

March 21, 2023

**SUBJECT: Burlington Housing Pledge**

Please be advised that at its meeting held Tuesday, March 21, 2023, the Council of the City of Burlington approved the following resolution in relation to PL-24-23 and PL-29-23 regarding Burlington's Housing Pledge:

Endorse the "City of Burlington 2031 Municipal Housing Target Pledge", included as Appendix B to community planning department report PL-24-23, to support Council's commitment to accelerating the supply of housing to meet the 2031 Municipal Housing Target of 29,000 new housing units, subject to the following conditions:

That the City not be penalized financially or otherwise, for failing to meet the identified housing target; and

That the City reaffirms our position outlined in the council approved Strategic Plan Vision to Focus to maintain the current urban/rural boundary and take every opportunity to advocate for the Greenbelt Plan, and that our pledge to build more homes in Burlington must not be used as a rationale for opening up Greenbelt, or Niagara Escarpment Planning Area lands for development; and

That the City reaffirms our position outlined in the council approved Strategic Plan Vision to Focus to maintain the current urban/rural boundary and take every opportunity to advocate for the Greenbelt Plan, and that our pledge to build more homes in Burlington must not be used as a rationale for opening up Greenbelt, or Niagara Escarpment Planning Area lands for development; and

That the housing target be recognized as an aspirational target and that the City be permitted to continue to utilize the applicable population and employment forecasts from the Growth Plan, 2020 and/or municipal growth allocations assigned to and/or developed by the City, for the purposes of creating development related studies, plans, and by-laws; and

That the Province continue to work with municipalities to provide new opportunities for municipalities to generate stable revenue and grant opportunities, such as the Streamline Development Approval Fund, to aid in the rapid delivery of the identified municipal initiatives and growth-related infrastructure; and

That the Province consult and engage with municipalities on recent and future legislative changes and initiatives to find mutually beneficial ways to streamline approvals and enable municipalities to collect growth-related charges to deliver infrastructure and

community needs quickly; and

Approve Attachment A to memorandum PL-29-23 to form part of the Burlington Housing Pledge; and with the following amendment:

“Burlington Council has made clear through our unanimously-supported Housing Pledge Report, that any additional homes built must not be built in the Greenbelt or Niagara Escarpment Planning Area, both of which are environmentally sensitive areas and include a World Biosphere Reserve. These areas must be protected for future generations and are not needed to accommodate housing goals. The City reaffirms our position outlined in the council approved Strategic Plan Vision to Focus to maintain the current urban/rural boundary and take every opportunity to advocate for the Greenbelt Plan. As such, our pledge to build more homes in Burlington must not be used as a rationale for opening up Greenbelt, or Niagara Escarpment Planning Area lands for development.

Direct the City Clerk to submit to The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing before March 22, 2023, the following documents to fulfill the Province’s request for a Council approved Municipal Housing Pledge:

- Council Resolution for PL-24-23 - Burlington Housing Pledge
- Covering letter signed by Mayor Meed Ward, and Shawna Stolte, Deputy Mayor for Housing, as attached to Memorandum PL-29-23
- Appendix B to Report PL -24-23 the Burlington Housing Pledge
- Report PL-24-23

If you have any questions, please contact me at extension 7702 or the e-mail address above.

Sincerely,



Kevin Arjoon  
City Clerk

Copy:

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario;

The Honourable Parm Gill, Minister of Red Tape Reduction;

MPP Natalie Pierre, Burlington;

MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos, Oakville North-Burlington;

Gary Carr, Halton Regional Chair

Paula Tenuta SVP Policy and Advocacy, Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD GTA)

Mike Collins-Williams, Chief Executive Officer, West End Home Builders’ Association (WEHBA)



March 21, 2023

The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
17<sup>th</sup> floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Clark,

### **Burlington's Pledge**

The City of Burlington is absolutely committed to facilitating the creation of more housing and more diverse housing options. Housing is a shared responsibility and the City has long understood the importance of facing the challenge of creating new homes and welcoming new residents and families to the City.

We are committed to doing our part to accelerate the creation of housing in Burlington, recognizing that the municipality does not build housing. The City's role is to ensure that the conditions for success are met to achieve the housing pledge; it is the role of the private sector to build the units. The City has made great strides in establishing supportive policies and strategies to facilitate the creation of new housing and more complete communities. These inter-related commitments are represented within the City's Strategic Work Plan, Vision to Focus, the Burlington Official Plan, 2020 and the City of Burlington's Housing Strategy.

The City has been assigned a 2031 housing pledge target of 29,000 units. The creation of complete communities and the building of more diverse housing options in Burlington is complex and cannot be achieved on our own. Collaboration and partnership with the Province and its Ministries, the Region of Halton, property owners, the development industry, residents, stakeholders and a wide range of agencies and institutions will be required to move forward.

Working with our community along with our development industry partners represented by the West End Home Builders Association (WEHBA) and Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD GTA), together we can deliver new housing that will also:

- support action related to the City's climate emergency declaration;
- support the objectives of the Integrated Mobility Plan;
- support the creation of housing in the right areas as set out in the Burlington Official Plan, 2020;
- support the creation of housing of a variety of tenures, types and sizes that will welcome more people and families to the city; and will
- support the creation of more complete communities with all the infrastructure (water and wastewater, schools, community centres, parks) required to support these new homes and people.

We are fortunate to have an excellent working relationship with our development industry partners, including WEHBA and BILD GTA. We meet regularly and engage in great dialogue. A key example was the Housing Strategy Working Group where, along with a diverse group of residents, and housing stakeholders, development industry representatives all shared their diverse knowledge and insights and then - and now - act as champions of the work. We all agree we have far more in common than what divides us. At the core we are all committed to working together toward the creation of more housing and more diverse, attainable and affordable housing options so that we can welcome more people into the City.

The following listing highlights the policies, plans, and actions that demonstrate how the City of Burlington will fulfil our commitment to the pledge to the construction of 29,000 new homes in Burlington by 2031.

### **Strategic Plan & From Vision to Focus**

One of the key strategic directions of the City's long-term strategic plan is "A City that Grows". This strategic direction speaks to creating community responsive growth and balanced, targeted population growth for youth, families, newcomers, and seniors. By focusing and directing population and higher densities in key areas, the City intends to build neighbourhoods that are environmentally-friendly, infrastructure-efficient, walkable, bikeable and transit-oriented.

In [Burlington's 2018-2022 Plan: From Vision to Focus](#), Focus Area 1 is – Increasing Economic Prosperity and Community Responsive Growth Management. One of the top priorities is housing with a goal of increasing the options for housing across the City. The work highlighted a number of key actions including:

- The scoped Official Plan Review and Interim Control Bylaw;
- Working with Halton Region to define Burlington's expectations for population and employment to 2041 as part of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review;
- Completion of Area-specific plans for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA); and,
- Completion of Housing Strategy.

The City has already begun laying the ground-work of future strategic planning and the development of multi-year plans to set unified objectives and goals related to the creation of complete communities in areas of future City growth and intensification. This work will support prioritizing efforts and ensuring the entire organization is moving forward together to fulfill the long-term vision for complete communities, including housing.

### **Housing Strategy**

The [Housing Strategy](#) challenges the City of Burlington to take on an ambitious role in order to move the City closer to our vision for housing which states:

**"Everyone is welcome in Burlington. Burlington is a city where all current and future residents have access to the housing options that meet their needs at all stages of life, and that are attainable at all income levels."**

Based on the [technical research](#) completed in earlier project phases, and subsequent discussions with Burlington City Council; the project steering committee; and the project working

group, it was determined that the City of Burlington, as a lower tier municipality, has two key opportunities to do its part to “make moves” in addressing the broader housing crisis:

- First, through partnership and advocacy with upper levels of government and housing providers to help deliver the deep affordability and housing options needed by residents of Burlington within the lower income deciles; and
- Second, through focusing on implementing the direct actions that the City can take to increase housing options and opportunities for residents of Burlington within the middle-income deciles.

There are a wide range of implementation actions listed in the Housing Strategy. They include: seeing the policies of the Burlington Official Plan, 2020 come into effect, translating those policies into zoning – both of which face challenges given the status of the Official Plan at the OLT. The Housing Strategy also emphasizes the City’s role and opportunity to address “missing middle” both from the perspective of having housing options that are affordable/attainable for middle-income households and for the opportunity to diversify the spectrum of housing types and tenures. Other key initiatives include rental housing protection through demolition control and the creation of an inclusionary zoning approach for the MTSAs. In both of these cases and in other instances, the high degree of uncertainty related to Provincial changes to policy, legislation and regulation remain a challenge for moving forward.

The City is committed to responding in this great time of change by redefining the City’s role and responsibility in supporting the creation of a diversity of housing options that are attainable at all income levels as part of implementing the Housing Strategy. The City will develop an updated implementation plan that considers the wide range of issues, partners and opportunities.

## **Burlington Official Plan, 2020**

Burlington Official Plan (OP), 2020 fuses the local community interests with Regional and Provincial policy direction and articulates the City of Burlington’s vision for growth and change to 2031 and beyond. The Plan establishes a community vision, a new urban structure and a new growth framework that sets out the relative priority, degree, type, and location of growth anticipated in the City. The OP presents a long-term vision for a built-out municipality that will grow primarily through intensification.

Approved by the Region of Halton in late 2020, the document today remains significantly under appeal.

The Official Plan lays the foundation for where new housing, jobs and community amenities are expected within our pre-ROPA 49 urban boundary. While growth is expected throughout the built-up area, significant growth and change are focused at our three MTSAs, downtown, uptown, along frequent transit corridors like Plains Road and Fairview Street and existing retail plazas adjacent to established residential areas. Alongside these high-level directions, the Plan also sets out development-ready provisions and guides development within certain parameters allowing for private sector flexibility while ensuring the public interest is maintained.

The new Official Plan enhances policies to support residential growth. At the highest level, the identification of MTSAs as key areas for future growth and change along with the merging of the

former “major retail areas” and “mixed use activity areas” designations add new lands to serve as areas for more intensive integration of a wide range of uses including residential, where housing didn’t previously exist. Significant areas within Burlington have been assigned policy that establishes a wide range of permitted uses that include significant potential for housing intensification. At the more granular level some residential neighbourhood policies have base increases to density ranges, and clear provisions for accommodating different housing types, among other things. While these provisions are under appeal property owners, in many cases, must go through an Official Plan amendment in order to achieve housing intensification given that the existing Official Plan remains in effect.

Although not anticipated by the Official Plan, Burlington City Council would like to express appreciation for the Minister’s decision as part of ROPA 49 that opens opportunities for the creation of new, complete, mixed use communities in several major areas of Burlington including lands within Bronte Creek Meadows, 1200 King Road, the Bridgeview area and Eagle Heights. We look forward to developing the local vision for these major areas alongside our development industry partners.

We are confident there is sufficient land within our pre-ROPA 49 urban boundary to accommodate the housing pledge to 2031. The introduction of additional areas for future growth through the Minister’s decision on ROPA 49 also provides opportunities for the creation of new, complete communities. Burlington Council has made clear through our unanimously-supported Housing Pledge Report, that any additional homes built must not be built in the Greenbelt or Niagara Escarpment Planning Area, both of which are environmentally sensitive areas and include a World Biosphere Reserve. These areas must be protected for future generations and are not needed to accommodate housing goals. The City reaffirms our position outlined in the council approved Strategic Plan Vision to Focus to maintain the current urban/rural boundary and take every opportunity to advocate for the Greenbelt Plan. As such, our pledge to build more homes in Burlington must not be used as a rationale for opening up Greenbelt, or Niagara Escarpment Planning Area lands for development. Directing growth within the existing urban boundary set out in ROPA 49 will protect Burlington’s critically important agricultural and natural heritage systems while still allowing the City to meet all population and employment growth objectives and targets, including the housing pledge.

## **Zoning By-Law**

In the Fall of 2022, Council gave direction to undertake the development of a Zoning By-law review. This work will modernize zoning regulations, implement the new Official Plan, and is expected to reduce the amount of zoning by-law amendments and minor variances required for development. The appeal of the Burlington Official Plan, 2020 in its near entirety, along with the wide range of legislative, policy and regulation changes occurring, or set to occur within the realm of Provincial policy, has introduced significant uncertainty into the project.

## **Major Transit Station Areas**

The Major Transit Station Area boundaries in Burlington were established through the Minister’s approval of the Region of Halton’s Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48. The City acknowledges and appreciates the Minister’s support for adjusting the Urban Growth Centre boundary and removing the Major Transit Station Area designation from downtown Burlington. This move provides the opportunity to direct significant growth closest to where major transit

service and inter-regional connections are available. The move is in keeping with Provincial direction in the PPS and the Growth Plan and recognizes and supports current and planned significant provincial investment in transit.

The MTSA Area Specific Plans (ASPs) will provide the land use planning vision and framework to establish complete communities around Burlington's three GO Stations. The plans aim to achieve a diverse, dense and transit supportive mix of homes, jobs and supporting amenities like parks, community facilities, recreational and commercial opportunities to 2051 and beyond. The creation of these new complete communities, will be supported by private investments that follow the significant public investments in planning and infrastructure in these key areas.

While work has continued on the development of the MTSA ASPs the ultimate implementation of these plans will also experience a delay as a result of the uncertainty with the OP appeals.

### **Streamlining Development Approval Initiative Fund (SDAF)**

Through this one time funding opportunity the City developed a project to deliver specific improvements to the low-density residential development approval service (i.e. Pre-building permit process) using LEAN Six Sigma principles to provide efficiencies in the development approval process for gentle intensification projects, such as developments of less than 10 units, new dwellings and additional dwellings on residential properties.

The SDAF project has led to a number of positive organizational and process outcomes. Most important are the cultural changes in how we conduct our work. The concept of continuous improvement and integration of LEAN principles has been embraced by staff. It has strengthened staff morale and empowered them to execute changes in business processes that improve overall efficiency, customer experience, and sustainability of workloads. It is anticipated that staff will proactively continue with new experiments and implement those that are successful. Lessons learned from this project will be adapted and scaled up to other more complex development processes so that we can continue to maximize efficiency and staff capacity in our service delivery.

### **Burlington Lands Partnership**

The Burlington Lands Partnership (BLP) establishes an internal structure with a focus on strategic lands related to the following priorities: economic growth and job creation, city building projects that enhance the quality of life for all citizens, and delivering an increased supply of attainable/affordable housing. Specific to housing, the BLP will facilitate the acquisition of lands and provide project management support related to implementation of attainable housing partnerships.

### **Additional Residential Units**

The City responded to recent changes introduced through Royal Assent of Bill 23 by interpreting the current Zoning By-law to immediately implement the additional residential units requirements. In the future the City will consider any study required to support:

- Amendments to the portions of Burlington Official Plan, 2020 that are in force related to Additional Residential Units
- Zoning amendments required to support the creation of new units within the urban area, and,
- Infrastructure (streets, water and wastewater services, etc.) availability, deficits and opportunities to support new housing intensification.

## **Bill 109 Implementation**

The City responded to approval of Bill 109 by updating the Official Plan amendment, Zoning By-law amendment and Site Plan Control Application processes to meet legislated timelines and get to a decision point faster, while ensuring that every effort is made to achieve the best planning outcome for each application. This work streamlined application processes to create consistent, predictable and customer-focused application reviews. Included as part of this work was an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) that updated the information and materials required for complete applications, public notification requirements and development application process changes. The OPA is currently under appeal and therefore not yet in force and effect.

## **Monitoring Staff Capacity**

The City is committed to monitoring staff capacity to ensure that the organization is resourced and organized properly to deliver on the City's objectives and this pledge. City Council has demonstrated a commitment to evolving the organization with a focus on development related services over the past several years. City Council has demonstrated this commitment with the addition of over 20 development-related positions and significant investments in new human resources within the 2023 budget. Moving forward staff will undertake a fee review which will also service as new data related to staff capacity to understand the impacts of the implementation of Bills 109 and 23. An outcome of this work will be a better understanding of the resources required across development services to ensure staff is positioned to deliver on Council and customer expectations. With this new information City Council will be in a position to understand what, if any, additional resources are required to facilitate the creation of new housing and jobs.

In addition, in response to significant hiring challenges across the GTHA for all subject matter experts involved in development review the City is looking into creative options. One creative solution is outsourcing application reviews to external subject matter experts. This is itself challenging due to consulting firms serving development industry clients (introducing perceived conflict), staff resourcing within consulting firms, and financial limitations of municipalities.

## **Understanding our Pipeline**

Recent data suggests currently as of March 2022, there are over 23,000 housing units in the development application review pipeline; with approximately 7300 units tied up in OLT appeals.

We commit to reviewing the City's updated development pipeline to create a better understanding through working with the development industry and applicants. Using the best available information will allow the City and the Region to make informed decisions on actions



that would yield the best investments in infrastructure and support prioritizing development that commits to moving forward expeditiously and delivers results that support a wide range of strategic City objectives, as discussed above. This commitment will involve an approach for monitoring progress against the housing pledge as well as continued dialogue with our industry partners to ensure opportunities and challenges are well understood.

## **Understanding and evolving into the City's new role**

The City is committed to looking for new ways to deliver complete communities. The City is prepared to consider redefining the role of the lower tier municipality to respond to change and to look for creative solutions to move forward together. The first steps in this journey will start with the Council/Staff Workshop planned for March 30, 2023. We are committed to rethinking approaches to designing complete communities **as an organization**.

The City of Burlington is committed to the long-standing principle that new growth is financially sustainable and that development related charges pay for growth-related infrastructure, facilities and parks to support the development of complete communities. The principle of growth paying for growth is a critical consideration to avoid or minimize the burden of growth costs falling on existing taxpayers. Bill 23 limits the few tools the City has to deliver affordable housing and build parks and green spaces to create complete communities.

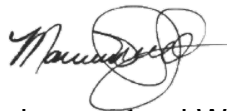
## **Burlington's Requests of the Province to Support this Pledge**

- The Province recognizes that housing is a shared responsibility and that the City not be penalized financially or otherwise, for failing to meet the identified housing target;
- That the target be recognized as an aspirational target;
- An immediate review of housing opportunities that are currently appealed as part of City-wide Official Plan Amendments or new Official Plans, is mandated. Reject appeals that directly impact as of right housing intensification;
- Providing additional SDAF funding to allow the LEAN Six Sigma principles to be more rapidly extended to all *Planning Act* and *Building Code Act* applications, including technology platforms that efficiently facilitate the customer's journey;
- The Province consult and engage with municipalities on recent and future legislative changes and initiatives to find mutually beneficial ways to streamline approvals and enable municipalities to collect growth-related charges to deliver infrastructure and community needs quickly;
- While those discussions are underway ensure municipalities are made whole, dollar-for-dollar to eliminate the unintended consequences of Development Charges reductions associated with Bill 23;

- Funding for City-wide studies to identify infrastructure opportunities or deficits to support new intensification and associated funding to implement infrastructure such as road, water and waste water services to support new housing intensification;
- Consider rejecting appeals related to the implementation of Bill 109 legislative timelines;
- Support the expedited resolution of Burlington Official Plan, 2020 appeals, including rejecting appeals that directly impact as of right housing intensification to meet City, Regional and Provincial objectives;
- Pause further legislative and regulatory changes until comprehensive engagement occurs with municipalities, to avoid any unintended consequences;
- Ensure that professional licensing and regulatory bodies are aligned in expediting review/approval of international professional designations; and,
- Ensure that professional licensing and regulatory bodies are aligned in efficiently training, testing and awarding professional designations to Canadian-trained workforce.

Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. We look forward to working together with the Province of Ontario and the development community on innovative solutions and partnerships to increase attainable housing options for residents at every stage of life.

Signed on behalf of Burlington City Council by



Marianne Meed Ward  
Mayor of the City of Burlington



Shawna Stolte  
Deputy Mayor for Housing, City of Burlington

Copy:

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario;  
 The Honourable Parm Gill, Minister of Red Tape Reduction;  
 MPP Natalie Pierre, Burlington;  
 MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos, Oakville North-Burlington;  
 Gary Carr, Halton Regional Chair  
 Paula Tenuta SVP Policy and Advocacy, Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD GTA)  
 Mike Collins-Williams, Chief Executive Officer, West End Home Builders' Association (WEHBA)

Attachments:

Staff Report  
 Appendices

Actions	Barriers	Support Requested
Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing Legislation and Regulations</li> <li>• Reliance on approval of BOP, 2020</li> <li>• Reliance on moving forward with Zoning By-Law Review</li> </ul>	
Approved, under appeal BOP, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing policy landscape</li> <li>• OLT delays</li> <li>• Extensive, near whole plan appeals including key elements of the plan that would, as-of-right support the creation of new housing supply.</li> </ul>	<p>Mandate an immediate review of housing opportunities which are held up by appeals, both site-specific and City-wide amendments or new Official Plans.</p> <p>Automatically reject appeals that directly impact as of right housing intensification that exceeds some threshold of intensification.</p>
Major Transit Station Area Area-specific planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing Legislation and Regulations</li> <li>• Reliance on approval of BOP, 2020</li> <li>• OLT delays</li> <li>• Cost of land makes it challenging to provide infrastructure such as high-quality parks and other community service facilities to support the rapidly growing populations in primary intensification areas.</li> </ul>	Modernize municipal revenue tools to provide for consistent financing of community supportive infrastructure.
Implementing MMAH decision on ROPA 48 and 49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OLT modifications</li> </ul>	
SDAF project used LEAN Six Sigma principles to provide efficiencies in the development approval process for gentle intensification projects such as developments of less than 10		Additional SDAF provincial resources will allow the LEAN Six Sigma principles to more rapidly be extended to all <i>Planning Act</i> and <i>Building Code</i>

units, new dwellings and additional dwellings on residential properties.		Act applications, including technology platforms that efficiently facilitate the customer's journey.
Creation and implementation of a Burlington Lands Partnership internal structure to facilitate the acquisition of lands and provide project management support related to implementation of attainable housing partnerships.		Modernize municipal revenue tools to provide for consistent financing of community supportive infrastructure and land acquisition dedicated to affordable housing.
Respond to recent changes by interpreting the current Zoning By-law to immediately implement the additional residential unit requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No barrier to deal with in the immediate term.</li> </ul>	<p>Funding for studies that will identify any infrastructure deficits to support new intensification.</p> <p>Funding for the construction of infrastructure required to support new housing intensification, such as roads, water and waste water services.</p>
<p>The City has implemented Bill 109 by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- updating the ZBA and SPA processes to meet legislated timelines and get to a decision point faster.</li> <li>- updating pre-consultation process for ZBA and SPA to help support applicants and outline path to success to get to permits quickly.</li> </ul>		
The City proposed an Official Plan Amendment to implement Bill 109 in late 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OLT appeal, including key elements that will support efficient comprehensive review of development proposals.</li> </ul>	Reject appeals related to implementation of Bill 109 legislative timelines.
Initiating Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review project to modernize zoning regulations, implement the new OP, and reduce the amount of rezoning and minor variances required for development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing Legislation and Regulations</li> <li>• Reliance on approval of BOP, 2020</li> </ul>	Expedite resolution of BOP appeals, including rejecting appeals that directly impact as of right housing intensification that exceeds some threshold of intensification.

<p>Monitoring staff capacity to ensure the City is resourced and organized properly to deliver on this pledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant hiring challenges across the GTHA for all subject matter experts involved in development review.</li> <li>• Outsourcing of reviews is challenging due to concentration of consulting firms serving development industry (perceived conflict) as well as staff resourcing challenges within the consulting industry.</li> </ul>	<p>Pause further legislative and regulatory changes.</p> <p>Ensure that professional licensing &amp; regulatory bodies are aligned in expediting review/approval of international professional designations.</p> <p>Ensure that professional licensing &amp; regulatory bodies are aligned in efficiently training, testing and awarding professional designations to Canadian-trained workforce.</p>



**SUBJECT: Burlington Housing Pledge**

**TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.**

**FROM: Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility**

Report Number: PL-24-23

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 155-03-01

Date to Committee: February 28, 2023

Date to Council: March 21, 2023

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**Recommendation:**

Endorse the “City of Burlington 2031 Municipal Housing Target Pledge”, included as Appendix B to community planning department report PL-24-23, to support Council’s commitment to accelerating the supply of housing to meet the 2031 Municipal Housing Target of 29,000 new housing units, subject to the following conditions:

That the City not be penalized financially or otherwise, for failing to meet the identified housing target; and

That the housing target be recognized as an aspirational target and that the City be permitted to continue to utilize the applicable population and employment forecasts from the Growth Plan, 2020 and/or municipal growth allocations assigned to and/or developed by the City, for the purposes of creating development related studies, plans, and by-laws; and

That the Province continue to work with municipalities to provide new opportunities for municipalities to generate stable revenue and grant opportunities, such as the Streamline Development Approval Fund, to aid in the rapid delivery of the identified municipal initiatives and growth-related infrastructure; and

That the Province consult and engage with municipalities on recent and future legislative changes and initiatives to find mutually beneficial ways to streamline approvals and enable municipalities to collect growth-related charges to deliver infrastructure and community needs quickly.

## **PURPOSE:**

The City of Burlington has been asked to demonstrate its commitment to accelerating housing supply by developing a Municipal Housing Pledge and taking necessary actions to facilitate the construction of 29,000 units by 2031, which amounts to 17,658 more units than are currently anticipated for Burlington (2021 – 2031) as part of the recently completed Land Needs Assessment prepared to support the Region of Halton Integrated Growth Management Strategy in accordance with the Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology, as set out in the Growth Plan.

## **Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
  - Improve integrated city mobility
  - Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
  - Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- 

## **Background and Discussion:**

### 1.0 Background

As set out in [CS-12-22: Consultations on Bill 23 More Homes Built Faster, 2022](#) the province introduced Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 on October 25, 2022.

The goal of the legislation is to facilitate the construction of 1.5 million new homes in Ontario by 2031. The omnibus bill proposes amending a number of existing statutes including: the Planning Act, Ontario Heritage Act, Development Charges Act, Conservation Authorities Act, and Ontario Land Tribunals Act, amongst others.

Complimentary to Bill 23 and the associated postings the Province introduced the concept of housing targets in a bulletin listed on the ERO as “2031 Municipal Housing Targets”. The notice clarifies that the Bulletin has been posted for “informational purposes only” and that the Province was not seeking comments. The bulletin establishes housing targets for 29 selected lower- and single tier municipalities in Southern Ontario and includes the requirement that each municipality establish a pledge that identifies tools and strategies they intend to use to achieve their housing target. The targets for each of the 29 municipalities are included in the following table:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Housing Target</b>
City of Toronto	285,000
City of Ottawa	151,000
City of Mississauga	120,000
City of Brampton	113,000
City of Hamilton	47,000
City of London	47,000
City of Markham	44,000
City of Vaughan	42,000
City of Kitchener	35,000
Town of Oakville	33,000
City of Windsor	13,000
City of Richmond Hill	27,000
City of Burlington	29,000
City of Oshawa	23,000
City of Barrie	23,000
City of Guelph	18,000
City of Cambridge	19,000
Town of Milton	21,000
Town of Whitby	18,000
City of St. Catharines	11,000
Town of Ajax	17,000
City of Waterloo	16,000
City of Kingston	8,000
City of Brantford	10,000
Clarington	13,000
City of Pickering	13,000
City of Niagara Falls	8,000
Town of Newmarket	12,000
Town of Caledon	13,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,229,000</b>

The City of Burlington has been assigned a 2031 Housing Target of 29,000 units. In addition, the City was provided a letter and associated info sheet (Appendix A) describing the Municipal Housing Targets and requesting that the municipality prepare a Municipal Housing Pledge and take the necessary steps to facilitate achieving the target.

The letter sets out that:

*Pledges will provide important information that showcase the strategies and actions that municipalities choose to adopt in order to prioritize and accelerate housing. Our government intends to use your pledges to monitor and track progress so we can continue to play a role in supporting municipalities and removing barriers to housing development.*



## **2.0 Discussion**

### **2.1 Housing Focus**

The City of Burlington is absolutely committed to supporting the creation of more housing and more diverse housing options. While committed to working toward this ambitious target it is important to acknowledge that many factors related to the creation of new units are beyond the control of the City.

The City of Burlington does not build housing. While the creation of new housing is enabled by the policies and regulations of the municipality it is the individual decisions of land owners, developers, businesses all in the context of the broader market (economy, demand, availability of skilled labour, costs of materials etc.) that create new housing units. As a lower tier municipality, the City of Burlington is responsible for local decisions which guide future land use, development and growth. The City also has a role to play in advocating to upper levels of government to advance objectives and actions set out in the Housing Strategy and communicate the challenges experienced by municipalities in the delivery of a range and mix of housing for all ages, abilities, household sizes and income levels. The City is committed to improving in areas within its control.

### **2.2 Policy Overview**

A Place to Grow established a distribution of population and employment within the GGH to 2051, which for the whole of Halton Regions resulted in 1,100,000 people and approximately 500,000 jobs by 2051.

Halton Region completed a Land Needs Assessment as part of the Region of Halton's municipal comprehensive review work. The Land Needs Assessment (LNA) supported ROPA 49 and identified that in the period from 2021 to 2031, an additional 11,342 units will be needed to accommodate Burlington's share of population growth.

The LNA study work included detailed study and analysis informed by:

- a Provincially-mandated land needs assessment methodology,
- the allocation of 1.1 million people by 2051 to Halton Region as set out by the Province, and
- detailed information about the land use policies established within Burlington Official Plan (BOP), 2020 to embed local plans and priorities within the Regional work.

As discussed in [PL-37-22 Regional Official Plan Review ROPA 49 staff comments](#), as set out in the LNA supporting ROPA 49 which assessed growth to 2041:

*The forecasted household growth for the City under the Modified Preferred Growth Concept equates to an average of 1,156 units/year. This is higher than the average number of units a year identified under the Draft Preferred Growth Concept as well as in the City's Growth Analysis Study. It is also significantly higher than the City's average of 570 units/year over the last 10 years (2011-2021) based on CMHC Housing Completion data.*

The Land Needs Assessment work supported the population and employment allocations set out in Regional Official Plan Amendment 49 as approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Housing Pledge asks Burlington to accommodate/encourage the delivery of more than double the housing units allocated to Burlington from 2021 to 2031, which was acknowledged previously as significantly higher than 10 year historical trends. In other words, an additional 17,658 units will need to be accommodated by 2031. If measured over the 2021 to 2031 time frame, in order to achieve Burlington's Municipal Housing Target of 29,000 units by 2031, the average number of units built per year will need to increase to 2,900 units per year up from the 10 year average of 570 units per year.

### **2.3 Opportunities and Challenges**

Housing is a shared responsibility. The City has made great strides in establishing supportive policies and strategies to support the creation of housing and the creation of more complete communities.

The creation of complete communities and the building of more diverse housing options in Burlington is complex and collaborative work involving the Province, the Region of Halton, property owners, development industry, institutions, residents, stakeholders and agencies. Through engagement on the City's Housing Strategy the City heard that all are encouraged by the Housing Strategy and want to move forward to support the creation of new housing options that are more attainable for the community. The City also heard very clearly that any moves to action on housing must also:

- support action related to the City's climate emergency declaration;
- support the objectives of the Integrated Mobility Plan;
- support the creation of housing in the right areas as set out in the Burlington Official Plan, 2020;
- support the creation of housing that will welcome more people and families to the city;
- support the creation of more complete communities.

Any progress on housing that does not also deliver on the broader objectives of the City and the Province will have the potential to undermine the ability to continue to meet the

broader objectives set out in the City's Strategic Plan and its associated plans and strategies. Continuing to invest in the community and creating a desirable place to live, work and play is critical to the continued success and desirability of the City.

Exceeding the planned unit targets by such a large margin over the near term (> 10 years) will require:

- Private sector creation of new housing units, including housing options and opportunities for people within the middle income deciles;
- Government creation of deeper affordability units;
- Release of the Burlington Official Plan from the OLT appeal process to unlock approved housing intensification and eliminate the barrier of site-specific Official Plan Amendments for housing intensification;
- Up to date local policies and zoning to support the creation of new housing;
- Coordination of the provision of infrastructure to support this increased rate of development with Halton Region and its partner municipalities. The prioritization, provision and financial planning of infrastructure is critically important to this goal.
- Provincial investment in funding, tools and resources that help municipalities to incentivize rental housing.
- Provincial investment in preparing Community Planning Permit Systems and protection of the tool once approved by Council
- Provincial pause on further significant changes that draw attention and resources away from the core focus.

Although noted above it is particularly important to note that the hard and soft infrastructure required to support new housing is delivered by all levels of government and a wide range of utilities, agencies and institutions. These supports including water, waste water, roads, parks, libraries, recreation facilities, and transit must all be in place to support the creation of these new units.

#### A note on Water and Wastewater servicing:

Halton Region's population is expected to grow by 153,000 people between 2021 and 2031. Based on the LNA the number of housing units is expected to grow by 56,900 units.

As noted in the table above, three of the four local municipalities within Halton have been assigned housing targets, through the housing targets bulletin – totaling 83,000 units to 2031. When assessed against the overall growth set out in the LNA to 2031 the difference amounts to 26,100 units. With over 45% more units targeted for this timeframe there will be intense competition and the need for prioritization decisions that local municipalities will contribute to but may not be in a position to influence

significantly. In this one critical dimension there will be significant challenges predicting where new housing units will actually materialize and ensuring sufficient infrastructure (of all kinds) is planned for, financed and built at the right time to accommodate.

The best approach for the City is to rely on the significant effort invested by the City in:

- the creation of the new Official Plan (BOP, 2020);
- the completion of the Region of Halton's IGMS and Municipal Comprehensive Review;
- the work on Major Transit Station Area area-specific planning; and,
- the creation of the Housing Strategy.

### **3.0 City of Burlington Actions**

In response to the wide ranging ERO postings related to Housing in late 2022 staff developed a set of guiding principles in [CS-12-22: Consultations on Bill 23 More Homes Built Faster, 2022](#). Drawn from Vision 2040 – Burlington's Strategic Plan, 2018-2022 Plan: From Vision to Focus, the Official Plan and other key documents, these guiding principles were used to guide responses to the proposals presented by the Province:

- More Homes Built Faster;
- Complete Communities;
- An Engaged Community;
- Growth Pays for Growth;
- Matters of Provincial Interest;
- Public Health and Safety; and,
- Environment, Urban Design and Climate Change

For a full description of the guiding principles refer to [CS-12-22: Consultations on Bill 23 More Homes Built Faster, 2022](#). These guiding principles are embedded in the City's plans, strategies and initiatives discussed below.

#### **Strategic Plan**

One of the key strategic directions of the City's long term strategic plan is "A City that Grows". This key strategic direction speaks to achieving community responsive growth and balanced, targeted population growth for youth, families, newcomers and seniors. By focusing and directing population and higher densities in key areas the City intends to build neighbourhoods that are environmentally friendly, infrastructure-efficient, walkable, bikeable and transit-oriented.

Burlington's 2018-2022 Plan: From Vision to Focus sets a number of focus areas including Focus Area 1 – Increasing Economic Prosperity and Community Responsive

Growth Management. One of the Top priorities is Housing with a goal of increasing options for housing across the City. The work highlighted a number of key actions including:

- The scoped Official Plan Review and Interim Control Bylaw;
- Working with the Region to define Burlington's expectations for population and employment to 2041 as part of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review;
- Completion of Area-specific plans for Major Transit Station Areas; and,
- Completion of Housing Strategy.

Please refer to Appendix B for a complete list of the range of actions and initiatives underway.

### **Official Plan**

The Burlington Official Plan, 2020 fuses the local community interests with Regional and Provincial policy direction and articulates the City of Burlington vision for growth and change to 2031 and beyond. The Plan establishes a community vision, a new Urban Structure and sets out a Growth Framework that supports the long-term vision for the urban area of a built-out municipality that will grow primarily through intensification. These two frameworks along with the land use policies for the Urban Area are to be used together to understand the relative priority, degree, type and location of growth anticipated in the City. Alongside these high-level directions, the Plan also sets out development-ready provisions and guides development within certain parameters allowing for private sector flexibility while ensuring the public interest is maintained. Approved by the Region in late 2020, the document today remains significantly under appeal.

The new Official Plan enhances policies throughout to support residential growth. At the highest level the merging of the former "major retail areas" and "mixed use activity areas" designations offered an opportunity to serve as areas for more intensive integration of a wide range of uses including residential. Significant areas of the City have been assigned policy establishing a wide range of uses that may be permitted as well as significant housing intensification. At the more granular level the residential neighbourhoods policies have seen base increases to density ranges, clear provisions for accommodating different housing types, among other things.

While these provisions are under appeal property owners in many cases must go through an Official Plan amendment in order to achieve housing intensification as a result of the existing Official Plan remaining in effect.

## **Zoning By-Law Review**

In the Fall of 2022, Council gave direction to undertake the development of a Zoning By-law review to implement the policy direction as set out in the Official Plan. The appeal of the BOP 2020 in its near entirety, along with the wide range of changes occurring, or set to occur within the realm of Provincial policy has introduced significant uncertainty into the project.

## **MTSA area-specific planning**

The Major Transit Station Area boundaries in the City were established through the Minister's approval of the Region of Halton's ROPA 48. The MTSA ASPs will provide the land use planning vision and framework to establish complete communities around Burlington's 3 GO Stations. The plans aim to achieve a diverse, dense and transit-supportive mix of homes, jobs and supporting amenities like parks, community facilities, recreational and commercial opportunities to 2051 and beyond.

While work has continued on the development of the MTSA area-specific plans the ultimate implementation of these plans will also experience a delay as a result of uncertainty with the OP appeals.

## **Housing Strategy**

The [Housing Strategy](#) challenges the City of Burlington to take on an ambitious role in order to move the City closer to the Vision for housing which states:

“Everyone is welcome in Burlington. Burlington is a city where all current and future residents have access to the housing options that meet their needs at all stages of life, and that are attainable at all income levels.”

Based on the [technical research](#) completed in earlier project phases, and subsequent discussions with City of Burlington Council; the project Steering Committee; and the project Working Group, it was determined that the City of Burlington, as a lower tier municipality, has two key opportunities to do its part to “make moves” in addressing the broader housing crisis:

- First, through partnership and advocacy with upper levels of government and housing providers to help deliver the deep affordability and housing options needed by residents of Burlington within the lower income deciles; and
- Second, through focusing on implementing the direct actions that the City can take to increase housing options and opportunities for residents of Burlington within the middle-income deciles.

There are a wide range of implementation actions listed in the Housing Strategy. This includes seeing the policies of the BOP, 2020 come into effect, translating those policies

into Zoning – both of which face challenges given the status of the Official Plan at the OLT. Other key initiatives included rental housing protection through demolition control and the creation of an inclusionary zoning approach for the MTSAs. In both of these cases and in other instances, the high degree of uncertainty related to Provincial changes to policy, legislation and regulation remain a challenge for moving forward.

### **Strategy/process**

Please find attached for your consideration the draft Housing Pledge Appendix B. As set out in the guidance for the preparation of the Housing Pledge staff are supportive of the Provincial interest in removing barriers. In order to support that objective the Housing Pledge has identified key initiatives and specific requests for the Province to consider in Appendix B.

Municipalities will require significant support from the Province in order to find locally appropriate, innovative ways to make progress on their respective pledges.

The City requests that municipalities and the Provincial government work collaboratively to identify additional tools, resources and appropriate funding from the Province in light of the significant changes proposed in Bill 23 that substantially limit the ability of municipalities to generate revenue to support development and growth of complete communities.

Municipalities will also require the development industry do their part by building high-quality housing that supports daily needs of current and future residents by building complete communities.

### **Options Considered**

N/A

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### **Financial Matters:**

Not applicable.

### **Total Financial Impact**

Not applicable.

### **Source of Funding**

Not applicable.

### **Other Resource Impacts**

Not applicable.

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### **Climate Implications**

The Region's Urban Structure focuses on growth within the existing Urban Areas of the Region of Halton. Through the identification of a hierarchy of Strategic Growth Areas across the Region, the Regional Urban Structure reinforces the City's Urban Structure and Growth Framework and generally the ability and desire to accommodate intensification and encourage and prioritize transit-supportive growth.

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### **Engagement Matters:**

No engagement specific to the development of the housing pledge was undertaken. The commitments highlighted in the City's pledge are based on current committed work, policies and approaches.

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### **Conclusion:**

The City is committed to supporting the creation of more housing and more diverse housing options. While committed to working toward this very ambitious target it is important to acknowledge that many factors related to the creation of new units are beyond the control of the City.

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Respectfully submitted,

Brynn Nheiley, MCIP, RPP

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### **Appendices:**

- A. Municipal Housing Targets and Municipal Housing Pledge Letter and Info Sheet
- B. City of Burlington Housing Pledge



**Notifications:**

Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.