units as originally planned.
 4. **Enforcement Provisions** – Including fines for non-compliance, more detailed inspections, and a complaint process for neighbours to safely and respectfully report any issues.
 5. **Exemptions or Considerations for Family Units** – While upholding health and safety standards, case-by-case exceptions could be considered for caregivers or multi-generational households, provided single-unit dwelling guidelines are maintained and overcrowding (as in many existing rental units) is avoided.
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Rationale for Implementing Occupancy Limits in Residential Zones

To support the proposed bylaw, the following outlines key reasons why establishing occupancy limits is necessary for the health, safety, and fiscal responsibility of the city.

1. Strain on Municipal Infrastructure

- **Increased Wear and Tear:** Roads, sidewalks, water mains, and sewers experience accelerated degradation when population density exceeds planned levels.
- **Higher Maintenance Costs:** Infrastructure repairs and upgrades must occur more frequently, increasing long-term costs to the city.

2. Overburdened Public Services

- **Waste Collection:** Additional residents create more garbage, recycling, and organic waste, requiring more frequent or longer pickup times or larger containers—at the city's expense.
- **Emergency Services:** Fire, EMS, and police services may face higher call volumes in areas with overcrowded homes.

3. Unfair Taxation

- **Flat Tax Structure:** Single-family homes with high occupancy still pay the same taxes as standard households, despite using significantly more city services.
- **Increased Burden on Other Taxpayers:** The cost of extra service usage is passed on to all residents.

4. Parking and Traffic Congestion

- **Excess Vehicles:** Multiple unrelated adults often each have cars, overwhelming street parking and driveways.
- **Access Issues:** Congested streets can block emergency vehicles, snowplows, and waste collection trucks.

5. Neighborhood Decline and Property Value Impacts

- **Visible Deterioration:** Overused homes are more likely to show signs of wear, neglect, or poor upkeep, reducing neighbourhood appeal. Property standards are frequently not adhered to in homes that have high occupancy.
- **Investor Saturation:** High-occupancy rentals often replace long-term, family-owned homes, shifting the character and demographics of the neighbourhood.
- **Lower Resale Value for Adjacent Properties:** Homes next to visibly overcrowded properties are harder to sell and typically sell for less, as potential buyers are deterred by concerns about noise, congestion, and lack of stability.

6. Public Health Concerns

- **Overcrowding Risks:** Increased humidity and poor airflow can promote mold and respiratory issues.
- **Rodent Infestations:** More garbage and improper waste storage attract rats and pests, creating a sanitation hazard.
- **Spread of Illness:** Close quarters increase the risk of spreading communicable diseases, especially in unregulated settings.

7. Zoning Integrity and Community Stability

- **Undermining Planning Goals:** Allowing multi-tenant occupancy in single-family zones contradicts established land-use plans.
- **Reduced Neighbourhood Cohesion:** High turnover, absentee landlords, and transient populations destabilize community bonds.

8. Safety Code Violations

- **Fire Hazards:** Unauthorized sleeping areas or basement units often lack proper egress or fire protection.
 - **Lack of Oversight:** Many of these conversions avoid permits or inspections, creating hidden risks for tenants and neighbours alike.
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Conclusion:

Introducing occupancy limits would bring our city in line with responsible urban planning practices already in place across the province. It will also ensure we continue to promote healthy, safe, and appropriately zoned communities. I urge the City Council to review this proposal and consider launching a study or consultation process with other municipalities to assess how such a bylaw could be implemented effectively.

Occupancy limits are not about restricting housing options—they're about ensuring that homes remain safe, neighbourhoods stay livable, and city services remain sustainable. Proactive regulation ensures fairness, safety, and responsible development across the community.

I look forward to hearing from you and how we can work together to implement a plan for all citizens of Oshawa to be housed in a safe, equitable and effective manner.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Jeynes

Oshawa Home Owner and Concerned Citizen

M.F.I.P.P.A. Sec.14(1)

sarah.jeynes@ddsb.ca

311 Knowledge Base Article

Bylaw enforcement - occupancy standards - maximum number of people - ceiling heights - size of rooms

[Provide feedback](#)

A habitable room is defined in the [Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 629, Property Standards](#) as: A room in a dwelling designed and lawfully used or capable of being lawfully used for living, sleeping, cooking or eating.

Number of People

The maximum number of persons living in a habitable room cannot exceed one person for each nine square metres of habitable room floor area.

Room Size

There are minimum size requirements for habitable rooms that are used for sleeping as follows:

For rooms used by only ONE person, the minimum floor area of a room used for sleeping shall be six square metres.

For rooms used by TWO or more persons, the minimum floor area of a room used for sleeping shall be four square metres for each person.

Rooms used for sleeping shall have no wall less than two metres in length.

[Bylaw enforcement - occupancy standards - maximum number of people - ceiling heights - size of rooms - City of Toronto](#)

TORONTO MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 629, PROPERTY STANDARDS

§ 629-25. Occupancy standards.

- A. A room designed and intended for use as a non-habitable area shall not be used as a habitable area.
- B. No basement or cellar space shall be used as a dwelling unit or as a habitable room unless this use is otherwise permitted by law and complies with the other occupancy provisions in this chapter.
- C. The maximum number of persons living in a habitable room shall not exceed one person for each **nine square metres** of habitable room floor area.
- D. For the purposes of this section, the minimum height of a habitable room shall be 1.95 metres over at least 1/2 the floor area, and, for the purposes of Subsections E and F, any floor area under a ceiling that is less than 1.4 metres in height shall not be counted in computing the required minimum floor area of a room used for sleeping.
- E. The minimum floor area of a room used by only one person for sleeping shall be six square metres with the room having a minimum dimension on one side of two metres.
- F. The minimum floor area of a room used by two or more persons for sleeping shall be four square metres for each person so using the room.

[Chapter 629](#) - **TORONTO**

PART VII
INTERIOR MAINTENANCE AND OCCUPANCY STANDARDS
(Amended by By-law 3-2025)

24 Occupancy Standards

24.1 No room or area shall be provided for sleeping purposes unless:

- (1) it has been constructed with a building permit and reviewed for sleeping purposes;
- (2) is in conformance with the *Ontario Building Code* requirements for the construction of a bedroom; and,
- (3) there is a minimum floor area of 7 square metres (6 square metres if the room contains built-in closets).
- (4) there is a minimum floor area of 14 square metres where the room is provided to three Occupants; **(By-law 3-2025)**
- (5) there is a minimum floor area of 7 square metres per person where the room is provided to four or more Occupants; **(By-law 3-2025)**
- (6) for the purpose of subsections (4) and (5), an Occupant shall mean any person eighteen years of age or over; **(By-law 3-2025)**
- (7) where an occupant is under eighteen years of age, the room provided for sleeping purposes must still comply with all other standards established in this By-law and all applicable legislation, including but not limited to the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code. **(By-law 3-2025)**

[Property Standards By-law 165-2022 \(consolidated version\)](#) - **BRAMPTON**

Occupancy standards

5.15 Accumulation or storage of garbage, refuse, appliances, or furniture in hallways, stairways or balconies shall not be permitted.

5.16 All habitable rooms shall have a minimum ceiling height of 1.95 metres (77 inches), unless otherwise authorized by the Ontario Building Code.

5.17 Section 5.16 does not apply where the original roof construction has created a lesser ceiling height and, in such event, a minimum of one-half of such room area shall have a ceiling height of 1.95 metres (77 inches).

5.18 Every room in any dwelling unit used for sleeping purposes shall have a minimum room area of 7.0 square metres (75 square feet).

5.19 The number of occupants in a dwelling unit shall not exceed one person for every 13 square metres (140 square feet) of total habitable room space.

[The Corporation of the City of Guelph By-law Number \(2000\)-16454](#) - **GUELPH**

Occupancy standards

Occupancy standards are generally applied based on the number of household members per bedroom. In some circumstances, a Housing Provider may need to refer to the municipal occupancy standards which are based on the actual size of the unit and the number and age of household members.

The smallest unit a household may request is as listed in the three points below:

- one bedroom per two household members; or
- spouses or same sex partners may accept a bachelor unit; and
- as may be permitted based on the municipal occupancy standards.

The largest unit a household is eligible to request is as listed in the one point below:

- one bedroom for any two household members who are spouses of each other, and one bedroom for each additional household member.

Over housed households

As listed in the two points point below:

- A household is considered over housed if they occupy a unit of a size that is larger than the largest unit for which they are eligible.
- Over housed households are required to follow the Service Manager rules as set out in Directive H-16-04, Over Housed Households in order to remain eligible for rent-geared-to-income assistance.

[Occupancy Standards \(H-16-03\) | City of Kingston](#) - **KINGSTON**

611.3.45 Capacity - per hundred sq. feet - dwelling unit

The number of persons accommodated in a dwelling unit shall not exceed one (1) person per one hundred (100) square feet (9 square metres) of floor area in habitable rooms, exclusive of kitchen or cooking areas.

Policy

Maximum Number of Bedrooms

Households are entitled to a maximum number of bedrooms in a community housing unit, according to the size of the household. The occupancy standards are:

- One bedroom for any two members of the household who are spouses of each other.
- One bedroom for each additional member of the household.
- An additional bedroom(s) if the housing provider is satisfied that extenuating circumstances exist (by approval of the Service Manager).

Minimum Number of Bedrooms

A household may accept a unit size that is smaller than the maximum allowed. Accepting a smaller unit will not give the household priority when applying for a larger unit through Housing Access Peterborough.

The smallest unit a household is eligible for is a unit that has one bedroom for any two members of the household, and an additional bedroom if the household has an odd number of members.

[occ-2020-03-occupancy-standards.pdf](#) - **PETERBOROUGH**

1. Occupancy Standards

Occupancy Standards for all RGI units are set out as follows:

(a) largest unit a household is eligible for:

- one bedroom for spouses; and
- one bedroom for each additional person(s) of the household.

2020-04

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Social Services Department - Housing Services DIRECTIVE

Household Composition:	Largest unit a household is eligible for:
Two (2) people who are spouses of each other	One (1) Bedroom
Two (2) people who are not spouses of each other	Two (2) Bedroom
Four (4) people that make up two separate spousal relationships	Two (2) Bedroom
Two (2) people who are spouses of each other and one dependent child	Two (2) Bedroom
Any of the above plus one or more additional household person(s)	The number above plus one (+1) bedroom for each additional person

In order to qualify for an additional bedroom due to disability or medical condition, the household will need to submit a completed Medical Need for Additional Bedroom Form (HP26) to the Housing Provider for a review and decision. The following medical conditions are not normally considered for an additional bedroom:

- snoring and sleep apnea
- frequent night time waking or insomnia
- a temporary medical condition

(b) smallest unit a household is eligible for:

- Bachelor for people who are spouses of one another;
- One bedroom for every two members of the household; and
- An additional bedroom if there are an odd number of members in the household.

Household Composition:	Smallest unit a household is eligible for:
Two (2) people who are spouses of each other	A bachelor unit
Two (2) people who are not spouses of each other	One (1) bedroom
More than two (2) people	One (1) bedroom for every two (2) people plus an additional bedroom (+1) when there is an odd number of people

Municipal Bylaws and Occupancy Standards

In Ontario, municipal bylaws are important for deciding how many tenants can live in a rental property. Each municipality has its own bylaws. These rules help make sure that properties follow local health, safety, and building standards.

Municipal bylaws usually set rules for how many people can live in a space. For example, the Ontario Building Code says that in a living area of 9 square meters, only one person is allowed.

These rules aim to stop overcrowding. Overcrowding can cause health and safety problems, like bad air quality or not enough fire exits.

Municipal occupancy standards can change based on the type of property. For instance, the rules for a single-family home may be different from those for an apartment building or a multi-unit dwelling. Landlords need to know these [local laws](#) to prevent penalties or legal problems.

[Guide to How Many Tenants Can Live In a House in Ontario?](#) - **“BUILDER CODE”**

What is a “suitable” household?

Under the Standard, suitable housing is based on the following criteria:

- A maximum of 2 persons per bedroom.
- Household members, of any age, living as part of a married or common-law couple share a bedroom with their spouse or common-law partner.
- Lone parents, of any age, have a separate bedroom from their children.
- Household members aged 18 or over have a separate bedroom, except those living as part of a married or common-law couple.
- Household members under 18 years of age of the same sex may share a bedroom, except lone parents and those living as part of a married or common-law couple.
- Household members under 5 years of age of the opposite sex may share a bedroom if doing so would reduce the number of required bedrooms. This situation would arise only in households with an odd number of males under 18, and odd number of females under 18 and at least one female and one male under the age of 5.

An exception to the above is a household consisting of 1 individual living alone who may live in a studio apartment with no separate bedroom.