



Pipeline to Permit Committee

Addendum

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Date: March 6, 2025
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Location: Council Chambers, City Hall, second floor
Contact: Deputy Clerk, lisa.palermo@burlington.ca 905-335-7777, x7492

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Note: this document was published on February 26, 2025

5.2 *Response to recommendations from University of Waterloo students - Zoning By-laws and Housing as a Human Right: A Study of the City of Burlington (DGM-31-25)* 7 - 10

Note: this document was published on February 26, 2025

SUBJECT: Housing and Community Improvement Plan Update
TO: Pipeline to Permit Committee
FROM: Development and Growth Management
Community Planning

Report Number: DGM-28-25

Wards Affected: all

Date to Committee: March 6, 2025

Date to Council: March 18, 2025

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Pipeline to Permit (P2P) Committee with an overview of actions which together enabled the City to move forward with the proposed Rental and Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Committee of the Whole will consider and decide on the CIP in spring 2025.

The discussion with P2P will be supported by this memo and a companion presentation. This is an opportunity to leverage your insights and experiences to support the implementation of a housing-oriented CIP aligned with the City's objectives.

Staff will share details on the City of Burlington's actions which together enabled the City to move forward with the housing-oriented CIP:

- [Housing Strategy \(2022\)](#)
- Housing Accelerator Action Plan (2024)
- Proposed Rental and Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (2025)

Background Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy, approved in June 2022, 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.”

The Housing Strategy provides a roadmap for addressing local housing needs and increasing housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents at all stages of life and at all income levels. It identifies the key players in housing and their respective roles, including the role of the City of Burlington. The Housing Strategy identifies 12 Actions to move toward the vision for housing in Burlington.

Based on the findings of 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.

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.

Housing Accelerator Action Plan (2024)

Staff Report [CS-13-23](#), presented a Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) [Action Plan](#) for endorsement in principle and authorized staff to submit the City’s application on August 18, 2023.

On January 15, 2024, Infrastructure Canada and CMHC announced the City’s application was approved for \$21,156,248.60. These funds will be advanced to the City over the course of four years based on a successful annual review by CMHC. The first funding advance was received in January 2024. The second advance is anticipated for February 2025. To receive full funding the City must meet all the following targets and initiatives:

1. Housing Targets

- a. Total Supply Growth target of 2,724 permitted housing units
- b. Additional targets:
 - 1,047 missing middle housing units (defined as 4-stories or less and not a single residential unit)
 - 1,294 other multi-unit housing units
 - 8.4% (228) of the Housing Supply Growth Target are affordable units.

The City is responsible for achieving all housing targets by December 31, 2026.

2. Initiatives:

The following seven initiatives were included in the HAF application as the City's Action Plan:

1. Streamlining planning and building approval process.
2. Implementing Major Transit Station Areas and Community Planning Permit System.
3. Support and encourage the creation of additional residential units and consider opportunities to increase as of right permissions.
4. Identify opportunities to incentivize the creation of rental and non-market housing.
5. Build community and partner capacity by creating a Housing Connections Centre.
6. Public lands and partnerships.
7. Municipal infrastructure needs.

On November 4, 2024, Council received a HAF update ([PL-82-24](#)), and approved the proposed [HAF implementation budget](#). Currently, the City does not fund a Community Improvement Plan. The City currently has the opportunity to leverage available HAF funds to support implementation of the proposed Rental and Affordable Housing CIP in order to achieve the HAF missing middle and affordable rental housing targets.

Council information report [DGM-19-25](#) provided a progress update on achievement towards the housing targets, initiatives, and the proposed next steps to further implement the approved HAF Action Plan. This report noted that as of January 2025, 50% of the total Housing Supply Growth target (2,724 units) has been achieved.

Initiatives to Increase Housing Options and Supply

Community Planning has led several recent initiatives that align with the City's Housing Strategy Vision to increase housing options to meet the needs of all residents at all stages of life and at all income levels and fulfill obligations in the City's Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan.

The [Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments to Increase Housing Options](#) was approved by Council on January 28, 2025. These amendments to the [Official Plan, 2020](#) and [Zoning By-law 2020](#), permit four units as-of-right through the Additional Residential Unit policies contained within the Burlington Official Plan, 2020 and Zoning By-law, 2020. Additionally, OPA 3, amends the policies of the Residential Neighbourhood Area, BOP, 2020.

OPA 3 establishes built form as a metric used to describe the degree of development within the residential neighbourhood areas rather than density, supported by other policy guidance to be implemented through the Zoning By-law. This amendment works to increase the diversity of housing options, within the City's Urban Area to support gentle ground-oriented intensification that considers the context and character of Burlington's Established Neighbourhoods while providing opportunities for more diverse housing options to meet the needs of all residents at all stages of life and at all income levels.

This new policy framework sets the stage for the city to achieve its P2P and HAF housing unit targets. These actions also support a number of the key recommendations provided by the University of Waterloo Student team including promoting diverse housing options and infill development.

Proposed Rental and Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan

The Council-approved Housing Strategy and HAF Action Plan identify the need for the City to develop a Community Improvement Plan (CIP). A CIP is a tool that allows a municipality to direct funds and implement policy initiatives toward a specific strategic and planning objective. [Staff Report PL-56-24: Community Improvement Plan Study Draft Terms of Reference](#) presents a [terms of reference](#) that was endorsed by Council on July 16, 2024.

Supported by HAF funds, staff are working with a consultant to deliver the proposed CIP to Committee of the Whole in spring 2025. CIP financial incentives were identified throughout the 2023 and 2024 reports to Council as essential to achieve the HAF total Housing Supply Growth and especially the 8.4% (228) affordable housing unit targets before the end of December 2026. Developing and implementing a CIP also supports the University of Waterloo Student presentation research findings that identified incentivizing housing development as having a key role in achieving housing objectives.

The proposed CIP, once approved, is anticipated to be in place for ten years. The [HAF implementation budget](#) provides for funding over 2025 – 2026 or based on availability of HAF from CMHC.

What We've Heard

The draft CIP approach has considered input to date from the community, Deputy Mayor for Housing and City Councillors, staff from across city departments, building and development industry stakeholders including the Burlington Housing Development Liaison Committee (HDLC) and representatives that sell, manufacture and build ARUs, and the Region of Halton in its capacity as provider of assisted and special needs housing.

Key feedback includes:

- Support for a suite of incentive options to address various permanent affordable rental housing needs, including three-bedroom units
- Grants should be tied to the provision of affordable rental units, with an agreement for an affordability period
- Leverage existing CMHC and City programs and allow for financial incentive stacking
- Strong support from building industry for Tax Increment Equivalent Grants (TIEGs)
- CIP should apply to the urban area, where there is existing services and infrastructure
- Need to drive interest in the CIP incentives and support property owners and housing providers in the incentive application process

CIP Financial Incentive Options

The draft CIP will include a variety of proposed financial incentive programs to promote an increase in permanent rental housing stock in both ground and non-ground-oriented housing forms, including additional residential units (ARUs) and multi-unit housing, with an emphasis on affordability. The draft CIP will be applicable to the City's Urban Area. The CIP financial incentives are available to both private and public sector housing providers.

The proposed CIP programs may include grants for pre-development studies and fees and for housing projects that further city housing objectives, and forgivable loans for new affordable-rental units such as ARUs, units in multiplexes, townhouses, and multi-unit buildings.

Tax Income Equivalent Grants (TIEGs) that grant back a portion of the property tax uplift from a new housing development with affordable-rental units are also being proposed, subject to further implementation assessment.

Financial analysis was undertaken to develop the forgivable loan and grant values, considering residual land value, market conditions and average market rents. Staff will present an overview of the proposed CIP including a high-level overview of financial incentives and other important elements of the CIP.

Next Steps

The proposed CIP will be released on the [Get Involved Burlington Housing Strategy](#) webpage, providing opportunities for public input up to and including at the Statutory Public Meeting. All public input will be provided to Council as they consider the CIP programs.

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Memo Approval:

All memos are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.

SUBJECT: Response to Recommendations from University of Waterloo Students – Zoning By-laws and Housing as a Human Right: A Study of the City of Burlington

TO: Pipeline to Permit Committee

FROM: Development and Growth Management
Community Planning

Report Number: DGM-31-25

Wards Affected: All

Date to Committee: March 6, 2025

Date to Council: March 18, 2025

Memo Details

The purpose of this memo is to provide a response and extend our appreciation to the students from the University of Waterloo for their presentation at the January 16, 2025 Pipeline to Permit Committee meeting. The presentation was comprehensive and highlighted the research the students conducted into exploring the relationship between zoning and housing as a human right, including an examination of the City of Burlington's policy landscape, best practices review, and a set of recommendations for consideration by the City as part of the New Zoning Bylaw Project. The presentation highlighted a few practices that are emerging within municipalities globally and across North America that provide valuable perspectives.

The students identified several key recommendations in their presentation, which include:

- Condensing Zones and using Form-Based Code / Progressive Typology-Based Approaches
 - Flexibility in the Development of Housing – Ottawa and Edmonton focus on physical form instead of use
- Promoting Diverse Housing Options
 - Inclusive Development of Housing – allow shared living shared living models in more neighbourhoods
- Reducing Zoning Requirements for Building Envelopes
 - Flexibility in the Development of Housing – reducing zoning requirements to create more flexible, diverse and affordable housing options
- Ensuring Compatibility Between the Zoning By-law and Other Legislation

- Address Inconsistencies that Constrain Housing Development – alignment of Burlington’s Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw to improve housing access
- Incentivizing Development
 - Standardize Community Benefit Charges and Inclusionary Zoning – key tools to incentivize development, ensuring consistent, transparent and equitable contributions to community benefits
- Promoting Infill Development
 - Intensification-focused Residential Zoning Framework – adding framework to the Zoning Bylaw and supporting policies in Burlington’s Official Plan

City staff have had the opportunity to review these recommendations and will consider them in more detail as part of the ongoing work through the New Zoning Bylaw Project (NZBP). Several of the recommendations are aligned with the goals and objectives of the project and are being considered as part of the work that is already underway. The alignments are summarized below:

- Condensing Zones and using Form-Based Code / Progressive Typology-Based Approaches.
 - The new zoning bylaw will incorporate both modern and best planning practices and will look for opportunities to consolidate residential zones. Doing so would reduce the amount of regulations and ensure greater flexibility for dwellings within existing neighbourhoods. Consideration will also be given to the use of form-based zoning to implement the objectives and policies of the Burlington Official Plan (BOP, 2020).
- Promoting Diverse Housing Options
 - The project will implement the objectives and policies of the new BOP, 2020, particularly Section 8.3 Residential Neighbourhood Areas, and also the new policy framework set out in Official Plan Amendment #3 (OPA 3). For example, OPA 3 emphasizes the importance of “built form” as a key test for compatibility rather than density. This approach will be carried through and implemented through the Zoning By-law. OPA 3, and the guidance it provides to the New Zoning Bylaw Project, works to increase the diversity of housing options, within the City’s Urban Area to support gentle ground-oriented intensification that considers the context and character of Burlington’s Established Neighbourhoods while providing opportunities for more diverse housing options to meet the needs of all residents at all stages of life and at all income levels.
- Reducing Zoning Requirements for Building Envelopes
 - As part of the New Zoning Bylaw Project scope, the City is looking for opportunities to provide more flexibility and adaptability as development trends change. This is accomplished in part by reducing the number of zoning provisions that depend on others, and being intentional about the regulations that are being advanced. This overall direction is in alignment with the consideration

to reduce zoning requirements for building envelopes to support diverse housing options.

- Ensuring Compatibility Between the Zoning By-law and Other Legislation
 - In response to the housing crisis there has been a shift in legislation, policy and approach at all levels of government. At City level, these changes have included the City Housing Strategy and the City's commitments associated with the Housing Accelerator Fund. The New Zoning Bylaw Project will implement the policy framework of the new BOP, 2020, including OPA 3, and will be informed by other on-going initiatives at all levels of government. Alignment between policies of BOP, 2020 and the regulatory framework of the new zoning bylaw is a primary consideration for the project and to support the focus on supporting more housing options in Burlington neighbourhoods.
- Incentivizing Development
 - The New Zoning Bylaw Project will continue to look for opportunities to encourage investment and redevelopment, and remove barriers, in an effort to facilitate new housing. This can be achieved by some of the items noted above, including looking for opportunities to be user friendly, easy to interpret and facilitate a streamlined process for residents and the development community. The project is also giving consideration to pre-zoning areas for residential development, providing a broader range of permissions and more flexible provisions. The suggestion for standardizing community benefit charges and inclusionary zoning will be considered in more detail as part of the ongoing work through the New Zoning Bylaw Project, and in conjunction with parallel City initiatives such as the Community Improvement Plan that will be forthcoming in spring 2025.
- Promoting Infill Development
 - As noted above, the New Zoning Bylaw Project is tasked with implementing the objectives and policies of Section 8.3 Residential Neighbourhood Areas, and also the new policy framework set out in OPA 3. This amendment works to support gentle ground-oriented intensification within Burlington's Established Neighbourhoods while providing opportunities for more diverse housing options to meet the needs of all residents at all stages of life and at all income levels. Consideration will be given to exploring the use of intensification-focused residential zoning framework as part of the ongoing work related to the New Zoning Bylaw Project.

We encourage participation in the project going forward. Additional details about the project are provided in the link below. As part of the project engagement process, we will look for an opportunity for City staff to come to a future P2P meeting to provide an update on the project.

<https://www.getinvolvedburlington.ca/newzoningbylaw>

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Memo Approval:

All memos are reviewed and approved by the Commissioner, Head of Corporate Affairs, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Legal and Legislative Services/City Solicitor.