



Committee of the Whole
Agenda published October 24, 2025
Addendum published October 31, 2025

Date: November 3, 2025
Time: 1:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, City Hall, second floor

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My name is Lawson Hunter. I am a resident of Burlington.

I am delegating to Committee on the topic of the proposed 2026 Budget.

More specifically, I'm here to speak about what I perceive as the absence of something in the Budget.

Climate Change is mentioned only once in the 568 page budget document recently released.

It is in conjunction with 'mitigating flood risk' under the title 'Factors that Impact the City Budget'.

I'm here to remind Council that in 2019, you all declared a 'climate emergency' – which is pretty strong language. You also made a promise to the residents of Burlington that the city would be net-carbon neutral by 2050 – or at least work towards that.

In your minds comes 'the list': EV chargers; Free transit; geothermal heating at Skyway arena; solar panels on Fire Station 5, Mountainside and Skyway community centres; LEED design at Robert Bateman community centre; transition of city fleet to electrification; Green Building Standards; protected bike lanes. etc.

The City repeats it's past accomplishments as new ventures. In document after document, whether it is in the form of a consultant's plan or a staff report things that have already taken place, or aspirations that have little hope of being accomplished are presented as bold new initiatives, when in fact they are run of the mill, must-do items that keep the lights on, the streets busy, and are performative displays that lead to empty promises and systemic under achievements.

An example comes right from this proposed budget on page 12. "In 2025, the City is investing over \$12 million in stormwater management projects to reduce flooding in target areas. Between 2015 and 2025, the City has invested \$90 million in stormwater management infrastructure".

All I have to say is – that's so 2025.

I'm here to ask, 'What are you going to do in 2026 and beyond as we inch ever closer to 2050?'

The word 'sustainability' is used in this document several times but it's always connected to 'financial sustainability'. Perhaps, financial stability would be a better use of words.

Also mentioned many times is 'a dedicated levy of 2%' which makes me wonder if that's above and separate from the 5.8% increase in budget – like the levy added on to tax bills to help pay for the Jo Brant hospital expansion, or the levy to pay for the Robert Bateman debt repayment on the \$100 million bill?

Of course the 2% levy is for Resilient Infrastructure, whatever that is. Is there such a thing as Non-resilient infrastructure?

This brings me to a subject I raised at a recent Budget Town Hall session. And that is – if I have a fire

in my kitchen, or a flood in my basement, and I repair the damage – can I call that Innovation or is it simply ‘maintenance’? It might be an improvement over the old infrastructure but it’s still not resilient.

So let’s put aside this notion that repaving roads, reconstructing culverts, maintaining transit vehicles, replacing water and wastewater mains, and pouring new sidewalks is anything other than plain, old, maintenance.

And while we’re at it, let’s not get into the blame game that the federal and provincial governments have all the responsibility. They too, have dropped the ball on climate change but cities have a responsibility too, and much can be done on a local level.

When PM Mark Carney muses about making Canada an energy superpower including pipelines and carbon storage, he’s checked out. I won’t get into Doug Ford’s approach to the Greenbelt, highways to nowhere, endangered species, and conservation authorities that are prevented from doing their job.

When respected scientists, ecologists, and a few forward-thinking politicians tell us to ‘forget keeping our average temperature increases below 1.5 degrees’, it’s time to do what we can which is a lot more than we think.

When UN head Antonio Guterres says, “Let’s recognize our failure. The truth is that we have failed to avoid an overshooting above 1.5C in the next few years. And that has devastating consequences.”

According to the latest CORPORATE ENERGY AND EMISSIONS MANAGEMENT PLAN report Appendix A to EICS-08-24, Burlington has not reduced GHG emissions by any measure.

But if you can believe it, on page 50 of this proposed budget under ‘Community & Customer Outcomes’, community emissions in 2024 totalled 1,022,435 (one would presume tonnes of emissions) but the projection for 2025 will be an incredible 751,453 tonnes in 2025, a 26.5% decrease.

Well done Burlington. How did that happen?

Lets get back to reality shall we. We have not done enough over the past 6 years to adapt to climate change.

Offering \$1000 to a household that has experienced a flooded basement because someone forgot to clear a culvert is not enough.

When we have 1,600 km of roadways but only 48 km of bike lanes, and less than 2km of protected bike lanes – that is not enough.

When we have a shortfall of over \$868 million in infrastructure replacement – that is not enough.

Where is our Brownfield Strategy? Where are the recommendations from the 2022 Climate Resilient Burlington Engagement Plan?

Why has it taken so long for the City to reach the conclusion that people that can afford a \$70,000 EV car don’t need free charging or parking all day?

What is the purpose of Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines when, and I quote from staff

report DGM-21-25 “The applicants did not provide consideration to the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines however, staff is of the opinion the applicants can take future steps through the construction and maintenance processes”. So I guess the rules apply to some but not all.

I’m concerned about terminology creep when staff reports change Council’s desire to be net carbon-neutral to ‘a low carbon future’ (DMG-66-25).

I’m concerned when 91 out of 97 mature trees are allowed to be cut down to allow for a development just because it would eliminate 20 dwelling units out of a potential 253 units (DGM-64-25). Does this mean that 20 dwelling units are more important than 91 trees?

When will we actually start buying Battery Electric Vehicles for Burlington Transit, as alluded to in the previous 5-year business plan? Perhaps more importantly, when will the city build a transit maintenance facility that accommodates EV chargers for city buses? Until then, we are stuck with hybrid buses that will tie us to fossil fuels for the next 25 years.

I could go on but I will remind committee members that in 2019, following the climate emergency declaration, I gave each and every one of you a list of 100 things that other cities in Canada were already doing to mitigate climate change.

From banning gas powered leaf blowers, to transit corridor lanes, to creating car-free zones, to offering bursaries to students taking environmental courses, to strictly enforcing idling by-laws, to offering real subsidies and incentives for homeowners to install solar panels and heat pumps (not interest free loans or waiving of administration fees) there is much that can be done. I don’t see any of that in this proposed budget.

Other cities in Canada and around the world are doing what they can to help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

David Miller, former mayor of Toronto, in his book ‘Solved’, notes several things that cities around the world are doing.

One of them is creating a committee of residents, industry experts and city staff (similar to Pipeline to Permit committee) to do something called ‘participatory budgeting’. Since 2014, Paris, France, has set aside one percent of its annual budget to be allocated towards climate issues. This process has engaged thousands of residents with the intention of building a stronger relationship between city hall and residents.

This is where I note that the word Transparency is mentioned several times in the proposed budget.

In his book, Miller wrote, “Can major cities save the planet entirely on their own? Perhaps not but studies show that about 70% of the world’s greenhouse emissions can be attributed to cities.”

So what do we do in Burlington?

We commission a lot of expensive consultant’s studies to tell us what we want to hear.

We offer interest free loans to people to install heat pumps but we don’t allow the environmental ‘concierge’ staff person to name specific companies or costs, and then just point residents to federal and provincial programs that may or may not exist in 6 months time. Is there any wonder that only 11

households picked up the city's offer?

The City provides a solar map so that residents can look and see if their roof is suitable for solar panels. And if a resident is interested in installing solar panels, the city waives the administration fee for the application. There should be no charge if I want to put solar panels on my roof. And I should be able to use the power my own panels generate for my own house – not get forced into a net-metering program with Burlington Hydro.

In this proposed budget is a request for \$200,000 to hire contractors to plant and prune trees on city property. This money makes a mockery of the number of volunteer community groups such as Field & Stream or BurlingtonGreen that do this, in many cases for free.

In my opinion, the \$200,000 would be better spent if someone, contractors or staff, went around and inspected and maintained the trees that are often planted beside roads that have poor soil and are too crowded to have any chance of survival.

On purpose or by accident, the City, and I include both council and city staff, have ignored the warnings and not taken seriously the existential threat to not only us but to our children and grandchildren.

Let me give you an example from this proposed budget. Here's a quote from a staff request.

“Although the broader environmental impact of not having a (\$30,000) flood awareness campaign is that unprepared properties could sustain more damage than they otherwise might, technically the City programs themselves have no environmental impact at an operational level.”

City programs have no environmental impact.

Despite what Doug Ford says, you have the responsibility to change this budget and to put a fire under the feet of city staff who, I believe, do not seriously take your request from 2020 to examine every policy, every staff report, every action under a climate lens.

Between January and June of this year, out of some 140 staff reports I only counted a dozen that included Climate Implications in their reports. It suddenly became optional.

Everything the City does is connected to climate change. Every program, every purchase, every development application, every policy has an impact on the environment.

This budget does not reflect that. This budget ignores climate change. This budget is a failure.

My requests are simple.

- Engage the public.

Allocate one per cent of the city's budget to Climate change mitigation and adaptation and show that as a separate budget line item.

Think long-term and create a robust education program to help support the community in its

efforts to truly achieve zero net-carbon neutral by 2050.

October 28, 2025

COW November 3, 2025
CAO-06-25 delegation material

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward and Members of Burlington City Council

City of Burlington
426 Brant Street
Burlington, ON L7R 3Z6

**Subject: Burlington Chamber of Commerce Position on City Staff Recommendation
Regarding Burlington Economic Development and Tourism**

Dear Mayor Meed Ward and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce and our membership, I am writing to express our position on the recommendation to dissolve Burlington Economic Development and Tourism and to bring these functions under the City's corporate structure.

The **Burlington Chamber of Commerce does not support this recommendation**. We strongly believe that Burlington's Economic Development and Tourism Department functions most effectively as an **independent, third-party organization**, rather than as a department within municipal government.

Since Tourism Burlington joined Burlington Economic Development, the department has evolved into one of the **best-in-class tourism organizations in the province**, providing exceptional value and results for the community. The **Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)** has been managed efficiently under this model, and the majority—if not all—of the hotel funders have expressed satisfaction with how marketing funds are being used to promote Burlington as a tourism destination.

We also wish to note that while the **Burlington Chamber of Commerce was mentioned in the staff report, we were not engaged or consulted** by the report's author in its preparation. Given the Chamber's active role in Burlington's business ecosystem and ongoing collaboration with Burlington Economic Development and Tourism, we believe our perspective would have provided valuable insight into the effectiveness of the current structure and the importance of maintaining it.

As an independent organization, Burlington Economic Development and Tourism has demonstrated the ability to **collaborate effectively with key community stakeholders**, such as the Burlington Chamber of Commerce and the West End Home Builders' Association. A strong example of this collaboration was the joint advocacy effort to oppose a consultant's recommendation to increase development charges by 15%. Working together, we successfully



advocated for a **25% reduction**, which was critical in supporting Burlington's building and business community through a challenging economic environment.

Burlington Economic Development and Tourism also plays a vital role as one of the four independent members of Team Burlington, alongside the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Burlington BIA, and the Aldershot BIA. Team Burlington was **instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic**, providing critical support, unified communication, and up-to-date information to help the business community navigate unprecedented challenges. More recently, **this partnership has continued to deliver value by supporting businesses affected by current tariff challenges and ensuring timely communication and coordinated advocacy.**

Additionally, the Chamber wishes to clarify that there is **no duplication of information** between the Burlington Chamber of Commerce and Burlington Economic Development and Tourism with regard to tariffs. In fact, our two organizations **complement each other's work** — our respective websites link to one another and provide **distinct yet equally important information** for Burlington businesses. This collaboration ensures the business community receives comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date guidance on complex economic issues.

The Chamber is concerned that bringing Economic Development and Tourism under the City's corporate umbrella would **erode the independence, agility, and business-centered collaboration** that have been key to Burlington's economic success. Maintaining the current arm's-length model allows for greater responsiveness, stronger engagement with the private sector, and a continued focus on driving investment and growth in our community.

We respectfully urge City Council to **maintain Burlington Economic Development and Tourism as an independent organization**, preserving the collaborative framework that has served Burlington so effectively. This model has proven to foster innovation, build partnerships, and strengthen the city's economic resilience.

Thank you for your attention and leadership on this important matter. We appreciate your continued commitment to Burlington's economic prosperity and stand ready to work collaboratively toward our shared goal of a thriving, competitive, and sustainable local economy.

Sincerely,
Terry Caddo
Executive Director
Burlington Chamber of Commerce
terry@burlingtonchamber.com

Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

October 31, 2025

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward and Members of Council
City of Burlington
426 Brant Street
Burlington, ON

RE: CAO 06-25 Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) Governance, Accountability, and
Structural Alignment

Delegation from:

Sean Ballard, Chair, Finance & Risk Committee
Nancy Rowland, Chair, Destination Development & Marketing Committee
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT)

Dear Mayor Meed Ward and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Finance & Risk Committee and the Destination Development & Marketing Committee of the Board of Directors of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT), we wish to thank Council for the opportunity to speak to the governance and accountability of Burlington's Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT).

This delegation directly addresses the Financial Section of Report CAO-06-25, particularly its findings regarding the MAT and references to an outdated tourism delivery model. We aim to provide clarity on the substantial steps taken through the merger to modernize the MAT framework, strengthen oversight, and enhance transparency.

While we recognize that continuous improvement is an ongoing process, the transformation of Burlington's tourism operations has already delivered tangible, measurable results. Since the merger, satisfaction among hotel partners with MAT-related programs and tourism services has increased from 0% to 100%, reflecting a stronger partnership, improved communication, and shared confidence in how MAT revenues are being used.

Purpose and Shared Objective

The MAT is a critical funding tool for reinvesting in Burlington’s visitor economy and driving measurable economic return. Under section 400.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001 and Ontario Regulation 435/17, once collection and administration costs are covered, municipalities must remit 50% of net MAT revenues each year to an eligible tourism entity—a non-profit whose mandate includes the promotion of tourism—under a financial accountability agreement.

Currently, this legislative requirement is being fulfilled through an outdated [Appendix D to RCC-12-22](#), which predates the merger and no longer reflects the integrated governance structure or current compliance standards. Updating this framework will ensure continued legislative compliance, modern oversight, and alignment with Burlington’s long-term strategic vision.

Progress Achieved Through the 2025 Merger

Following Council’s 2024 direction and collaboration with City leadership and the former Tourism Burlington Board, BEDT formally became a new organization on January 1, 2025, with a mandate to scale Burlington’s tourism and destination management capacity and provide enhanced governance for the MAT, which generates over \$2 million annually for the City with 50% (approx \$1 million) going to BEDT in line with the legislative requirements outlined in CAO-06-25.

Through the merger, BEDT has implemented several mechanisms to strengthen governance, transparency, and ROI:

1. New Business and Visitor Service Models

- The rollout of the Tourism Investment Fund (TIF), a grant funding program that leverages the MAT to support qualified events and conferences that generate overnight stays in Burlington. To date, more than \$275K in funding has been distributed, helping to generate more than 1100 overnight stays since its launch in 2024.
- Implementation of a Corporate Calling Program and Event Concierge Service, connecting businesses and event organizers to Burlington’s hotels, venues, and suppliers to maximize local economic impact.

- Integration of tourism sales into business development through a unified Customer Experience Framework, ensuring consistent standards across corporate attraction, meetings, and visitor services.

2. New Stakeholder Engagement Channels

- Launch of Burlington Tourism Industry Day (April 2025), which now serves as the annual forum for reporting on MAT-funded initiatives, stakeholder results, and strategic priorities.
- Establishment of the Tourism Industry Leadership Roundtable, jointly with the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, uniting hotel operators, City staff, and business leaders in MAT governance and ROI discussions.
- Creation of the Marketing Masterminds Peer Network, aligning campaigns and collaborative promotions across Burlington’s hotel, attraction, and event sectors.

3. New Marketing and Destination Programs

- The continued development of a unique destination brand that will launch in 2026, with the project has been informed by extensive research and engagement. By weaving together Burlington’s strengths, aspirations, and opportunities, we aim to craft a compelling place narrative that not only attracts attention but also supports economic growth for Burlington.
- Successful implementation of multi-channel campaigns (E.g. Get Your Festival On, 5 Things You Didn’t Know, Experience Spring in Burlington) delivered over 10 million impressions across Ontario and U.S. markets.
- Rollout of the Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP)—Burlington’s vision and roadmap for sustainable, high-impact tourism growth, and laying the groundwork to integrate the DSP with Horizon 2050 and the Corporate Compass.
- Modernization of the Visitor Services model, including a Mobile Visitor Centre and new digital engagement tools using Bandwango, developed in partnership with the City of Burlington and cultural partners.

For example: Bandwango “Culture Days Adventure Pass” Pilot

A recent pilot project demonstrates how BEDT and the City are working collaboratively to deliver ROI-driven, MAT-supported experiences.

The Culture Days Adventure Pass, powered by Bandwango, was developed jointly with the City of Burlington and Burlington's cultural institutions: the Burlington Performing Arts Centre (BPAC), Art Gallery of Burlington (AGB), Burlington Public Library (BPL), and Museums of Burlington.

The digital pass offered residents and visitors an interactive, gamified experience encouraging attendance at multiple culture sites throughout the city. The program:

- Reached hundreds of participants, generating direct foot traffic and cross-promotion across partner institutions;
- Provided new first-party data on visitation patterns, supporting BEDT's development of the Tourism Data Dashboard; and
- Demonstrated the power of coordinated, MAT-funded partnerships to enhance visitor engagement while supporting local arts and culture organizations.

Financial and Operational Considerations

Beyond the statutory requirement for 50% of MAT funds to be administered by a qualified non-profit, it is important to recognize the broader financial and operational implications of reversing the merger at this stage. The City and BEDT have already invested significant time and resources to integrate the former Tourism Burlington functions, align systems, and establish new governance, audit, and reporting frameworks to strengthen accountability. Re-creating or transitioning to another structure, whether to meet MAT eligibility or replicate the functions now centralized within BEDT, would require additional legal, audit, and administrative costs with no clear benefit to taxpayers.

The merged organization has not yet been afforded a full fiscal year to demonstrate the measurable benefits of its unified approach, despite early evidence of improved stakeholder satisfaction, stronger partnerships, and initiatives that drive ROI on the taxes collected through MAT such as the Destination Stewardship Plan and Tourism Investment Fund. Reopening governance at this stage would not only create uncertainty for staff and partners but also risk duplicating costs and undermining public confidence in a model designed precisely to address prior accountability concerns with the MAT.

Outstanding Governance and Risk Issues

While the merger has resolved many historical compliance and coordination issues, BEDT has identified several structural gaps that require Council direction:

1. Outdated Financial Framework – The existing reliance on [Appendix D](#) to [RCC-12-22](#) must be replaced with a modern Financial Accountability Agreement that meets legislative standards and reflects current governance.
2. Outdated MAT By-laws – Current by-laws pre-date both the Destination Stewardship Plan and Horizon 2050, creating misalignment between strategic priorities and MAT funding.
3. Integration of the Destination Stewardship Plan – Council endorsement and integration of the DSP into Horizon 2050 and the Corporate Compass are required to ensure alignment between economic, cultural, and tourism goals.
4. Transparency and Reporting – Establishing a joint communications and reporting structure with the City and Chamber of Commerce will provide clearer updates to Council, businesses and the public on MAT allocations and outcomes.
5. Short-Term Rental Integration – With a short-term rental by-law now in place, extending the MAT to short-term stays will ensure fairness across Burlington's accommodation sector.

Recommendations for Council Consideration

To strengthen accountability and ensure compliance, the BEDT Board recommends that Council direct staff to undertake a comprehensive review of the MAT framework in partnership with BEDT and the Burlington Chamber of Commerce.

The review should:

1. Endorse the Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP) as Burlington's guiding tourism policy and integrate its objectives into Horizon 2050 and the Corporate Compass.
2. Update MAT By-laws and establish a new Financial Accountability Agreement in compliance with s. 400.1 of the Municipal Act and O. Reg. 435/17, clearly defining roles, reporting requirements, and KPIs.
3. Develop a Joint MAT Communications and Reporting Framework, ensuring consistent, transparent public updates on revenues, spending, and ROI.
4. Include MAT modernization within the upcoming ABC Accountability Framework review, aligning financial and governance standards across all City boards and agencies.

5. Evaluate extension of MAT to short-term rentals, ensuring equitable treatment for all accommodation providers.

Call to Action

The BEDT Board respectfully requests that Council provide direction at Committee of the Whole to initiate this comprehensive MAT review and modernization in 2026 whether in coordination with external agencies or as part of the transition plan.

By establishing clear governance, updated by-laws, and aligned accountability mechanisms, Burlington can ensure its MAT framework continues to deliver on legislative compliance, community value, and stakeholder trust.

Closing

The MAT is more than a revenue tool—it is a reinvestment mechanism that fuels Burlington’s economic and cultural vitality. Through the merger, BEDT has built the systems, partnerships, and engagement structures to ensure every MAT dollar contributes to measurable outcomes for residents, visitors, and businesses.

We appreciate Council’s attention to this matter and look forward to collaborating on a renewed MAT framework that strengthens transparency, accountability, and long-term return on investment for Burlington.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Ballard
Chair, Finance & Risk Committee
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

Nancy Rowland
Chair, Destination Development & Marketing Committee
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

cc:

Curt Benson, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Burlington
Andy Scott, Chief Transformation Officer, City of Burlington

Terry Caddo, President & CEO, Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, BEDT
BEDT Board of Directors

Attachments:

Appendix A – Appendix D to RCC-12-22 (Existing MAT Financial Framework)
Appendix B – Destination Stewardship Plan Summary Presentation

Municipal Accommodation Tax Fund Criteria and Focus Areas

INTRODUCTION:

The Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) legislation requires the municipality to share a minimum of 50 per cent of the tax revenue collected from MAT, net of related administration costs, with an eligible tourism entity. The legislation does not mandate how municipalities spend the remaining 50 per cent, although it is suggested it should support tourism-related opportunities and infrastructure. This document identifies the objectives, criteria principles, roles, and areas of focus for both Tourism Burlington and the City of Burlington in the allocation of tax revenues collected from the MAT.

Tourism Burlington MAT Tax Revenue Reserve Fund

OBJECTIVE & OVERVIEW:

The Tourism Burlington portion of the MAT revenue (50 per cent of total tax revenues collected minus administration costs and fees) will be allocated to a Tourism MAT Reserve Fund and used to support tourism-related projects/initiatives that attract visitors to Burlington. The projects will include marketing campaigns, market research, incentive programs, and destination development initiatives. A portion of the funds may be used to fund contract staff resources required to implement new initiatives.

PRINCIPLES

- To be a steward of the destination by marketing and managing all actions of the organization on behalf of our tourism stakeholders;
- To increase awareness and visitation to Burlington through destination marketing and product development; while enhancing Burlington's national and international profile as a destination of choice for visitors;
- To facilitate, collaborate, and ensure industry growth;
- To become more competitive in the meetings and incentive travel, sports tourism, leisure travel, and group tour markets;
- To provide economic recovery to tourism and hospitality businesses;
- To attract new corporate sales business for hotels and attractions.

CRITERIA:

- Tourism projects and initiatives must take place in Burlington.

FUND OVERSIGHT & APPROVAL

The Tourism Burlington Board of Directors provides oversight for this Tourism MAT Reserve Fund through the approval of its annual budget. Informed by its Strategic Plan and the annual marketing plan, the budget will ensure the principles and criteria are integrated into the use of the MAT Reserve Fund. A regular review of the board structure will be examined to determine if additional representation is required from the tourism industry. Tourism Burlington will report annually to Council on the success of funded projects.

The role of the Tourism Burlington Board of Directors will be to:

- Review and approve the annual tourism marketing plan which will include be implemented with the use of MAT funds;
- Review and approve key performance indicators, as informed by the strategic plan, including MAT initiatives;

- Review and approve Tourism Burlington's annual operating budget, including the use of MAT reserve funds;
- Receive quarterly updates on the progress of the strategic plan, marketing plan, and staff work plans;
- Report annually to partners and Council at the Tourism Burlington Annual General Meeting on initiatives highlighting MAT and KPI.

An application process will be required for funding programs and incentives requested by event organizers or sporting hosts. Applications will be reviewed by a sub-committee appointed by the Tourism Burlington Board of Directors.

COMMUNICATION/ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder consultation will be sought annually prior to budget submission through meetings with event organizers, venue sales staff, and the Marketing Committee. The Board-approved Tourism Strategy would be posted on the Tourism Burlington website. Regular communications through partner newsletters will highlight how the MAT tax revenues have been spent.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

After receiving stakeholder feedback, Tourism Burlington developed the following key focus areas for use of the Tourism portion of the MAT Reserve Fund:

Destination Development - Expansion of Tourism Niche Market Opportunities

The Tourism Burlington MAT Reserve Fund will be used to expand product offerings to increase Burlington's niche tourism experiences. Projects could include creating tourism routes and trails, developing themed tourism experiences or products and other initiatives that will contribute to an increase in visitation and overnight stays in Burlington.

The initiatives will be aligned with Tourism Burlington's strategic plan and the City of Burlington's Vision to Focus.

Priority will be given to:

- Outdoor Adventure;
- Cultural tourism – i.e.: Burlington attraction pass;
- Culinary;
- Ecotourism.

Incentives Programs

The Tourism Burlington MAT Reserve Fund will be used to support new and enhanced business and sporting events to generate overnight stays. A focus on animating areas of Burlington through the provision of booking incentives.

Funding will be provided as follows:

- One-time seed funding for hosting new tournaments, special events, conferences, and group tours that attract overnight visitation;
- Existing tournaments, special events, conferences, and group tours that add a new dimension to their current offering and marketing plans, targeting tourists and or new audiences.

Priority will be given to:

- Events generating overnight stays at local accommodations;
- Shoulder or non-peak season events;
- Events or programs that lend to the culture and diversity of Burlington;

- Collaborative partnerships (two or more partners);
- Events that take place in locations other than downtown;
- Sustainable or ecotourism-focused events.

Collaborative Marketing and Media Relations

The Tourism Burlington MAT Reserve Fund will be used to help develop collaborative marketing campaigns to build awareness for Burlington as a destination. This will include the promotion of new packages and experiences, joint media buys, hosting of media influencers, FAM tours and events, and photo or video content shoots to create a shared library and other creative partnerships to generate more awareness for increased visitation to Burlington.

Priority will be given to:

- Campaigns promoting packages with overnight stays at local accommodations;
- Shoulder or non-peak campaigns;
- Markets indicated in the Board approved annual marketing plan;
- Collaborative partnerships (two or more partners).

Tourism Destination Development/Feasibility Studies

The Tourism Burlington MAT Reserve Fund will be used for tourism studies or research that support the development and confirm the financial viability of new tourism products and experiences in Burlington. To be eligible, studies must be secured with a procurement process, and proponents must be professional consultants or firms specializing in tourism and/or economic impact.

Priority will be given to:

- Development of a Sport Tourism Strategy;
- Economic Impact Studies specific to Halton or Burlington;
- Visitation and sales data, specific to Halton or Burlington;
- Collaborative partnerships (two or more partners).

City of Burlington MAT Tax Revenue Reserve Fund

OBJECTIVE & OVERVIEW:

The city's portion of Municipal Accommodation Tax revenue (50 per cent of total collected minus administration costs) will be allocated to the City MAT Reserve Fund as outlined in Appendix B. This fund will support projects and initiatives that result in measurable improvements to city services that enhance tourist experiences and increase their visitation.

PRINCIPLES

- To improve visitor and resident experiences in Burlington through increasing the infrastructure and tourism capacity of the City to foster a positive destination image.
- To enhance Burlington's national and international profile as the best city to live in Canada through placemaking and place branding initiatives.

CRITERIA:

- Enable the City to increase investment in tourism-related initiatives that promote, position and brand Burlington as a competitive destination.

FUND OVERSIGHT & ASSESSMENT

A task group will be struck to provide oversight for this fund. The role of the task group will be to:

- Regularly review and refine the fund criteria;
- Establish a process for the solicitation of projects / initiatives;
- Recommend projects to be funded through the City of Burlington MAT Tax Revenue Reserve Fund at the beginning of the budget process;
- Report annually to Council through the budget process on funded projects.

The task working group will include senior members of the following departments:

- Recreation, Community and Culture Department (2 members) - Task Group Coordinator and 1 other member;
- Engineering Services – Park Design and Construction (1 member);
- Facilities, Assets, Sustainability (1 member)
- Community Planning (1 member)
- Budget Representative.

The task group will also include 2 representatives from Tourism Burlington, one staff member, and the Board Chair.

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND APPROVAL

As part of the annual budget process, the task group will identify projects for the City of Burlington MAT Tax Revenue Reserve Fund. Projects may be identified prior to the annual budget as well. Eligible projects will be submitted as part of the capital budget process. The budget review committee will review requests and make a recommendation to Council through the budget process. Council would make the final decision regarding the project(s) and use of this fund during the annual budget review.

COMMUNICATION

Approved projects will be listed on the City's website. Media releases will also be issued as appropriate during or post-project completion.

MAT Tax Revenue Reserve Fund Summary

Reserve Fund	Focus Areas	Reviewed by	Use of Funds Approved by	Under Authority	Communication
Tourism MAT Reserve Fund	Destination Marketing, Destination Development initiatives	Marketing Committee Special Projects Committees and Staff	Tourism Burlington Board of Directors	City/Tourism Service Agreement Reserve Fund Bylaw	Tourism Annual Report at Annual General Meeting Capital Budget Committee
City MAT Reserve Fund	New or enhanced city initiatives that have some correlation to tourism	Identified by MAT Working Group (City/Tourism) Budget Review Team	City Council	Reserve Fund Bylaw	Media Release Tourism Annual Report at Annual General Meeting



DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

WELCOME TO BURLINGTON

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01 Approach

02 Vision & Target Audiences

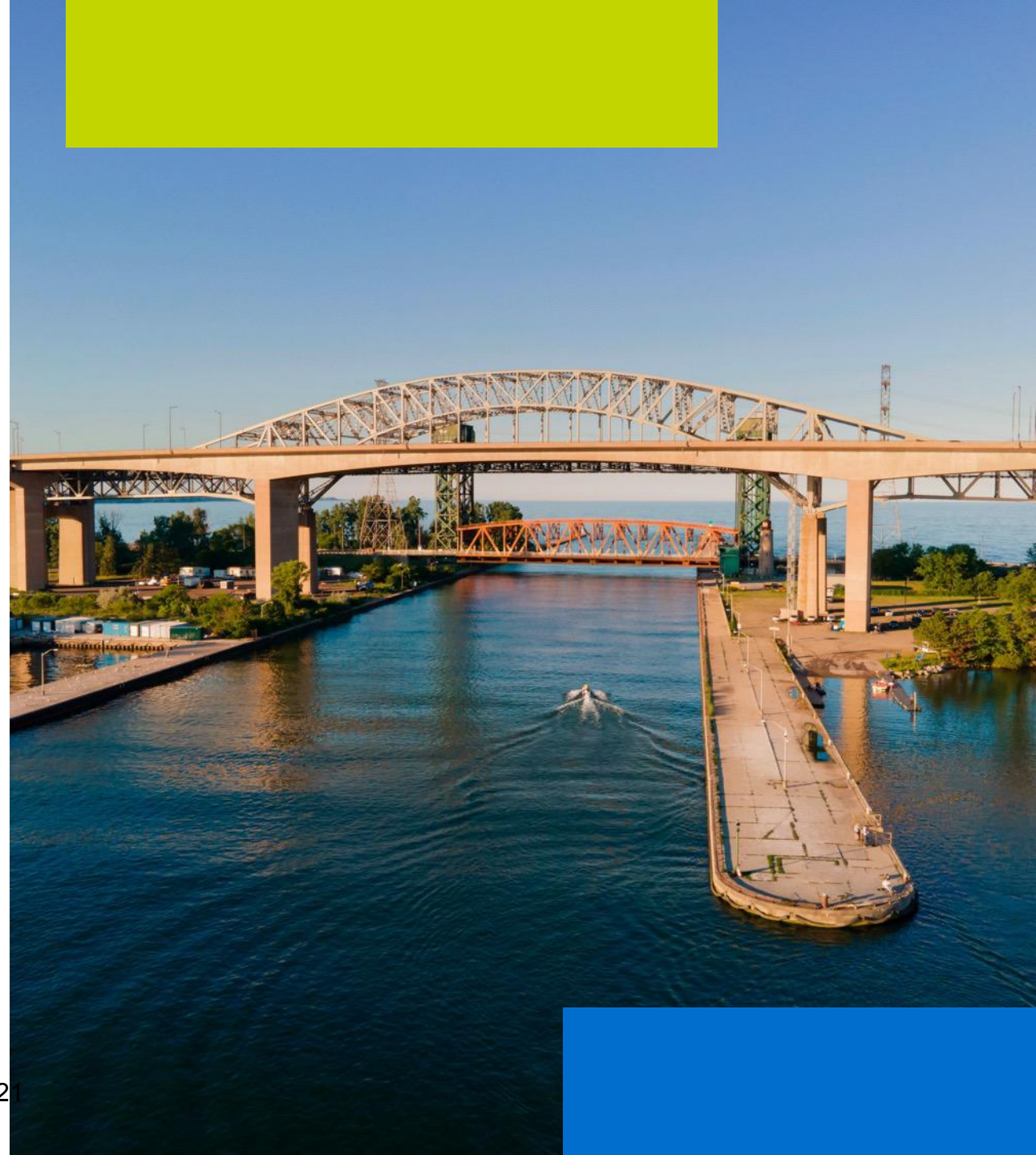
03 Strategic Framework

04 Our Focus Today

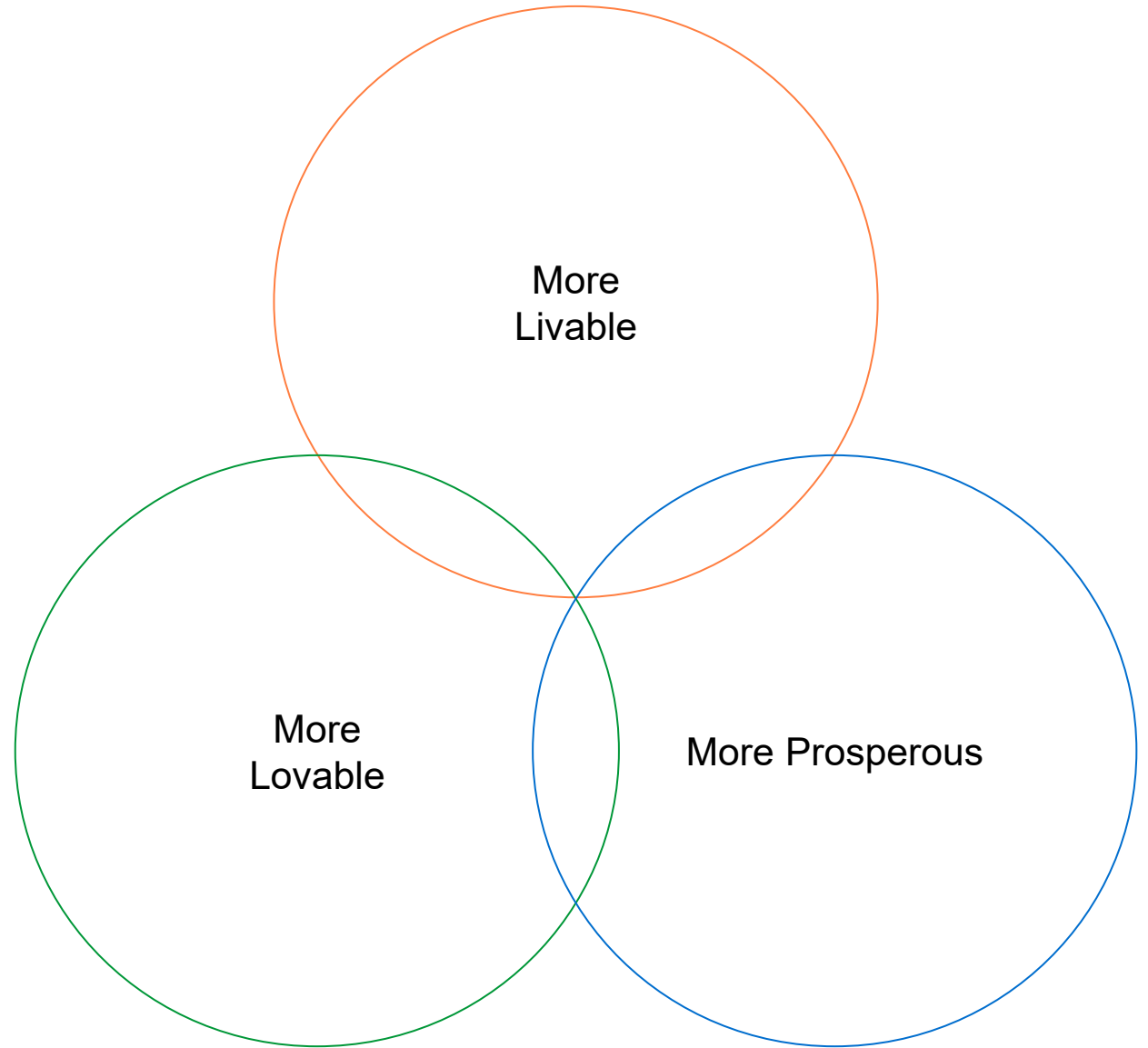
What is a Destination Stewardship plan?

A Destination Stewardship Plan provides a strategic roadmap for sustainable tourism development that balances visitor experiences, community needs, environmental protection, and economic prosperity.

Unlike traditional tourism plans, Burlington's approach recognizes the similarities between attractive places to visit and attractive places to live and work, creating mutual benefits for visitors, residents, and businesses.



Visitors want to visit those destinations that are also attractive places to live and to work.



An integrated approach to destination development

HORIZON 2050

Horizon 2050 is Burlington's long-term strategic plan, focused on shaping the city's growth and development to ensure a sustainable, vibrant future for residents, businesses, and visitors.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Such an approach will complement broader economic development initiatives designed to position Burlington as an attractive centre for businesses and the growing greater Toronto population base.

DESTINATION BRAND PROJECT

The recent merger streamlines efforts to support Burlington's businesses and tourism, while focusing on marketing to create a strong, unique destination brand for the city.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

The Destination Stewardship Plan will be linked to Burlington's economic development strategy and provide key inputs to the Destination Brand project currently underway.

Destination Stewardship Plan Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1 Define the tourism vision for Burlington for the next 5 - 10 years.

OBJECTIVE 2 Present strategic directions, priority areas and action items that will help to create long-term community wealth for Burlington through tourism.

OBJECTIVE 3 Serve as a collective tourism roadmap for destination stakeholders that will help to ensure the long-term sustainability of our destination and grow Burlington's competitive position as a destination of choice.

Vision Statement

By 2030, Burlington will be Ontario's premier destination, seamlessly blending vibrant urban amenities with stunning natural beauty and waterfront views. Its strategic location in a rapidly growing corridor positions Burlington as a key player in attracting diverse visitors and businesses with its unique cultural, recreational, and culinary experiences.

Burlington will thrive as a vibrant hub for arts, recreation, and business, offering high-quality amenities, safe communities, and diverse, year-round programming. Embracing innovation and growth, Burlington will be designed for the future, with thoughtful and strategic planning to ensure it becomes a top-ranked Canadian city where people live, work, and play. The city will develop and manage tourism for the benefit of the community, providing unforgettable experiences for both residents and visitors, and fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous environment for all.



► Target Audiences

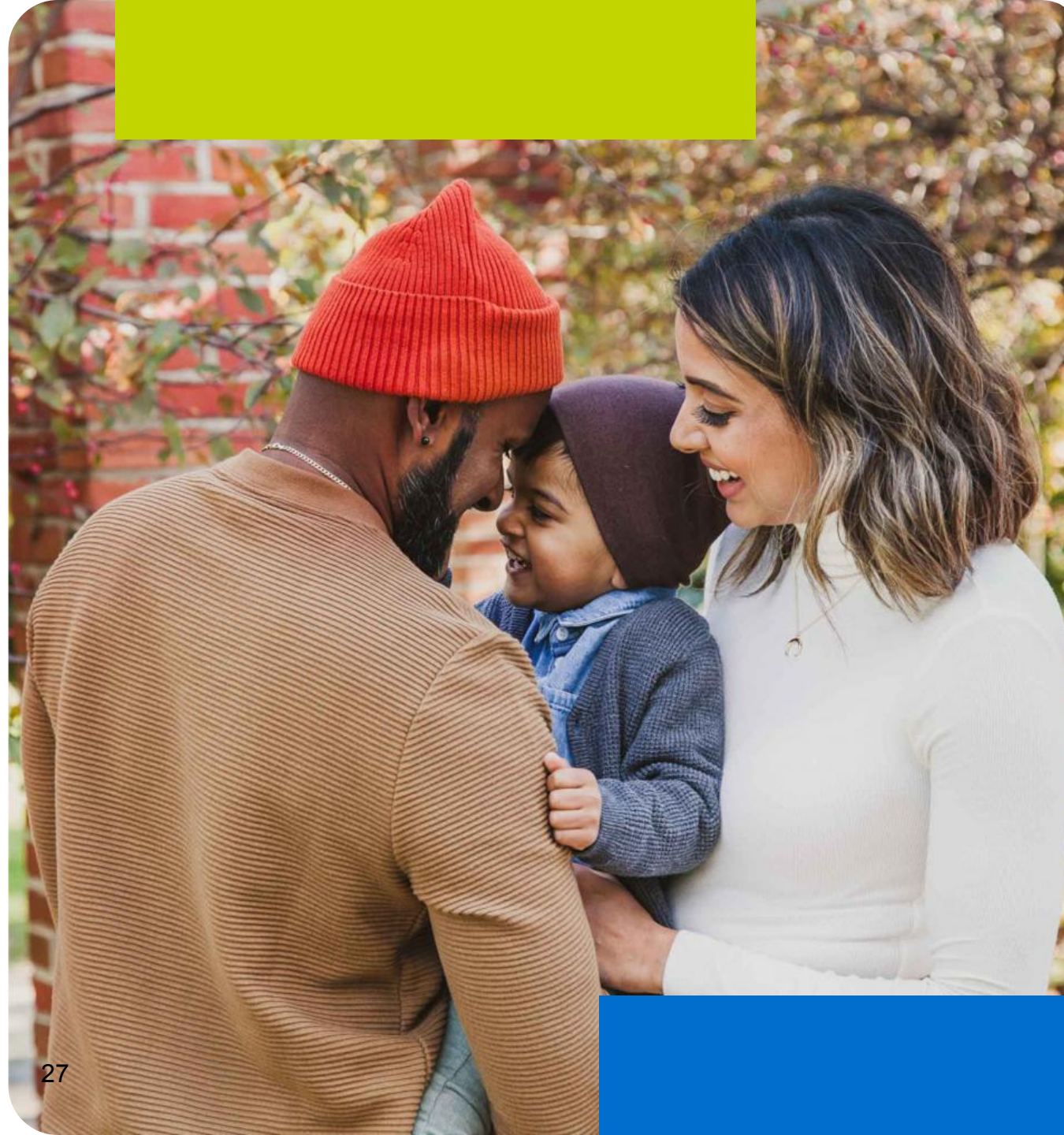
Diverse Families

Location: Primarily in Peel, York, and Toronto; households with 3+ people, children, and many identifying as visible minorities and immigrants to Canada.

Social Status: Value community perception, showcasing status through home and possessions.

Leisure: Enjoy novel experiences and indoor activities like video games, home workouts, and bowling.

Lifestyle: Focused on family life and maintaining a strong social presence.



Suburban Families

Location: Primarily in suburban areas surrounding the GTHA; households with children and middle-aged parents.

Social Status: Financially stable with household incomes above the regional average; predominantly non-visible minority groups.

Leisure: Focused on family bonding through local events, parks, sports, and outdoor activities; occasional cultural and entertainment outings in the city.

Lifestyle: Emphasize family values, community involvement, and a balanced suburban lifestyle.



Affluent Mature Families

Location: Primarily in urban areas across the GTHA, with higher representation in York, Halton, Hamilton, and Durham; households with children.

Social Status: Above-average household incomes; older maintainers with university degrees; typically, not identifying as visible minorities.

Leisure: Enjoy gardening, walking, and other physical activities; frequent restaurants, bars, and local parks.

Lifestyle: Focus on leaving a legacy, community involvement, and improving health.



Diverse Urban Starters

Location: Primarily in Toronto; young singles and couples with university degrees and slightly below-average incomes.

Social Status: Below-average visible minority presence, with 45% identifying as part of a visible minority group; trend-conscious individuals seeking recognition.

Leisure: Enjoy attending large events, engaging in sports and physical activities, and visiting restaurants, parks, art galleries, and music venues.

Lifestyle: Appreciate diverse cultures, novelty, and trendy items; active social scene with a focus on peer recognition and new experiences.



Business & Group Travel

Business & Group Travel Hub: Popular for professionals attending events, conferences, and corporate retreats.

Prime Location & Venues: Accessible, high-quality venues and accommodations in a key commercial corridor.

Leisure & Business Blend: Strategic GTA location with a unique mix of leisure amenities, ideal for sports, conferences, and regional gatherings.



Strategic Priorities for Burlington

STRATEGIC PRIORITY
#1

**Branding &
Marketing**

STRATEGIC PRIORITY
#2

**Product &
Programming**

STRATEGIC PRIORITY
#3

**Environment &
Enabling
Conditions**

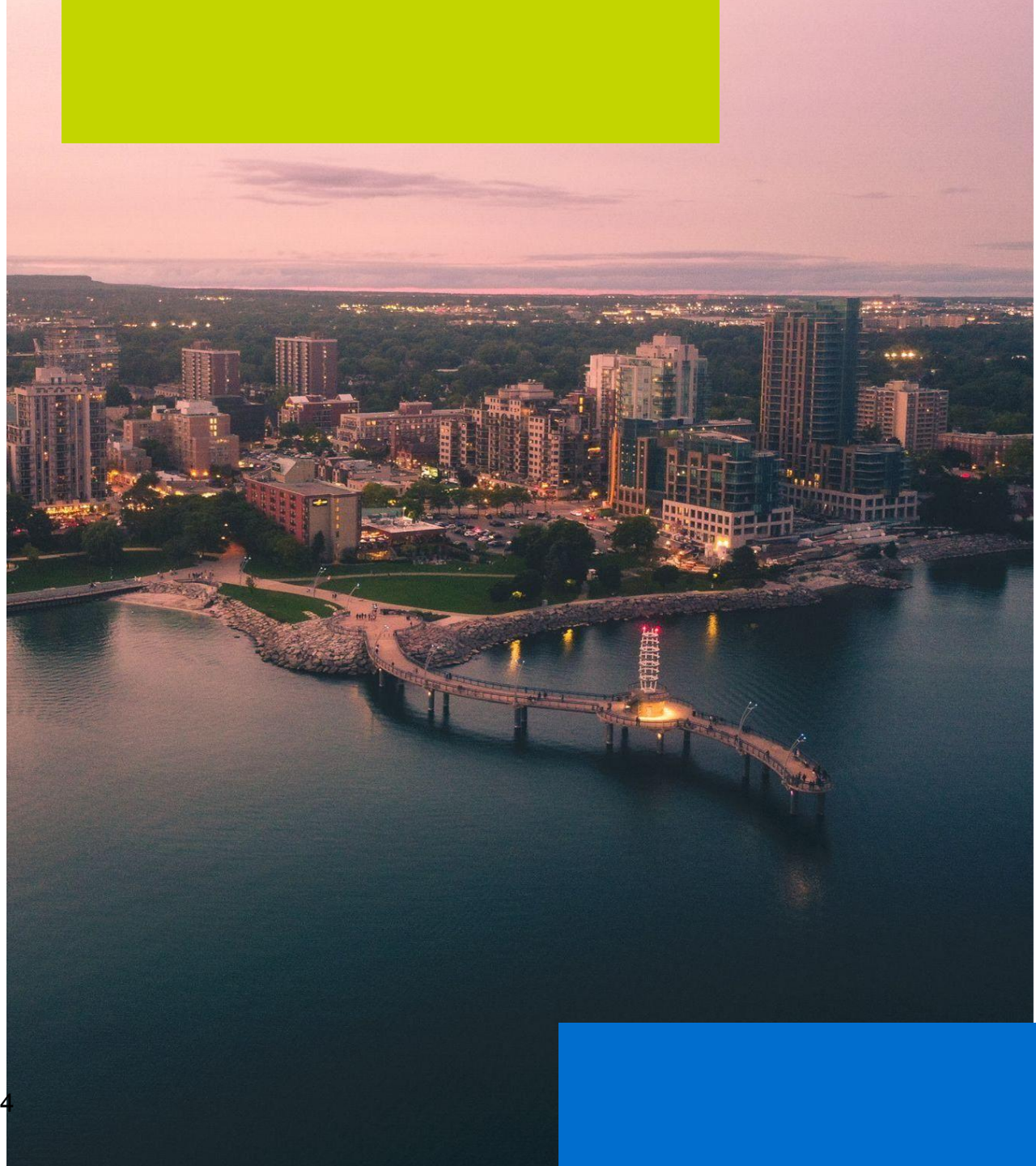
Pillar 1: Branding & Marketing

Why It Matters

Effective branding makes a destination stand out by **highlighting unique attributes** and **differentiating the destination** in a crowded field.

Communication and marketing of these unique selling points can build an **emotional connection and appeal** to the target audience's interests and desires.

Sales, customer experience support and the effective use of partnerships in undertaking marketing activities all form part of a successful, overall destination marketing and positioning strategy.



Key Strategic Pillars

Content

Channels

Sales

Group Travel

Partnerships

Visitor Services

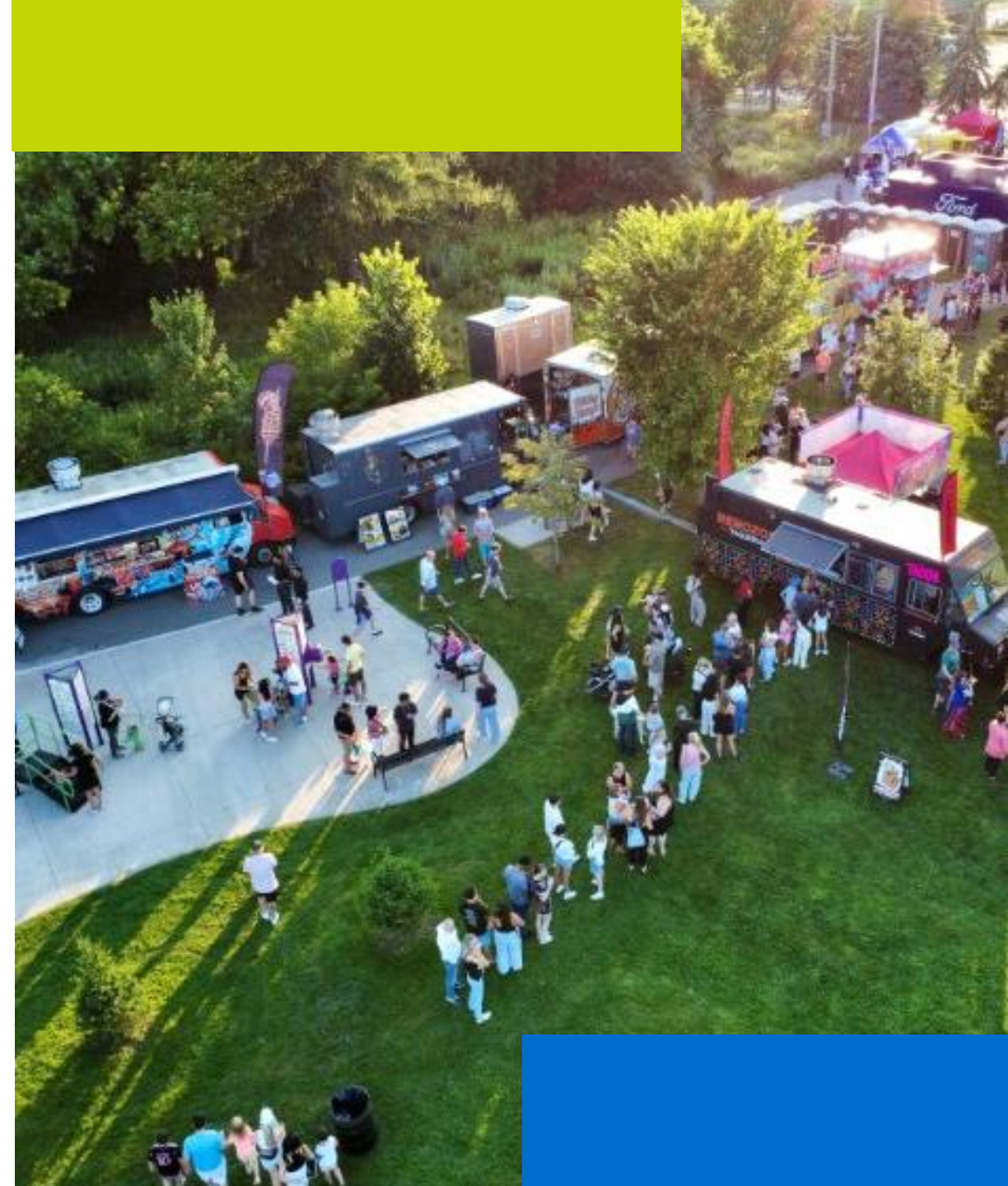
Pillar 2: Product & Programming

Why It Matters

Programming, notably high-profile festivals and events, complements the product offering by **animating public spaces** and **insighting travel** throughout the year.

While the waterfront's uniqueness makes it central to Burlington's tourism, concentration of visitor activity—often from multiple large events—short-changes broader visitor-ready offerings.

Spreading visitors beyond the waterfront to reduce congestion and **distribute benefits citywide** will require participation at the city, neighbourhood, event organizer and commercial level.



Key Strategic Pillars

Neighbourhoods

Festivals & Events

Arts & Culture

Family Friendly
Attractions

Culinary &
Agriculture

Outdoor Recreation

Pillar 3: Environment & Enabling Conditions

Why It Matters

Burlington's appeal as a tourism destination is intrinsically tied to its **physical infrastructure** and the **supportive systems** that enhance visitor experiences.

From event facilities and public spaces to accessibility initiatives and technological advancements, these elements form the backbone of Burlington's tourism landscape.

By **strategically developing** these areas, the city aims to create an environment that not only attracts visitors but also ensures their stay is **seamless, enjoyable, and respectful** of the local community.

These efforts lay the groundwork for a thriving, sustainable tourism ecosystem that benefits both visitors and residents alike.



Key Strategic Pillars

Event Infrastructure

Accessibility &
Inclusivity

Connectivity &
Transportation

Technology &
Innovation

Sustainability &
Climate Action

Destination
Governance



► Our Focus Today

Destination Development and Marketing 2025-2026 Priorities

**Co-Marketing and
Partnerships**

**Seasonal
Campaigns and
Digital**

**Development of
Key
Sub-Strategies**

Destination Brand Project (Q1 2026)

Destination Stewardship Plan Implementation (2024-2027)

DSP Implementation – 3 Year Roadmap

Lead

Advocate

Support

City of Burlington

- 1 Horizon 2050
- 2 Municipal Accommodation Tax
- 3 Culture Plan
- 4 Departmental Strategies

External Partners

- 1 Culture Boards
- 2 Hotels, attractions and local business
- 3 Transportation partners
- 4 Other tourism agencies

Get in Touch

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 Burlington Economic Development + Tourism



Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

October 31st, 2025

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward and Members of Council
City of Burlington
426 Brant Street
Burlington, ON

RE: Third-Party Review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (CAO-06-25)

Dear Mayor Meed Ward and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT), I would like to thank Council and staff for their time and consideration of the Third-Party Review (CAO-06-25) and its appendices. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you to provide context, clarification, and constructive recommendations on how we can move forward together.

Our Shared Objective

BEDT and the City share a common goal: to ensure Burlington's economic and tourism programs are structured for long-term success, accountability, and value for residents, businesses, and visitors. The Board's focus remains on the following outcomes: jobs, investment, visitor spending, and community benefit. To deliver this effectively, it is essential that we work together to ensure the right structure and conditions are in place, and that it is done thoughtfully and strategically.

This letter supports an informed Council decision that provides clarity and direction to both City and BEDT staff, enabling coordinated action to address root-cause structural issues rather than surface symptoms.

Review and Progress to Date

Council directed the merger of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington through Report [COW-04-24](#) and subsequent updates including [CM-06-24](#), Council Information Package reports and direct emails to council. City of Burlington staff and council were fully integrated and engaged in directing this process through

participation in the boards of both organizations and the joint governance committee established between the two organizations to manage the merger. BEDT completed this complex integration on schedule as of January 1, 2025, creating a unified organization that aligns economic development and tourism under one strategic framework.

This work represented one of the most significant organizational transitions undertaken by a Burlington agency. It required extensive governance, HR, financial, and legal integration, bringing together two entities that had operated independently for more than twenty years. Thousands of hours of staff, legal, and consultant time, and a significant investment of public funds were dedicated to aligning policies, systems, and strategy. The merger achieved the objectives outlined by Council: to strengthen oversight of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT), eliminate duplication, and deliver a more accountable, high-value organization.

The new BEDT structure now delivers integrated services and measurable results, including improved accountability, coordinated sector strategies, and an enhanced visitor-economy framework through the Destination Stewardship Plan.

Findings and Structural Gaps

While the Third-Party Review (CAO-06-25) identifies areas for improvement, many of the challenges it highlights are structural rather than organizational, stemming from outdated accountability frameworks and expired agreements that apply across Burlington's broader agency, board, and committee (ABC) system.

BEDT's accompanying report, Addressing Gaps and Inconsistencies in CAO-06-25, outlines several outdated references, omissions, and factual inaccuracies that must be clarified to ensure Council's deliberations are based on accurate and verified information. In particular, the report contains statements about BEDT's actions and decisions for which the factual basis is unclear or opinion-based rather than evidence-verified. Correcting these items is critical not only for informed decision-making but also for the integrity of the public record.

For example, the current state of reporting and the servicing agreements:

- The Service Agreement between the City and BEDT expired more than ten years ago. In its absence, a patchwork of interim systems and processes evolved to support day-to-day coordination.

- These informal arrangements recommended as part of the 2020 Governance Review approved in [CM-27-20](#) functioned adequately but were disrupted by organizational changes within the City during 2024-25, including new reporting structures and the discontinuation of BEDT's former ability to report directly to Council through standing committees.
- These legacy conditions have created alignment and communication gaps that affect not only BEDT but all ABCs and underscore the need for a comprehensive accountability framework.

It is essential that Council's decision on CAO-06-25 recognize these underlying structural challenges and the compounding effects on the ability of both organizations to deliver results together.

Organizational Credibility and People

The Board recognizes that CAO-06-25 and its appendices have had real and understandable impacts on staff morale and organizational confidence. While the report was intended to focus on governance and structure, aspects of its tone and interpretation have created uncertainty among staff and stakeholders and risked diminishing the professionalism and credibility of a team that has successfully delivered a complex merger and strong performance outcomes.

In response, BEDT leadership has reinforced internal messaging emphasizing that this process is a structural and governance review and not a reflection of performance. A joint session with City and BEDT leadership is scheduled for October 31 to discuss the report's findings, answer questions, and reaffirm shared commitment to staff well-being, engagement, and collaboration.

The Board remains committed to transparency, morale, and maintaining a sense of stability and professionalism during this period of review and transition.

Shared Alignment and Recommendations

As outlined in the July 2025 submission to Rubicon and in the March 2025 correspondence with the CAO, the Board supports continuing with a hybrid governance model with enhanced alignment tools, rather than full municipal integration. This model provides business-sector agility and direct accountability to Council through shared KPIs, financial oversight, and City participation on the Board and committees.

This finding is consistent with the quantitative analysis presented in the Rubicon report, which highlights that external, arm's-length agencies are typically more prevalent in economic development functions, especially within mid-sized and smaller municipalities. The report concludes that such models tend to produce more transparent and quantifiable outcomes, particularly in investment attraction and job creation and was highly supported among the interview and survey participants.

To address the structural gaps identified, BEDT recommends that Council direct staff and BEDT to jointly:

1. Develop a new MOU or Service Charter defining roles, reporting relationships, and alignment with the City's Corporate Compass and Horizon 2050.
2. Renew the Service Agreement, updating funding, KPI reporting, and Council engagement and governance mechanisms.
3. Implement a shared KPI dashboard to provide regular, transparent updates on performance and risk.
4. Undertake a comprehensive review of MAT by-laws and governance, ensuring transparency and alignment with the Destination Stewardship Plan and stakeholder expectations.
5. Reinstate clear Council reporting channels for BEDT and other boards to maintain open accountability.
6. Implement the recommendations of the ABCs Accountability Framework ([RCC-25-23](#)) in alignment with BEDT's recommendations to modernize governance structures and address the root structural issues affecting all ABCs.

Endorsed Board Governance Model Recommendation from July 2025 Rubicon Submission

Inline with the July submission to Rubicon (attached as an appendix) the BEDT board continues to endorse the current-state Hybrid Model with enhanced alignment and process implementation. A hybrid governance model in economic development and tourism refers to an external, incorporated organization governed by an independent, multi-sector board of directors. This model combines the agility and responsiveness of a business-led entity with municipal accountability through formal reporting mechanisms, shared KPIs, and strategic planning integration. This model provides key advantages including:

1. Strategic Agility: Independent agencies can act quickly on investment attraction and tourism promotion without bureaucratic delay.
2. Business Credibility: A board composed of local leaders, sector experts, and entrepreneurs fosters legitimacy and trusted relationships.
3. Operational Flexibility: Agility in hiring, procurement, and grant applications supports tailored programming.
4. Stakeholder Alignment: Hybrid structures allow for multi-sector collaboration across business, academia, and government with agile support mechanisms.
5. Accountability Through Transparency: Performance metrics and KPIs are published externally and reviewed by an independent board

BEDT is already operating in a closely aligned hybrid model that provides flexibility, accountability, and value for taxpayer dollars. Gaps have emerged in recent years due to lack of formal agreements and processes behind the current hybrid governance structure that came to light during recent leadership changes within the City. This leaves BEDT and the City of Burlington susceptible to gaps in alignment and risks emerging with changes in the leadership structure of the organizations. BEDT board's position is that the current structure offers the ideal path forward and higher value add to the City and its stakeholders, however we recommend strengthening the model with updated governance tools and deliberate alignment with City direction, not dissolving or integrating BEDT into the City.

The Broader Structural Context

As identified through [RCC-25-23](#), many of Burlington's boards and agencies are operating without updated service agreements or a consistent accountability framework. This represents a systemic challenge. Implementing a comprehensive ABC framework that formalizes governance expectations, reporting, and alignment mechanisms will resolve root-cause issues and strengthen Council oversight across the City's entire ABC portfolio as recommended in [RCC-11-24](#).

Call to Action

The BEDT Board respectfully requests that members of Council make a clear decision today directing staff and BEDT to move forward collaboratively. We ask Council to confirm continuation of the hybrid model and the development of a Renewed Service Agreement or MOU within the context of a new, comprehensive ABC accountability

framework. We will work to implement processes to enhance Council oversight within this mechanism.

We will however support the development of a transition plan, should Council determine integration is appropriate.

In either case, the focus should be on addressing root causes of misalignment and ensuring strategic, financial, and governance integration, not the technical HR, financial, or legal details of merging organizations, in addition to addressing reputational and credibility impacts created by report CAO-06-25.

Clear Council direction will provide stability for staff and stakeholders, allow City and BEDT leaders to focus on implementation, and reinforce Burlington's reputation for evidence-based, collaborative governance.

Closing

BEDT remains committed to partnership, transparency, and measurable results. By addressing structural and process gaps and reaffirming confidence in the professionalism of the people who deliver these results daily, Council can strengthen Burlington's economic resilience and governance accountability.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration as we work together to ensure Burlington's governance model reflects best practices and shared community priorities.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Laidman
Chair, Board of Directors
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

cc:

Curt Benson, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Burlington
Andy Scott, Chief Transformation Officer, City of Burlington
Anita Cassidy, Executive Director, BEDT
BEDT Board of Directors

Attachments:

Appendix A: BEDT Report on Gaps and Inconsistencies in CAO-06-25 prepared for BEDT Board

Appendix B: BEDT July 2025 Submission to Rubicon

Appendix C: BEDT March 2025 Letter re Third-Party Review

Appendix D: BEDT Summary Report on CAO-06-25 Board Discussion and Prioritization prepared for BEDT Board

Report: Addressing Gaps and Inconsistencies in CAO-06-25 and the Rubicon Third-Party Review

Prepared by: Burlington Economic Development & Tourism (BEDT)

Date: October 28th 2025

Executive Summary

This report identifies factual inconsistencies and omissions in CAO-06-25, 'Findings from the Third-Party Review of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism,' and its supporting Appendix A – Rubicon Strategy Report. It provides verified clarifications and supporting evidence to ensure Council has accurate, contextual information before the November 3 Committee of the Whole discussion. The goal is to protect the organizational, board, and staff reputation of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT) and ensure that Council's deliberations are based on factual, balanced, and complete information.

Key concerns include:

- (1) omission of merger rationale and progress;
- (2) incomplete benchmarking of destination management organizations (DMOs);
- (3) inaccurate claims of duplication of services;
- (4) misrepresentation of TechPlace and BEDT's governance committees; and
- (5) absence of partner verification.

The report recommends directing BEDT staff to collaborate with the City's Chief Transformation Officer (CTO) to correct inconsistencies, assess reputational impacts, and submit a joint clarification note before the Committee of the Whole meeting. Board members are also invited to submit additional observations for inclusion in the final submission.

Purpose

This report outlines factual inconsistencies and omissions within CAO-06-25 and its supporting Appendix A – Rubicon Strategy Report. It ensures that Council decisions are informed by accurate, contextual information.

Context

The merger of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington took effect on January 1, 2025, following Council direction. BEDT cooperated fully with the Rubicon review, supplying governance, financial, and performance documentation through several submissions.

Summary of Key Gaps and Inconsistencies

1. Omission of merger context and progress: key rationale and post-merger progress unacknowledged.
2. Incomplete governance and KPI benchmarking: omission of DMO comparators despite BEDT's dual mandate.
3. Governance and accountability: mischaracterization of Board oversight and City participation.
4. Stakeholder engagement: lack of partner verification with Chamber and innovation networks of statements in staff report.
5. Duplication of services: incorrect claims regarding Planning coordination and Tariff Resource Hub.
6. Misrepresentation of Board committees: HR, Finance, Destination, Innovation, and BGR committees have formal mandates and City participation.
7. TechPlace: contrary to report, TechPlace delivers strong ROI and fulfills Council's direction on co-location verified through city led governance review in 2020 (reports CM-19-20 and CM-27-20).
8. Procurement and consultant expertise: sole-sourcing to a government-relations firm led to limited quantitative analysis.

Reputational Considerations

Uncorrected inaccuracies risk misrepresenting BEDT and City performance, undermining Council confidence, and affecting staff morale. Correcting the record demonstrates accountability and shared commitment to transparency.

Recommended Next Steps

1. Direction to Staff – BEDT staff to collaborate with the City CTO to address inaccuracies and prepare a joint clarification note before Nov 3.
2. Board Input – Invite Board members to submit additional feedback on inconsistencies.

3. Partner Verification – Engage Chamber, tourism, and innovation partners for written confirmation of statements of duplication and views represented in the report.
4. Include references to BEDT submission in corrected report.

Conclusion

By working jointly with the City to correct the record ahead of the Committee of the Whole, BEDT supports informed, evidence-based governance and safeguards organizational and City reputation.

Appendix: Key Inconsistencies and Omissions

Category / Section	Statement or Assertion in CAO-06-25 / Rubicon Report	Verified Information / Correction	Implication or Impact	Supporting Source(s)
Organizational Information	Key Organizational information is incorrect including services, no of employees, board members etc	See 2026 BEDT Budget Submission, www.investburlington.ca for corrections	Speaks to overall accuracy of report and verification of information	
Governance Model	BEDT's independent governance model limits accountability to Council.	BEDT is a City-owned corporation with the City as sole member, full budget approval by Council, and participation of the CAO and City staff in Board and committee meetings.	Overstates risk and misrepresents existing accountability mechanisms.	BEDT By-laws; HR & Governance Committee Reports, Board submission to Rubicon
Service Agreement Risk	Operating without a Service Agreement creates legal and financial exposure.	The prior Service Agreement expired in 2011; renewal identified as administrative, not risk-related.	Creates unnecessary perception of non-compliance.	CM-17-20; BEDT Audit Records
Governance Review Continuity	Rubicon's work builds on the	Rubicon did not review or reference	Overstates continuity and rigour.	CM-27-20; Consultant Correspondence

	2019/2020 governance review.	2019/20 materials until after BEDT request; methods differ.		
Merger Context	Persistent misalignment and duplication of work.	The Jan 2025 merger resolved legacy overlap; governance and KPIs updated accordingly.	Fails to acknowledge Council's direction and progress achieved.	Council Reports DSP Plan 2025
DMO and Tourism Performance	No DMO or MAT governance comparators referenced.	BEDT provided Deloitte 2024 scan benchmarking hybrid EDO–DMO models.	Removes tourism accountability context and dual mandate clarity.	Deloitte Best Practices Scan (Aug 2024)
Stakeholder Feedback	Stakeholders report limited awareness of BEDT outcomes.	Rubicon survey had fewer than 40 respondents most with less than 19 employees; BEDT engaged over 800 businesses in 2024.	Anecdotal feedback presented as representative.	BEDT 2024 Annual Report; Rubicon Survey
Duplication of Effort	BEDT duplicates City and Chamber functions.	High-impact file coordination occurs under joint City–BEDT Concierge; Tariff Hub (2019) was co-developed with Chamber.	Misrepresents collaboration as duplication.	BEDT–City CX Framework; Chamber correspondence
TechPlace	TechPlace lacks oversight and duplicates services.	Council's 2020 review confirmed TechPlace ROI and governance model	Contradicts Council-approved data and direction.	CM-27-20; TechPlace Cost-Benefit Analysis (2020), TechPlace

	BEDT reconsidered previously agreed lease terms and renegotiated rates.	Lease was not representative of lease terms discussed during purchase of Bateman and included significant additional costs for room rentals	Misrepresents due diligence by board and escalation of lease issues to CAOs office.	lease correspondence
Employment Lands Conversion	BEDT opposed and advocated against provincially approved employment land conversions	BEDT noted strategic impacts of conversions to shovel ready lands. BEDT endorsed a mixed use vision for 1200 King and Bronte Meadows the key employment sites converted by ROPA 49.	Mischaracterizes actions by BEDT	ECDEV-02-24 1200 King Economic Vision https://www.burlington.ca/en/news/from-burlington-economic-development-economic-vision-for-1200-king-road.aspx
Regional Realignment Parallel Analysis	BEDT engaged a consultant for parallel analysis of work already underway by the City	BEDT engaged a consultant to support an analysis of business models and KPIs for economic development and tourism as part of merger activities to inform a joint EcDev and Tourism model	Mischaracterizes actions by BEDT	Deloitte Best Practice Scan 2024

KPI Integration	BEDT lacks clear KPIs and reporting.	Integrated 2025 Performance Plan aligns KPIs to City's Corporate Compass.	Creates impression of missing transparency despite framework.	BEDT 2025 Performance Plan
Staffing and Costs	BEDT has ~15 staff and in-kind rent.	Actual 7 Permanent FTE + contract roles; pays full market rent at 414 Locust Street.	Overstates financial exposure and scale.	BEDT HR Records; Lease Agreement 2024
Board Committees	Committees lack formal oversight function.	Five committees with City and partner representation (HR, Finance, DDM, BGR, I&E).	Mischaracterizes governance maturity and integration.	HR & Governance Committee Reports
Consultant Methodology	Independent third-party analysis by governance experts.	Rubicon is a government-relations firm; methodology qualitative, limited governance modeling.	Reduces analytical depth and objectivity.	Comparison to outcomes and reporting to 2020 Governance Review
Tourism Integration	Tourism remains fragmented.	Integration completed Jan 2025; DSP and brand strategy implemented.	Misrepresents merger success and operational progress.	DSP 2025; HR & Governance Reports
Partner Engagement	Limited engagement with external agencies.	BEDT collaborates with Innovation Factory, Haltech, Angel One, Brock University, and Chamber.	Understates existing partnerships.	BEDT Partnership Engagement Strategies and agreements; I&E Committee, Service agreements with

				Angel One and Innovation Factory
Reputation and Communications	Operational confusion impacting stakeholder confidence.	Partner satisfaction for Tourism improved from 0% (2023) to 100% (2025).	Incorrectly implies loss of trust; ignores positive trend.	DSP Implementation Survey (2025); Partner Feedback Summary

- Most inconsistencies stem from omitted merger context, incomplete benchmarking, or lack of verification.
- Duplication and accountability assertions rely on perception data rather than validated evidence.

BEDT Board Engagement Third Party Review Summary & Recommendations

July 3, 2025

Overview: Third-Party Review (CM-10-24 Summary)

[CM-10-24 Update on strategic initiatives and organizational services](#)

Rationale: To evaluate the governance and service delivery model of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT) in light of its recent merger, with the goal of ensuring alignment with City objectives, transparency, and effective resource use.

Stated Objectives of Third Party Review:

1. Assess the effectiveness of BEDT's current organizational structure.
2. Clarify how BEDT aligns with City economic development and tourism priorities.
3. Explore structural options (e.g., standalone, hybrid, or integration).
4. Recommend strategies to improve accountability, reporting, and partnership.

Structural Options being considered as part of Third Party Review

- **BEDT Board Recommendation - Continued current-state Hybrid Model with enhanced alignment and process implementation.**
- Status Quo or Integration of BEDT services into COB – will not address gaps and risks identified as part of the third party review process

Hybrid Governance Model Recommendation

For clarity, BEDT is already operating in a closely aligned hybrid model. A hybrid governance model in economic development and tourism refers to an external, incorporated organization governed by an independent, multi-sector board of directors. This model combines the agility and responsiveness of a business-led entity with municipal accountability through formal reporting mechanisms, shared KPIs, and strategic planning integration.

This model provides key advantages including:

1. **Strategic Agility:** Independent agencies can act quickly on investment attraction and tourism promotion without bureaucratic delay.
2. **Business Credibility:** A board composed of local leaders, sector experts, and entrepreneurs fosters legitimacy and trusted relationships.
3. **Operational Flexibility:** Agility in hiring, procurement, and grant applications supports tailored programming.
4. **Stakeholder Alignment:** Hybrid structures allow for multi-sector collaboration across business, academia, and government with agile support mechanisms.
5. **Accountability Through Transparency:** Performance metrics and KPIs are published externally and reviewed by an independent board.

As stated, BEDT is already operating in a closely aligned hybrid model that provides flexibility, accountability, and value for taxpayer dollars. Gaps have emerged in recent years due to lack of formal agreements and processes behind the current hybrid governance structure that came to light during recent leadership changes within the City. This leaves BEDT and the City of Burlington susceptible to gaps in alignment and risks emerging with changes in the leadership structure of the organizations. **BEDT board's position is that the current structure offers the ideal path forward and higher value add to the City and its stakeholders, however we recommend strengthening the model with updated governance tools and deliberate alignment with City direction, not dissolving or integrating BEDT into the City.**

Key Takeaways:

- **Integration will not create incremental efficiencies or reduce administration:** BEDT is already aligned with City of Burlington HR policies and utilizes City of Burlington Finance, payroll and IT systems. The external structure allows the best of both worlds to create more flexibility in procurement, external funding opportunities and the ability to execute quickly. BEDT relies on City-managed finance, accounting, HR, and IT via an expired services agreement creating gaps and risks in service delivery and it is recommended that this be updated and enhanced.
- **Resource effectiveness and increased customer satisfaction:** BEDT has **reduced staff headcount by 30%** since pre-merger, while expanding services and sector impact.
- **City Alignment:** BEDT board has integrated representation by City of Burlington CAO, Mayor and Councilors while XLT membership has been integrated at the working committee and tactical level.
- **Lack of clear City of Burlington strategy for BEDT to create stronger alignment:** BEDT executed a merger in line with council direction and timelines. A new strategic plan, KPIs and organizational structure has been implemented, but full alignment is pending feedback by the City of Burlington.
- **Customer Focused Service Delivery:** Tourism destination business satisfaction with services increased from 0% pre-merger to 100%. Clear Integrated Customer Experience process in place with City of Burlington(COB) that defines the role of COB and BEDT in supporting the growth and attraction of businesses.
- **Operating Cost-efficiently with continuous improvement:** Funding increases from COB have averaged just 1.75% -2% annually for the last 5 years well below inflationary increases and City of Burlington staff cost of living increases. BEDT has continually optimized service delivery and staff structure to stay within the City of Burlington budget allocation despite larger payroll increases for comparable City roles.
- **Delivering \$1.5M+ in Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) value annually:** BEDT governance provides trusted oversight for the required tourism DMO under the MAT by-law inline with municipal trends across Ontario to implement external DMO structures to ensure MAT accountability.
- **Business Leadership and \$125K+ in Board value:** Volunteer Board provides strategic insight and in-kind leadership not available through municipal structure. High credibility with businesses and tourism operators due to dedicated, expert and sector led structure with flexibility to launch sector-specific initiatives (e.g., TechPlace, TIF) and pivot quickly to meet business needs (eg, COVID, Tariffs).
- **Risk management:** Separate legal entity protects the City while aligning via shared leadership and reporting. Gaps exist due to lack of formal processes, expired MOU/Service agreements which clearly outline City of Burlington/BEDT reporting, deliverables and council engagement mechanisms. BEDT board has always emphasized alignment with COB around the board table and delivered on council directions eg merger, innovation strategy, main street business programming during COVID.

Risks and Disadvantages of Municipal Integration

While integrating economic development functions into a municipality may appear to simplify governance, it introduces significant risks including:

1. **Loss of Agility:** City processes introduce delay in approvals, hiring, and contracting, limiting response to market opportunities.
2. **Reduced Private Sector Engagement:** Business leaders may disengage from purely advisory roles, reducing volunteer contributions and trust.
3. **Funding Vulnerability:** Loss of access to private partnerships, grants, or innovation funding typically unavailable to municipal bodies.
4. **Erosion of Accountability:** Without a performance-focused board, service quality may default to process metrics over outcomes.
5. **Strategic Misalignment:** Municipal mandates may prioritize planning or service delivery over economic competitiveness and investment attraction.
6. **Mission Drift:** Economic development priorities may be subsumed under broader political or administrative pressures.
7. **Tourism Governance Breakdown:** Loss of MAT oversight and trust from tourism stakeholders if separated from dedicated governance expertise. Increased risk of MAT spending being redirected to unrelated infrastructure. Current City-side MAT process for oversight of funds by a [taskforce](#) including representatives from Tourism not being followed. Risk of diminished industry trust in MAT if not properly governed.
8. **Disruption of Integrated Model:** Unwinding the merger undermines efficiencies and gains in cross-sector alignment.

Recommendations

Endorse continuation of the current Hybrid Governance model for BEDT with enhancements around alignment, process, accountability and reporting.

1. Governance Framework & Role Clarity

- Co-develop an MOU/Charter clarifying:
 - Strategic priorities
 - Roles and responsibilities (e.g., CX model, development files)
 - Council reporting structure and timelines
 - Ability for COB appointees to set priorities around board table and clear reporting/alignment mechanisms via council reporting/presentations
 - Alignment mechanisms with Horizon 2050 and Corporate Compass

2. Reporting and KPI Integration

- Formalize shared KPI dashboard with co-developed indicators
- Regular briefings to Council with performance and risk updates

3. Improved Integration Mechanisms

- Reaffirm roles in integrated CX process and business growth strategy
- Assign City SLT/XLT liaisons to BEDT working committees

4. Preserve and Evolve MAT Governance

- Codify MAT fund management roles for both City and BEDT
- Ensure dedicated, tourism-led oversight to maintain industry trust and meet legislative intent

Appendices

Appendix 1: BEDT Strategic Plan & KPIs

Appendix 2: BEDT 2024 Annual Report

Appendix 4: BEDT Economic Indicators 2020-2025

Appendix 3: Integrated Customer Experience Overview

BEDT Economic Indicators Dashboard available at <https://investburlington.ca/tourism-data-hub/>

BEDT Tourism Dashboard available at <https://investburlington.ca/data-centre/economic-indicators-dashboard-pilot/>



BEDT Strategic Plan Operational Plan (2025 – 2030)

Burlington Economic Development (BEDT) Strategic Plan 2025–2030

Stakeholder Engagement

- **180+** Stakeholder Interviews
- **2000+** Survey Responses
- **19** Sector Focus Groups

Purpose

To be a champion of Burlington's economic prosperity by attracting and supporting businesses and visitors.

Mission

To drive sustainable economic growth and destination excellence by supporting businesses, attracting investment, and creating magnetic visitor experiences.

Following the amalgamation with Tourism, we undertook a comprehensive recalibration of our strategy, service model and processes to better harness the combined strength of two key economic drivers. Our integrated approach is designed to unlock greater value, improve efficiency, and strengthen impact across the community.

This transformation is guided by four key themes: driving value through collaboration, deepening stakeholder engagement, elevating the customer experience, and fostering innovation in economic development and tourism.

We deliver on this through our four strategic pillars: Investment Attraction and Competitiveness, Business Retention and Growth, Destination Marketing and Development, and building an Engaging Organization.

| Our Strategic Pillars



| Our Strategic Pillars by Services

1. Investment Attraction & Competitiveness

Goal: *Attract high-value, future-ready businesses and investment to Burlington.*

- Business Location & Development – Site selection, feasibility studies, development concierge support
- Global Business Integration – Soft-landing services for international firms; export market development and trade readiness
- Grants, Incentives & Investment Readiness – Incentives navigation, investment fund support
- Market Intelligence & Industry Insights – Sector data, economic reports, opportunity briefs
- Strategic Connections – Curated introductions to civic leadership, developers, and regional influencers

2. Business Retention & Growth

Goal: *Support and grow existing businesses to scale and thrive.*

- Business Outreach & Retention Programs – Corporate calling program, customer service requests (CSR)s, issue resolution, relationship management
- Provide support through policy advocacy and Competitiveness (Market and Business Intelligence)
- Start-Up & Growth Concierge – TechPlace support, coaching, acceleration, and funding access
- Talent & Workforce Solutions – Hiring networks, skilled talent attraction, post- secondary education linkages
- Innovative Ecosystem Development – Cluster strategy development, knowledge-sharing events, peer forums
- Provide Global Business Support - Soft-landing for international firms, cross border investments, export market development, enabling global reach from a local base
- Funding & Capacity Building – Grant support, training partnerships, targeted programs that support business successes

3. Destination Marketing & Development

Goal: *Promote a vibrant business and tourism destination*

- Marketing & Amplification – Storytelling and milestone promotion, campaigns and media partnerships
- Destination Development – Support for festivals, events, and experience design; visitor servicing and wayfinding (strategic connections)
- Tourism Investment Fund and Bid Fund– Capital support for tourism events; investor attraction and support
- Partnerships & Stewardship – Collaboration with tourism operators, BIAs, arts, and culture
- Data & Insights – Visitor tracking, economic impact studies

4. Engaging Organization (Enabler)

Goal: Ensure our staff are empowered to provide exceptional customer service experience

- Develop a strong digital service transformation (digital & data excellence)– leverage salesforce, office 365 and AI tools to improve productivity
- Strengthen employee engagement
- Revitalized performance management systems that empower and enrich jobs and employees
- Develop a training and development strategy for employees
- Expand revenue sources
- Deepen broader and strategic stakeholder engagement to unlock high value opportunities

Destination Stewardship Plan

BEDT's Destination Stewardship Plan focuses on recommendations to responsibly grow Burlington's visitor economy by balancing economic impact with community well-being, environmental enablement and sustainability

- Enhancing Burlington's appeal as a sustainable, experience-rich destination
- Supporting tourism operators and events with resources and capacity building
- Encouraging community-based tourism that reflects Burlington's identity
- Aligning destination development with environmental, social, and cultural goals
- Embedding equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all visitor experiences

You can view our 3-year roadmap to implementing our destination stewardship plan here - [LINK](#)

| Our Strategic Plan - At a Glance

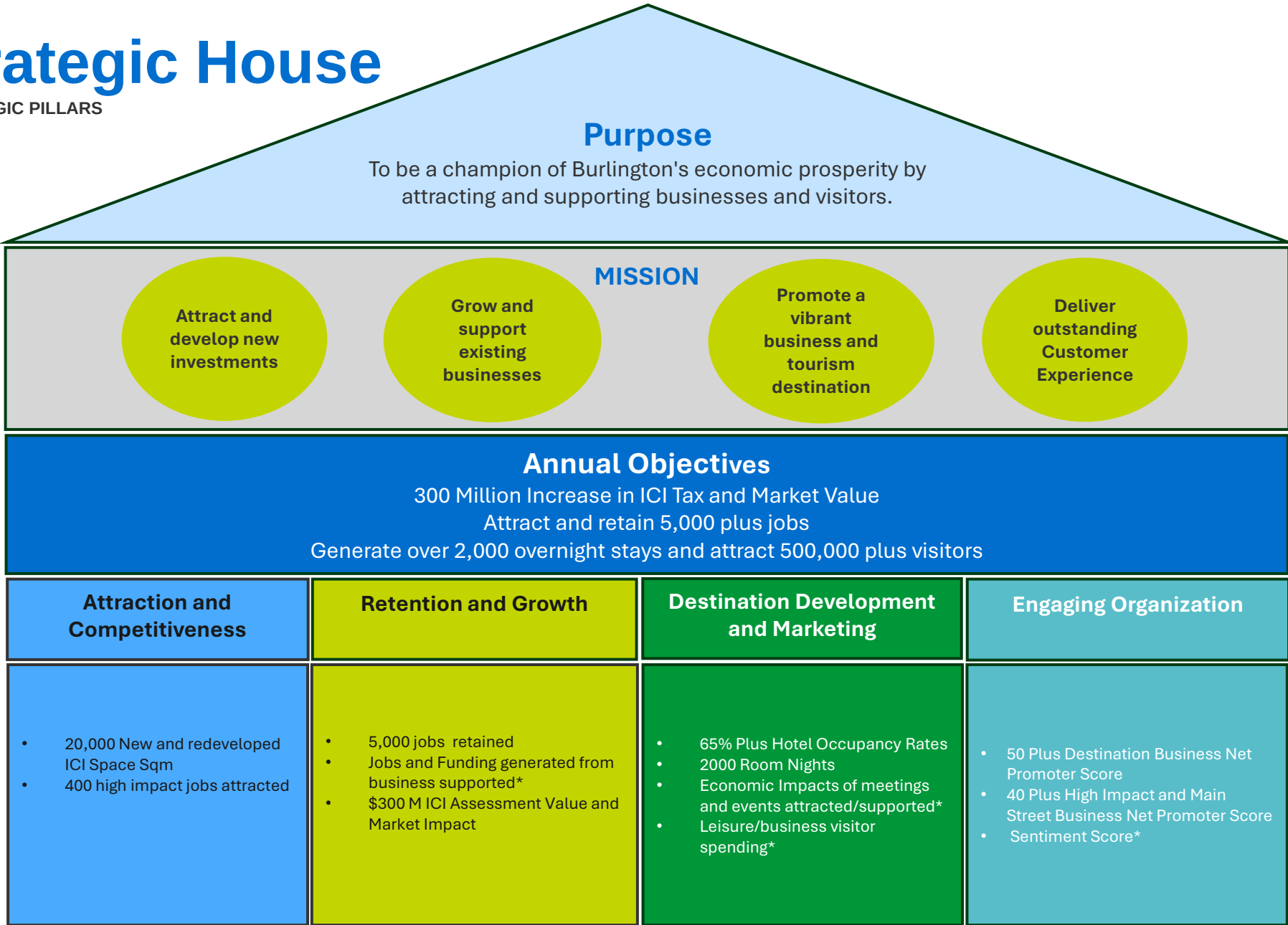
Our strategic plan focuses on three core pillars—Investment Attraction, Business Growth, and Visitor Experience—aimed at driving economic impact for Burlington.

All programs and services are aligned to deliver measurable results, with key performance indicators as seen below -



2025 Strategic House

FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC PILLARS



← Pillars

← Economic Indicators & KPIs

BEDT KPIs 2025 & 2024 Performance

Objectives	KPI	Target 2025	Actual 2024
Attract investments that drive long-term economic prosperity for residents and businesses	Number of jobs attracted	300+	387
	Number of investment/event leads	100	73
	\$ ICI Assessment and Market Value Impact	300M CAD	- ICI - 27,644,000 401M CAD
	New and redeveloped Industrial Commercial and Institutional Space Sqm	20000 +	21,491
Support the retention and growth of Burlington's businesses	Number of high impact jobs retained	400 +	472
	Number of jobs supported by programs and services	5000 +	New Metric
	Number of Customer Service Requests Satisfaction Level	600 40 plus NPS	453 CSRs 42 NPS
	Number of Corporate Calls to support business retention and growth	100	108
	Number of Businesses supported in business startup and scale up	650	544
	Jobs and Funding generated from business supported	tbd - New data sources being developed	New Objective
Improve visitor experiences, and implement strategic marketing to drive tourism economic growth, and increase the impact of the Visitor Economy	Destination Business NPS*	50 + NPS	0%- March 2024 85%- Dec 2024
	Hotel Occupancy Rates	65%	61%
	Hotel Room Nights Directly Generated	500% YOY Increase (2,000 nights) 380,000	355 353,330
	Total Room Nights		
	Visitors Attracted	500000 +	447,195

Get in Touch

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 [Burlington Economic Development and Tourism](#)



2024 ANNUAL REPORT





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MAYOR’S GREETING

FROM MAYOR MARIANNE MEED WARD

Burlington’s momentum in 2024 was undeniable, with a 10-year high in housing starts, new leadership at City Hall, and continued investments in infrastructure, sustainability, and economic resilience.

These achievements have provided a strong foundation that positions us well as we face the unexpected challenges of 2025. The trade war has created significant uncertainty, impacting businesses and residents alike. Burlington remains committed to supporting our community, working to bolster economic stability and resilience during these turbulent times.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to making Burlington a place of opportunity, even in the face of adversity.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward
City of Burlington

BEDT AMALGAMATION

STRONGER TOGETHER

On March 3, 2025, we officially announced the amalgamation of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington into a single organization: Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT). This strategic move brings together our efforts to support local businesses, residents, and visitors, and strengthen Burlington's tourism sector under one cohesive vision. In 2024 alone, tourism generated \$524 million in visitor spending, highlighting the vital role it plays in our economy.

With a unified marketing and communications strategy, we are now better positioned to deliver a consistent destination brand, implement our Destination Stewardship Plan, and streamline services for partners, businesses and visitors. This new structure allows us to align economic and tourism strategies, improve operational efficiency, and create a stronger, more vibrant Burlington for all.



ENHANCED COLLABORATION

By uniting, we're aligning tourism and economic development to drive stronger strategies, coordinated growth, and impactful destination development.



UNIFIED BRANDING

We're building a unified destination brand and strategic plan to showcase Burlington's strengths, drive tourism, and support long-term success.



STREAMLINED PROCESSES

Consolidating administrative functions and streamlining processes will result in cost savings and operational efficiencies for both agencies.



STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Aligning strategies helps us pursue shared goals like job creation and placemaking while reducing duplication and maximizing impact.



ENHANCED VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Integrating tourism and economic development enhances visitor experience, boosts referrals, encourages repeat visits, and helps attract new investment opportunities.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

USHERING IN A NEW ERA OF TOURISM IN BURLINGTON



WHAT IS A DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN?

A Destination Stewardship Plan (DSP) is a strategic roadmap that guides sustainable tourism development, ensuring that visitor experiences, community well-being, economic growth, and environmental protection are balanced. Unlike traditional tourism plans, Burlington's DSP integrates tourism with broader community and economic goals, making the city not only a great place to visit but also a vibrant place to live and work.

WHY TOURISM MATTERS FOR BURLINGTON

Tourism is a key driver of Burlington's economy, contributing \$524.1 million in visitor spending in 2024 alone. Beyond economic benefits, tourism enhances our city's cultural vibrancy, supports local businesses, and strengthens Burlington's reputation as one of Ontario's most livable cities.

OUR VISION

Burlington is where Ontario's natural beauty and urban energy meet—a destination that brings people together. With our stunning waterfront, vibrant downtown, and scenic rural landscapes, Burlington is a premier destination that balances tourism growth, community values, and sustainability.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

With a clear roadmap in place, we are set to implement the Burlington DSP recommendations in a thoughtful and sustainable manner over several years, focusing on three core areas that will shape the city's visitor economy over the next decade.

1. BRANDING & MARKETING

How we position, promote, and sell Burlington as a destination.

- ✓ Unified Messaging & Content
- ✓ Marketing Channels & Digital Strategy
- ✓ Business Events & Group Travel
- ✓ Partnerships
- ✓ Visitor Services

2. PRODUCT & PROGRAMMING

The attractions, experiences, and activities that define Burlington.

- ✓ Signature Neighbourhoods
- ✓ Festivals & Events
- ✓ Arts & Culture
- ✓ Family-Friendly Attractions
- ✓ Culinary & Agriculture Tourism
- ✓ Outdoor Recreation

3. ENABLING CONDITIONS

The infrastructure, policies, and supports that create an exceptional visitor experience.

- ✓ Event & Tourism Infrastructure
- ✓ Accessibility & Inclusivity
- ✓ Connectivity & Transportation
- ✓ Technology & Innovation
- ✓ Sustainability & Climate Action
- ✓ Destination Governance



**i Scan to learn more
about our Destination
Stewardship Plan**

TOURISM

YEAR IN REVIEW

VISITOR SPENDING IN BURLINGTON (2024)

\$524M

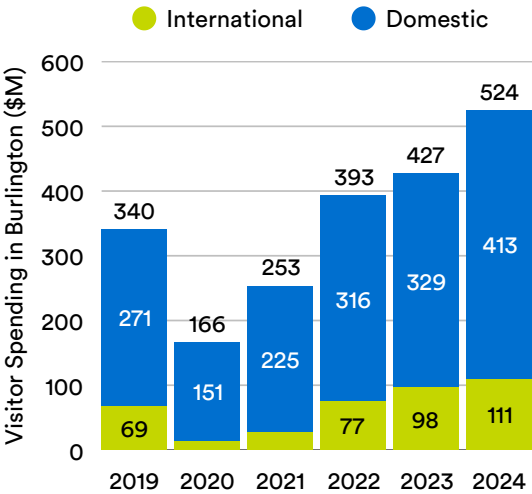
VISITOR SPENDING

+12.5%

YOY GROWTH IN SHARE OF
NATIONAL SPENDING

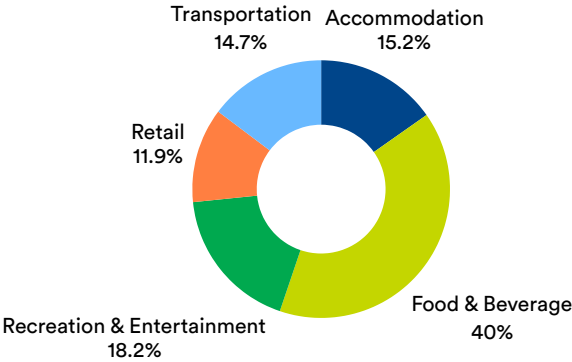
+14.6%

YOY GROWTH IN SHARE OF
PROVINCIAL SPENDING



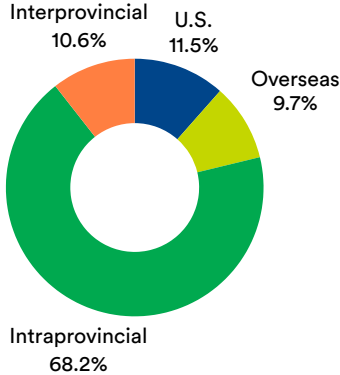
VISITOR SPENDING BY CATEGORY

① 2024



VISITOR SPENDING BY ORIGIN MARKET

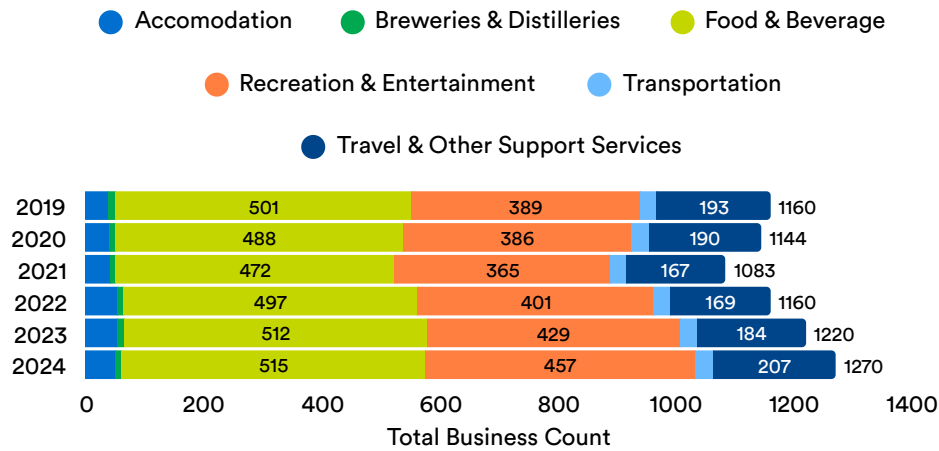
① 2024



① Data based on totals sourced from the Canadian Tourism Data Collective.

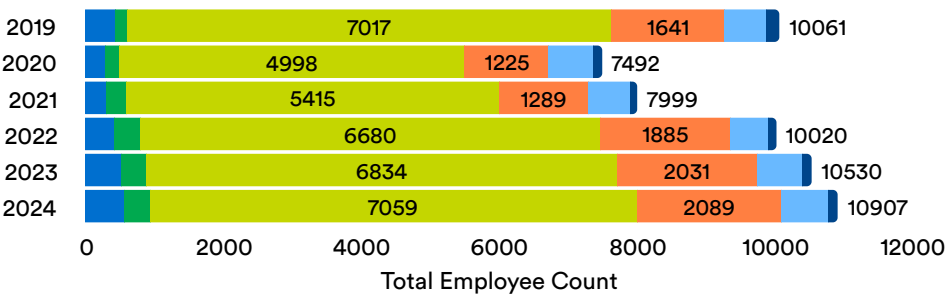
BUSINESS COUNT BY CATEGORY

TOURISM SECTOR: 2019-2024

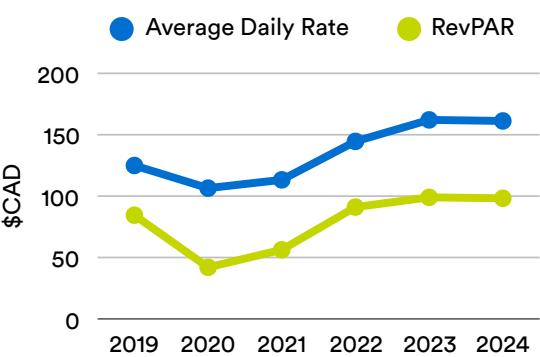


EMPLOYEE COUNT BY CATEGORY

TOURISM SECTOR: 2019-2024



AVG. DAILY ROOM RATE AND REVPAR



Scan to view the full Burlington Tourism Data Dashboard

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TARGET



① RevPAR = revenue per available room.
① Data based on totals sourced from the Canadian Tourism Data Collective.

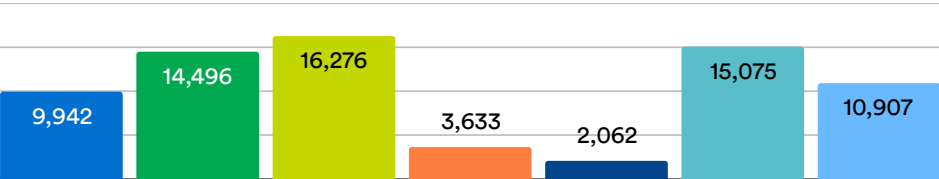
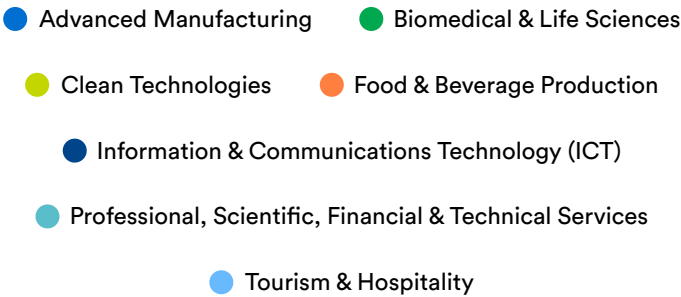
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

YEAR IN REVIEW

Burlington continued to see strong economic growth in 2024, with expanding investment, a booming clean tech sector, and new data insights that showcase our city’s momentum across key business indicators.



EMPLOYEES BY KEY SECTOR



① Food & Beverage Production employee count includes 388 employees as part of agriculture sector. Breweries & Distilleries employee count included in both Food & Beverage Production and Tourism & Hospitality sectors.

BURLINGTON BUSINESSES

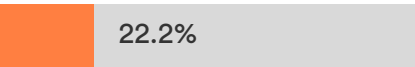


AVAILABILITY RATES

INDUSTRIAL



OFFICE



① Data sourced from City of Burlington, EMSI, Halton Region, Environics, and Statistics Canada. Employment figures do not capture people who live in Burlington but work for a non-Burlington employer



DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Burlington's total construction value continued to trend upwards in 2024, with a 22% increase year-over-year. This is complimented by new industrial, commercial, and institutional (ICI) space totalling 197,528 ft² — with a construction value of \$241M.

① *Excludes developments in "other" category of building permit audit reports referring to minor construction projects that do not add considerable economic value.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUESTS

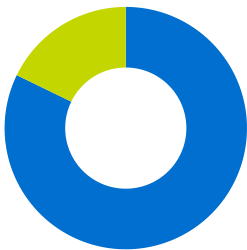
453
CUSTOMER SERVICE
REQUESTS

108
CORPORATE CALLS

800+
BUSINESSES
SUPPORTED

CENSUS DATA (2021)

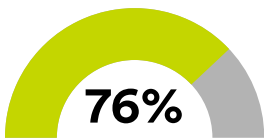
Non-Working Age Population
17.8%



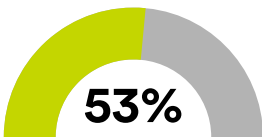
Working Age Population (15-65 yrs)
82.2%

199,484
POPULATION SIZE

\$166,370
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
INCOME



WORKING AGE POPULATION WITH
A POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION



LABOUR FORCE
PARTICIPATION RATE

① Data sourced from City of Burlington, Environics, Statistics Canada, and Statistics Canada.

Data and Highlights

SUPPORTING STARTUPS AT TECHPLACE

YEAR IN REVIEW

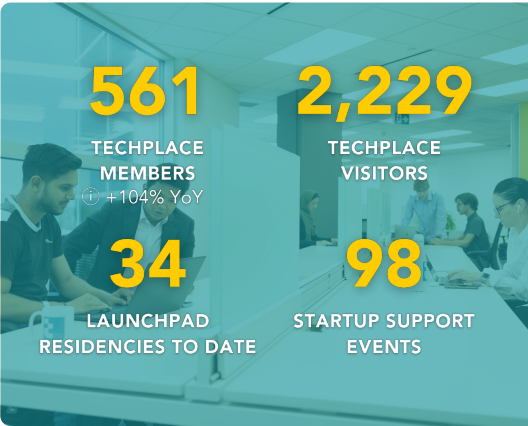
In 2024, TechPlace continued to thrive as Burlington’s hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. We welcomed Innovation Factory as our newest co-location partner in April, hosted delegations from Latvia, Costa Rica, and more, and proudly showcased our space during a successful Collision Conference tour. Demand for LaunchPad memberships remained strong, reflecting the value of our community and resources.



Entrepreneurs are so fortunate to have TechPlace in our community.

Their free resources, mentorship and introductions build skills and opportunities to make informed business decisions and scale your business quickly.”

— Lisa Blinn, Accessibility Specialist

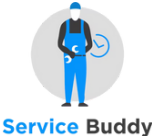


LAUNCHPAD COMPANIES



① LaunchPad companies are high-potential technology startups that can drive regional economic growth through innovation, job creation, and investment attraction in Burlington and beyond.

NEW LAUNCHPADS IN 2024



OUR CO-LOCATION PARTNERS



① Data sourced internally. LaunchPad company stats based on 12 companies.

DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH



“2024 signaled a year of strategic evolution for Burlington Economic Development and Tourism. From integrating two teams into one unified organization to leading the development of Burlington’s Destination Stewardship Plan, we built a stronger foundation for long-term prosperity.

Tourism in Burlington hit a record \$524 million in visitor spending, reinforcing the city’s growing appeal. Meanwhile, our innovation economy gained momentum through new partnerships and increased demand at TechPlace, which saw a 104% year-over-year rise in memberships thanks to the addition of Innovation Factory as our newest co-location partner.

We expanded our data capabilities, strengthened regional partnerships, and supported major investments in clean tech and innovation. Our new Destination Stewardship Plan sets a visionary course for responsible tourism growth and deeper community engagement. The expansion of our Corporate Calling Program enabled us to identify new strategic opportunities for tourism, and the launch of the Event Concierge Service and Tourism Investment Fund continue to strengthen our ability to attract high-value events, support local businesses, and drive local economic growth.

As we look ahead, we are focused on enabling sustainable growth and delivering exceptional service to the people and partners who power our city. Thank you for your continued trust and collaboration.

Sincerely,
Anita Cassidy
Executive Director
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism



2024 marked a historic milestone with the official amalgamation of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington. Over 2,000 volunteer hours from our boards and remarkable dedication from staff made this complex integration a success, without losing focus on day-to-day operations.



Together, we supported over 800 businesses across economic development and tourism combined, helped attract over 300 new jobs, and launched impactful new programs like our expanded Corporate Call Program and Event Concierge Service. The commitment shown has laid a strong foundation for the future.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this transformational year. We’re just getting started.

Sincerely,
Ron Laidman
Chair, Board of Directors
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

OUR SERVICES



**BUSINESS
LOCATION &
DEVELOPMENT
CONCIERGE**



**START-UP &
GROWTH
SUPPORT**



**MARKET
INTELLIGENCE &
INSIGHTS**



**TALENT &
WORKFORCE
SOLUTIONS**



**GLOBAL
BUSINESS
SUPPORT**



**GRANTS,
INCENTIVES &
INVESTMENT
READINESS**



**MARKETING,
PROMOTION &
AMPLIFICATION**



**MEETING &
EVENT
CONCIERGE**



**STRATEGIC
CONNECTIONS
THAT MATTER**

CONTACT US



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investburlington.ca | tourismburlington.ca

Economic Snapshot

Economic Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Source
	Total-YTD	Total-YTD	Total-YTD	Total-YTD	Total-YTD	Q1	
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY							
Number of ICI Building Permits - Burlington	251	279	274	256	279	60	City of Burlington Building Department - Building statistics & Reports (Just considering ICI)
ICI Building Permits Construction Value - Burlington	\$131,199,809	\$168,317,511	\$145,005,818	\$29,997,151	\$ 240,589,627	\$65,907,316	City of Burlington Building Department - Building statistics & Reports (Just considering ICI)
ICI Building Permits Construction Value - Burlington	17,431	56,081	16,068	66,994	18,351	21,169	City of Burlington Building Department - Building statistics & Reports
Number of new jobs - Burlington	843	849	232	816	358	179	Burlington Economic Development Calculation (from New ICI Jobs sheet in this workbook, 2022 onwards indicates net new jobs by taking demolitions into account)
Number of Residential Building Permits - Burlington	760	812	745	378	174	35	City of Burlington Building Department - Building statistics & Reports (Not including the accessory structures and others)
Residential Building Permits Construction Value - Burlington	\$233,022,435	\$285,126,135	\$198,447,831	\$161,338,650	\$34,253,353	\$14,487,361	City of Burlington Building Department - Building statistics & Reports (Not including the accessory structures and others)
Total residential and non-residential construction value - CMA	1,757,727	2,535,900	2,428,721	3,114,917	1,787,601	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
Total residential construction value - CMA	1,095,514	1,540,268	1,367,857	2,034,996	1,165,346	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
Single dwelling building total construction value - CMA	703,654	941,958	720,244	594,900	500,385	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
Multiple dwelling building total construction value - CMA	701,860	898,340	647,613	1,440,096	664,860	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
Total non-residential construction value - CMA	662,213	995,632	1,060,864	1,079,920	753,592	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
Total industrial construction value - CMA	205,556	90,534	104,530	332,640	94,861	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
Total commercial construction value - CMA	386,287	785,535	596,310	519,752	409,143	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
Total institutional and governmental construction value - CMA	70,370	115,533	360,024	227,528	249,589	-	Statistics Canada, Table 34-10-0066-01: Building permits, by type of structure and type of work (x 1,000), Hamilton CMA (Value of permits - Available monthly)
JOBS							
Jobs/ha	5.02	5.02	6.10	6.01	6	-	Burlington Economic Development Calculation (EMSI Job Totals/Total Area of Burlington(18,570ha))
Vacant Employment Land (Ha)	252.26	294.6	-	-	378.1	-	Burlington Economic Development Calculation
Shovel Ready Land (Ha)	10.02	13.60	-	-	-	-	Burlington Economic Development Calculation
Office Inventory (sq. ft.)	3,334,376	3,422,270	3,423,071	-	3,423,071	-	Cushman & Wakefield Office Market Overview
Office Availability Rate (direct and subset)	15.3%	21.7%	23.1%	-	22.20%	-	Cushman & Wakefield Office Market Overview
Office Vacancy Rate (direct and subset)	-	-	23.1%	-	21.20%	-	Cushman & Wakefield Office Market Overview
Industrial Inventory (sq. ft.)	23,360,288	23,122,782	23,253,493	-	24,104,189	-	Cushman & Wakefield Industrial Market Overview
Industrial Availability Rate (direct and subset)	1.7%	1.6%	0.6%	-	3.90%	4	Cushman & Wakefield Industrial Market Overview
Industrial Vacancy Rate (direct and subset)	-	-	1.6%	-	3.51%	4	CoStar
Number of Businesses in Burlington	4,947	4,981	5,111	5080	-	-	Halton Employment Survey
Number of Businesses in Burlington	7,083	7,233	7,490	-	7,664	-	Table 33-10-0397-01 Canadian Business Counts, Burlington
Active businesses (Hamilton CMA)	17,102	17,915	18,133	-	18,588	-	Statistics Canada Table 33-10-0270-01 Hamilton CMA (data from last month of quarter)
CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION, HOUSING STARTS, COMPLETIONS AND UNITS UNDER CONSTRUCTION							
Average Housing Price	\$896,528	\$1,084,166	\$1,205,439	\$1,078,966	\$1,135,110	\$1,194,928	Realtors Association of Hamilton-Burlington Market Statistics (last month of quarter)
Average Rental Price	\$1,589	\$1,587	\$1,693	\$1,765	\$1,929	-	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing Starts, Completions and Units Under Construction
Housing Starts	758	547	127	300	1132	396	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing Starts, Completions and Units Under Construction
Completions	695	747	96	801	577	48	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Housing Starts, Completions and Units Under Construction
CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION, HOUSING STARTS, COMPLETIONS AND UNITS UNDER CONSTRUCTION							
Population	-	197,582	200,819	201,028	199,484	199,484	Environics from Burlington Sites
Average Household Income	-	\$145,209	-	-	-	166,370	Environics from Burlington Sites
Median Household Income	-	-	-	-	-	-	MoneySense Canada/Maclean's Magazine's Best Places to Live (Environics Analytics)
Labour Force	-	111,439	114,822	113,340	105,761	105,761	Environics from Burlington Sites
Jobs in Burlington by Sector (Total)	-	110,088	113,332	111,643	103,623	103,447	Environics from Burlington Sites
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (11)	-	478	492	410	564	564	Environics from Burlington Sites
Mineral, Oil and Gas Extraction (21)	-	243	228	248	286	286	Environics from Burlington Sites
Utility Services: Power, Gas, Steam, Water, and Sewage (22)	-	725	842	759	804	804	Environics from Burlington Sites
Construction (23)	-	6,025	6,282	6,023	6,250	6,250	Environics from Burlington Sites
Manufacturing - Processed Food, Textiles, Clothing (31-33)	-	10,628	11,269	11,088	9,420	9,420	Environics from Burlington Sites
Wholesale Trade (41)	-	6,838	6,783	5,416	5,416	5,416	Environics from Burlington Sites
Retail: Home, Food, Automobiles, Personal Care (44-45)	-	13,370	13,727	13,709	12,174	12,174	Environics from Burlington Sites
Transportation and Warehousing: Private and Public	-	4,197	4,285	4,062	4,393	4,393	Environics from Burlington Sites
Information (51)	-	3,057	3,115	3,091	2,689	2,689	Environics from Burlington Sites
Banking, Finance and Insurance (52)	-	7,187	7,444	7,713	7,324	7,324	Environics from Burlington Sites
Real Estate and Rentals (53)	-	2,482	2,805	2,501	2,343	2,343	Environics from Burlington Sites
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (54)	-	10,206	10,437	10,472	11,963	11,963	Environics from Burlington Sites
Holding Companies and Managing Offices (55)	-	414	441	410	692	692	Environics from Burlington Sites
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Education (61)	-	4,586	4,742	4,758	3,912	3,912	Environics from Burlington Sites
Health Care and Social Services (62)	-	9,475	9,730	9,336	8,788	8,788	Environics from Burlington Sites
Arts, Sports, Entertainment, and Recreation (71)	-	11,595	11,993	11,427	11,456	11,546	Environics from Burlington Sites
Accommodation and Food Services (72)	-	2,236	2,271	2,221	1,808	1,808	Environics from Burlington Sites
Other Services - Repair, Personal Care, Laundry, Religious, etc. (81)	-	6,845	7,055	7,012	4,732	4,732	Environics from Burlington Sites
Public Administration (91)	-	3,930	4,045	4,111	3,674	3,674	Environics from Burlington Sites
Jobs to Population Ratio	-	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.52	0.52	Burlington Economic Development Calculation
Jobs	83,474	85,508	87,694	87,693	87,391	-	Halton Employment Survey
Unemployment Rate (Hamilton CMA)	7.2%	5.5%	4.1%	4.9%	5.9%	7.4%	Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0378-01: Labour force characteristics, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality (last month in quarter)
Unemployment Rate (Halton)	7.9%	3.7%	6.1%	5.3%	-	-	Halton Business Blog
Working age population (15-64 %)	-	63.1%	-	-	-	-	Census Profile, Census of Population 2016 and 2021
Youth (under 35 %)	-	37.7%	-	-	-	-	Census Profile, Census of Population 2016 and 2021
First generation immigrants (%)	-	27.6%	-	-	-	-	Census Profile, Census of Population 2016 and 2021
TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION							
Commute within Burlington	-	50.5%	-	-	-	-	Census Profile, Census of Population 2016 and 2021
Public transportation usage (%)	-	4.3%	-	-	-	-	Census Profile, Census of Population 2016 and 2021
Active Transit Usage (Walk or Bike) (%)	-	4.5%	-	-	-	-	Census Profile, Census of Population 2016 and 2021

Note: Information updated on a quarterly basis or as available from sources.

Note: Labour and business figures are collected from various sources with varying methodologies, thus resulting in different figures.
Note: Average Housing Price is an in-house calculation done by Burlington Economic Development. A methodology change was adopted in 2021, opting for weighted averages vs the regular averages used prior to 2021.

Note: In 2021, new vacant lands were designated as Shovel Ready lands by Burlington Economic Development staff. Some lands are now anticipated to be developed in 18-24 months due to expedited commenting/approval processes.

An aerial photograph of Burlington, Vermont, showing a dense urban area with various buildings, green spaces, and a waterfront. A prominent pier extends into Lake Champlain, featuring a small structure at its end. The sky is filled with soft, golden-hour clouds. The title text is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Collaborative Customer Experience: City of Burlington and BEDT Overview

Background/ Overview

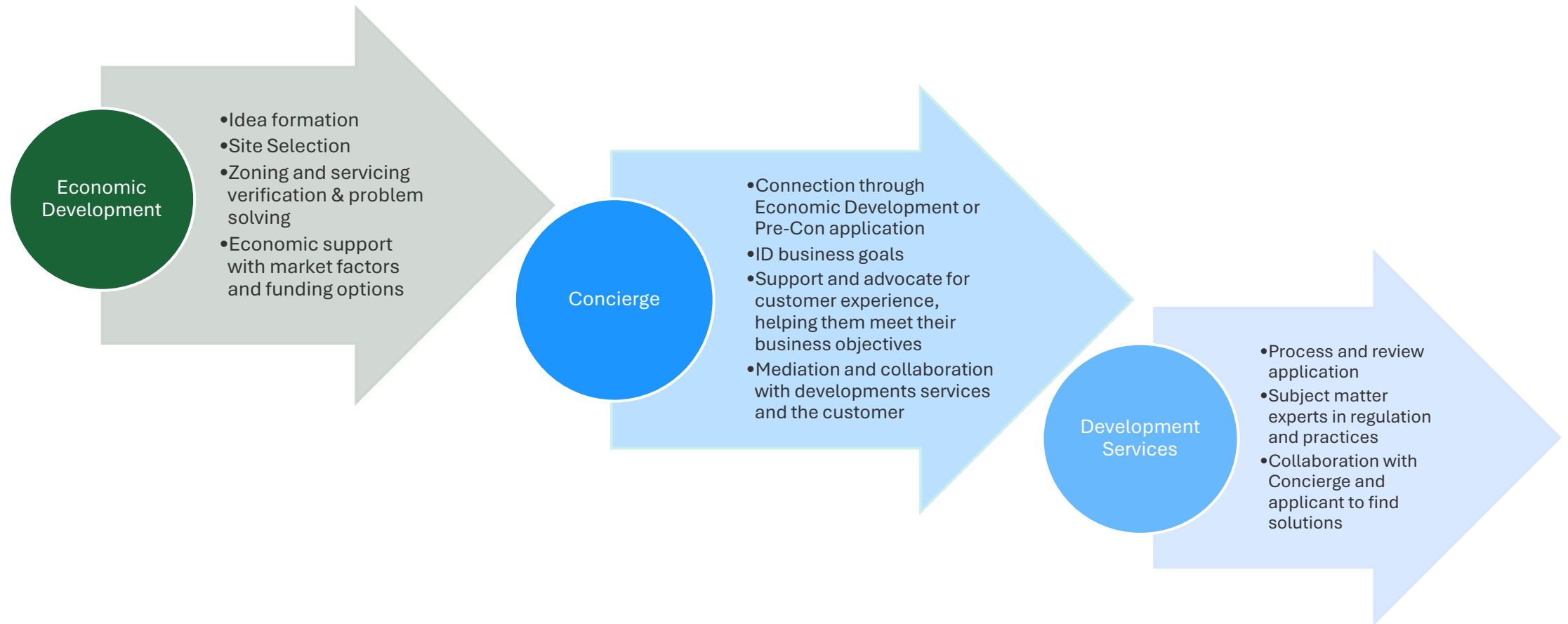


Initiated through the Red Tape Red Carpet Taskforce (RTRC), these process improvements began due to the need for improved business conditions within Burlington. Initially, prior to RTRC Burlington had a reputation for being one of the more bureaucratic municipalities to develop within. In collaboration with the City of Burlington we held engagement sessions to assess ways in which these processes could improve.

This overtime led to the creation of a revised Customer Experience strategy that sought to: improve development conditions, provide white glove service for impactful investments, and improve Burlington's corporate reputation. This strategy has seen several iterations since its initial conception, and overtime has led to significant progress within development services.

Files recognized as High Impact are eligible to receive a Development Concierge service, which will include a dedicated single point of contact to assist with process navigation and communication coordination.

Cross Functional Collaboration for Improved Customer Experience



Overview - Current High Impact Criteria

HIGH IMPACT (HI) ECONOMIC CRITERIA

For industrial and commercial files:

- 50+ industrial jobs generated or retained
- 20+ office jobs generated or retained
- 30+ retail jobs generated or retained

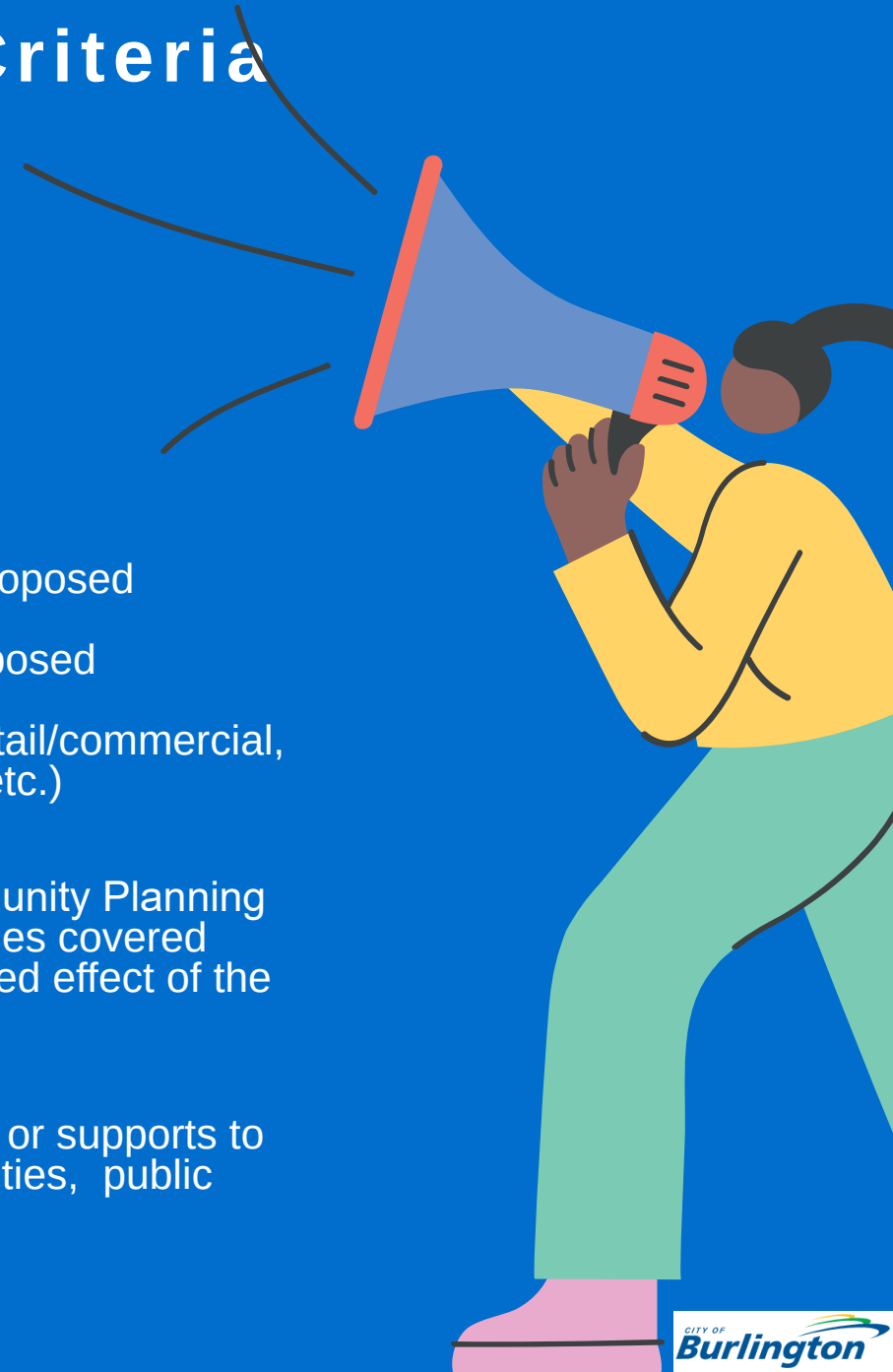
HIGH IMPACT (HI) ATTAINABLE HOUSING CRITERIA

- 10+ residential units
- 30% units designated affordable in the proposed development.
- 100% purpose-built rental units in a development with 10+ units in the proposed development
- Apartment dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms in 35% of units in the proposed development.
- Mixed Use Developments that contain 3+ land uses (i.e. residential, retail/commercial, office, employment, minimum 0.1 Ha parkland, public service facilities, etc.)

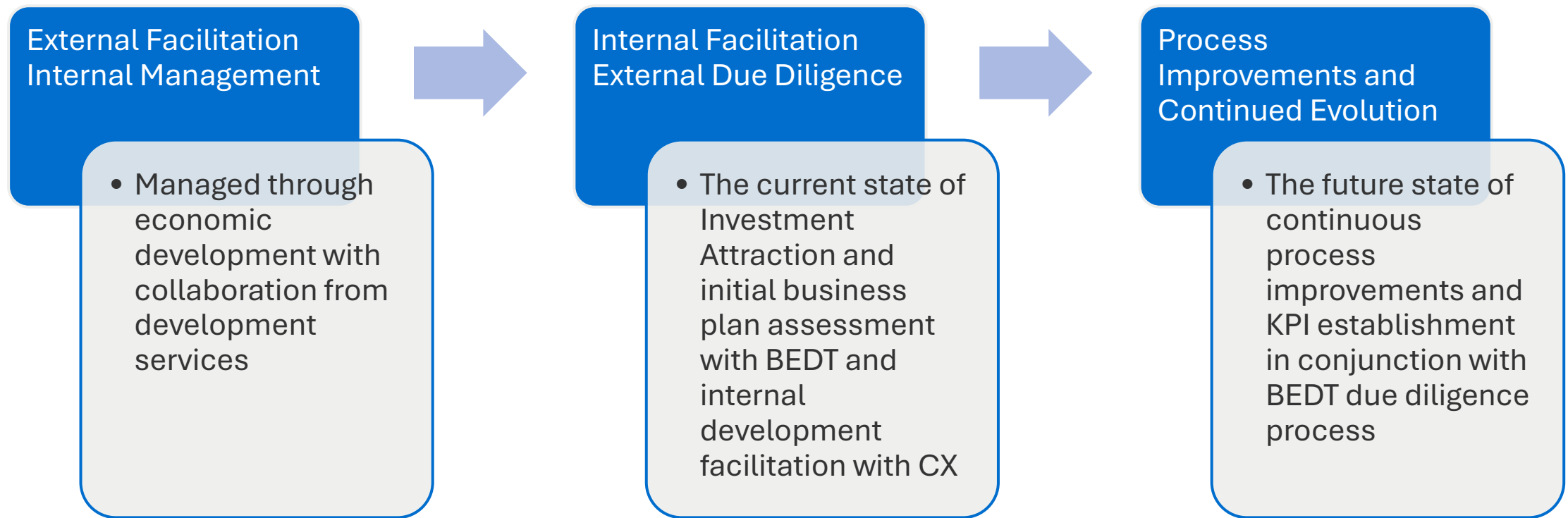
These criteria will apply to development files in the MTSA's. Once the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) is approved the concierge service for development files covered under the CPPS will be revisited and modified if needed to achieve the desired effect of the HI criteria throughout the City.

HIGH IMPACT (HI) COMMUNITY CRITERIA

- Projects that have a high impact on community and deliver new services or supports to the community. Examples include, new city facilities, social support facilities, public services facilities, institutional facilities etc.



The Evolution of Departmental Collaboration





Process Improvements

City of Burlington SDAP Project & Concierge Success

Streamlined Development Application Process

- **Enhance the entire application process** to ensure more efficient and customer-centric service delivery.
- **Streamline interactions and approvals** across the entire planning and building processes.
- **Increase the speed of application review** while reducing failure demand, making the experience smoother and easier for the customer.

Key focus areas for improvement:

Finding the win-win between improving collaboration with our customers and offering timely file reviews

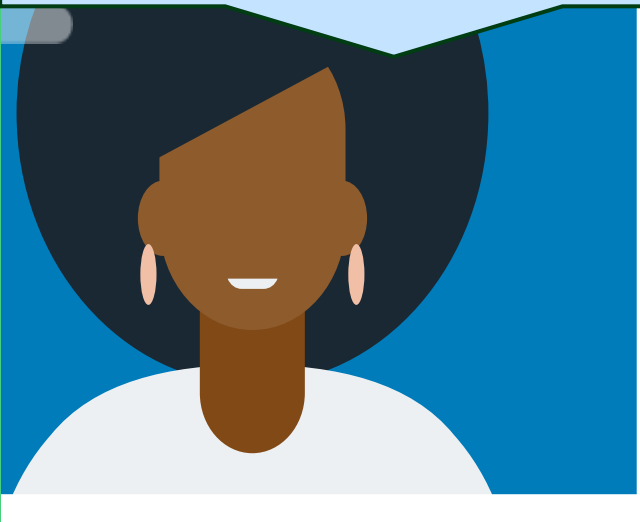
Focusing on the value-add work, and reducing waster where non-value add exists

Using technology to improve the experience of both staff and the customer

Concierge Success

- Data collected for 2024 indicates:
- 100% of Hi Impact Business Customers report that the concierge service made their process navigation easier.
- 100% of Hi Impact Business Customers report that the concierge service made their experience either slightly better or exceptional compared to one without the service
- 50% of Hi Impact Business Customers report they will recommend the City of Burlington to a friend or colleague for service after receiving the concierge support

“After meeting the concierge service, things did a complete 360-degree turn. The role was facilitating meetings with the right people at the City and getting us prompt answers. I can wholeheartedly say that without the concierge service, we wouldn’t have advanced this project as quickly as we have. It feels like the concierge is part of the team and truly cares about the success of our project and ensuring that we meet our desired timelines.”



“Working with the concierge was great! Their services were vital to successfully navigating the permitting process at City Hall and answering questions we had. By having them as our primary contact it made our work simpler and more efficient.”



“[The concierge] acted as a liaison between our organization and staff to assist in resolving planning application matters...in a timely manner. [The role] can provide invaluable advice to the City Manager and members of Council as to how to untangle some of the complexities and obstacles of the planning process...”



A stack of several manila-colored file folders is shown in the upper left corner of the slide. The folders are slightly offset, revealing the edges of the ones underneath. They are resting on a solid blue background that covers the rest of the slide. The lighting is soft, creating gentle shadows.

Where We Collaborated: Key Files

High-level overview and impacts – immediate and projected

Developer

Hopewell

- One of the largest ICI developers within Halton Region. Has collectively built several million square feet of ICI space across Southern Ontario.
- Through the last new phase of their development 3455 North Service Rd they were able to solve multiple issues and attract multiple new businesses.

Emshih

- A traditional, regionally focused, developer who has a focus on retail and residential developments. Has millions of SqF of ICI space across Halton Region.
- The current CX processes have been utilized to ensure their development adjacent to key intensification areas is realized and they can continue to locate businesses to Burlington.

Weston Consulting

- Leading consulting firm for most large scale developments in both the ICI and residential spaces. Works across all municipalities in the GTA.
- Across multiple files, their developments have been provided white glove service that has ensured their client's are retained and expanded within the City of Burlington.

Large Business

ABS Machining

- A three-stage development that began in 2017 but required multiple sites and buildings to fully meet their business expansion needs.
- The current phase of this development required development facilitation and established several million in assessment value increase and several hundred jobs.

Mercedes Benz/ Astra Capita

- One of the largest automotive employers within Burlington and a key ICI developer within the Western GTA as well. Their plans included expansion of their dealership, redevelopment of an adjacent parcel, and the retainment of a large company.
- The CX processes provided assurance as they considered multiple parts to their expansion. They were able to retain a large employer

King Paving

- A key relocation file where King Paving Burlington needed to relocate in order to achieve the full redevelopment potential of their site that would allow the redevelopment of the Aldershot MTSA
- After 8 years they were able to find a solution- working with CX- to relocate their existing operations, begin remediation on their site in Aldershot, and retain all of their current employees.

Small Business

Service Plus Aquatics

- A new industrial company that BEDT worked to locate to Burlington over the past five years. They focus on the installation and servicing of pools in condos and institutions.
- Once taken into the high-impact file criteria they were able to locate to their site on Palladium and generate approximately 150 jobs for the city.

Burlington Gymnastics

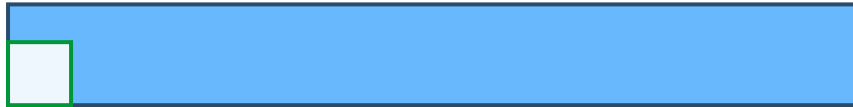
- A key partnership with the City of Burlington, and one of the largest sports programs within the City. They had been assessing a possible expansion for six years with no concrete options.
- While working with CX, they were able to locate to a site within a Hopewell Development alongside the NSR. This would not have been possible if not for the problem solving work of CX.

Cubas Restaurant

- A new restaurant that wanted to open a dance floor alongside their traditional restaurant operations. This led to issues regarding zoning interpretations, and overall municipal licensing.
- Through the small business role facilitation role, and open dialogue with planning, the restaurant was able to locate to Burlington and begin operations.

Successes and Gaps

Successes



- ☐ Approval rating of concierge program
- ☐ Single point of communication for regulatory issues with key files
- ☐ Job Creation Numbers
- ☐ Assessment increase numbers
- ☐ Improved reputation within community

Gaps



- ☐ Awareness of concierge program
- ☐ Criteria difficult to calculate for “high-impact”
- ☐ Survey, and customer feedback, only measures the concierge not reputational improvement
- ☐ Positive v. negative feedback is difficult to measure with the current tracking systems
- ☐ Continued lack of communication between consultants and clients

Moving Forward

1. Discussion on role of BEDT and working committees in Integrated CX
2. Collaborative support for large business with HI criteria
3. Updates to High Impact Criteria to include main street files
4. Continued process improvements through SDAP
5. Improved KPIs for Key Investment Outcomes
6. Improved Relationship/ Reputational Tracking Metrics

March 17, 2025

**Mr. Hassaan Basit
Chief Administrative Officer,
City of Burlington**

Dear Hassaan,

On behalf of the Board of Burlington Economic Development and Tourism, I would like to provide an update on our organization's goals and activities, and also express our support for the Third-Party Review and additional considerations for better alignment. Given the significant change undertaken over the past year, at the direction of Council, to merge Burlington Economic Development and Tourism Burlington, it is helpful to the newly merged organization and Board of Directors to ensure that Burlington's economic and tourism strategies are future-ready and that they align with City goals.

As you are aware, we formally completed all merger activities and are now officially operating as of January 1 as Burlington Economic Development and Tourism (BEDT). This represents a significant milestone that, in response to a request by the City to complete the merger and to subsequently ensure it was expedited and completed by January 1, resolves challenges related to the Tourism MAT funding and creates greater alignment and efficiencies in the implementation of business and visitor attraction strategies.

Given that this merger required significant work related to governance restructuring over the past year, I know that the staff and Board are excited about BEDT's Key Objectives for 2025. These objectives, as outlined below, include specific and measurable economic and tourism priorities that align with City Priorities and ensure coordination with City departments and enhanced accountability for residents, businesses, and stakeholders:

1. Investment Attraction:

- Attract \$300 million in new Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) assessments.
- Create 300+ high-impact jobs through business investment and relocation.
- Generate over 2,000 overnight hotel stays to drive local tourism revenues.

2. Business Support & Retention:

- Retain and support 5,000+ jobs to sustain Burlington's economic stability.
- Provide direct support to 750+ businesses, helping them grow and stay in Burlington.
- Expand 20,000 sqm of new or redeveloped ICI space to accommodate business expansion.

3. Visitor Experience & Destination Development:

- Attract 500,000+ visitors through events, marketing initiatives, and tourism investments.
- Maintain a Destination Business Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 50+ to ensure a high-quality visitor experience.
- Achieve 65%+ hotel occupancy rates, strengthening Burlington's tourism economy.

These Key Objectives build on some of the high-impact economic development and tourism outcomes achieved in 2024, in addition to the successful completion of the merger, including:

- Supporting 750+ businesses and retaining 5,000+ jobs.
- Attracting \$300M in new ICI assessments and 300+ high-impact jobs.
- Generating 500,000+ visitors and achieving 65%+ hotel occupancy rates.
- Expanding TechPlace's support of entrepreneurs supporting 800+ businesses and securing \$187,000 in new business support services from partners.

As a result of the last governance review undertaken in 2020, a key recommendation was to ensure clear communication and direct channels to the City due in part to a prior breakdown in information sharing that had been identified by Council. Since then, BEDT had been reporting to the City directly via the Committee of the Whole and other Council reports when required. Over the past months, these channels have been reduced and/or eliminated so we hope we can find a way to continue to communicate BEDT kpi's and activities moving forward to the City and Council. In addition, there is monthly reporting provided to the Board of Directors and Committees, who provide independent expertise and oversight in a number of key strategic areas, and include invaluable resources from the business community that live, work, and support the City's economic and tourism industry.

We deeply appreciate the support of the City and Council throughout this transition and look forward to further collaboration as we build on these successes in 2025 and beyond. In addition, I am hopeful that the review will provide consideration for this merger having just been completed and allow time for the newly merged entity to further demonstrate its value. Regardless, I know that staff and the Board welcome recommendations related to how BEDT can continue to work with the City to ensure alignment, coordination, and transparency on key priorities.

On the Third-Party Review, we also want to reinforce that BEDT is an experienced organization and our Board members are professionals who volunteer our time to support BEDT, the City and our community. Our preference as a Board continues to be that we engage directly with the City and work through future structure, processes, and outcomes in a collaborative manner with our City stakeholders. The review, as conducted so far, has left minimal opportunity to do so and in our view is missing out on the opportunity to engage our team in a more meaningful manner to add value to the process. I want to express our desire that whatever recommendations come from the review, a guidepost we should all have is to ensure continued board and organizational engagement and that a collaborative approach will ensure we reach an aligned and successful outcome. We are all striving towards the same goal, to ensure our limited resources are used in the most effective manner to support the goals of the City and our business and tourism stakeholders.

With this, and to further demonstrate our support for the governance review, I have asked the Executive Director of BEDT to prepare some background and materials to provide directly to the consultants conducting the review. I would also like to request an ongoing meeting or call prior to our board meetings moving forward to ensure I have any updates or information on the review. This will ensure I can communicate with the board effectively and ensure alignment with the City on messaging.

Once again, we appreciate the ability to engage on this initiative. We look forward to continuing the conversation and working together to drive economic and tourism success in Burlington.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Laidman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ron Laidman
Chair, Board of Directors
Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

Third-Party Review (CAO-06-25 / Rubicon Report) BEDT Summary Report: Board Discussion and Prioritization

Prepared by: Burlington Economic Development & Tourism (BEDT)

Date: October 28th

Purpose

This report prepares the Board for the November 3 Committee of the Whole discussion on CAO-06-25 and the Rubicon Third-Party Review. It reaffirms the Board’s commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for Burlington’s economic development and tourism sectors, engaging constructively with the City, and ensuring Council decisions are based on accurate, balanced information. The report highlights alignment and gaps between the July 2025 Board Submission and the staff/consultant recommendations, outlines recommended BEDT - Chief Transformation Officer (CTO) coordination process, and identifies interim priorities to maintain continuity and readiness for potential transition.

1. Board Position (July 2025 Submission)

The Board’s submission emphasized maintaining a hybrid governance model with stronger City alignment via a formal MOU/Charter, shared KPIs, and quarterly Council briefings. It focused on measurable outcomes—jobs, investment, visitor spending, and business retention—as defining success factors. It also reaffirmed the 2024 Council-directed merger to modernize and streamline tourism and economic development functions. The Board’s guiding principle remains focused on achieving the best strategic outcomes, regardless of structure, provided it ensures clarity, performance, and alignment.

2. Areas of Alignment with CAO-06-25 and Rubicon

There is clear philosophical alignment between BEDT’s recommendations and those of City staff and Rubicon on several themes.

Theme	BEDT Board Position (July 2025)	Alignment in CAO-06-25 / Rubicon Report
City–BEDT Alignment	Formal MOU / Charter to define roles and reporting.	Agrees that roles and integration require clarity.

Council Visibility & Transparency	Semi-annual briefings and public KPI dashboard.	Recommends stronger reporting to Council.
Performance Measurement	Shared KPI framework tied to Horizon 2050 and Corporate Compass.	Notes need for clearer outcomes and KPI tracking.
MAT Oversight and Tourism Accountability	Transparent administration of MAT and Tourism Investment Fund.	Calls for enhanced transparency in MAT governance.
Economic & Tourism Integration	Single mandate connecting business growth and visitor economy.	Recognizes the value of an integrated approach.

3. Areas of Misalignment and Gaps for Discussion

The following table highlights key differences between the Board's submission and staff/consultant findings to inform Board discussion.

Topic	BEDT Board Submission (July 2025)	Staff / Rubicon Position	Key Gap / Consideration
Governance Model Options	Supports 'Hybrid with Controls'.	Recommends full City integration.	Hybrid option not evaluated or costed.
Merger Context	Cites Jan 2025 Council-approved merger achievements.	References outdated pre-merger issues.	Omits purpose and progress of merger.
Tourism / DMO Framework	Submitted Deloitte 2024 EDO-DMO benchmark.	Benchmarks EDOs only.	Missing tourism KPI context and MAT model.
TechPlace	Provides Council-endorsed ROI and impact data.	Describes duplication / misalignment.	Omits verified results and Council direction.
Tourism Arm Outdated	New Destination Stewardship Plan and Tourism Services rolled out through 2024-2025	Assesses old outdated Tourism model	Report speaks to known perceptions tourism programming prior to the merger that

	including Ontario Tourism Industry Awards of Excellence nominated Concierge Service		have been addressed.
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4. Coordination with City CTO

As recommended through the separate Report on Gaps and Inconsistencies in CAO-06-25, BEDT staff are working with the City's Chief Transformation Officer (CTO) to validate and correct factual inconsistencies, assess reputational impacts, and prepare a joint clarification note for Council prior to the November 3 meeting. This collaboration reinforces the shared commitment to accuracy and constructive solutions.

5. Interim Priorities and Continuity Actions

To ensure delivery stability while Council considers CAO-06-25, the Board should confirm the following priorities:

- a. Committee Appointments and Coordination – Confirm continuation of 2025 committee appointments delegated to HR & Governance Committee and approved at the October HR & Governance Meeting.
- b. Destination Brand and Marketing – Proceed with the Destination Brand as the external consumer facing brand for visitors and businesses. New organizational identity to be revisited following council direction on CAO-06-25 recommendations.
- c. Transition Planning and CTO Coordination – Direct the Executive Director to work with the City CTO to identify key items for coordination and prioritization of a transition plan should CAO-06-25 be approved, including MAT continuity, KPI integration, stakeholder communication, and HR/governance considerations.

6. Framing Questions for Board Discussion

- Does the Board reaffirm its support for a 'Hybrid with Controls' model as the best path to economic and tourism outcomes?
- Which clarifications should be jointly addressed with the City to remove bias and confusion?
- What coordination measures should be prioritized to ensure continuity if CAO-06-25 is approved?

- What tone and key messages should the Chair and Executive Director deliver to Council to emphasize alignment and partnership?

7. Next Steps

1. CTO Coordination – Finalize joint clarification and begin work on transition readiness plan ahead of Committee of the Whole.
2. Board Feedback – Submit additional observations on alignment or omissions by Thursday at noon
3. Continuity Actions – Confirm committee appointments and brand implementation to maintain momentum.
4. Council Preparation – Delegate authority to Chair, Vice Chair and committees chairs to approve final Board position and representation for November 3 with delegation materials to be distributed to board.

8. Conclusion

The BEDT Board remains focused on achieving the best outcomes for Burlington's economy and visitor economy. By collaborating with the City to clarify facts, align on governance objectives, and prepare for any transition with professionalism, the Board can ensure Council makes an informed, evidence-based decision that advances Burlington's long-term prosperity and reputation.



**A DIGITAL -FIRST REPORT
COVERING 13 INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY
WELL -BEING**

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2025 REPORT

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QUALITY OF LIFE



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Belonging B+

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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion B+

Economy B

Environment B+

Health & Wellness B+

Housing B-

Learning B+

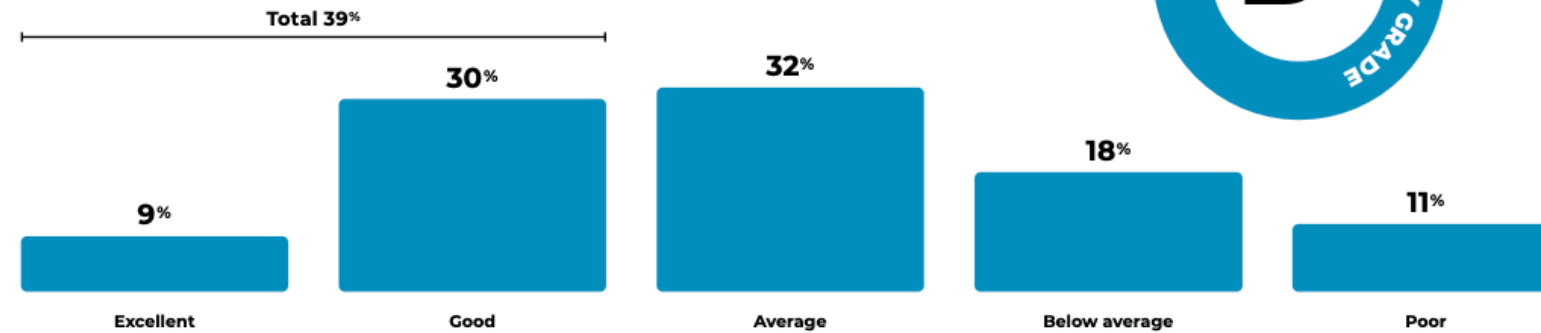
Safety A-

Sports & Recreation A-

Transportation B-

Standard of Living B+

Housing

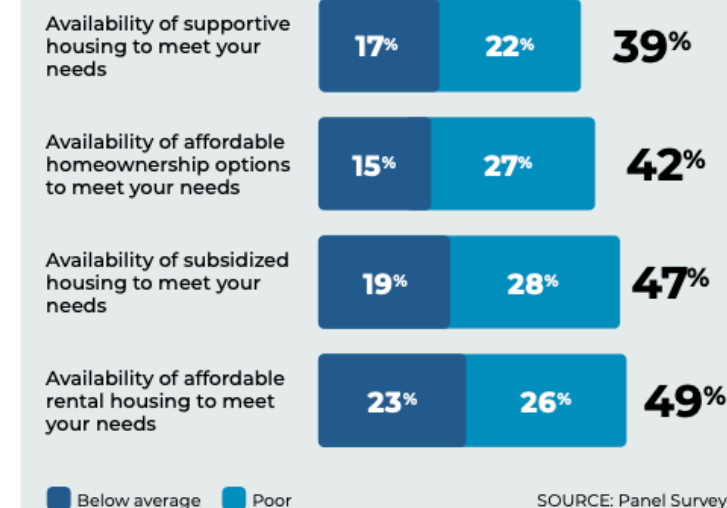


Having safe and accessible housing people can afford is a basic need that contributes significantly to quality of life.

Housing in Burlington receives a relatively low overall average grade of B- and is tied with transportation for the vital indicators with the lowest ratings. Less than 4 in 10 residents provide good or excellent ratings in this area, with those who were born outside Canada, BIPOC residents, and men being more likely to do so.

Ratings for the specific aspects of housing reveal a consistent dissatisfaction with the state of housing availability and affordability in Burlington. Around 4 in 10 residents provide negative ratings for the availability of supportive housing and affordable home ownership options in the city, and just less than half are negative regarding the availability of subsidized housing and affordable rental opportunities. More Burlington residents are unhappy with housing than satisfied, showing that housing is an important issue for the community.

Sustainable Development Goals



Dissatisfaction with the current state of housing in Burlington is not distributed equally across demographics; those who are white, college educated, aged 31-44, or a woman tend to be more likely to provide negative ratings for specific elements related to housing.

SOURCE: Panel Survey

Community Survey participants rate housing in Burlington lower than the general population, with an overall average grade of C+. Ratings for specific aspects of housing are also lower across the board. This may reflect that this group has a closer awareness of current housing challenges in Burlington.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY

IMPACT & ACTION



BCF IMPACT

55 youth (ages 16-24) have been supported through BCF's partnered social impact investment with Halton Children's Aid Society's Bridging the Gap Program.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

- Support charities that identify solutions to help address housing needs.
- Advocate to your local government for affordable and supportive housing.



72%

increase to the Halton Access to Community Housing (HATCH) waitlist for rental geared-to-income housing from 2021 to 2024

8,048

number of applicants on the waitlist

SOURCE: Halton Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy 2025 – 2035

16%

increase in shelter intakes in Halton Region in 2024, compared to 2023

Halton Region's shelter system operated at 40% over capacity in 2024.



SOURCE: Halton Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy 2025 – 2035

343 → Halton households experiencing homelessness in 2024

84% → people who reported that low incomes were a barrier to finding housing

77% → people who said high rents were a barrier to housing

Source: Halton Region's 2024 Point in Time Count

22% of Halton residents rent

1.6%: Halton's vacancy rate – 3% is considered healthy

SOURCE: CMHC, Fall 2024 Rental Market Report

\$1,900+: average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Halton

SOURCE: CMHC, Fall 2024 Rental Market Report

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

8.4%

Halton families living in multigenerational housing in 2021

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

Racialized households in Halton are more likely to experience core housing need. These are the top five racialized groups experiencing core housing needs more than others: Arab, West Asian, Black, Korean, Chinese.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

TAKING COLLECTIVE ACTION

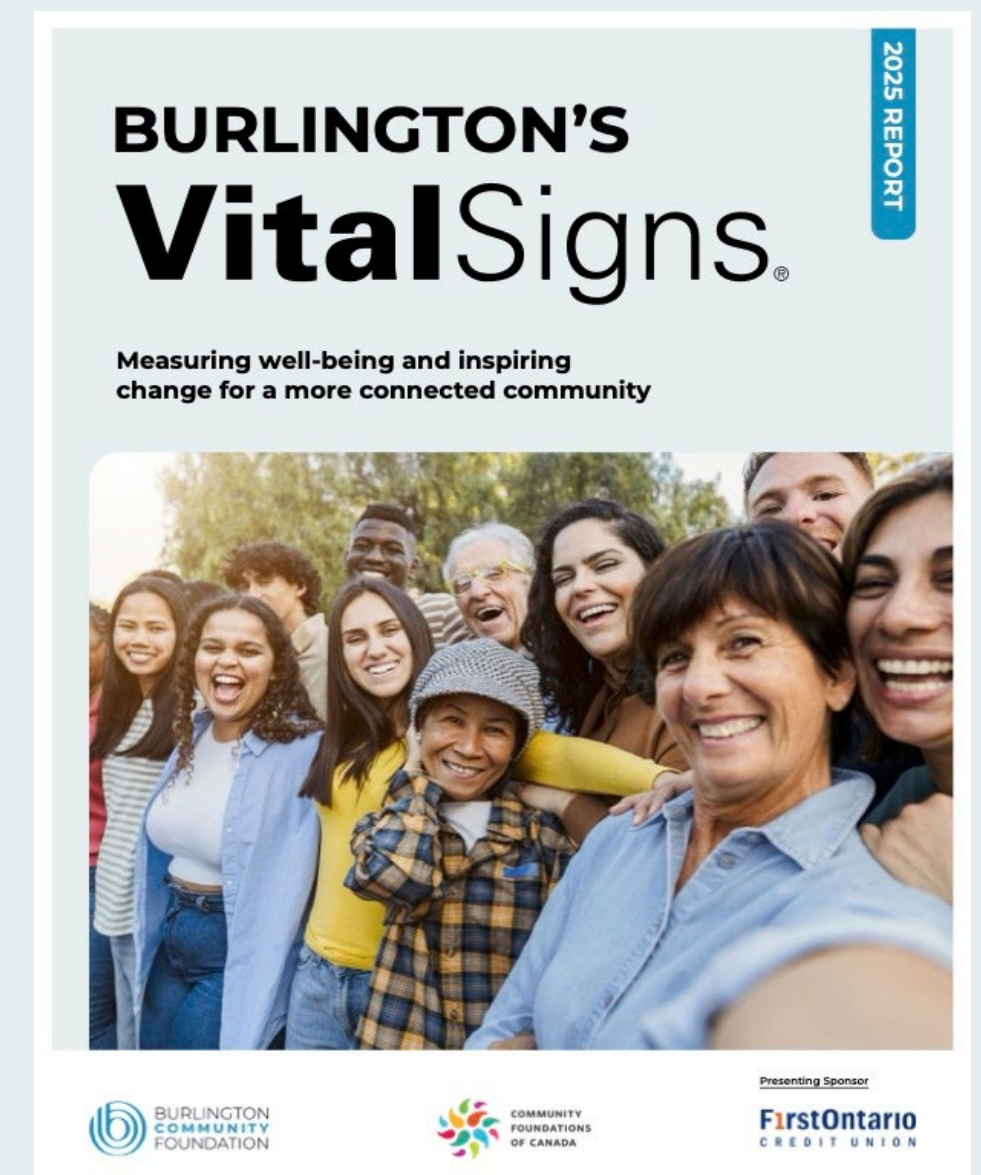
- ✓ Vital Community Conversations over next 24 months
- ✓ Providing charitable grants that align with identified priorities
- ✓ Discussion and sharing of BCF's Vital Signs report and its key findings
- ✓ BCF housing initiative set to launch later this week, inviting residents to support urgent housing needs in our city, through generosity
- ✓ National Housing Day forum, hosted by Community Development Halton, on Nov. 21. Panel moderated by BCF CEO Megan Tregunno.

THANK YOU

Thank you for the opportunity to share about Vital Signs

ACTIONS COUNCILLORS CAN TAKE:

- ☒ **Subscribe** to BCF's monthly newsletter + follow BCF on socials.
- ☒ **Share** about Vital Signs in your newsletter, with constituents and neighbours.
- ☒ **Connect** with BCF to discuss how we can collectively inspire community action.



BURLINGTON'S VitalSigns.®

**Measuring well-being and inspiring
change for a more connected community**



Thanks to our Sponsors

Presenting



Vital Supporters



Land Acknowledgement

Burlington as we know it today is rich in history and modern traditions of many First Nations and the Métis. From the Anishinaabeg to the Haudenosaunee, and the Métis – our lands spanning from Lake Ontario to the Niagara Escarpment are steeped in Indigenous history.

The territory is mutually covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the Ojibway and other allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

The Burlington Community Foundation acknowledges that the land on which we gather, work and play is part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We celebrate our Urban Indigenous brothers and sisters across Burlington and deeply value their contributions and voices in the community.



Burlington Community Foundation Team Members

Megan Tregunno, CFRE

Chief Executive Officer

Dana Brown

Communications & Grants Associate

Martine Fournier, CPA-CA

Finance Partner

Board of Directors

Tim Cestnick

Board Chair

Co-Founder & CEO, Our Family Office Inc.

Carlos Alvarez

Treasurer & Secretary

Partner, KPMG

Tulika Majumdar

Chair, Community Leadership Committee

Associate Director, Data Engineering,

RBC Insurance

Cathy Olsiak

Chair, Nominating & Governance Committee

Partner, Simpson Wigle Law LLP

Lisa Ritchie

Chair, Investment Committee

Vice-President Emeritus, Burgundy Asset

Management Ltd.

Matt Afinec

President and Chief Operating Officer,

Hamilton Sports Group

Kevin Brady

Director, Advica Health

Dom Marinic, CPA, CIM, FCSI

Director, Investments, The Pioneer Group Inc.

Regional Research Contributor: Community Development Halton

Rishia Burke

Executive Director

Richard Lau

Social Planner

Steven Barrow

Social Planner

Iman Kaur

Community Planner

A Message from our CEO



Megan Tregunno, CFRE
Chief Executive Officer
Burlington Community
Foundation

For more than a decade, the Burlington Community Foundation (BCF) has been producing Vital Signs reports to inform and engage our city.

Vital Signs is Canada's most extensive community-driven data program, led by Community Foundations of Canada, and implemented by community foundations locally.

Our Burlington 2025 Vital Signs report builds on this national framework, providing a timely snapshot of our city and how Burlington residents are feeling about vital indicators that contribute to their quality of life and that of their fellow citizens.

This year, you may notice a few differences in our report: it has a refreshed look to pair with our recently updated brand identity; there is an easy-to-understand grading

system applied to each vital indicator; and we have added a wealth of first-hand data to accompany our contextual regional data, provided by our Regional Research Contributor, Community Development Halton.

With this report, we strived to create a vital local resource for our community. One that takes a comprehensive look at areas such as housing, arts and culture, diversity, equity and inclusion and much more. We asked Burlington residents detailed questions about more than a dozen vital indicators, in an effort to highlight where our city is thriving and where there are opportunities for growth.

We hope this report will be used to inform decision-making, enliven conversations, spark civic engagement, and activate more progress in areas where it's needed most.

Thank you to our presenting sponsor, FirstOntario Credit Union and all of the sponsors, supporters and collaborators who have helped to ensure this Vital Signs resource is made available to the community.

As a Foundation, we are committed to using these findings to help guide our BCF-directed granting, ensuring resources and support are aligned with our city's greatest needs.

As our city's giving and generosity hub for more than 25 years, we work with generous individuals, businesses, governments, and charitable partners to make an impact locally and beyond. We know that together, we will be able to continue to strengthen community through generosity.

A Message from our Presenting Sponsor



Joanne Battaglia
SVP Marketing,
Communications &
Community Partnerships
FirstOntario Credit Union

FirstOntario is more than just a financial institution. Strongly rooted in the communities we serve for over 86 years, we've become a mainstay not just because our members trust us when it comes to their finances, but also because of our commitment to being hands-on contributors and raising awareness about causes and initiatives that make a difference.

Through sponsorships, partnerships and the tireless efforts of our employee Blue Wave volunteers, we strive to make a positive impact in key areas that help to strengthen our communities: food security; affordable housing; youth, health and wellness; and financial literacy. Guided by our social purpose statement, we exist to unite communities for a sustainable future.

For more than a decade, FirstOntario has partnered with the Burlington Community Foundation, a partnership founded on our mutual commitment to overall well-being. We are proud to be the presenting sponsor for Burlington's 2025 Vital Signs Report, an integral local resource we know will help engage the community and contribute to lasting change; and we look forward to continuing to champion the work of this important organization.

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Burlington Community Foundation

Burlington Community Foundation has been the city's trusted philanthropic partner for more than 25 years.

Established in 1999 by Burlington residents, BCF brings together generous donors, businesses and community members who want to have a lasting impact in our local community and beyond.

We serve as a charitable giving hub, managing donor advised funds that provide on-going resources for granting in our local community and to charities across Canada.

With our support, generous individuals who want to make a difference can create a sustained stream of funding to meet their short and long-term generosity goals.



We also identify community needs and provide regular grants to charitable organizations working to strengthen quality of life in Burlington. We have invested more than \$12.7M into people, projects and initiatives that strengthen Burlington and communities across Canada.

BCF is part of a national network of more than 200 community foundations across Canada, all working to create communities where everyone belongs.

What is Vital Signs?

Vital Signs is a national program led by community foundations, and coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada, that leverages local knowledge to measure the vitality of our communities and support action towards improving our collective quality of life.

Community foundations use the knowledge gained through Vital Signs to lead on impact in their community. Priorities identified by Vital Signs are often incorporated into the strategic direction of the foundation and guide decision-making as a community leader and funder. As a result, community foundations are able to move the needle on the most pressing issues.

Methodology and Demographics

1. Panel survey results were collected from 403 Burlington residents through Leger's online research panel, LEO. This group was randomly selected to reflect the city's population. To make sure the results match the community as closely as possible, the data was adjusted for age and gender using information from the 2021 Census. In this report, these findings are called **"Panel Survey" results** and letter grades are based on this data.

2. Community survey results are based on feedback from residents who joined the survey through a public link shared by the Burlington Community Foundation. These responses

provide valuable insights, but they may reflect the views of more engaged residents and might not fully represent the broader Burlington population. In this report, these findings are called the **"Community Survey" results** and are shown alongside the Panel Survey results for comparison.



Look for this symbol throughout the report.

3. Regional Data: This contextual data was compiled by our **Community Research Contributor Community Development Halton**.

		Panel Survey	Community Survey
n=		403	254
Gender	Male	46%	29%
	Female	53%	69%
	Non-binary	<1%	<1%
	Other	<1%	-
Age	18-30	15%	3%
	31-44	25%	17%
	45-54	17%	20%
	55+	43%	60%
Ethnicity (can identify with more than one group)	White	87%	83%
	Total BIPOC	15%	12%
	Total Indigenous	2%	<1%
	Black	4%	2%
	South Asian	3%	4%
	Chinese	3%	1%
	Arab	2%	4%
	Latin American	1%	1%
	Other Asian	2%	4%
	Self-describe	1%	2%

		Panel Survey	Community Survey
Born in Canada	Yes	84%	76%
	No	16%	24%
Tenure in Canada	Up to 5 years	8%	3%
	6-10 years	10%	15%
	11-20 years	22%	19%
	20+ years	57%	61%
Tenure in Burlington	Up to 5 years	17%	11%
	6-10 years	12%	12%
	11-20 years	22%	14%
	20+ years	47%	63%

		Panel Survey	Community Survey
Education	HS or less	16%	5%
	College	25%	23%
	University	49%	65%
Employment	Working	60%	55%
	Not working	8%	5%
	Retired	26%	37%
	Student	4%	1%
	Other	1%	1%
HH Income	Less than \$50K	8%	9%
	\$50K – \$79,999	15%	10%
	\$80K – \$125K	27%	21%
	\$125K +	39%	39%

Rounded data: The Panel Survey results presented in this report have been rounded to make them easier to read. Since the totals were calculated using the original, unrounded figures, they may not exactly match the sum of the rounded values shown.

Key Findings

Most Burlington residents feel good about life in the city. Eight in 10 say the quality of life here is good or excellent. People who are especially positive include retirees, residents aged 55 and older, those without children, people who have lived in Burlington for many years, and those born outside Canada. The top things residents enjoy about Burlington are its waterfront, safety, convenient location, parks and green spaces, and community festivals and events. Many aspects of life in Burlington are rated highly, with sports and recreation and safety receiving an A- average grade. Most other areas are rated B+ or higher.

Housing and transportation stand out as the main areas where residents see room for improvement. Each received an overall grade of B-. More than 1 in 3 residents rate housing options as below average or poor, with the biggest concerns being the lack of affordable rentals and subsidized housing. When it comes to getting around, fewer than two-thirds say any form of transportation is easy to use. Public transit and active transportation (like cycling or walking) receive the lowest ratings. These challenges connect to the top issues residents identify in Burlington: cost of living, housing affordability, and traffic. Residents most often suggest adding affordable housing, lowering costs, and improving transit and traffic flow as the best ways to improve life in the city.

Residents feel positively about community engagement in Burlington, but participation doesn't always match perceptions. More than two-thirds say they see public spaces as places to connect with others, know where to find community resources, and feel they can engage with the community in ways that matter to them. However, only about half of residents say they take part in community activities, and fewer still volunteer their time.

Learning opportunities are generally viewed positively. About three-quarters of residents are happy with K-12 education in Burlington. Views on lifelong learning opportunities are also mostly positive, though somewhat less so. Affordability of post-secondary education stands out as an area for improvement, with fewer than half of residents rating it positively.

Burlington residents draw a clear distinction between parks and sensitive natural habitats. More than 8 in 10 feel positively about the quality and availability of parks and green spaces in their neighbourhoods. In contrast, fewer than two-thirds give positive ratings when it comes to protecting Burlington's sensitive habitats.

STRENGTHS

80% rate quality of life in Burlington as good/excellent

82% feel accepted for who they are

80% feel safe in their neighbourhood

74% rate their ability to participate in sports as good/excellent

72% believe it is important to learn about and respect Indigenous culture, values and traditions

57% rate their current household finances as good/excellent

A majority rate their spiritual (69%), mental (67%), and physical (62%) health as good/excellent

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

39%	rate housing in Burlington as good/excellent
40%	rate their wage in relation to cost of living as good/excellent
50%	rate their ability to access mental health care in a timely manner as good/excellent
35%	rate the availability of entry-level job opportunities as good/excellent

GRADE SUMMARY

Panel Survey	
	n= 403
Quality of Life	A-
Arts & Culture	B+
Belonging	B+
Community Engagement	B+
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	B+
Economy	B
Environment	B+
Health & Wellness	B+
Housing	B-
Learning	B+
Safety	A-
Sports & Recreation	A-
Standard of Living	B+
Transportation	B-

How to Read this Report

Overall Results Snapshot – Panel Survey

This shows the letter grade and the overall results for each vital indicator, giving a quick snapshot of how the community is doing in that area.

Results Summary – Panel Survey

This provides a summary of each vital indicator, touching on both overall and specific results, as well as demographic differences.

Sustainable Development Goals

Throughout the report, you'll see icons for United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These show how each vital indicator connects to global priorities for building a better future.

Community Impact & Action

Highlights examples of the positive role the Burlington Community Foundation has played in each issue and shares simple ways residents can get involved and make a difference.



What are Sustainable Development Goals?



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal set of 17 interconnected goals established by the United Nations to address global challenges and promote a better and more sustainable future for all. Their purpose is to provide a comprehensive framework for countries, organizations, and communities to work together on key issues. Collectively, the SDGs aim to balance economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection by fostering collaboration and encouraging actions that ensure the well-being of both current and future generations.



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



End hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages.



Ensure equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning.



Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation.



Ensure access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for all.



Promote sustained, economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.



Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.



Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



Conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas, and marine resources.



Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice, and build accountable institutions.



Strengthen global partnerships for sustainable development.

Learn more about the Sustainable Development Goals

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

Be Informed, Get Engaged, Take Action

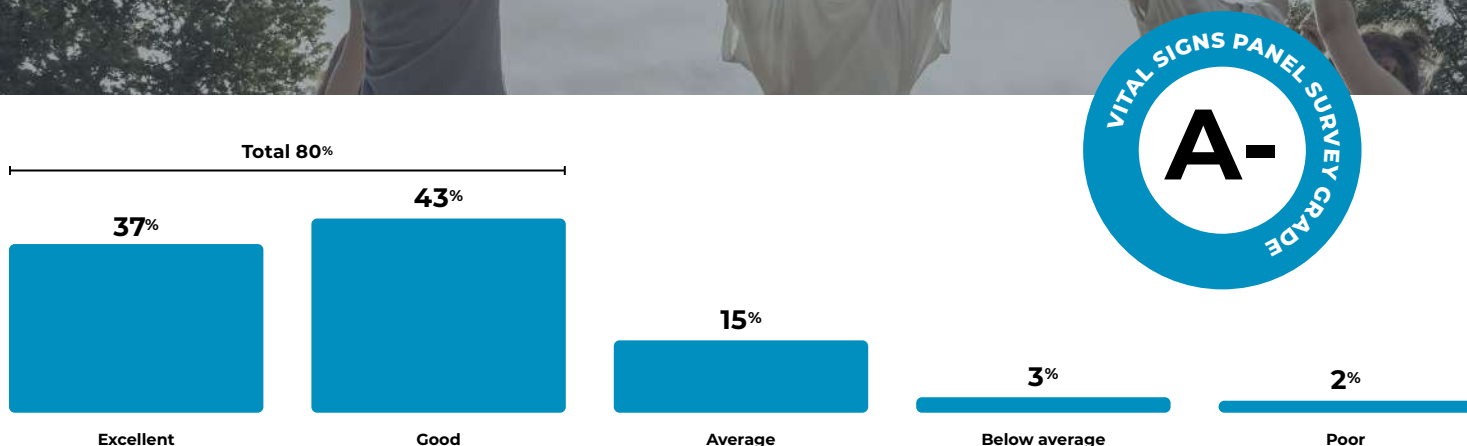
Vital Signs is Canada's largest community-driven data program, led by Community Foundations of Canada and implemented by community foundations locally. Vital Signs helps inform decision-making and creates opportunities for vital community conversations and taking civic action.



Here are 5 ways you can make a difference after reading Burlington's 2025 Vital Signs report:

1. Host a conversation with your neighbours, friends, peers or colleagues about one or more of the vital indicators.
2. Learn about local charities and organizations that advance community well-being.
3. Think about how your workplace can make a difference through volunteering or other community initiatives.
4. Donate to local organizations that support causes you care about and work to strengthen community.
5. Support the **Burlington Community Foundation** by making a donation, learning about ways to make a lasting impact in Burlington through a legacy gift, or discussing how you can start a fund to meet your philanthropic goals.

Quality of Life



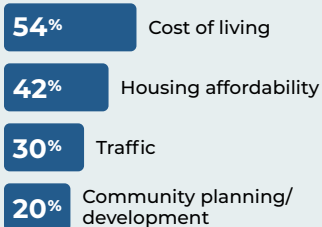
Quality of Life represents the general well-being of individuals and society in Burlington, encompassing the 13 grading vital indicators assessed throughout the Burlington Vital Signs survey.

Burlington residents have a very positive view of quality of life in Burlington and give it an average grade of A-, with 8 in 10 residents giving good or excellent scores. Those born outside Canada, retirees and those aged 55+, those without children, and longtime residents of Burlington all are more likely to rate the quality of life more positively.

Cost of living, housing affordability, traffic, and community planning are the most important issues in Burlington according to residents; while waterfront access, safety, location, parks/green spaces, and festivals/events are among the best things Burlington has to offer.

When it comes to suggestions for making Burlington better, improving housing affordability, improving public transit, controlling development, addressing traffic congestion, and improving cost of living top the list of suggestions.

Most important issues facing Burlington



SOURCE: Panel Survey

Best things about Burlington



SOURCE: Panel Survey

What would make Burlington an even better place to live for you?

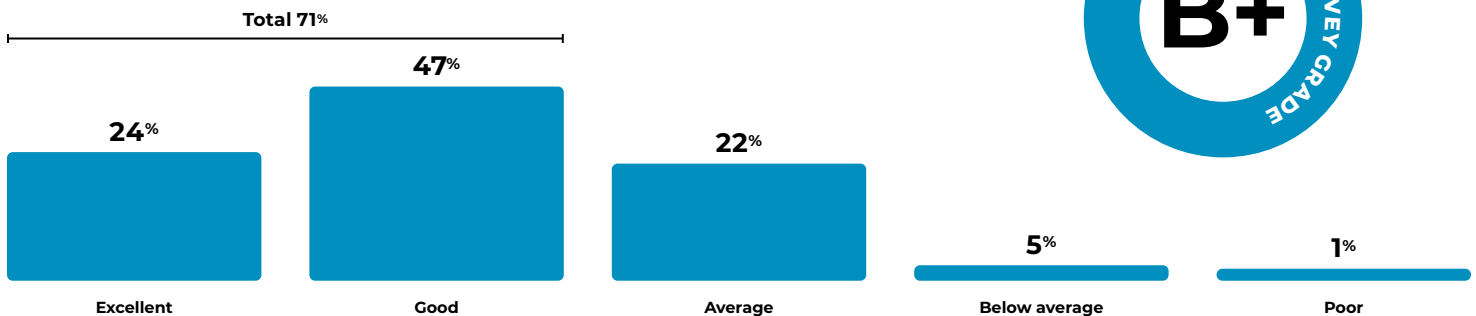


SOURCE: Panel Survey



While their overall perceptions of quality of life in Burlington are consistent with the general population, Community Survey participants are notably more concerned about traffic and community planning and are more likely to suggest addressing traffic and controlled development as ways to make Burlington better. They are also more likely to cite Burlington's sense of community and the generosity and care its residents show as the best things about Burlington.

Arts & Culture



Arts & Culture make a community a vibrant and enriching place to live. An active and diverse mix of cultural offerings increases our sense of satisfaction with our environment and community pride.

Burlington residents are very positive regarding arts & culture in their city; more than 7 in 10 rate it good or excellent and it receives an average grade of B+ from residents. Older residents aged 55+ and those in middle income brackets (\$50k-\$79k) have more positive overall perceptions of arts & culture in Burlington.

Most residents perceive Burlington's arts & culture scene to be varied, affordable, and supportive. Greater than 6 in 10 residents are positive regarding the variety and affordability of arts and cultural events in Burlington, and a similar amount feel positively about the support that arts and culture communities, including artists, receive.

Sustainable Development Goals



Variety of arts or cultural events (e.g., festivals, concerts, etc.)



Affordability of arts or cultural events (e.g., festivals, concerts, galas)



Support of arts and culture communities, including artists' well-being



Excellent Good

SOURCE: Panel Survey

Those with higher incomes are more positive regarding the affordability of arts and cultural events, indicating that there may be a gap in how different income brackets perceive the relative affordability of arts and cultural events in Burlington.

SOURCE: Panel Survey

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

\$343,187 in grants made to local arts and culture organizations in the 2024/25 fiscal year.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Visit local galleries and historical sites and consider supporting by making a donation.



55

number of arts and cultural organizations in Halton Region

SOURCE: Halton Community Services Directory, Arts & Culture

14.4%

of Halton's non-profit sector is made up of arts and cultural organizations

SOURCE: Community Development Halton, "State of the Nonprofit Sector," Community Data Watch (Nov. 2024)



15

performing arts venues and groups (includes municipally operated, non-profit and charities)

SOURCE: Town of Milton, Town of Oakville, City of Burlington, Town of Halton Hills, Halton Community Services Directory



8

non-profit galleries and arts societies (includes municipally operated)

Halton Region hosts many arts and cultural events each year, including both recurring major events and Culture Days (Halton Hills):

→ About **28** major recurring annual events across Halton

→ **130+** smaller events through Culture Days

SOURCE: ON Culture Days, 2023 Year-End Report, Halton Community Services Directory, Arts & Culture, <https://visitoakville.com/>, <https://experiencemilton.com/>, <https://www.milton.ca/>, <https://www.visithaltonhills.ca/>, Welcome to Burlington, Ontario Canada | Burlington Economic Development and Tourism

13,208

jobs in Halton related to arts and culture

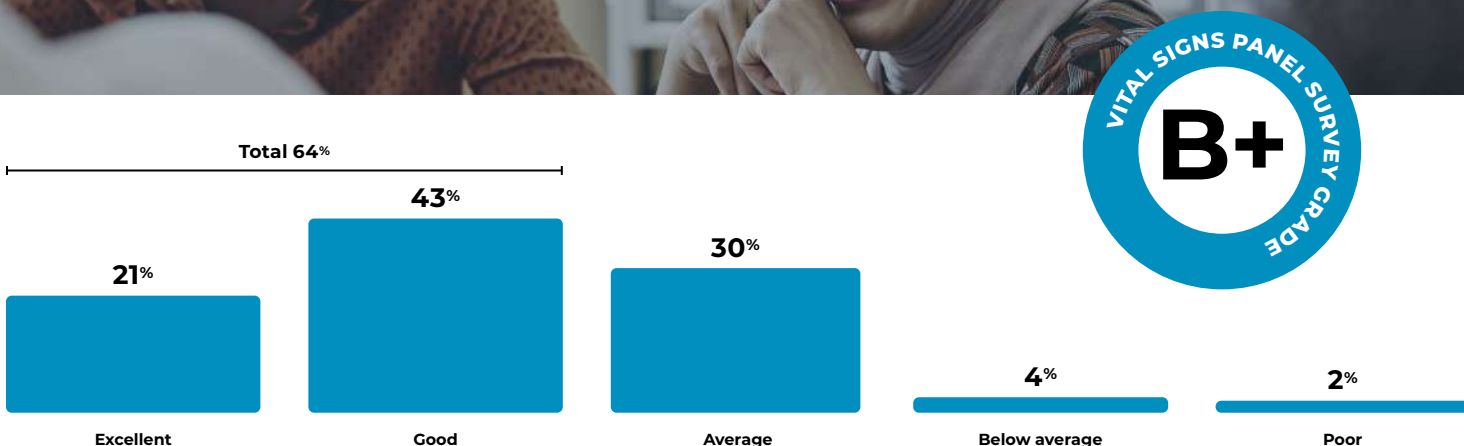
SOURCE: Nordacity. For the Ontario Arts Council. "Arts Across Ontario Impact Report 2025"

In 2024:

- There were **12** Indigenous History Month events in Halton.
- There were **13** Black History Month events in 2024 across the four municipalities.

SOURCE: Welcome to Burlington, Ontario Canada | Burlington Economic Development and Tourism, <https://visitoakville.com/>, <https://experiencemilton.com/>, <https://www.milton.ca/>, <https://www.visithaltonhills.ca/>

Belonging

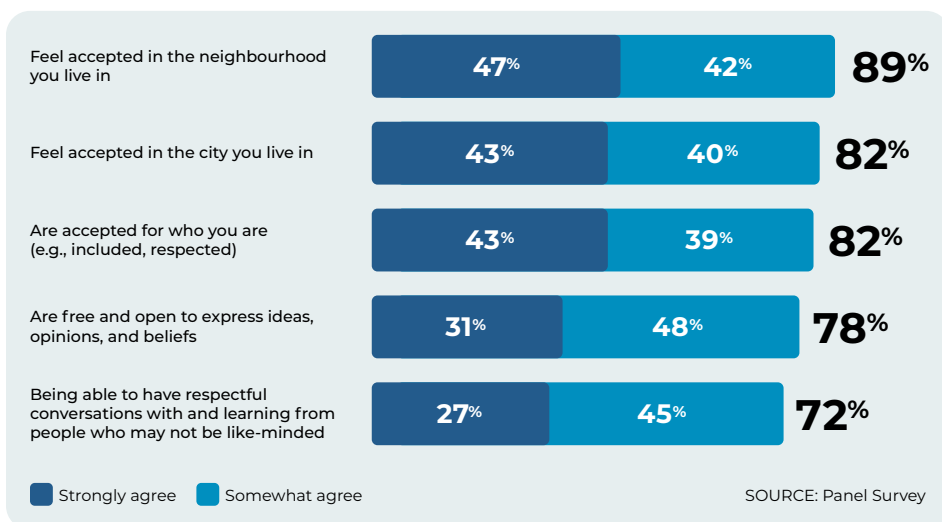


Belonging isn't just a concept for newcomers, but something that is applicable to everyone in a community. This includes members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, those who have a low income, Indigenous and BIPOC community members and others.

Burlington is perceived by residents as a strong performer in belonging; nearly two-thirds rate Burlington as good or excellent in this area, and it received an overall average grade of B+. Overall perceptions of belonging are consistent across all demographic groups, meaning that perceptions of belonging in Burlington are not heavily influenced by demographics such as age, gender, and ethnicity at the city-wide level.

Burlington residents are extremely positive regarding feelings of acceptance, with greater than 8 in 10 reporting they feel accepted in their neighbourhood, in the city, and for who they are. In addition, around three-quarters of residents report positive ratings for freedom of expression and respectful conversations with those who may not be like-minded. These overwhelmingly positive figures point towards the vast majority of Burlington residents being happy with the level of acceptance currently observable in the city.

Sustainable Development Goals



Among the Community Survey participants, those who are older, have a higher-income, and identify as white tend to feel more positive about acceptance and freedom of expression in Burlington. At the same time, they report feeling slightly less of a sense of belonging compared to the overall population, giving an average grade of B. These differences suggest that experiences of belonging may not be the same for everyone, and that some of these differences are more noticeable among the Community Survey participants.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY

IMPACT & ACTION



BCF IMPACT

BCF connects generous community members and businesses to causes they care about, creating long-term change.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Introduce yourself to your neighbours; take the lead on creating a neighbourhood skills map to identify what skills are available in your local community and call on each other when help is needed with a household task or special project.

85.3%

of those aged 65+ reported the strongest sense of belonging in Halton

67.1%

of newcomers and

65.2%

of non-native English speakers reported experiencing a strong sense of belonging

25%

of Indigenous survey respondents reported a strong sense of belonging

48.4%

of respondents in the 2SLGBTQIA+ group reported a strong sense of belonging

50.6%

of respondents with a disability reported a strong sense of belonging

64.9%

of respondents with low income reported a strong sense of belonging

74%

of people who participate in groups, associations and organizations were more likely to report a strong sense of belonging

56%

reported having positive neighbourhood cohesion in Burlington

SOURCE: Community Development Halton and Our Kids Network, Halton Sense of Belonging Survey, 2025

Places noted as being most inclusive

- Halton Multicultural Council (HMC) Connections
- YMCA
- Dare to be Youth

Religious institutions were places noted as inclusive

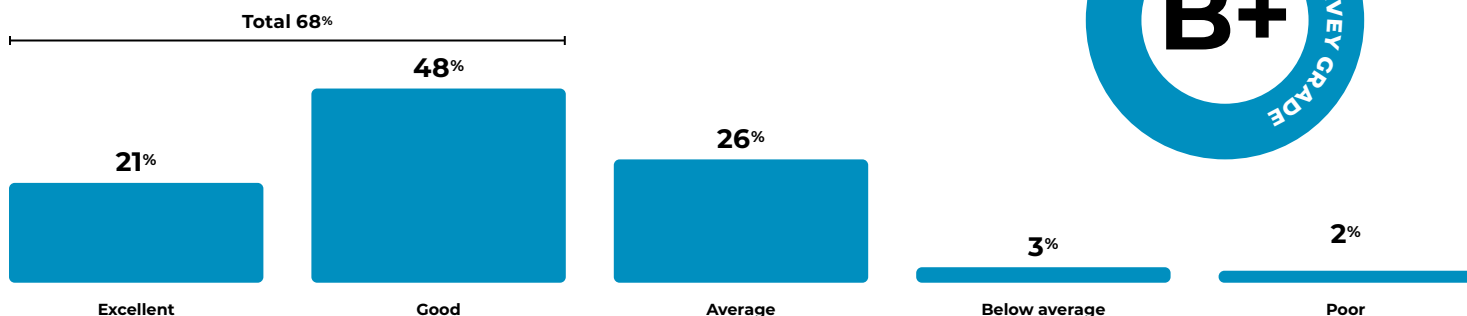
Places noted as not being most inclusive

- Golf courses
- Libraries
- Social services
- Driving centres
- Some hospital emergency rooms
- School registration offices

SOURCE: CCAH Belonging and Racial Identity in Halton Report 2022



Community Engagement



Community Engagement is how engaged members of the community are when it comes to volunteering and participating in community activities, or collaborating with individuals, groups, or the community at large, to address issues and solve problems that affect the community.

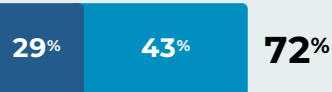
Community Engagement is perceived to be an area of relative strength by Burlington residents, with nearly 7 in 10 providing good or excellent ratings in the area and the overall average grade being B+. Those in middle income brackets (\$50k-\$79k) have more positive overall perceptions of community engagement in Burlington.

Burlington residents demonstrate strong community awareness and engagement. More than two-thirds say they know where to find community services, feel able to engage with their community in the way they want, and view public spaces like libraries as opportunities for connection. However, fewer residents report active involvement, as only about half say they participate in community activities or volunteer.

Sustainable Development Goals



You view spaces such as the public library system as a way to seek opportunities for community connection



You are aware of where you can find/access community services or resources



You are able to engage with your community in the way you want to



You participate in community activities (e.g., food bank, community clean-up, etc.)



You are an active volunteer within the community



Strongly agree Somewhat agree

SOURCE: Panel Survey

Those with higher incomes are more likely to be active volunteers in their community, indicating the potential presence of barriers limiting those with lower incomes from volunteering.

Women are less likely to agree that they are able to engage with their community in the way they want, presenting an opportunity for improving engagement channels targeted at women.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



Community Survey participants are slightly more negative than the general population regarding community engagement in Burlington, with the overall average grade being B among this group. That said, Community Survey participants are more likely to identify as active volunteers, reinforcing the deeper level of engagement present within this group.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

BCF hosts Vital Community Conversations for community members to connect with each other and learn about ways they can lend support through volunteering or donating.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Participate in your own community conversation by connecting with neighbours and new friends.

80.5%

of non-profits in Halton report difficulty in recruiting new volunteers

51.2%

of non-profits facing the challenge of volunteers retiring

22%

of Halton's non-profits are entirely driven by volunteers

SOURCE: Community Data Watch: The State of Halton's Nonprofit Sector, November 2024

21%

of people said affordability was a factor in why they chose to volunteer, or be involved in a community association. The cost of being involved in the community as a volunteer (e.g., transportation, equipment, memberships) can be a barrier for some Halton residents.

SOURCE: Community Development Halton and Our Kids Network. Halton Sense of Belonging Survey, 2025

27.6%



Burlington voter turnout (2022 municipal election)

SOURCE: Elections - City of Burlington



IN HALTON REGION, BETWEEN 2018 AND 2023

97,000

number of donors in 2023, compared to **100,060** donors in 2018, a **3% decrease**

\$2,682

average donation in 2023, compared to **\$2,368** in 2018, a **13.2% increase**

\$500

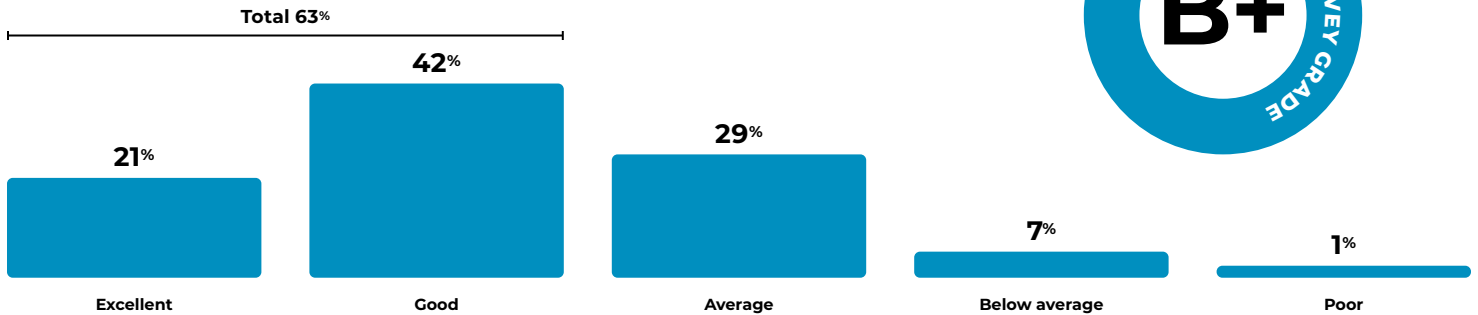
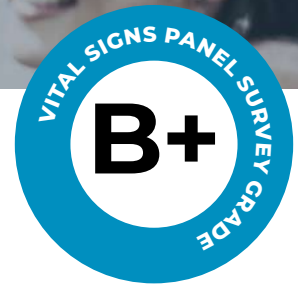
median donation in 2023, compared to **\$400** in 2018, a **25% increase**

donors under 24 years old represented **2%** of all donors – with average donation of **\$690**

donors over 65 years old represented **29%** of all donors – with average donation of **\$3,570**

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, T1FF taxfiler data, 2018 and 2023

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



Diversity refers to the presence of differences, equity focuses on allocating resources based on need to ensure equal outcomes, and inclusion is about a sense of belonging and being heard.

Burlington residents feel the city is doing well in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), with more than 6 in 10 rating the city as good or excellent in this area. The average overall grade assigned by residents is a B+. However, Canadian-born residents are less likely to provide positive ratings for DEI.

Sustainable Development Goals



Cultural education is important to Burlington residents; most agree it is important to learn about and respect Indigenous culture and values and that there should be more opportunities to support cross-cultural education and awareness. Perceptions are also positive when it comes to anti-racism, equity, inclusion, and equal treatment and opportunities.

Which of the following should Burlington focus on when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Provide affordable housing/more rental opportunities	55%
Provide supports for people experiencing mental health problems, addictions, and homelessness	52%
Provide equal opportunities to all citizens	39%
Host cultural events/festivals/celebrations	31%
Provide opportunities that promote social, cultural and racial equality	30%

SOURCE: Panel Survey

It is important to learn about and respect Indigenous culture, values and traditions

40% 32% **72%**

Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour have equal opportunities and are treated as equals (e.g., equal access to employment, education, housing)

28% 38% **65%**

Burlington residents are committed to anti-racism, equity, and inclusion

18% 47% **65%**

There should be more opportunities to support cross-cultural education and awareness

26% 33% **59%**

☒ Strongly agree ☒ Somewhat agree

SOURCE: Panel Survey

Younger residents aged 18-30 are more positive regarding Indigenous-focused and other cultural education and awareness opportunities. They are also more likely to believe Burlington should focus on cultural events, provide opportunities that promote equality, and provide educational opportunities that teach diversity and inclusion.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



Overall, Community Survey participants give diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in Burlington a grade of B. Within this group, those with higher incomes are more likely to share positive views overall. Participants also place strong importance on learning about Indigenous culture and values. At the same time, they are less positive about the opportunities available to BIPOC residents and about the commitment of Burlington residents to anti-racism and inclusion. They show strong support for providing more help to people experiencing mental health challenges, addictions, and homelessness.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

\$130,450 in grants made towards local charities advancing social justice, inclusion and women's support in the 2024/25 fiscal year.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Make a donation to organizations that support inclusivity and diversity education.

REGIONAL DIVERSITY

The region's ethnic makeup remains predominantly **English (18%), Scottish (14%), Irish (14%), and Canadian (10%).**

Mother tongue: According to Statistics Canada, mother tongue is defined as the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data is collected.

English → 386,360 → 65.3%

Top 5 Languages after English:



SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

The most prevalent second language in Burlington, spoken by **9.1%** of the population, is **Spanish**, followed by **Arabic (8.6%), Polish (6.4%), Mandarin (5.9%)** and **Punjabi (5.2%)**.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

24% of Halton's racialized population are under the age of 18, compared to **19%** of the general population

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population

Between 2016-2021, Halton's racialized population grew from **138,995** to **209,505**, a **50.7% change**.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population

Between 2016 and 2021, Halton's population of racialized women increased **49.5%** from **72,105** to **107,824**.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population

Between 2016 and 2021, more than **31,000** newcomers settled in Halton.

20% from India

14% from China

8% from Pakistan

5% from the Philippines

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DISABILITIES

23%

of people in Halton had a disability in 2022

111,000

approximate number of people in Halton with one or more disabilities in 2022

15,318

youth with one or more disabilities in Halton. Youth experienced the largest increase of people with disabilities in Halton Region between 2017 and 2022.

Mental health-related disabilities saw the most significant rise, from **33%** to **39%** between 2017 and 2022.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2017, 2022



STUDENT GENDER DIVERSITY

5% of elementary and secondary students in the Halton District School Board identified as **Gender Diverse**, which also includes multiple gender identities

15% (grades 7 and 8) and 17% (secondary) in the Halton District School Board identified as one or more of the following: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Queer, Questioning, Asexual, Pansexual, and/or additional sexual orientation(s) not specified

SOURCE: HDSB, Student Census Update, May 2022

6.9% of secondary Halton Catholic District School Board students identified as **other gender identities**

21% of secondary students in the Halton Catholic District School Board identified as one or more of the following: Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer, Asexual, Lesbian, Gay, Questioning or additional sexual orientation

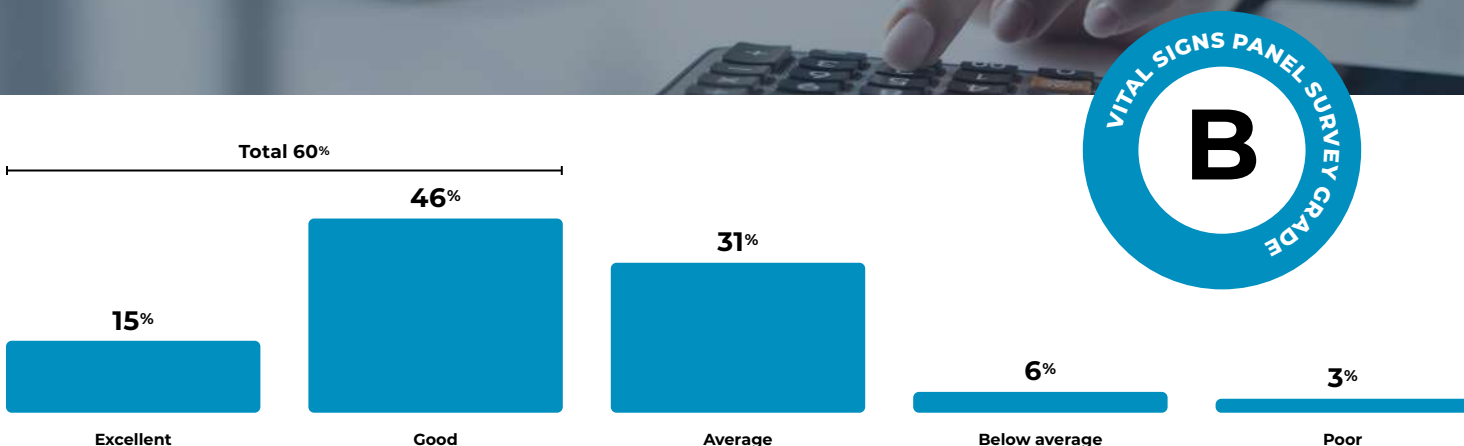
Source: HCDSB, Student Census 2022 Results Report, March 2023

115 hate crimes were reported in 2024, a decrease from 146 in 2023

The Black community was targeted the most with 23 incidents, followed by the 2SLGBTQIA+ community with 18 incidents and the Jewish community with 15 incidents.

SOURCE: Halton Regional Police Services "Annual Report 2024"

Economy

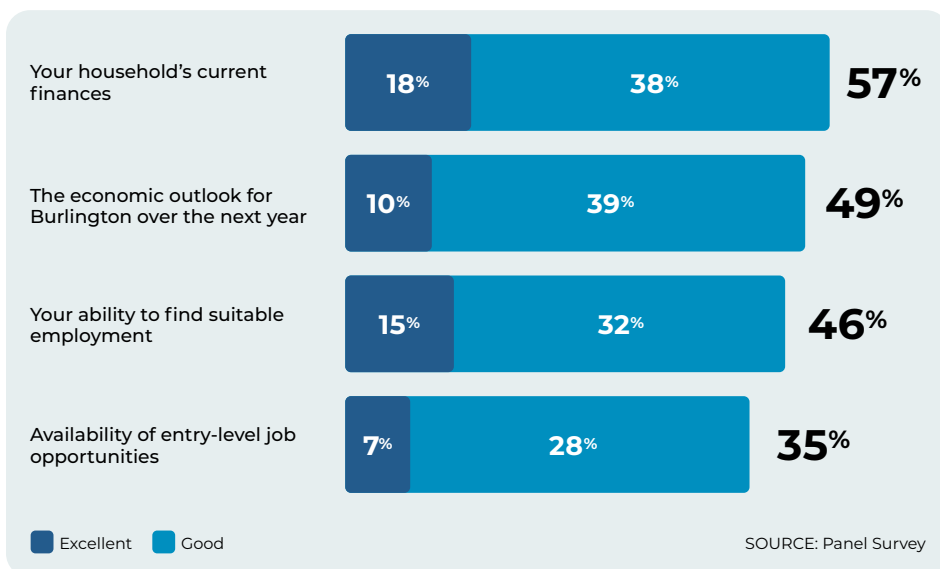


Strong and vibrant communities have diverse local economies and a wide variety of options for fulfilling, secure, and well-paid work.

Burlington residents rate the city moderately overall when it comes to the economy. Six in 10 provide good or excellent ratings in this area, while the overall average grade is a B. Retirees and men are more likely to feel positively about the economy in Burlington.

More than half of residents feel good about their household finances. Just under half feel positive about Burlington's overall economic outlook and their chances of finding suitable work. The most concerning result is entry-level job opportunities; only one-third of residents see them positively, making this the lowest-rated part of Burlington's economy.

Sustainable Development Goals



Those with higher incomes are more likely to provide positive ratings regarding all sub-aspects related to the economy.

Younger residents aged 18-30 and BIPOC-identifying residents are significantly more likely to provide positive ratings regarding the availability of entry-level job opportunities.

Men are more likely to be positive regarding Burlington's economic outlook and their household finances.

SOURCE: Panel Survey

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY

IMPACT & ACTION



BCF IMPACT

BCF was certified by the Ontario Living Wage Network as a Living Wage Employer in 2024.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Support charities that increase opportunities for jobs and training programs.

Annual social assistance rates, before tax

\$8,796



maximum for a single person receiving Ontario Works

SOURCE: Government of Ontario

\$16,896



maximum for a single person receiving Ontario Disability Support Program

SOURCE: Government of Ontario

Minimum wage annual earnings (35 hours per week) as of Oct. 1, 2025

\$32,032

for Minimum Wage (\$17.60/hour)

\$47,320

for Living Wage (\$26/hour)

SOURCE: Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, Ontario Living Wage

246,000 → jobs identified in Halton in 2024

70.1% full-time positions

43.2% were provided by independently-owned businesses

SOURCE: Halton Region Employee Survey Results 2024



390,200 → individuals 15 years or older in Halton's labour force in 2024 (Q1)

SOURCE: Halton Region Labour Market Highlights 2024

4% → Halton's unemployment rate in 2024 (Q1)

SOURCE: Halton Region Labour Market Highlights 2024

The 2024 top 5 sectors in Halton, based on job count

Retail Trade	14.0%
Manufacturing	12.8%
Health care and social assistance	12.1%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	8.2%
Accommodation and food services	7.8%

SOURCE: Halton Region Employee Survey Results 2024



\$45,700: average annual employment income for racialized women

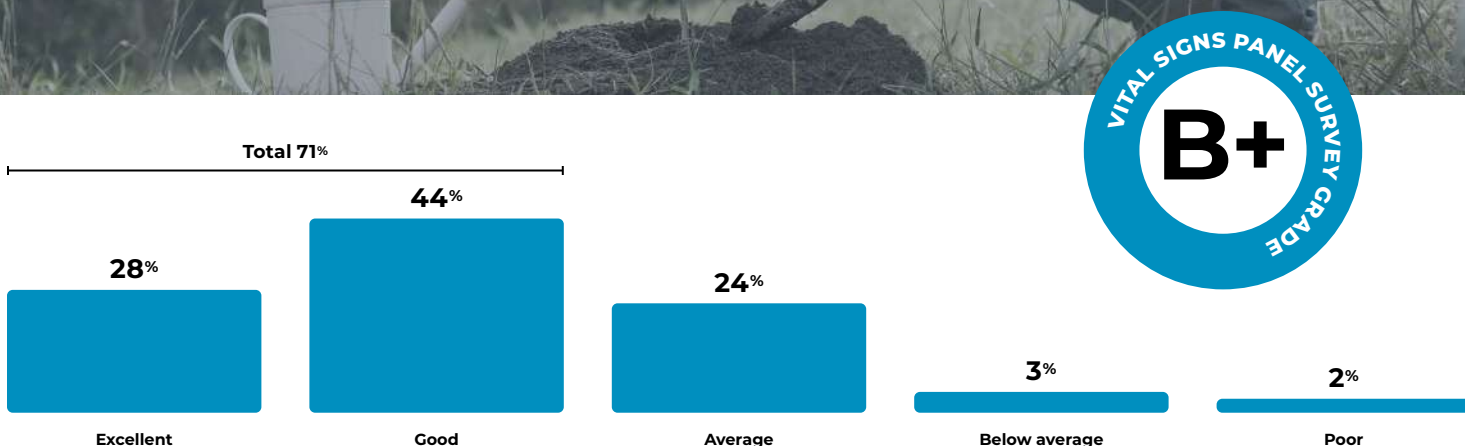
\$47,800: average annual employment income for non-racialized women

\$51,600: average annual employment income for racialized men

\$54,100: average annual employment income for non-racialized men

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Racialized Canadians are less likely to find good jobs as their non-racialized and non-Indigenous counterparts early in their careers, The Daily, 2023-01-18, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230118/dq230118b-eng.htm?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Environment



From the air we breathe to the ground we walk on, a healthy and sustainable environment is an important part of quality of life. A healthy environment is reflective of a healthy community.

Burlington residents rate the city positively overall when it comes to environment. More than 7 in 10 provide good or excellent ratings in this area, while the overall average grade is a B+. Those born outside Canada, those in middle income brackets, retirees, and older residents aged 55+ are more likely to provide good or excellent overall ratings for environment.

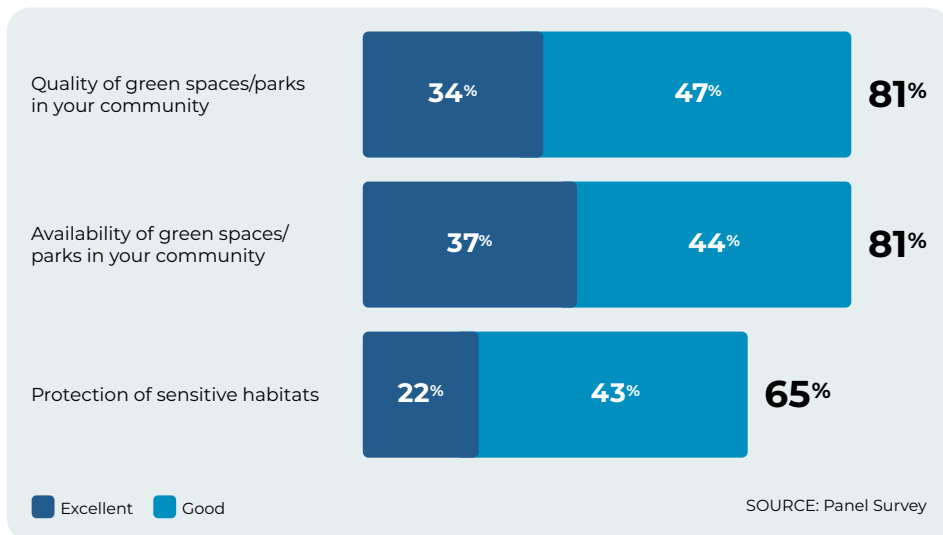
Most residents are very positive about Burlington's parks and green spaces. More than 8 in 10 say the quality and availability of these spaces are good. However, fewer than two-thirds feel positive about how sensitive habitats are being protected. This shows a difference in how residents view developed natural spaces, such as parks, compared to undeveloped areas, such as sensitive habitats.

Sustainable Development Goals



Those born outside Canada, men, BIPOC residents, and newcomers to Burlington are more likely to be positive regarding protection of sensitive habitat in Burlington. Those born outside Canada are also more likely to be positive regarding the quality of green spaces in the city.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY

IMPACT & ACTION



BCF IMPACT

- \$51,082 granted to environmental-based charities in the 2024/25 fiscal year.
- BCF operates out of a shared coworking space, which reduces our carbon footprint.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

- Donate to organizations that have a commitment to climate action.
- Participate in a community clean-up through a local charity, or volunteer to help sustain a community garden. Register your eco actions through **BurlingtonGreen**.

17+

environmental groups that are assessing issues, providing education and working on environmental improvements

SOURCE: Halton Community Services Directory Organization/Program Search

1 million

number of visitors to Conservation Halton's nine parks in 2024

SOURCE: Conservation Halton, "2024 Annual Report"



703

hectares of regional forests

12

conservation areas managed by Conservation Halton and Credit Valley Conservation

6

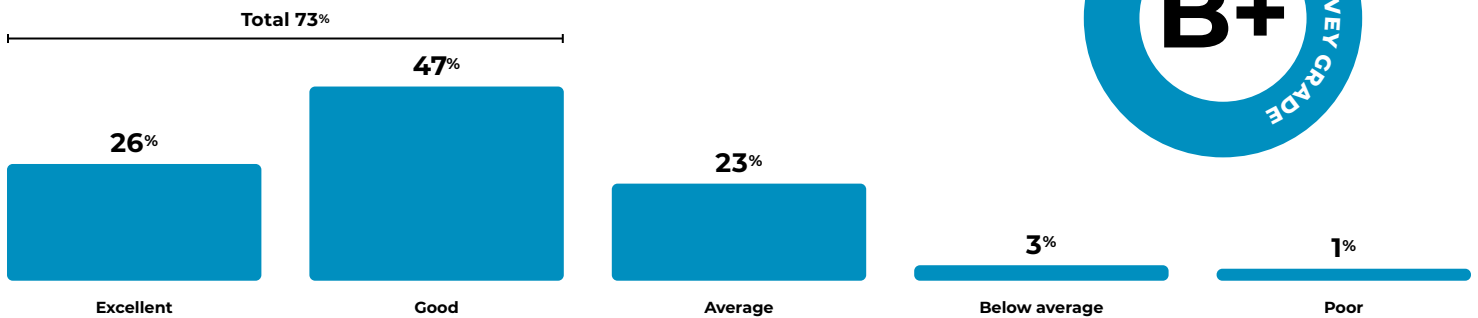
public gardens

12+

community food gardens

SOURCE: City of Burlington, "Community Gardens," Town of Oakville, "Designated gardening spaces," Milton & District Horticultural Society, "Sunny Mount Community Garden, Town of Oakville, "Planting for our future: Town of Oakville partners with community groups to launch sustainable gardening initiative"

Health & Wellness



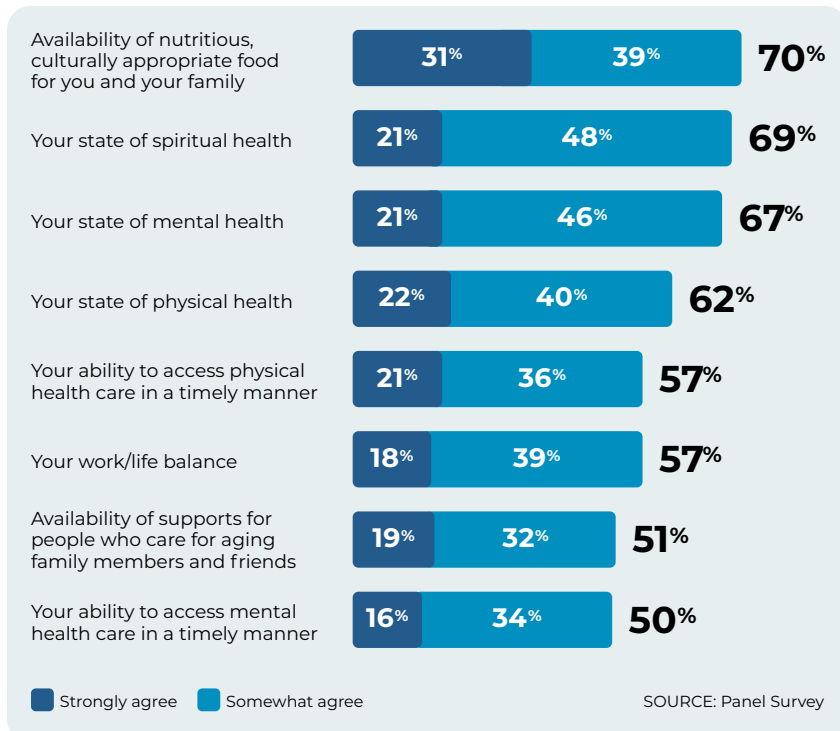
Good physical and mental health and wellness improves the quality of individual lives and reduces health care costs. The health status of people depends on good health practices and behaviours, and access to health care services.

Burlington residents are quite positive regarding health and wellness in the city. Nearly three-quarters of residents provide good or excellent ratings in this area, while the overall average grade is a B+. Those born outside Canada, men, and those with a long tenure in Burlington are more likely to be positive about this vital indicator overall.

Sustainable Development Goals



Most Burlington residents feel positive about their health and wellness. At least half gave good ratings for each specific aspect. The areas rated highest include access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food, as well as support for spiritual and mental health, with each receiving positive feedback from about two-thirds of residents. On the other hand, timely access to mental health care and supports for older adults are rated less positively, with around half of residents feeling good about these services.



Retirees and those born outside Canada are especially positive about health and wellness in Burlington and are more likely to provide positive ratings for most health and wellness related elements. Men, older residents aged 55+, and those with a university education also tend to be more positive about specific elements.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



Community Survey participants are less likely to provide excellent ratings for health and wellness, though positive ratings are more common among higher income members of this group. When it comes to more specific elements, Community Survey participants are more positive regarding the availability of nutritious and culturally appropriate food and their physical health, and less positive about the availability of aging supports.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

\$249,652 granted to charities addressing health, mental health and well-being in the 2024/25 fiscal year.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Donate to BCF's Mental Wellness Fund at www.BurlingtonFoundation.org.

1.9 hours

average wait time in emergency before being seen by a doctor, across Halton's three hospitals

1.6 hours

average wait at Joseph Brant Hospital

SOURCE: Health Quality Ontario, Time Spent in Emergency Departments, May 2025

10

Family Health Teams across Halton

SOURCE: Government of Ontario, "Family Health Teams," Health and Wellness

23%



number of Halton residents aged 15 years and older who had one or more disabilities that limited daily activities in 2022

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey on Disability, 2017-2022

33%



of those with a disability, noted as mental health-related

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey on Disability, 2017-2022



The Halton Information Providers Database lists the following Mental Health Support Services:

4

call-in support lines

10

distinct programs provided by the Canadian Mental Health Association

6

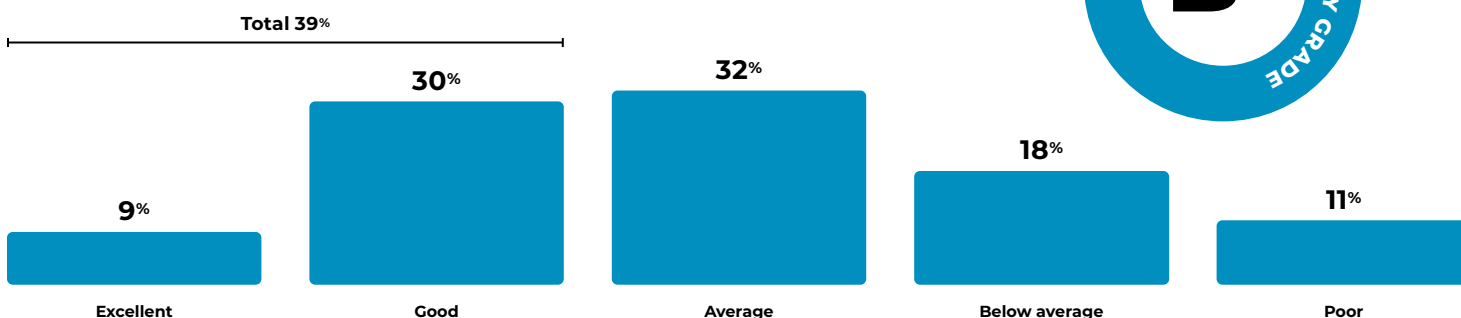
Halton Healthcare mental health clinics

3

major youth-specific supports

SOURCE: Halton Community Services Directory

Housing



Having safe and accessible housing people can afford is a basic need that contributes significantly to quality of life.

Housing in Burlington receives a relatively low overall average grade of B- and is tied with transportation for the vital indicators with the lowest ratings. Less than 4 in 10 residents provide good or excellent ratings in this area, with those who were born outside Canada, BIPOC residents, and men being more likely to do so.

Ratings for the specific aspects of housing reveal a consistent dissatisfaction with the state of housing availability and affordability in Burlington. Around 4 in 10 residents provide negative ratings for the availability of supportive housing and affordable home ownership options in the city, and just less than half are negative regarding the availability of subsidized housing and affordable rental opportunities. More Burlington residents are unhappy with housing than satisfied, showing that housing is an important issue for the community.

Sustainable Development Goals



Availability of supportive housing to meet your needs

17%

22%

39%

Availability of affordable homeownership options to meet your needs

15%

27%

42%

Availability of subsidized housing to meet your needs

19%

28%

47%

Availability of affordable rental housing to meet your needs

23%

26%

49%

Below average Poor

SOURCE: Panel Survey

Dissatisfaction with the current state of housing in Burlington is not distributed equally across demographics; those who are white, college educated, aged 31-44, or a woman tend to be more likely to provide negative ratings for specific elements related to housing.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



Community Survey participants rate housing in Burlington lower than the general population, with an overall average grade of C+. Ratings for specific aspects of housing are also lower across the board. This may reflect that this group has a closer awareness of current housing challenges in Burlington.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

55 youth (ages 16-24) have been supported through BCF's partnered social impact investment with Halton Children's Aid Society's Bridging the Gap Program.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

- Support charities that identify solutions to help address housing needs.
- Advocate to your local government for affordable and supportive housing.



72%

increase to the Halton Access to Community Housing (HATCH) waitlist for rental geared-to-income housing from 2021 to 2024

8,048

number of applicants on the waitlist

SOURCE: Halton Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy 2025 – 2035

16%



increase in shelter intakes in Halton Region in 2024, compared to 2023

Halton Region's shelter system operated at **40%** over capacity in 2024.



SOURCE: Halton Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy 2025 – 2035

343 → Halton households experiencing homelessness in 2024

84% → people who reported that low incomes were a barrier to finding housing

77% → people who said high rents were a barrier to housing

Source: Halton Region's 2024 Point in Time Count

22% of Halton residents rent

1.6%: Halton's vacancy rate – **3%** is considered healthy

SOURCE: CMHC, Fall 2024 Rental Market Report

\$1,900+: average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Halton

SOURCE: CMHC, Fall 2024 Rental Market Report

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

8.4%

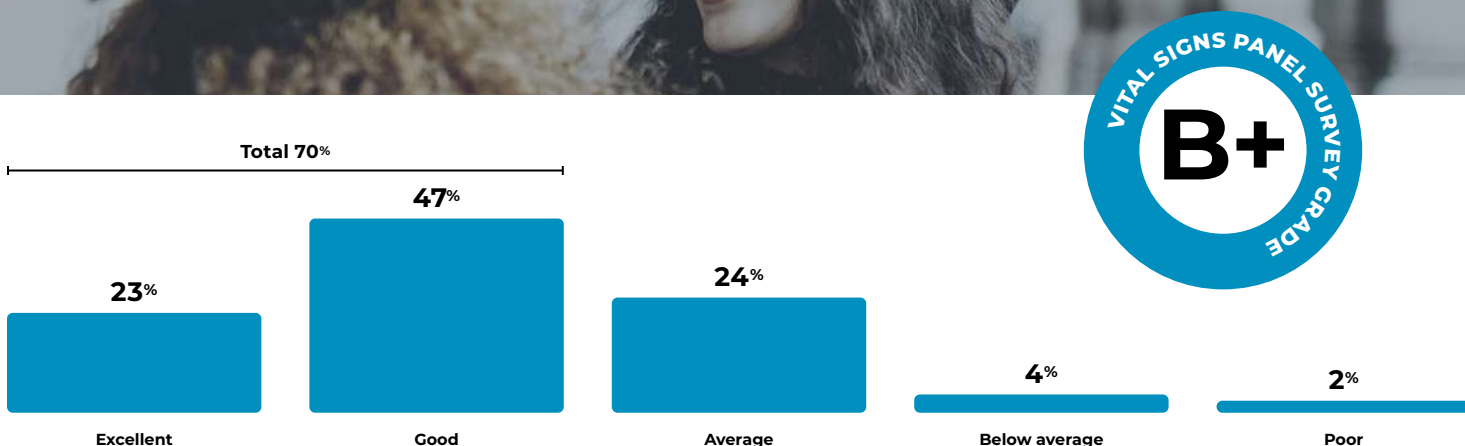
Halton families living in multigenerational housing in 2021

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

Racialized households in Halton are more likely to experience core housing need. These are the top five racialized groups experiencing core housing needs more than others: Arab, West Asian, Black, Korean, Chinese.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

Learning



Lifelong learning and educational achievement affect our ability to participate in a competitive workforce, achieve higher incomes, and escape the cycle of poverty.

Burlington residents feel the city is doing well in terms of learning, with 7 in 10 rating the city as good or excellent in this area. The average overall grade assigned by residents is a B+. Retirees and residents without children are more likely to rate this aspect positively.

K-12 education is extremely well received by Burlington residents, with just less than three-quarters providing positive ratings for this specific aspect. Ratings for access to lifelong learning opportunities are lower, but still mostly positive, while sentiment on the ability to afford post-secondary education is split, with just less than half rating this aspect as good or excellent.

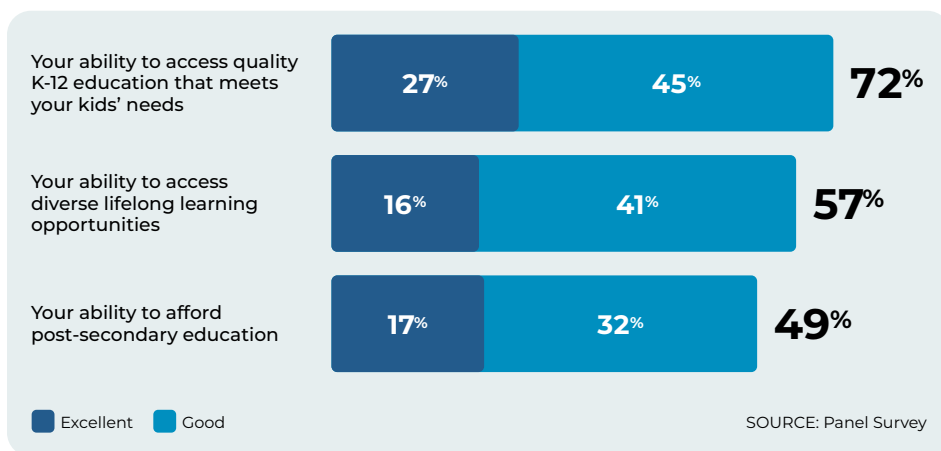
Sustainable Development Goals



Residents with higher incomes are more positive about their ability to access lifelong learning opportunities and afford post-secondary education. This points to a gap in accessibility for those with lower incomes.

Views on post-secondary affordability also differ by education level. University-educated residents are more likely to see it positively, while college-educated residents are less likely.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY

IMPACT & ACTION



BCF IMPACT

- BCF provides scholarships annually to students ranging from **\$750** to **\$5,000**, through donor advised funds held by generous individuals and businesses.
- **\$72,419** granted towards education in the 2024/25 fiscal year.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Give to an existing BCF scholarship fund to help more students gain access to post-secondary education at www.BurlingtonFoundation.org.



4 Post-secondary education institutions

- Wilfrid Laurier University
- Conestoga College
- McMaster University
- Brock University

SOURCE: Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security | ontario.ca

4 School Boards in Halton

Schools in Halton Region:

- 145 elementary schools
- 32 secondary schools
- 1 school for the deaf

SOURCE: HDSB and HCDSB for 2023-2024 from the Ministry of Education, Accueil | Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir - MonAvenir Conseil scolaire catholique, CS Viamonde | Écoles francophones en Ontario | Éducation en langue française de qualité en Ontario - Conseil scolaire Viamonde, Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf

78%

of Halton's **312,505 residents aged 25-64** held a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree in 2021 (243,754 residents)



51% had a bachelor's degree or higher for Halton residents aged 25-64

1.4% had a medical degree

13% had a master's degree

28% had a STEM degree or diploma

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

The 5-year high school graduation rates for 2023:

HDSB: **93.6%** HCDSB: **94.8%**

SOURCE: Ontario Ministry of Education, School Board Progress Reports % Five-Year Graduation Rate

About **80%** of working-age (25-64) women held a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree in 2021.

84% of working-age (25-64) men held a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree in 2021

88.3% of Halton newcomers had a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree in 2021

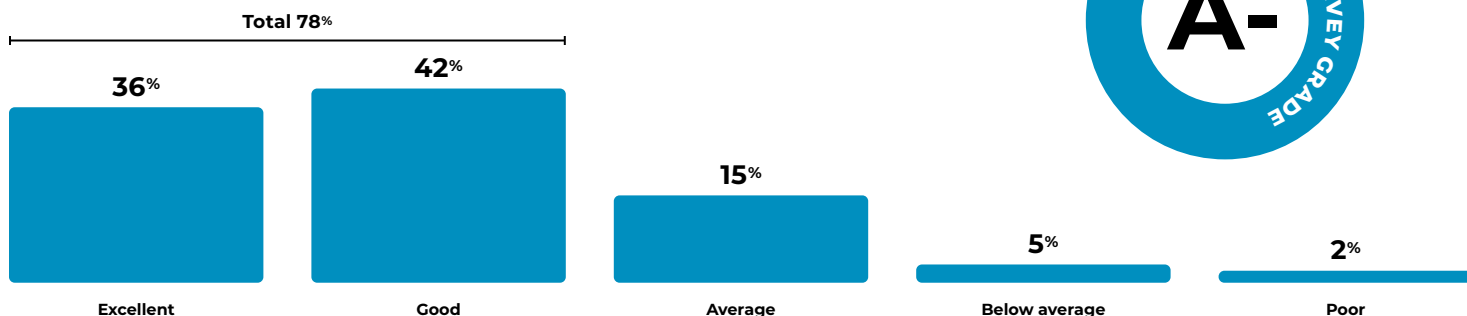
85.2% of Halton's racialized population had a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree in 2021

65% of racialized women had earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to **46%** of non-racialized women, as of 2021

Racialized women were twice as likely to have a master's degree or a degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry than their non-racialized counterparts.

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

Safety



Public and personal safety affects the way we socialize and participate in community life.

Burlington residents have a very positive view of safety in the city and give it an average grade of A-. Just less than 8 in 10 residents are positive regarding safety, with more than one-third rating it as excellent. That said, men are much more likely than women to feel positive about safety in Burlington.

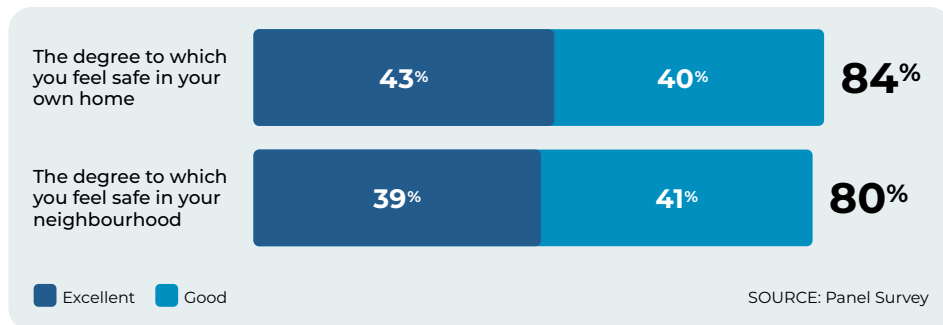
Most Burlington residents say they feel safe at home and in their neighbourhood. Eight in 10 give positive ratings, and about 4 in 10 rate their sense of safety as excellent.

Sustainable Development Goals



Residents with a university education and those living alone are more likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood. People born outside Canada and newcomers to Burlington are more likely to feel safe in their own home.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



Community Survey participants are less positive about safety overall, providing an average letter grade of B+. They are also less likely to be emphatically positive in their ratings of safety, with only around one-quarter providing excellent ratings in this area.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY

IMPACT & ACTION



BCF IMPACT

BCF recognized Social Justice, Inclusion and Women's Support, which includes Intimate Partner Violence, as a key community priority area in the 2024/25 fiscal year. This helped inform our BCF-directed granting.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Get to know your neighbourhood and neighbours, support each other by checking in and being aware of issues that may cause safety concerns.

2,380.7
per 100,000



the crime rate in Halton Region in 2023

SOURCE: Halton Region Community Safety and Wellbeing Dashboard

For Halton Region in 2024:

139,119
calls for service

↗ 0.16% increase from 2023

SOURCE: Halton Women's Place Annual Report 2024



15,967

total reported crimes

17

human trafficking
occurrences reported
to police

34.9%

crime clearance rate

SOURCE: Halton Regional Police Service Annual Report 2024

3,559

number of reported Intimate
Partner Violence-related
criminal incidents

SOURCE: Halton Regional Police Service
Annual Report 2024

80%

of Halton residents aged
18+ who felt safe walking
in their neighbourhood
after dark in 2019

SOURCE: Halton Region Community
Safety and Wellbeing Dashboard

Approximately:

30-50%

of **transgender and
gender diverse people**
will experience IPV

SOURCE: Community Development Halton, Our Halton Issue #1 2023, Women

61%

of **Indigenous women**
are likely to experience
IPV in their lifetime
compared to **44% of
non-Indigenous women**

57% / 53%
of women of men

who reported a
household income of
\$20,000 or less in 2018
experienced IPV

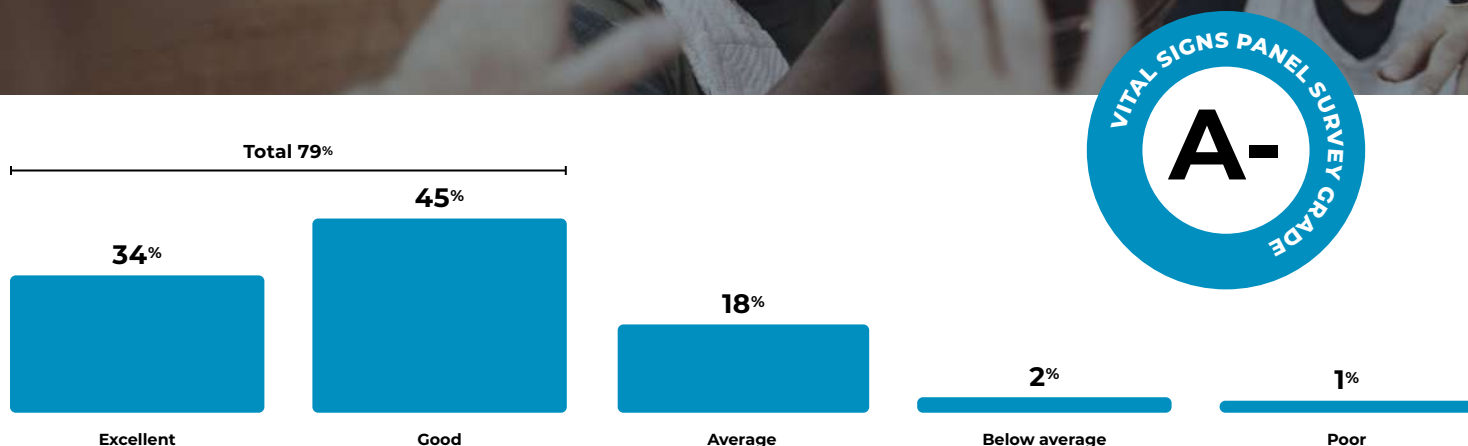
97% of parents/guardians of senior kindergarten children in Halton
felt their neighbourhood was a safe place to bring up children
in 2023

SOURCE: Our Kid's Network Kindergarten Parent Survey 2023

80% of students in grades 4-12 felt
safe at school in 2021

SOURCE: Halton Youth Impact Survey 2021

Sports & Recreation



Sports & Recreation play a foundational role in developing and sustaining healthy citizens and communities.

Burlington residents are very positive regarding sports and recreation and provide an overall average grade of A-. Just less than 8 in 10 residents provide good or excellent ratings in this area. Older residents and couples tend to be most receptive to sports and recreation in Burlington; retirees, those aged 55+, and households with two people, are more likely to give positive ratings, as are those with a longer tenure living in Burlington.

Access to community facilities such as libraries, parks, and community centres is the top-ranked individual aspect of sports and recreation in Burlington, with more than 8 in 10 giving it positive ratings. The ability of residents to participate in the recreational activities and competitive sports they want is also well received, with around 7 in 10 rating each of these areas positively.

Sustainable Development Goals



Access to community facilities (e.g., libraries, parks, community centres)



Ability to participate in the recreational/competitive sports you want



Ability to participate in recreational activities you want (e.g., crafting, book club, gardening)



■ Excellent ■ Good

SOURCE: Panel Survey

Perceptions of access to community facilities are more positive among those who are retired.

College-educated residents are less likely to provide positive ratings regarding their ability to participate in sports opportunities.

SOURCE: Panel Survey

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

\$23,642 granted to sports and recreation organizations in the 2024/25 fiscal year.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Enjoy one of the city's recreation centres by taking a class or trying a new activity.

70%

of people identified access to affordable/low cost recreation opportunities as important to them related to sense of belonging

27.3%

of people reported being a member, participant, or volunteer in sports or recreational organizations in the past 12 months

SOURCE: Community Development Halton and Our Kids Network, Halton Sense of Belonging Survey, 2025

Sport and recreation are local municipal responsibilities. Here are some of the amenities across Halton Region:

- **23** community centres
- **9** seniors centres
- **18** arenas
- **17** pools (indoor and outdoor)
- **47** splash pads
- **22** courts (indoor and outdoor)
- **459** parks and parkettes
- **13** skate parks
- **1** cricket pitch
- **1** cycling centre
- **1** beach
- **3** harbours

SOURCE: Town of Oakville Open Data Portal, Parks and Trails - Halton Hills, Open Data | Discover the Town of Milton, Facility List - Town of Milton, Recreation - City of Burlington

12

conservation authority parks located in Halton Region

9 Conservation Halton Parks, and **3** Credit Valley Conservation Parks within Halton Region

SOURCE: Conservation Halton, "2024 Annual Report," Credit Valley Conservation, "Annual Report 2024"

168

number of non-profit organizations listed in the Halton Information Providers Database as offering sport and recreation across Halton

SOURCE: Halton Community Services Directory

1

 Provincial Park

SOURCE: Ontario Parks

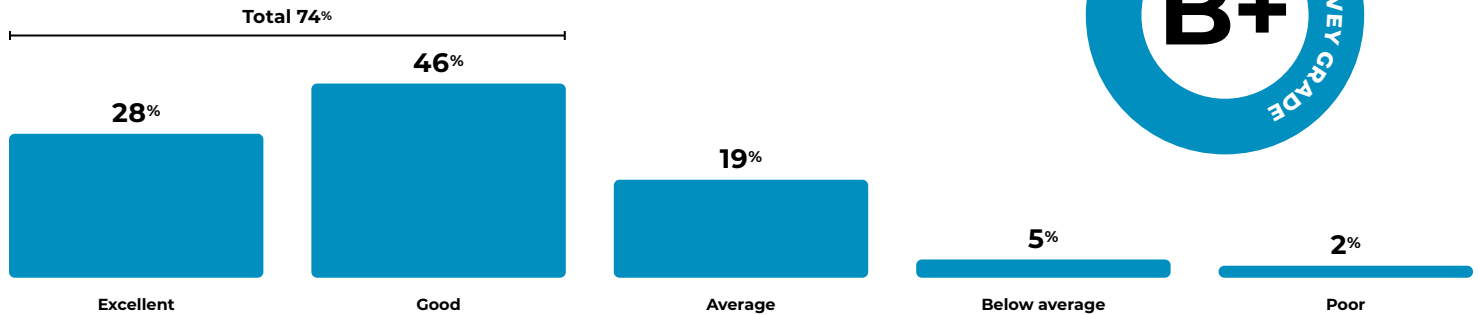


26

community organizations listed in the Halton Information Providers Database that offer sports with a focus on disability

SOURCE: Halton Community Services Directory

Standard of Living

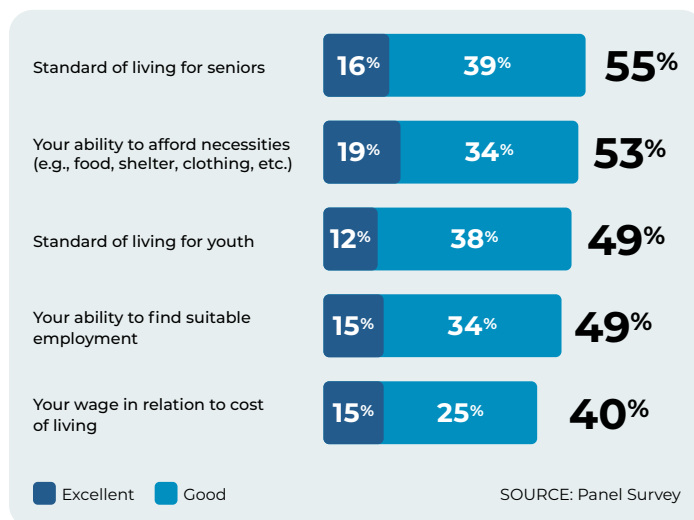


Individuals, families, and children living below the poverty line may face many obstacles, which can limit their ability to enjoy quality of life.

Most Burlington residents feel positive about the standard of living in the city, with nearly three-quarters giving good ratings and it receiving an overall average grade of B+. Men, retirees, residents aged 55 and older, two-person or childless households, higher-income residents, and longtime residents are especially likely to view the standard of living positively.

While overall ratings for standard of living are relatively positive, residents are more critical when it comes to individual aspects. Only around half of residents provide positive ratings for youth and senior standards of living, as well as the ability to afford necessities and find suitable employment. Wages in relation to cost of living received even lower ratings, with only 4 in 10 being positive about this aspect.

Sustainable Development Goals



Men and women tend to have different views on standard of living, with men more likely than women to give positive ratings. Higher-income residents also tend more to rate most aspects positively.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



Overall, Community Survey participants are less likely to rate standard of living as excellent despite the combined excellent and good proportion being similar to the general population. They are also notably less positive regarding the standard of living for youth in Burlington.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

\$154,295 granted to charities addressing poverty reduction, including food insecurity, in the 2024/25 fiscal year.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Donate to BCF's Community Fund, which addresses the city's most urgent needs through local charities by visiting www.BurlingtonFoundation.org.

13.1%

Halton's poverty rate in 2023



Who is most affected:

29.8% of individuals not part of a family unit (including those living alone)

25.6% of lone-parent families

13.6% of children (0-17)

12.4% of seniors

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, T1FF taxfiler data. 2023

\$290.57

→ The amount a family of four needs to spend weekly to maintain a basic nutritious diet.

SOURCE: 2024 Ontario Nutritious Food Basket, Halton Region Halton Health Data

14.2%

Halton households that faced food insecurity between 2021 and 2023

SOURCE: Household food affordability indicator report, Halton Region, 2025

9.9%

Burlington's poverty rate in 2022



Who is most affected:

Children (0-17 yrs)	10.9%
Seniors	7.5%
Lone-parent families	22.2%
Non-family persons	22.9%

SOURCE: Statistics Canada, T1FF taxfiler data.

25%

increase in food security program use across Halton from 2023 to 2024

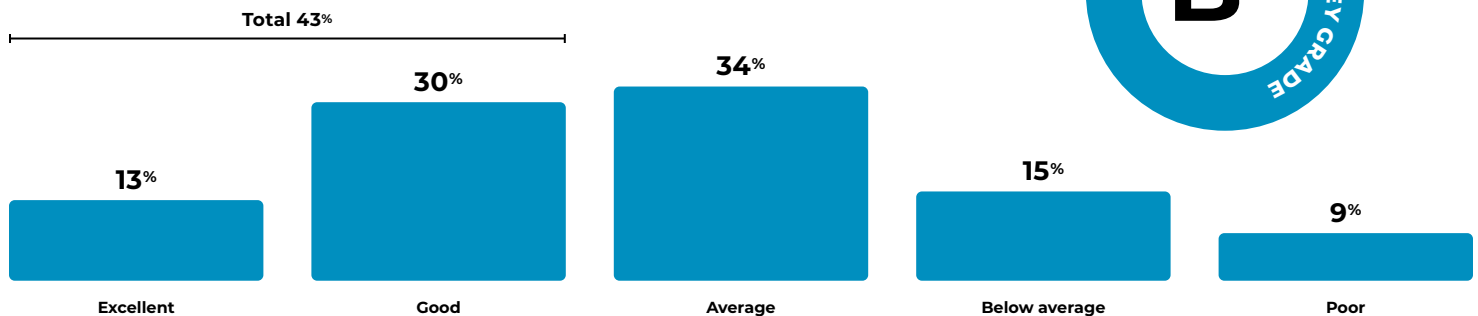
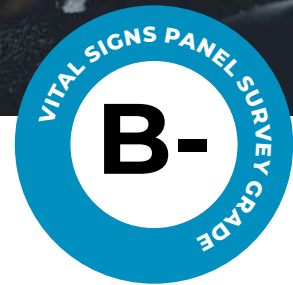
SOURCE: CDH, Community Data Watch: Household Food Insecurity in Halton, April 2025

10.6%

number of Halton residents experiencing energy poverty in 2021

SOURCE: CDH, Community Data Watch: Home Energy Vulnerability in Halton, June 2025

Transportation

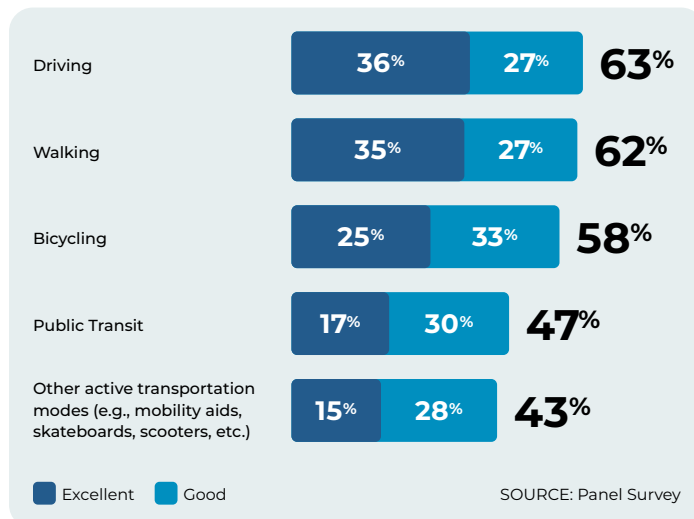


Transportation includes the ability to get around and transport people and goods. The capacity and convenience of transportation, such as our transit and road systems, have a big impact on quality of life.

Transportation in Burlington receives a relatively low overall average grade of B- and is tied with housing as the vital indicator with the lowest ratings. More than 4 in 10 rate this aspect as good or excellent, with consistent positive ratings across all demographic groups.

Perceptions of specific transportation modes in Burlington are mixed. Most residents rate driving, walking, and bicycling positively in terms of ease of use, while fewer than half are positive regarding public transit and other active transportation modes.

Sustainable Development Goals



Younger residents aged 18–30 tend to give higher ratings for both driving and public transit in Burlington. Residents with middle or higher incomes also rate public transit more positively, while BIPOC residents give higher ratings for driving.

SOURCE: Panel Survey



Overall, Community Survey participants are less positive than the general population regarding transportation in Burlington, providing an average grade of C+. Their opinions on the ease of use of specific transportation modes differ from the general population as they are more likely to provide lower ratings for all transportation modes except walking.

*Note: Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding of results.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITY



BCF IMPACT

Through compiling first-hand data on issues around transportation in this Vital Signs report, we aim to inform community action and investments.



CREATE YOUR IMPACT

Explore alternative methods of transportation; carpool when able; and check in with neighbours or colleagues who might need a ride.



1.87

number of vehicles per household

3.3%

households that have no vehicle

SOURCE: Transportation Tomorrow Survey, 2022

Households earning less than \$15,000 make more trips by **transit (12.9%)** and **walking (12.8%)**.

Transit use drops to **below 3%** among most households earning \$40,000 and above.

30-40%

of residents in Halton Region work in their home municipality

SOURCE: Transportation Tomorrow Survey, 2022



2.97 million:

bus passengers on Burlington Transit in 2023

SOURCE: Burlington Transit



470 km:

approximate amount of dedicated cycling infrastructure in Halton Region

SOURCE: Halton Region, 2011 "Transportation Master Plan (2031) – The Road to Change"

\$60 million:

amount Halton Region plans to spend on active transportation facilities and road safety improvements through 2031

SOURCE: Halton Region, 2011 "Transportation Master Plan (2031) – The Road to Change"

To learn more about how you can use Vital Signs to engage in community conversations and take action, please connect with our team.

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CHARITABLE REGISTRATION NUMBER

857812739 RR 0001



COW Nov 3, 2025
FIN-42-25 staff presentation

BUDGET 2026

2026 Budget Overview Report FIN-42-25
Committee of the Whole – November 3, 2025

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Telephone & 6 in person Town Halls

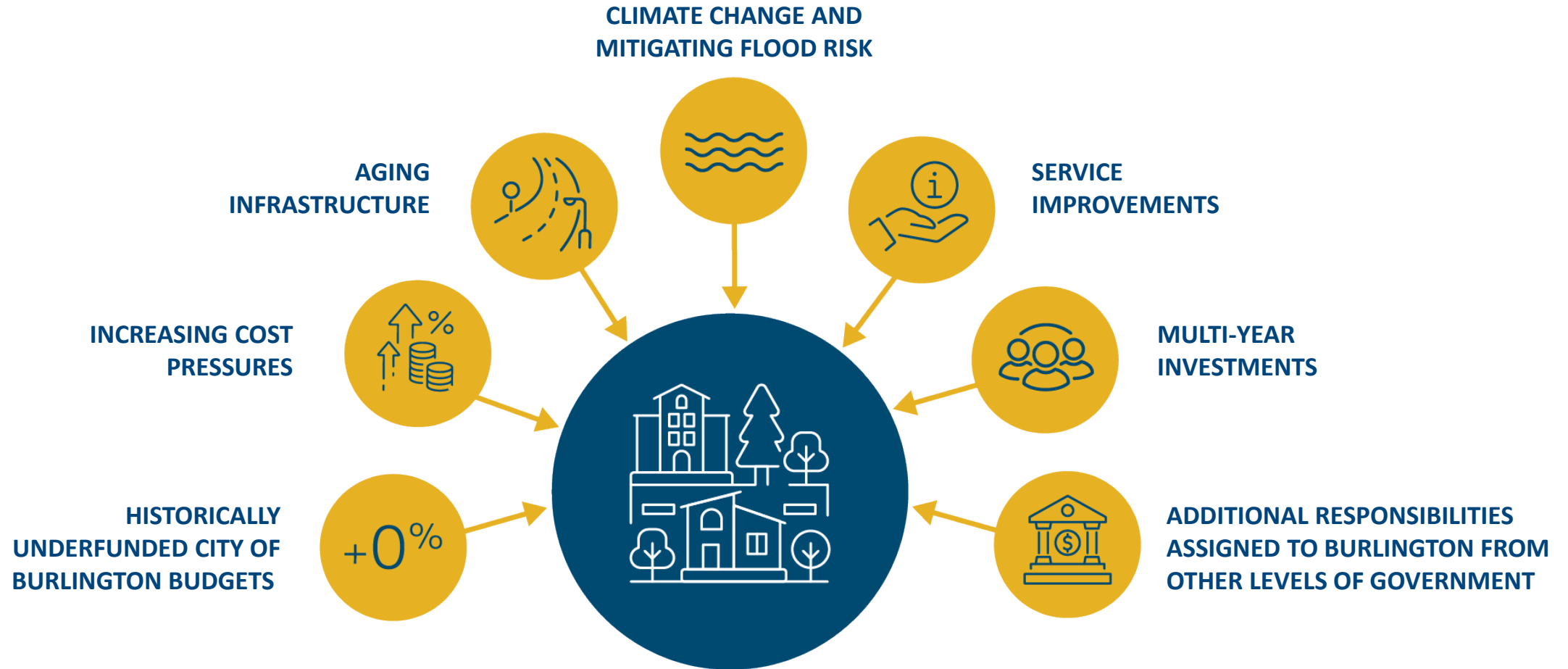


Get Involved Burlington & Community Panel



Food for Feedback

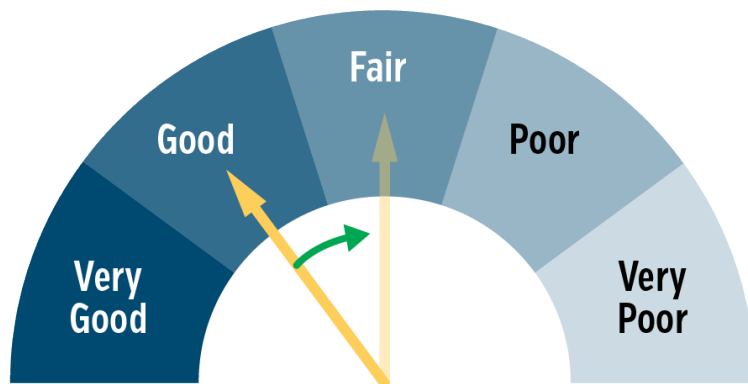
FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE CITY BUDGET



PROTECTING THE LIFE OF CITY ASSETS

BURLINGTON HAS \$7.1B CITY ASSETS.

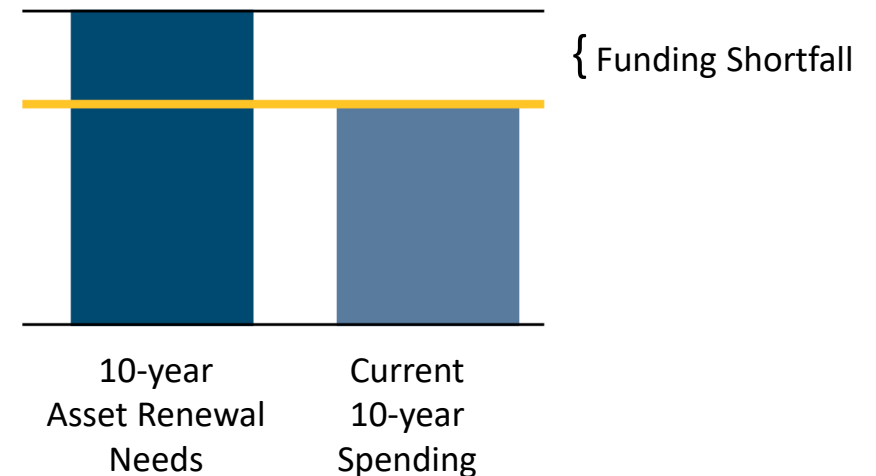
Currently they are in **Good** condition but trending to **Fair**.



Average Asset Condition

To ensure our assets do not deteriorate further, the City needs to **invest \$1.22B** over the next 10 years in infrastructure renewal. Currently we are spending \$868M over 10 years.

THIS LEAVES A GAP OF \$350M.



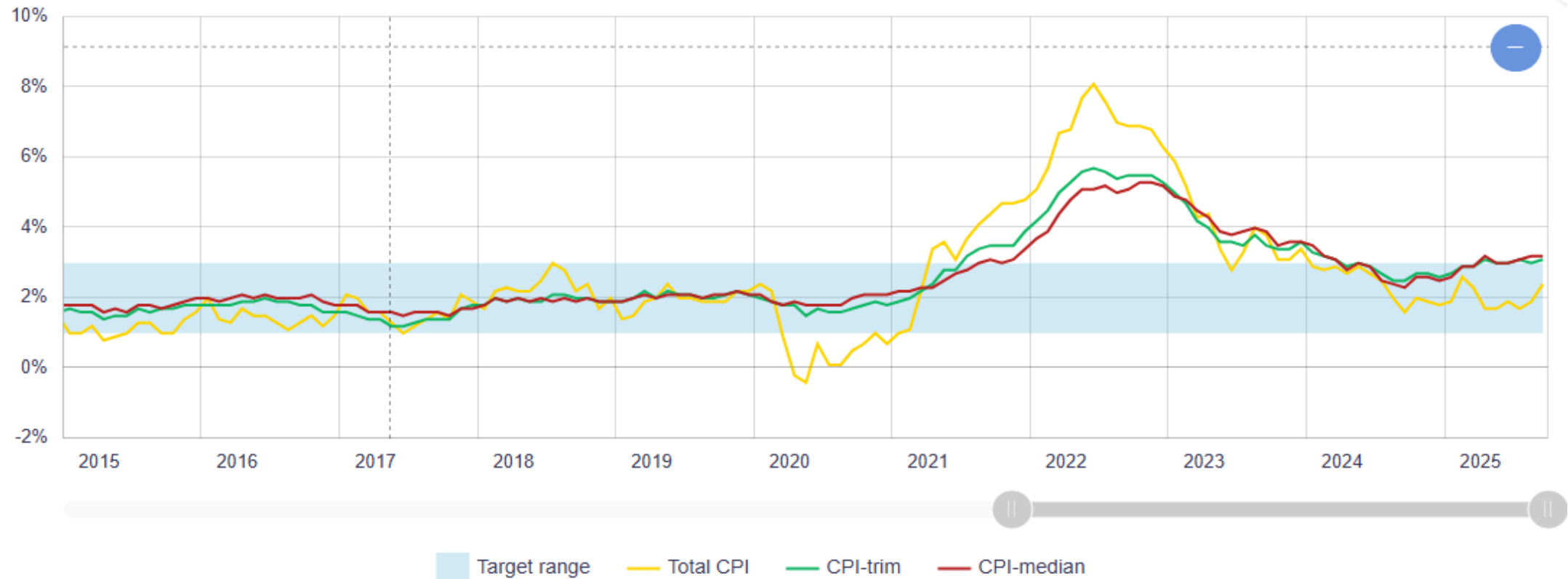
TO HELP ADDRESS THIS FUNDING SHORTFALL, THE CITY HAS A 2% INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY.

ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

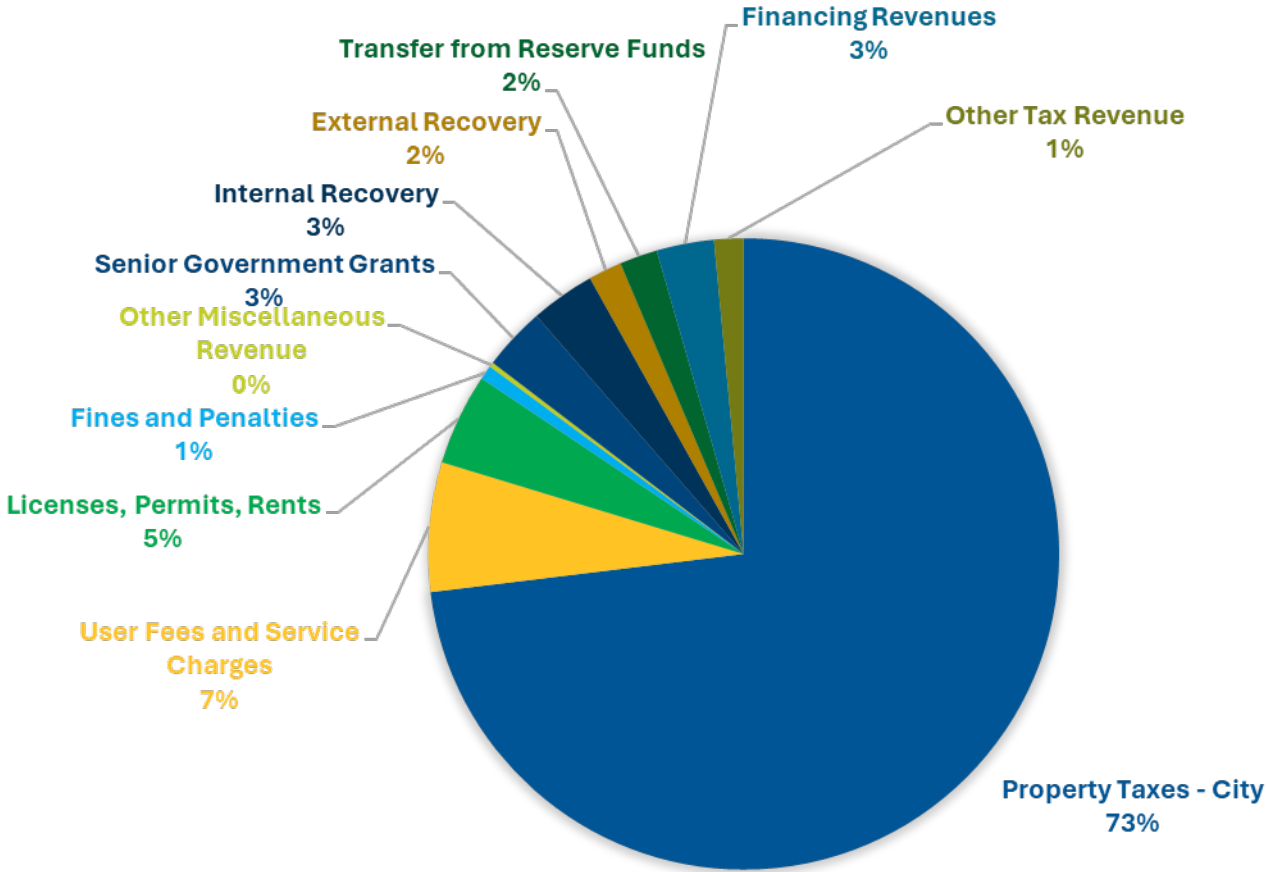
	2022	2023	2024	Sept 2025	4 year average	4 year compounded
Canadian CPI (all items)	6.8%	3.9 %	2.4%	2.4%	3.9%	16.4%
Canadian CPI Trim	5.3%	3.6%	2.6%	3.1%	3.7%	15.4%
Canadian CPI Median	5.2%	3.6%	2.5%	3.2%	3.6%	15.3%
Infrastructure Renewal Levy	1.6%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	1.9%	7.7%
Non-residential Construction Price Index	15.3%	5.4%	4.1%	3.9%	7.2%	31.4%

Key inflation indicators and the target range

Total CPI, CPI-trim, CPI-median and Target Range



OPERATING BUDGET FUNDING



OPERATING BUDGET \$387.3M

- Property Taxes - City (282,201)
- User Fees and Service Charges (25,892)
- Licenses, Permits, Rents (18,142)
- Fines and Penalties (2,807)
- Other Miscellaneous Revenue (928)
- Senior Government Grants (12,484)
- Internal Recovery (12,936)
- External Recovery (6,601)
- Transfer from Reserve Funds (8,197)
- Financing Revenues (11,364)
- Other Tax Related Revenues (5,822)

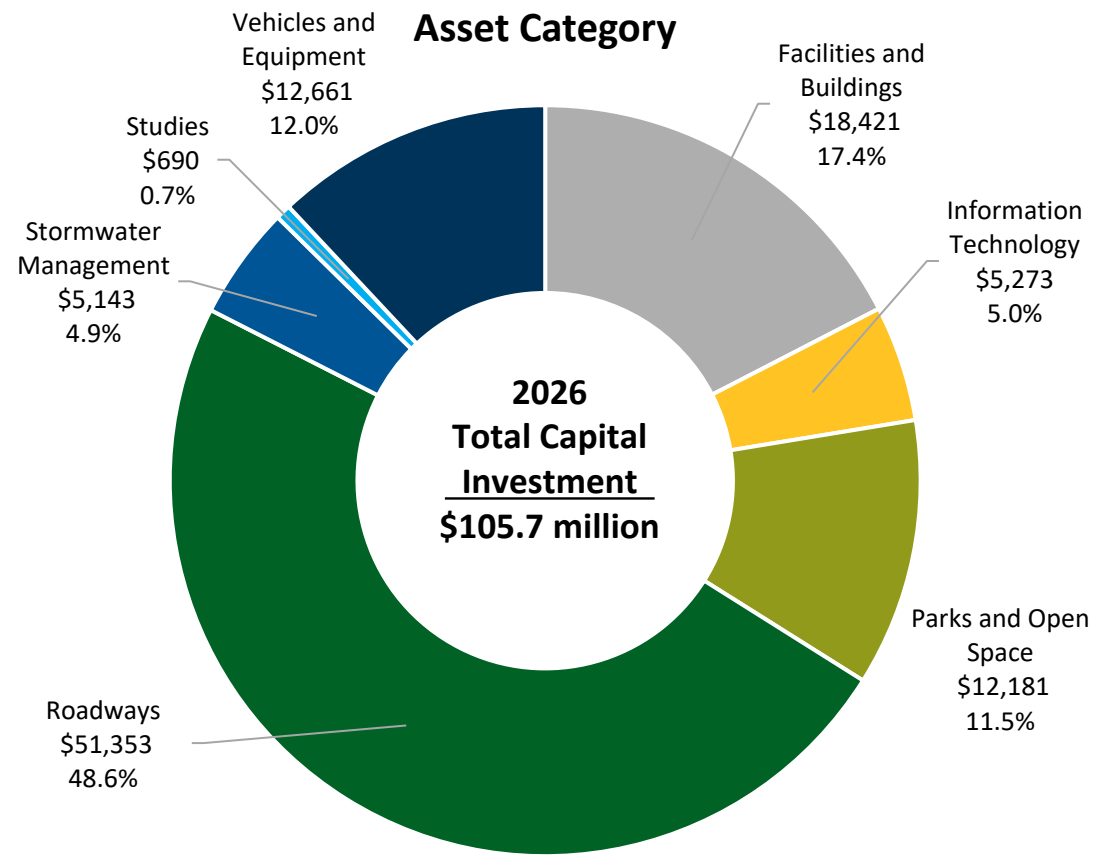
Note: Numbers are in \$ thousands and may not add due to rounding

BUDGET SUMMARY

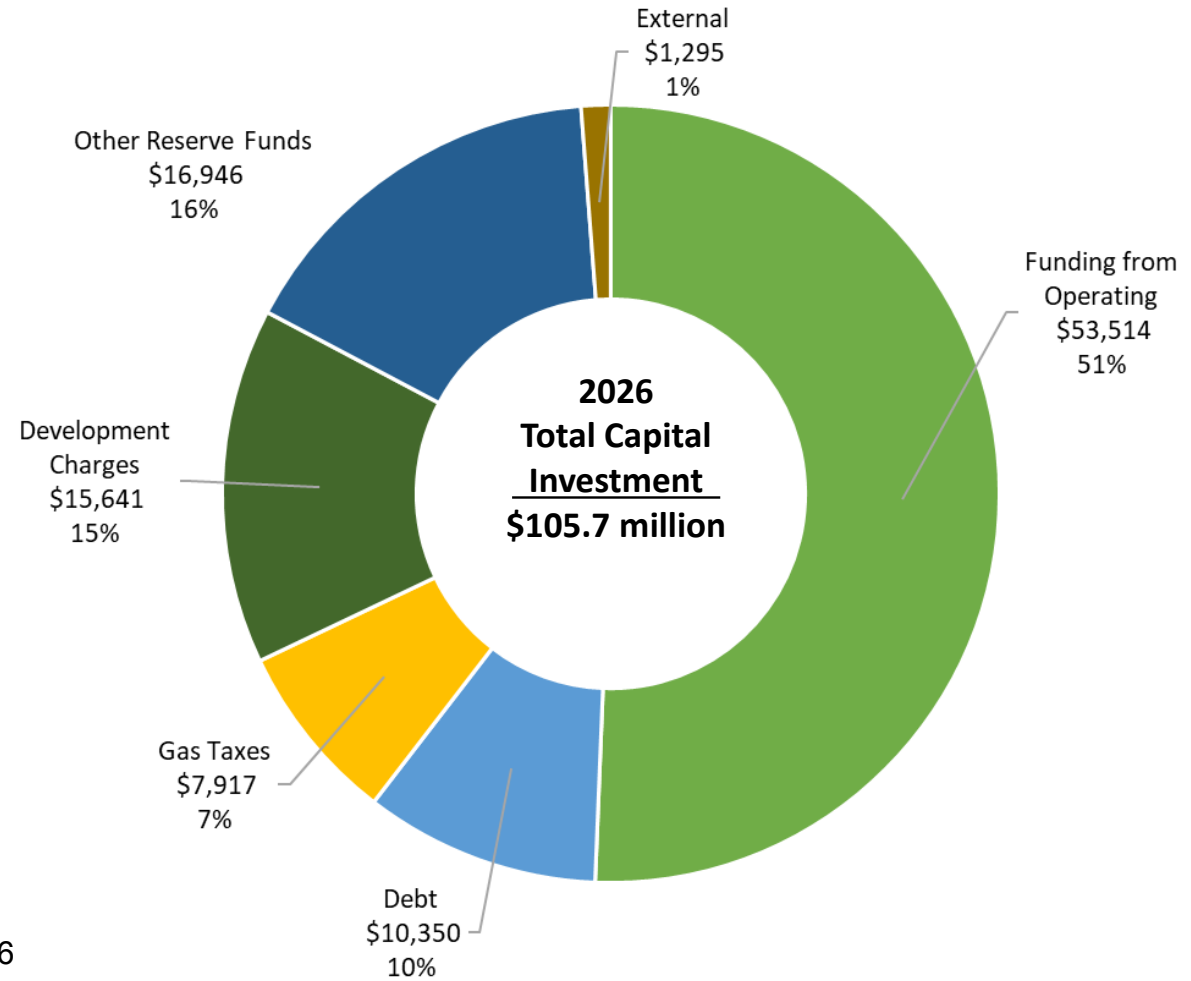
	2026 Budget Change	2026 Budget Change
Base Budget Impact including Assessment Growth @ 0.75%	\$ 9,178,448	2.69%
Infrastructure Renewal Levy	\$ 5,287,000	1.98%
Cumulative Impact including Infrastructure Levy	\$ 14,465,448	4.67%
Additional Budget Pressures		
Operating Impacts of New Infrastructure	\$ 1,784,286	0.67%
Operational and Financial Sustainability	\$ 100,000	0.04%
Multi-Year Community Investment Plan	\$ 250,000	0.09%
Cumulative Impact	\$ 16,599,734	5.47%
Key investments		
Livability	\$ 335,385	0.13%
Sustainability	\$ 512,414	0.19%
Transparency	\$ 30,000	0.01%
Grand Total City	\$ 17,477,533	5.80%
Overall Tax Increase (City, Region, Education)		4.49%

2025 CAPITAL BUDGET - \$105.7 MILLION

Asset Category



Funding Sources



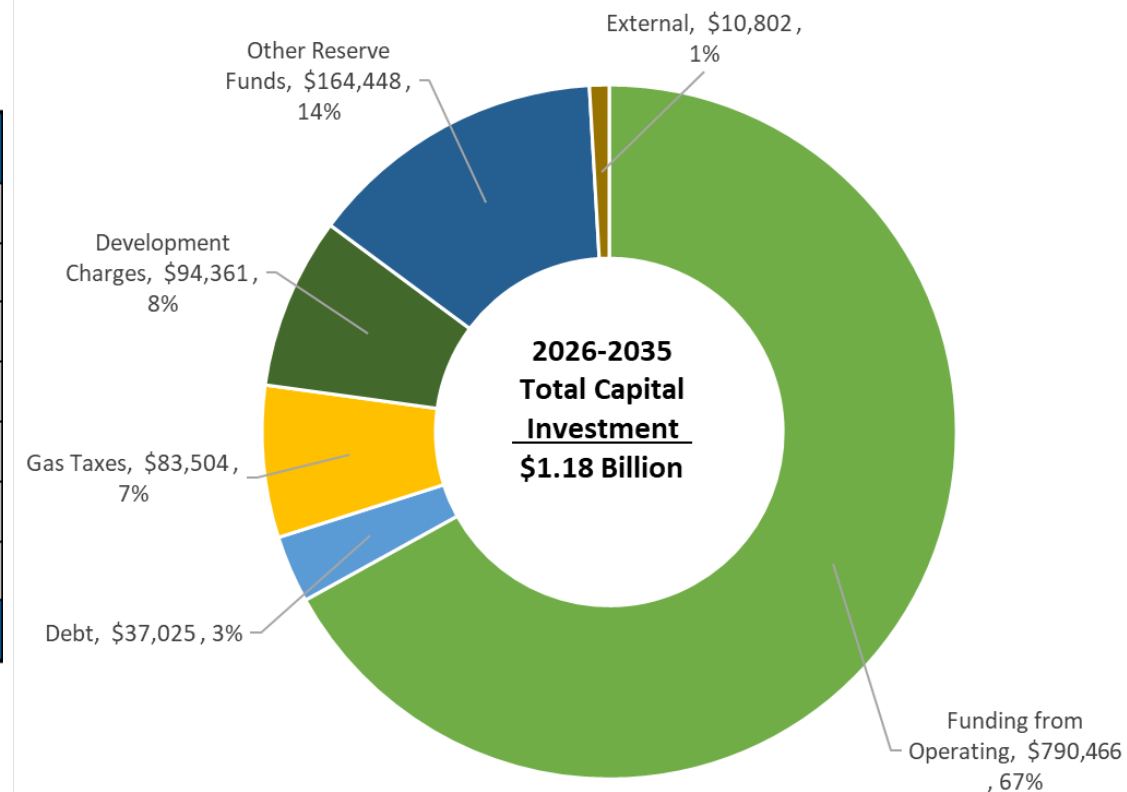
TEN YEAR CAPITAL FORECAST - \$1.18 BILLION

10-year capital budget by asset category

Project Type	New/ Enhanced	Infrastructure Renewal	Growth	Green	Total
Facilities and Buildings	\$ 2,319	\$ 136,108	\$ 13,708	\$ 23,141	\$ 175,275
Information Technology	\$ 5,125	\$ 61,530	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 66,655
Parks and Open Space	\$ 1,850	\$ 101,540	\$ 10,526	\$ -	\$ 113,916
Roadways	\$ 30,666	\$ 495,225	\$ 90,484	\$ 2,465	\$ 618,840
Stormwater Management	\$ -	\$ 48,551	\$ 6,724	\$ -	\$ 55,275
Studies	\$ 690	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 690
Vehicles and Equipment	\$ 635	\$ 119,758	\$ 5,104	\$ 24,458	\$ 149,955
Total	\$ 41,285	\$ 962,713	\$ 126,546	\$ 50,064	\$ 1,180,607

All values in thousands ('000), numbers may not add due to rounding

Funding Sources



BUDGET PROCESS

JULY 15	AUGUST TO NOVEMBER	OCT. 24	NOV. 3	NOV. 13	NOV. 24 & 25	DEC. 2
2026 Financial Forecast report approved by Burlington City Council.	Opportunities for public engagement, including in-person Budget Town Hall meetings, led by Mayor Meed Ward and participating Ward Councillors, and a 2026 Budget Telephone Town Hall on Nov. 5, from 7-8:30 p.m.	Proposed 2026 Budget posted to City's website, burlington.ca/budget and getinvolvedburlington.ca/2026budget .	Proposed 2026 Budget presented to City Council at Committee of the Whole meeting, 1 p.m. at City Hall, 426 Brant St. or livestream at burlington.ca/calendar . Delegations welcome. Register to speak to Council at burlington.ca/delegate .	A presentation from each Division of the City at Budget Committee meeting, 1 p.m. at City Hall, 426 Brant St. or livestream at burlington.ca/calendar .	Review of the proposed 2026 Budget, including any amendments put forward by City Council members, at Budget Committee meeting, 9:30 a.m. at City Hall, 426 Brant St. or livestream at burlington.ca/calendar . Delegations welcome. Register to speak to Council at burlington.ca/delegate .	Special Council meeting to finalize 2026 Budget, 9:30 a.m. at City Hall, 426 Brant St. or livestream at burlington.ca/calendar . Delegations welcome. Register to speak to Council at burlington.ca/delegate .



From: [Focus Burlington Newsletter](#)
To: [Mailbox, Clerks](#)
Cc: [Mailbox, Office of the Mayor](#); [Bentivegna, Angelo](#); [Galbraith, Kelvin](#); [Kearns, Lisa](#); [Sharman, Paul](#); [Nisan, Rory](#); [Stolte, Shawna](#)
Subject: Focus Burlington's 2026 Budget Survey
Date: Friday, October 31, 2025 10:04:35 AM
Attachments: [Focus Burlington 2026 Budget Survey Results.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Please include the attached survey results in the agenda for the November 3rd, 2025, council meeting. Respondents who participated in the survey and provided an email address have been blind copied on this email.

Unfortunately, this quote is from an American President, but it is appropriate.

"Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not the President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country."

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Focus Burlington Team

Focus Burlington's 2026 Budget Survey Results

October 31st, 2026

Thank you to the 222 people who participated in our survey. This is a summary of what we learned.

Question 1

Do you understand that the Burlington line on your tax bill will increase by 5.8%? The city is using this statement to describe the 2026 tax increase:

"... the City of Burlington's share of taxes being less than 3 per cent."

<https://mariannemeedward.ca/2026-budget-process-begins/>

What did we learn?

	# of responses	%
I believe that Burlington is increasing taxes by less than 3 per cent.	15	7%
I don't understand what is happening here.	102	48%
I understand that the 3 per cent increase is calculated in terms of the total tax bill and does not represent Burlington's tax increase.	96	45%

Our takeaway: The city's practice of stating the change in Burlington taxes as a percentage of the change to the total bill manages to mislead 7% of taxpayers and confuse 48% of taxpayers.

Question 2

Should Burlington clearly communicate the tax increase?

The Burlington line on the tax bill is projected to increase by 5.8%. The overall tax bill may increase by 4.49%. Until the Region of Halton and Halton Police Services set their budgets, we simply don't know what the overall increase will be. All we know now is that absolutely none of the city's increases will be "less than 3 per cent".

What did we learn?

Question 2	# of responses	%
No	8	4%
Yes	210	96%

Question 3

The July 2025 inflation rate was 1.7%. Burlington's proposed budget increase is 5.8% or more than 3 times the rate of inflation. With this in mind, should Burlington:

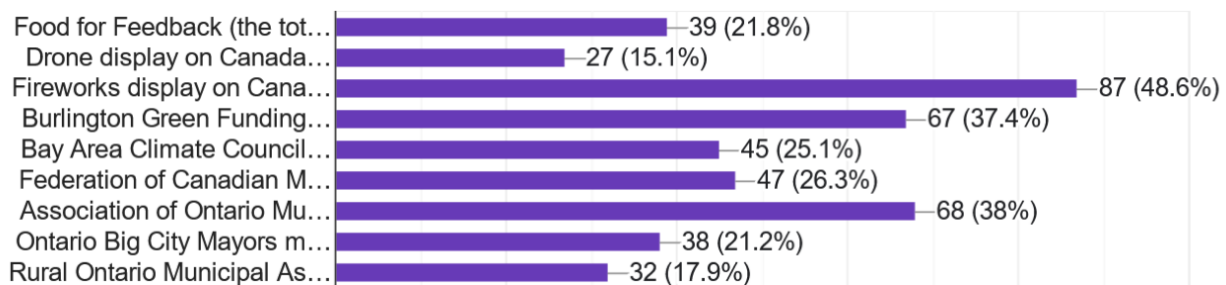
Question 3	# of responses	%
continue with the planned 5.8% increase	17	8%
decrease services to keep the tax increase at the rate of inflation	42	19%
find efficiencies to maintain services and hold the tax increase to the rate of inflation	146	67%
maintain services with a tax increase at or above inflation	13	6%

Our takeaway: *In the age of AI and Trump's tariffs, the future for many workers in the private sector is uncertain. The unemployment rate in Ontario is 7.1%. Our survey showed that 67% of residents want the city to find efficiencies to maintain services. Only 6% want to maintain the current service level with an increase at or above the rate of inflation.*

Question 4

Please check the programs in the list below that you want to see **continued**.

We received 179 responses to this question.



What did we learn?

No single program was selected by a majority of responders.

The most popular program is Fireworks on Canada Day, with the drone display only receiving support from 15.1% of respondents.

What did people write in the comment area?

None or a variation of none – 11 people.

Our roads need work, sewers - improve, bring up to standards, snow removal - improve, taxes are just too high for what they do, which is not very much!!

SOUND OF MUSIC FESTIVAL

Free Parking Downtown

Our take on this is that people are tired of the tax increases and are looking for any way to reduce spending and taxes.

Question 5

Do you support building a new art gallery for \$116 million?

The cost to build a new, larger art gallery has been estimated to be \$116 million. Donations and other levels of government may cover some of the costs.

<https://burlingtongazette.ca/library-rebuild-will-cost-116-million/>

What did we learn?

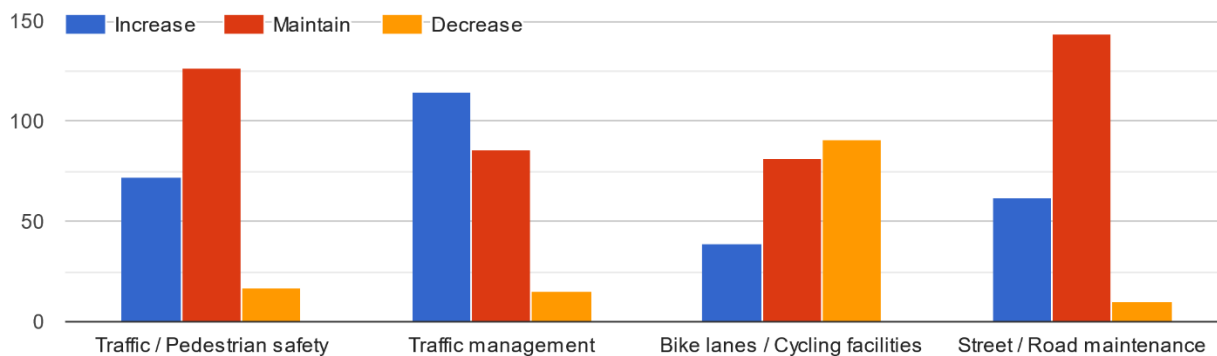
We received 218 responses to this question.

Question 5	# of responses	%
No	193	89%
Yes	25	11%

Our thoughts: *When the Executive Director of the Art Gallery of Burlington, Emma Sankey, presented detailed drawings of what a new art gallery would look like, along with costing, to our council, I was surprised. When I heard that Emma had met with many people, from art gallery employees to the mayor and each councillor, and discussed a new art gallery, I was more surprised. When there was no mention of consulting with taxpayers, I was not surprised at all.*

Question 6

Should the city increase, maintain, or decrease spending on the following specific items?



What did we learn?

We had 220 responses to this group of questions, with Traffic management being the only area where the majority of respondents want to see an increase in spending. We believe that residents are asking the city to improve traffic flows, not prioritize transit at traffic lights at the expense of drivers.

Our takeaway: When the city surveys residents, bike lanes and road improvements are lumped together in one question. By separating the questions, we can clearly see that our respondents want improvements in traffic management and not bike lanes.

Question 7

Do you have any comments on mobility (roads, traffic, transit, etc.)?

What did we learn?

I did my best to group the comments into subject areas. The grouping is highly subjective and may not reflect the commenter's intent.

Accessibility	as a senior using a mobility scooter I find the sidewalk' sloping curbs to the roads way to steep and sometimes difficult to manoeuvre, especially ascending! In addition, the buttons for pedestrian crosswalk lights are not very user friendly for the disabled.
Budget	THIS SHOULD NOT DRIVE THE BUDGET UP BEYOND INFLATION
Budget	Biggest concern is higher taxes.
Budget	We pay to much taxes , a nothing really getting roads , traffic, the list goes on !!
Budget	Cut spending. 6% is ridiculous and you wonder why people dont have kids
Development	Infrastructure is not keeping up with housing development. I am very concerned about development in the Burloak to Upper Middle Road to Appleby area
Development	Stop the high rises
Development	The city has to process zoning reform to ensure communities become accessible and walk-able and remove the need on relying on expensive personal transportation.
Development	Benefits should be created to encourage citizens to live and work in Burlington, the city cannot be a purely a bedroom community. Needs more manufacturing and businesses in general to become self sufficient
Development	New development approvals are stressing existing infrastructure significantly and degrade traffic with little or no reliable public transport.
Mobility	Stop the pilot project of electric scooters and continue with them being illegal on our roads and sidewalks

Mobility	Control or ban e-bikes and electric scooters
Mobility	They should prioritize bikes and transit more
Mobility	We could really use better north south bike paths. The lanes on walkers and applyby aren't very safe. The QEW needs more paths across it.
Mobility	Increasing pedestrian safety and cyclist safety is a priority for me. Let's reduce vehicles by improving transit and cycling options.
Mobility	Increased number of electric scooter riders using the roads that can't always be seen and they're using a combination of roadways and sidewalks to maneuver through busy intersections. Need to prevent/limit this somehow before it becomes the "norm".
Mobility	Stop wasting money on bike lanes like prospect street
Mobility	Get rid if bike lanes
Mobility	Do something about the e-scooters and e-bikes, regulations and enforcement are needed
Mobility	whoever designed the bike lane system is dumb and we need more connectivity across the network
Mobility	Cycling eastbound on plains road between Waterdown road and Shadeland is abysmal.
Mobility	Why do you need a whole committee for cycle advisory? Feels like a job one person could tackle.
Mobility	too many bike lanes for hardly any usage. We are not Europe - imposing bike lanes not needed is unnecessary especially when cyclists don't follow rules of the road and don't pay a fee to use the road.
Mobility	Please change bike lanes to be a part of a sidewalk - it is so dangerous to have them on the streets where cars weight tons of times more, than the bike and no shield to protect . In Germany this system works amazingly
Mobility	Keep bike lanes next to sidewalks and not on the road. If they must be on the road, erect physical barriers to prevent cars from hitting cyclists.
Mobility	If I can comment on cycling.. No one in their right mind would cycle on the main arterial roads, even with a designated bike lane. Why all these special committees. "Cycling Advisory Committee", "Traffic Advisory Committee". My family have lived in Burlington since 1964. Didn't used to have all this extra bureaucracy.
Mobility	Traffic lights are anti pedestrian requiring a button to turn on

Mobility	Traffic management due to QEW and Skyway congestions needs to be fixed ASAP. Better public transit and bike routes off of actual roads and more dedicated. Restrict neighbourhood roads to locals only during rush hour. Widen sidewalks around lakeshore and brant
Mobility	Less money spent on bike lanes as they are not usually useable during many winter months. More money needs to be spent on improving traffic flow as there are more residents in the city now- especially given the city's love for hi-rise condos!
Mobility	We need to keep improving our cycling network to make it a viable mode of transportation. One simple and relatively cheap improvement to the existing bike trails, such as the Centennial Trail, is to utilize the "continuous sidewalk" design (i.e. make a level crossing at all intersections). This would naturally slow traffic as it creates an elongated speedbump, while making the path smoother for riders. See https://www.tac-atc.ca/wp-content/uploads/epb-csbp-e.pdf .
Mobility	Better lighting is needed
Mobility	remove the unused bike lanes in the winter
Mobility	Bike lanes share part of the road with cars (Northshore)which is a dangerous scenario frequently slowing cars. In some instances they end abruptly. So what happens to the rider .. does he just evaporate
Mobility	We need expanded cycling infrastructure and better transit - perhaps LRTs along major arterial routes?
Mobility	Motorized scooters in bike lanes and roads -- yes, have seen a stupid scooter person on Guelph Line, no helmet, just zooming along! Have used my senior free Presto pass frequently. Beggars at busy intersections on the road. Not a good image for the City, hazardous safety situation for the person and driver.
Police	Burloak south of New is a drag race at night and weekends.
Police	there has clearly been a downturn in police presence on the roads
Police	Something has to happen to increase road safety. I've been in 2 near fatal accidents in 4 years that were not my fault (one T-Bone ran a red light, one rear end). I constantly see poor driving habits, fake license plates, speeding, and people running red lights.
Police	We must have more police presence on the streets, this way, traffic/pedestrians safety will immediately increase and home/vehicle robberies will dramatically decrease.
Police	Police enticement needed for safety

Roads	Fix potholes
Roads	Roads are terrible
Roads	Ukraine has nicer roads than we do. Google it. I'm not being cute.
Traffic	city needs a traffic light management system to better manage volumes and traffic flow; system needs to be flexible to adjust to highway closures
Traffic	Traffic congestion and gridlock is out of control. Appleby line is a disaster. Patio's on Lakeshore should be removed. Transit needs to be thoroughly investigated to reduce cost.
Traffic	Staff assessments I have seen of road usage, ie., that congestion isn't congestion, are unacceptable. By and large, improved road infrastructure to accommodate radical increases in community population density is usually ignored. We are also seeing terrible increases in cut through traffic as people seek (vainly) local road alternatives to the chronically choked QEW and 403. Is this taken into account in any way when assessments are done? Several times this summer my residential street and adjoining streets were gridlocked with vehicles trying to escape the QEW. I literally could not drive away from my home for a ridiculous amount of time, let alone get out of my driveway!
Traffic	Traffic and transit are both neglected. Traffic has increased awfully over last few years and isn't sustainable.
Traffic	Condo building without infrastructure is insane ..traffic snarls keep getting worse
Traffic	Panhandlers at most major intersections must be removed! They are a distraction!!
Traffic	Traffic management should be emphasized as congestion has increased with increase in population.
Traffic	Sinc traffic lights and manage congestion. Too many speed bumps.
Traffic	Too much building no change in infrastructure to accommodate ..increased traffic snarls impacting everyone
Traffic	increased traffic and people congestion
Traffic	Downtown Burlington is a Parking Lot. Transient Traffic must be addressed
Traffic	The lights are poorly timed especially when there is no one on the roads. Speeding in excess of 80km/hr is an issue on New Street
Traffic	The current roads and infrastructure will not keep up with the population growth in Burlington.

Traffic	Busy try for more lanes lakeshore
Traffic	Check and adjust traffic signal operation on a regular basis. remove as much as possible traffic congestion. Stop the over building of high rise condos.
Traffic	No speed cameras, less bike lanes, better speed bumps.
Traffic	Some traffic lights are sensed when they should be timed?E.g. Appleby N is useless when a GO train arrives. The volume is so great that one can't move when the light turns green as there is no space for a car at the next light's intersection so it backs up from Dundas to Fairview.
Traffic	Traffic in Burlington is Horrendous. The on street restaurant patios on Lakeshore must end.
Traffic	The Skyway shutdown was crazy. I hope that doesn't become an annual issue.
Traffic	The roads are brutal. Things need to change. Mainways should have construction based on surrounding area and construction levels in those areas before starting. As in, fairview, and brant, and thw service road shouldn't be closed at the same time ever except emergency. Something has to be done with the situation when the highways or skyway is blocked. Our city is used as a shortcut of sorts for people turning 10 minute drives into hour long drives for burlington residents multiple times a week.
Traffic	Stop building condos. Traffic is bad enough.
Traffic	Traffic lights are extremely inefficient
Traffic	Reduce non-resident commuter traffic downtown by closing Northshore access to QEW
Traffic	Traffic lights are always red. No sequence at all. Literally stop at every light and takes so long to get anywhere in Burlington.
Traffic	Traffic is becoming completely unmanageable in Aldershot/Downtown
Traffic	Stop building on streets that can't handle more traffic
Traffic	Too many people, equals too much traffic, poor planning for increase population
Traffic	It's shite because we are the armpit of the commuter path.
Traffic	have the lights sequenced so you don't hit every red light! go take a drive in Hamilton to see how it's done properly
Traffic	Invest in road "sound barriers" (grooves on the roads to slowdown trafic) Invest in roundabouts.

Traffic	stop the high rises that will decrease the traffic
Traffic	If anything, focus on traffic light timing to improve flow.
Traffic	Yes, traffic is terrible in key areas of the city during rush hour and Saturdays. The city needs to focus on studying what the impact of building too many condos in these areas will mean for congestion. I wonder though of such a study could be done efficiently to keep down costs.
Traffic	traffic congestion is the #1 issue
Traffic	Traffic is heavy. Traffic lights are not synched. Not enough speeding enforcement.
Traffic	MORE ROADS! Everyone on transit is a pipe dream, and if the roads are inferior (which they are) any buses aren't going anywhere either! How hard is this to understand?
Traffic	I am aghast at the narrowing of Prospect St., especially when more condos are planned for the mall site. Cut through traffic from highway gridlock is now a huge problem. Bike lanes need to be rerouted/eliminated where they are redundant or badly chosen.
Traffic	Traffic grid lock in Burlington is becoming a 24/7 event. We need better street light management, longer left turns, and better speed control
Traffic	It's becoming too busy in burlington no one does speed limit
Traffic	Timing of traffic lights and congestion need to be addressed. Make more decisions that inconvenience owners of homes with more than 5000 square feet.
Traffic	Congestion has gotten beyond horrible and only getting worse. They need to fix the traffic lights and find ways to make traffic more efficient
Transit	Double number of buses to double transit frequency using smaller buses similar to Oakville .
Transit	Public transit needs to be on time and reliable otherwise people will use vehicles. I only take the bus 6 times a month and at least 3 times the bus doesn't arrive as scheduled.
Transit	Too much money spent on bus driver salaries.
Transit	Transit prices are identical to Toronto with services much worse. It's cheaper to take an uber than the bus for 2+ people.
Transit	Public transit schedules need to be maintained and made consistent. It should also be made to notify of bus route cancellations in better time (i.e. NOT when the bus is due!) I am to understand Burlington has a program to sign up if they want driveway clearance during winter. Excellent idea! But you need to communicate things like this better!

Transit	Better Transit service
Transit	I don't understand why Burlington can't fix public transit. Stop vacuuming up autumn leaves and sponsoring \$500 parties for neighbourhoods, and put that money into getting a RELIABLE, efficient public transit system to help people get around. Look at York Region transit for an example.
Transit	I would love to take public transit but it's terrible
Transit	More buses, start considering light rail? Roads caused induced demand and are a budget sinkhole. If viable alternatives exist people will use them. Start by analyzing where people start and end journeys, which should be very easy with PRESTO tap card data.
Transit	Invest heavily in transit - this will improve traffic congestion!!!
Transit	Limited bus routes
Transit	Consolidate Oakville and Burlington transit into a non profit corp. like Burlington Hydro, and shift to smaller vehicles that are demand responsive in neighbourhoods, regulate motorized bicycles rather than facilitating them, facilitate neighbourhood traffic planning to protect neighbourhoods from pass through traffic than should be forced onto arterials, start doing proper cross walks Particularly along east west arterials, better regulate delivery vehicles and construction worker parking in residential area, .
Transit	We need to stop being so car centric and work on other options, including enhanced public transit and keeping vulnerable road users safe.
Transit	Transit continues to deliver constant red ink. We should not be giving rides for free as this just increases the amount of losses. Better traffic light syncing would help traffic congestion.
Transit	Why all the free transit to residents and mayor has said she would like it free for everyone.

Question 8

Should Burlington have a Traffic Advisory Committee?

Burlington has a cycling advisory committee. According to the city's website, "The Burlington Cycling Advisory Committee assists and advises Council in matters related to cycling in the city. The committee reports to Council through the [Committee of the Whole](#)."

Traffic impacts all of us; should there be a volunteer Traffic Advisory Committee?

What did we learn?

After reading over 90 comments on traffic provided in response to question 8, the results are not surprising.

Question 8	# of responses	%
No	68	31%
Yes	148	69%

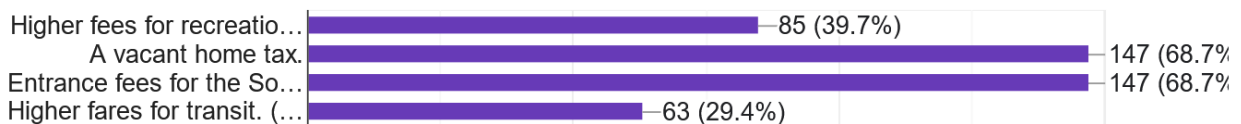
Question 9

What revenue-generating measures do you support?

- Higher fees for recreation, with subsidies for low-income families.
- A vacant home tax.
- Entrance fees for the Sound of Music festival.
- Higher fares for transit. (while continuing the subsidies for low-income families).
- Other _____

What did we learn?

214 responses



Other suggestions:

Charge parking fees for city Burlington staff
Entrance fees for the Sound of Music festival.
Bylaw and speeding tickets and cameras
Decrease in mayor's salary and councillors ..don't put in bike lanes then have to take them out ,
Enforce by-laws such as dog licensing and leashing; fine all the landscapers and private contractors that park on our roadways impeding traffic; maybe add one cent - not one percent but one cent - to each local sale at local businesses for a special city tax
Better planned and tendered city projects. Reduce staff
Recreation fees are 2.5x what they were in 2020
Higher fees for sitting on undeveloped land in prime areas. There are countless vacant lots especially downtown that sit and collect dust while developers try to either buy up neighbouring sites strategically over time or are waiting on appeals for ridiculous developments that no one in the community supports.
Increase taxes on secondary/investment properties Set a affordable minimum base (\$1-5)for any existing freebee`s where it makes sense
Review of transit: buses that circulate empty

Tolls for out of town drivers, speed and stop sign cameras
charge rich boomers more money. anyone who makes more than 100k should face a city income tax - especially government employees
Increased property taxes on chain restaurants, but not for non-chain restaurants.
Increase condo permit building fees
Increase parking fees downtown
More efficiently, accountability no painting on posts. Waste of money with allocation of funds
Paid parking at all hours and days but only for non burlington registered vehicles.
Raise taxes on houses greater than or equal to 5000 square feet. If there is a way to tax blonde hair dye at a municipal level do that too.
Use taxes more efficientlywe already pay a lotstop the thousand cuts.
have a cyclist license fee
If a larger group is planning a bbq or any other party in the park they should be charged for that -as they are taking the larger space and interrupting the ambience of the park.
Reasonable entrance fee,s for the sound of music.
Stop spending so much on consultants
Homeless pay 50% of their collection

Question 9

Are the taxation and debt levels sustainable?

Since 2022, and including the proposed 5.8% increase for 2026, the cumulative Burlington-only property tax revenue increase is 46.81%.

Between 2022 and 2024, long-term debt for the City of Burlington increased by 54% or \$40,574,000.

Yes - Burlington residents and businesses can continue to pay higher taxes and take on more debt

Pause - tax levels and debt levels are high enough.

Stop - this is affecting my family's ability to pay rent or stay in our home.

Other _____

What did we learn?

Question 9	# of responses	%
Stop	80	37%
Pause	95	44%
Yes	16	7%
Other	24	11%

Fully 81% of respondents are asking the city to stop or pause. Here are the other responses:

A clear need to regulate the total compensation package for all employees
budget process needs to include a risk assessment and zero balance budgeting to determine priorities
Burlington is entering a debt trap. It should be running a budget surplus and paying down the debt.
City council. stop driving people out of their homes by spiraling property taxes, that also affect rent increases.
Cut non-essential services, reduce staff, cut salaries to reflect no more than 3% annual increases over the last four years.
cut raises to staff and have accountability. Federal holidays should not be given to municipal staff
Find ways in the office to have people actually performing their jobs.
Freeze or reduce taxes immediately and GOVERNMENT OUT OF THE WAY
HOW ABOUT STOP AND PROVIDE MORE SUBSIDIES TO INCOME LEVELS LESS THAN \$75K
I don't know
I don't know enough about the terms used to make an informed decision
I've lived in Burlington my entire life and with ever increasing taxes I have seen no improvement in services or traffic management
Your survey is incredibly biased. Consult a data scientist.

Question 10

What are your top concerns about Burlington?

What did we learn?

We had 163 responses. They are listed below in alphabetical order. An AI-generated summary follows the list of responses.

"Nickle and dime-ing" residents with parking fees at Beachway and LaSalle Park lots. Motorized scooter users on bike lanes and sidewalks -- see above 😊.

Traffic lights that halt traffic (red light) at intersections when there is no reason -- no pedestrian, no turning traffic. Have experienced it several times in various parts of the city on the road and as a pedestrian and wonder why, am annoyed.

Posted Neighbourhood Watch signage in (my) neighbourhood(s?) that hasn't had the program for years!

Keep the new art gallery talk a pipe dream -- in this tough financial time there are housing, climate, security and myriad other issues that merit discussion and solutions. Better yet put a muzzle on the art gallery talk!!!

Budget setting info should include COB debt level and how it has accumulated.

1. Continued sprawl will bankrupt the city. 2. We need to maintain independence from provincial and Halton regional bureaucracies. We should strive to maintain our sense of community, and peaceful "small town", green urban vibe. Otherwise, we will just end up as part of some conurbation infested by corporate interests and bloated bureaucracies, all for the purpose of "growth".

1. Irresponsible, ballooning costs created by bloated salary increases and new programs, often unnecessary, with new staff to support them. 2. Over-intensification. 3. Over-regulation and abrogation of property rights (tree-cutting bylaw as an example)

1. Over embracing developers as the only budgetary solution to maintaining existing infrastructure.
2. NIMBYISM
3. Overly car centric urban planning.

1) Safety 2) High influx which affects and will further stress city's affordability and resource sharing.

1)City approves a budget then every couple of months approves, in council, additional funding requests. 2)\$110,000 median income is used in reports (e.g., recreation) to justify increases in revenue generation that remove inclusiveness for families living on \$50,000 as that is median Burlington single family income (not low enough to qualify for income subsidies.) \$110,000 is medium family income in Burlington. \$50,000 in medium income of 1 person families which are 20% of Burlington.

Why take time & labour to ask for feedback when Burlington survey design directs all responses to be the answer they wish.

Accommodating for future growth while maintaining our small-medium town look and feel

Affordability

Affordability

Affordability and cost of living
Affordability, housing, traffic
Affordability, safety, homelessness, traffic
Affordability, traffic,
Affordable living
At a civic government level Climate change & DEI initiatives should be ditched, on a practical working level bring back weekly garbage pick up and return to the national lead Burlington had on Recycling back in the early 1970's
Bad fiscal policy
Becoming overpopulated and infrastructure can't keep up.
Theft occurrences on personal property appears to be on the rise.
Building condos and increasing density without traffic solutions or amenities for the increased population.
Burlington mayor and planning department have become increasingly lacking in transparency. Ford took away planning authority at the region and burlington staff have quietly been continuing what the region was up to such as delaying permits in the rural area for large buildings, hydro challenges not being addressed in the rural area, natural heritage taking priority over development causing delay. Information coming out of mayors office slanted so that projects get passed but leaving out the entire facts. Ie speed cameras.
Car-centric; not attractive for business. Make downtown liveable and walkable. Invest in businesses that retain and attract young people.
Congestion, building condos without the infrastructure to handle them
Continued increases in taxes with little being used effectively. Why do we need a new art gallery at the projected cost of \$116 million?! What percentage of the city's population uses the current art gallery, compared the percentage of people using the city's food banks?!
Costs and traffic
Council is not responding to the concerns of citizens.
Crackheads Panhandlers
Crime and traffic
Crime. Road safety.
Crowding and traffic congestion. I fail to see how increasing the population at this point increases quality of life. Parks don't get bigger, public spaces don't get bigger, healthcare can't handle it. For my first 40 years in Burlington there were maybe 2 homeless people.
Current decisions on expenditures by current council include several vanity projects whilst taxpayers are struggling
Debt spending leading to tax increases without Council accountability
Developers are running the City. City Counsellor are Not listening to voters. Perfect example is Lisa Kerns approval on 2072 Lakeshore development
Downtown is not friendly

Duplicate services like loose leaf pick up vs. yardwaste, Regional Tourism & Small Business vs. city Tourism & Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce
Everything
excessive property taxation
Fiscal mismanagement and overdevelopment. Reckless additions of staff, programs, major initiatives and bloated salaries. City Hall is out of control.
forced dependency on single occupancy vehicles
From what I know, I think City staff salaries are more than the private sector. The councillor's salaries are public knowledge, and they're too high. It's part time, second job, for some who are self-employed. Their assistant handles much of the work.
Getting too expensive.
government spending. it makes taxes go up. this is across federal provincial and municipal levels. something like 80% of job creation since 2020 has been by the government - this is funded by taxes that i am expected to pay
Greed. Adding a billion condos like Mississauga to generate tax revenue.
Health and safety
High property tax increases well beyond inflation. Traffic congestion throughout the city. Too many tall condo buildings getting approved destroying the look of our city. Developers getting away with reduced parking requirements when building condos. There should be a minimum of one parking space per unit built. Otherwise neighbourhoods near these condos will get uncontrollable street parking near their homes.
High rise intensification. Traffic. Bloating beauruocracy. The flood of propaganda. Budget increases greater than inflation
high taxes
High taxes and building in areas that can't handle traffic volume
High taxes year after year
High taxes, especially in the presence of large amount of new buildings, supposedly paying taxes.
High taxes, inefficient traffic lights, spending on too many extras when economy is hurting
High traffic congestion and high property taxes.
Home safety
Housing affordability, over-dependence on cars which causes traffic, environment
Improve permit process for renovations and ADUs
increase in crime
Increase in theft and homelessness
Infrastructure

Integrity and transparency at City Hall
It seems that we are paying a lot of taxes and our mayor and council are bent on spending instead of being responsible with taxpayers money!
It's becoming unaffordable to live here. People buying up all the houses in my neighborhood and turning them in to shit hole rental properties while charging a fortune.
Keep spending in line with revenue, keep an eye on the homeless population (seeing more and more people on the street)
Lack of affordable rentals, too many condos, too much traffic and noise
Lack of transparency from the City and irresponsible spending
lack of transparency; inability to determine wants versus needs; lack of establishing priorities based on greatest needs and benefits; larger council is required to provide greater representation of residents
Mayoral powers. Increased taxes and cost of living.
MMW and council seem to have an attitude of "We want it, it's expensive but we'll buy it anyway, and let the taxpayers foot the bill" ENOUGH!!!!
mobility not in a car
Multi generational living and homes beyond safe levels. Rise of break and enters in the city. Homelessness.
Municipal government spending
Municipal spending bloat is making living here unaffordable.
My concern is that I wonder at the councils ability to focus on non frivolous expenditures within the current financial climate. Now is not the time to raise taxes as it sill further hurt suffering families. Let's put a pause on extra wants for the city, rather than needs. When the economy is better then we can look at projects, like the art gallery, when people's budgets aren't so tight. People will likely be more generous during fundraisers at that time.
New development congestion and increases in taxes with no discernible benefit.
Our Mayor- since in the office we have such incompetence
Out of control spending and adding more city employees..we should be cutting some of them..we are not getting value..and they should all be back in the office
Over building of Condominiums. Traffic congestion, High property taxes.
Over development, taxes, traffic
Over population, excessive condo building. over taxation, lack of council and other levels of government accountability.
Overdevelopment (way too many condos, especially downtown); property taxes must be lowered.
overdevelopment, traffic, crime

Parking downtown, traffic congestion (more enforcement for bad drivers) Population density. Too many apartments going in. Homelessness, dealing with individuals, somewhere for them to camp safely, with sanitation
Paying taxes and staying in my home during retirement
Payroll is the city s biggest expense??? Is there is any chance of cutting labor??
Poor leadership and management
Poor planning and government waste
Poor quality and quantity of services for amount of taxes we pay. Poor amenities in parks etc
Property tax and building in areas where there isn't enough traffic lanes to accommodate (downtown is a mess!). Art gallery should renovate inside and makes better use of existing building (not a priority - have wearily patrons contribute to renovate or sell more of the overpriced stuff in their store), money could be better spent renovating the senior centre that more people use.
Property tax is my main concern 2022 - \$3996.00 2023 - \$4247.55 2024 - \$4645.86 2025 - \$4916.25 That's a \$920.25 increase in 4 years. Where does this stop?? Almost \$5000 property tax for a small semi-detached house is ridiculous.
Property taxes are forcing people out of their homes
Property taxes are too high and not sustainable. Stop all unnecessary programs and freebie give aways such as grants for ARU's; Love your Neighbour; Food for Feedback; monies to SOM and Burlington Green; Grants for Neighbourhood projects of \$10,000 each etc. etc. And stop all of the money being spend on numerous mayor and council membership fees as well as our of town travel for our mayor and council. Also Burlington Green should be paying rent for their facility, presently they pay nothing.
Property taxes are too high.
PROPERTY TAXES THAT ARE TOO HIGH AND OVERSPENDING ON VANITY PROJECTS LIKE CITY HALL RENOVATION, BATEMAN FACILITY \$100 MILLION AND SKYWAY ARENA \$37 MILLION
Property taxes, new development, traffic
Public transport is horrible. Make it better.

Putting in bike lanes that a sm fraction of the population uses approx 1/2 of the year, buses that run empty most of the time , the insane building of condos with no infrastructure to support it, that just increase traffic snarls Poor planning of roads that have become too small to support the population increase, what are all these membership fees for .
Rising costs. Waste of tax dollars
Rising crime rates from surrounding GTA cities
Road infrastructure, police traffic enforcement
Road safety
Road safety, crime, cost of living
Safety and policing / crime prevention
Speeding
Stop spending
Tax increase. Funds wasted.
Taxes
Taxes and city counsel over spending
TAXES and TRAFFIC and building too many high rises without thinking of any of the consequences
Taxes and traffic.
Taxes are too high and the Mayor is trying to do too much.
taxes are too high for the services we recieve
Taxes are way too high and the increases are not sustainable
Taxes better managed, value for money, declining quality of life, destruction of character of the downtown, protection of character neighbourhoods, council representation, the need to consolidate Oakville and Burlington as southern tier municipality, the loss of touch with Council and staff to communities, etc oh, I forgot amalgamate BPAC, Art Gallery and that silly structure underneath Joesph Brant hoise, such gross efficiency.
Taxes getting too high
Taxes, homeless
That surveys are clearly biased. Traffic is too congested on stroads. There is not enough small businesses. Too many large single family homes
The amount of bad drivers and crime coming here from Brampton.
The destruction of downtown with the intensification of condo construction. The loss of our manufacturing and commercial base which directly results in loss revenue for the city. My largest concern is our fiscally out of touch City Council!
The increase in traffic snarls; the lack of clinics that r open on Sundays ; the lack of attention to infrastructure when building more ; the no of employees at city hall
The incredible increase in in taxes over 4 years.Stop it now!

The lack of accountability and transparency is creating an atmosphere of distrusts in our elected officials. Our tax contribution appear to spend without restraint.
The Millcroft golf course development is an example of one man destroying part of the character of Burlington. This with many others means that Burlington is not what it used to be - budget must include purchasing strategic property
The province has downloaded so many costs to municipalities and restricted development charges for new builds, which brought in revenue for the city. That information is not regularly shared when discussing some of the reasons why municipal property taxes have increased so drastically
The roads and wasted money
The suburbs and single family home dwellers of the city are paying very little tax for the cost of providing these services to them and are getting welfare through the young tax payers living in downtown core and condos across Burlington. Burlington has to switch to a Land Value Tax before this becomes a big problem in the short term and completely destroys the city and the communities there in the long term, as clearly visible anywhere else on earth.
The tax increases... the traffic speed cameras... The waste of money on nonsense appearances by the mayor!
The timing of new buildings (condos and business) versus newer infrastructure such as roads has always been very uneven. There is going to be a huge increase in traffic delays/accidents (downtown and suburban) if the flow of main traffic at crucial times is not moving.
There is a lot of money being spent foolishly. Downtown is wrecked with all the high rise buildings. I don't even want to go downtown any more.
There's no culture, we don't have as many locally owned restaurants, bars and shops like Hamilton does. There's no nightlife, or many fun places to go on the weekend, for example, an independent gallery like centre3, vintage shops, specialty cafes or venues to listen to live music. Also public transit needs to be better and running later to enjoy the things we do have.
To many "nice to have projects"
To much is spent on small interest groups. Accountability to residents should be a priority
Too expensive
Too many high rise buildings and more to be built. Very unprofessional urban design, especially along the lake.
Too many panhandlers, immigrants and higher taxes
Too many people
Too much focus on Bike Infrastructure. More focus on getting traffic moving.
Too much tax and no services

Too nimby centric. Increase development to reduce taxes
traffic
Traffic
Traffic
Traffic - drivers are aggressive and there is no oversight from police
Traffic - major congestion around the entire city especially the downtown core. We rarely visit or spend time downtown in Burlington because of this.
Traffic and money waste at city hall
Traffic and taxes
Traffic congestion daily on city and highway roads
traffic congestion due to poor traffic light sequencing. Money wasted on arts.
Traffic congestion, overdevelopment, safety
Traffic is ridiculous. A push for better transit and a push to have more people utilise it will benefit the city immensely.
traffic, greenspace
traffic, housing
Traffic, increased property taxes!
Traffic, overpopulation with lack of infrastructure, not enough spending on necessities and too much spending on low priority things like art galleries and drones. Not enough being done to actually improve the city from the inside but asking for tax increases while people are struggling more than ever. Ignores the fact that there is virtually no middle class anymore when suggesting fee increases for necessities like transit for everyone except "low-income" - we are all living hand-to-mouth here. Want to limit our vital facilities like transit in favour of art galleries. This money is better spent on our hospital.
traffic, rate of growth, housing affordability, need to redevelop industrial commercial and residential lands already serviced to avoid any reduction in farmland
Traffic, roads , jobs, taxes , there's no reason for more condos! Start spending where we need to , not where we don't needed to, affordable houses list goes on, the city mis manages our tax money!
Traffic, traffic safety and maintenance of green spaces that keep people safe. (Old trees by our home are dropping large branches and are not maintained like they used to be 10 years ago when we moved here)
Traffic. It's ridiculous and it's been ridiculous for a long time. FIX OUR TRANSIT SYSTEM. Make it easy for residents to leave vehicles at home and ride transit to get where they need to go. Quit focusing on only the "favoured" downtown residents.
Transient traffic making our city streets unsafe. Developers destroying Burlington with all the proposed high rises on Lakeshore & Old Lakeshore Rd. Lisa Kerns turned her back against her Constituents and voted for 24 stories at 2072 Lakeshore.

Unaffordable taxes
Unsafe roads, but this requires police presence, drivers in this city are distracted, aggressive and do not follow the highway traffic act
Unsustainable reckless spending from mayor and council. Cannot get rid of these people fast enough.
untimed lights, wasted land that could be used for community centres
Wasteful spending on things we don't need. Increase the number of housing in Burlington which in turn increases property taxes and revenue generated by the city of Burlington. We need efficient spending at municipal level and cut back on jobs in the government in this city as it seems to be getting out of hand.
Way too many non residents ruining a once great city. Our taxes are supporting too many people that don't work but take advantage of everything.
We keep adding people but not community spaces, so we are diluting the quality of life. Stop cutting down trees for endless sprawl. Our roads are clearly at capacity.
There should be more evening fun swims, for working families. The Mountainside reno took a bunch of swimming space and converted to serve the needs of a few lap swimmers. Where a big open pool is much more flexible I would chain myself to the gates to prevent the same changes happening to Nelson.
Wrecking the downtown with so many condos. Creating traffic issues. No bi laws regarding sleeping in public spaces

This is an AI summary of the above concerns:

Summary of Burlington Concerns

The feedback highlights a clear focus on the challenges associated with **city growth and development**, and the subsequent strains on **infrastructure** and **services**.

Top-Tier Concerns (Highest Volume of Responses)

These three issues represent the most common and pressing concerns for the residents:

1. Over-development/High-rise Buildings:

- This is the single most frequently mentioned concern.
- Specific worries relate to the **increase of high-rise buildings** and the fear of the city losing its character.

2. Traffic Congestion/Traffic Flow/Road Safety:

- A significant portion of feedback centers on the poor state of **traffic flow** and **traffic lights**.

- The issue of **road safety** is also a primary concern, likely exacerbated by increased density.

3. **Cost of Housing/Affordable Housing:**

- A major economic and social issue, with residents expressing concern over the **high cost of living** and the **lack of affordable housing** options.
-

Secondary Concerns (High Volume of Responses)

These issues also represent substantial areas of resident dissatisfaction or concern:

- **Roadway/Sidewalk Maintenance:** Concerns about the quality of basic infrastructure, indicating a need for better **road and sidewalk repairs**.
 - **Council/City Services/Tax Dollars:** A noticeable number of responses question the **value for property tax dollars** and express dissatisfaction with the **overall services provided by the City Council**.
 - **Public Transportation:** Respondents frequently cited the need for **improved and more convenient public transit services**.
-

Other Notable Concerns

- **Infrastructure Improvements:** General feedback on the need for upgrades to infrastructure (beyond just roads/sidewalks).
- **Bylaw Enforcement:** Concerns over the effectiveness and responsiveness of municipal bylaw enforcement.
- **Parks/Nature/Greenspace:** Some residents expressed the need to protect or improve parks and green spaces.

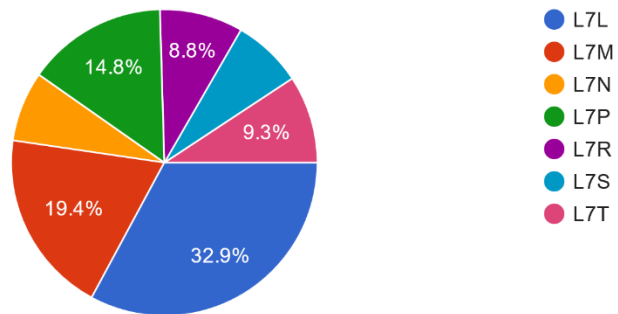
The overall theme is that the rapid **growth and development** of Burlington are perceived as directly leading to problems with **traffic, housing affordability, and the maintenance of core city infrastructure**.

Question 11

We asked for the first three digits of the respondents' postal code to make sure we had representation from across the city.

What are the first three digits of your postal code?

216 responses



Thanks again to everyone who participated in this survey.

COW November 3, 2025
DGM-99-25 MHBC correspondence

October 30, 2025

Karyn Poad, Supervisor, Community Initiatives
City of Burlington
426 Brant Street
Burlington, ON L7R 3Z6

Via Email: clerks@burlington.ca

Ms. Poad:

**RE: MTSA OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT NO. 2 NOTICE OF DECISION (REPORT DGM-99-25)
APPLEBY GO MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREA
OUR FILE: 1886G**

On behalf of our client, Alinea Land Corporation ("Alinea"), we are pleased to submit this letter outlining our concerns with the Minister Approved Official Plan Amendment No. 2 ("OPA 2") as it relates to the lands located at 4450, 4480 & 4500 Paletta Court (the "Subject Lands") (**Figure 1**).

Context

On December 21, 2023 a Site Plan application (City File: 535-013/23) was submitted for the Subject Lands to facilitate a comprehensive redevelopment of the site with three (3) one-storey light industrial buildings and one (1) four-storey office building with amenity space. Conditional Site Plan Approval was received on March 4, 2024 and MHBC has been assisting Alinea to address comments and conditions since that time in consultation with Staff. We have also coordinated Minor Variance Applications (City Files: 540-02-A-047/2024, 540-02-A-048/2024, 540-02-A-049/2024) to facilitate minor variations to the zoning provisions in support of the Site Plan application and these applications were approved on January 22, 2025.

OPA 2

A portion of the Subject Lands, including the properties 4480 and 4500 Paletta Court, are within the Appleby GO MTSA boundary. The Council-adopted version of OPA 2 designated the Subject Lands as Urban Employment (**Figure 2**) and permitted office and industrial uses on lands north of the rail corridor within the MTSA, consistent with the uses proposed through the Conditionally Approved Site Plan.

The Minister's Decision on OPA 2 included modifications to the Schedules and Policy framework for the Subject Lands, including a renaming of the "Urban Employment" designation to "MTSA Corridor Employment" on Schedule H (**Figure 3**) and a revised Policy 8.1.2(4.2)c) that modifies the permitted uses on the Subject Lands, eliminating office uses. The permitted uses for the lands north of the rail corridor have been revised to include

the following:

- Manufacturing uses;
- Research and development in connection to manufacturing anything;
- Warehousing and goods movement;
- Retail and office uses associated with the above uses;
- Facilities that are ancillary to the above uses;
- Institutional, retail and office uses that were lawfully established on or before October 20, 2024; and,
- Ancillary employment uses that are not institutional uses or commercial uses, including retail and office uses.

It is understood that City of Burlington staff proposed modifications to OPA 2 in consultation with the Province to achieve consistency with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 and the Planning Act definition of “area of employment” which does not permit offices. However, we are concerned that Alinea’s Conditionally Approved Site Plan that has been in place since March 2024 was not considered through this consultation process. The Conditionally Approved Site Plan, at the time of its approval, aligned with the Council-adopted version of OPA 2.

It is also understood that “lawfully established” offices are permitted, however, Alinea has only applied for building permits for the three industrial buildings and has not yet applied for a building permit for the proposed office use. We are therefore concerned that should the office use not be identified as a site-specific permitted use in OPA 2, there could be issues of non-conformity with the Official Plan in the future, and subsequently in the future CPP By-law. Alinea’s counsel has indicated that the office use for this site should meet the definition of “lawfully established” even though a permit for the new office building has not been issued. Not only does Alinea have Conditional Site Plan Approval for a stand-alone office on this site, what is proposed will replace a long-established office. These lands were the home of the formerly Paletta International head office, which is now Alinea Land Corporation. The office was destroyed by fire in 2017 and Paletta (now Alinea) has been planning to redevelop the lands to include a new office since that time. At no time did Paletta/Alinea abandon its intended office uses for the lands. Certainly the office use was lawfully established prior to October 20, 2024. While a portion of the building has been destroyed, Alinea is still operating its office on the Subject Lands in the portion of the building remaining. Alinea is in the process of finalizing the approval process for rebuilding the office and that should not affect its status as “lawfully established”. We would appreciate the City confirming that it agrees with this interpretation.

We would like to consult with Staff on the best approach to recognize the Conditionally Approved Site Plan which permits a stand-alone office use on the Subject Lands within the MTSA Corridor Employment area. We will also continue to engage with Staff on the CPP By-law to ensure that the Conditionally Approved Site Plan and Minor Variance applications are all recognized to ensure the site-specific permissions for the Subject Lands are incorporated into the Draft CPP By-law coming forward to Council in Winter 2026.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Yours truly,

MHBC

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Melinda MacRory". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "M" and "R".

Melinda MacRory, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP
Partner

cc. D. Pitblado, Alinea Land Corporation

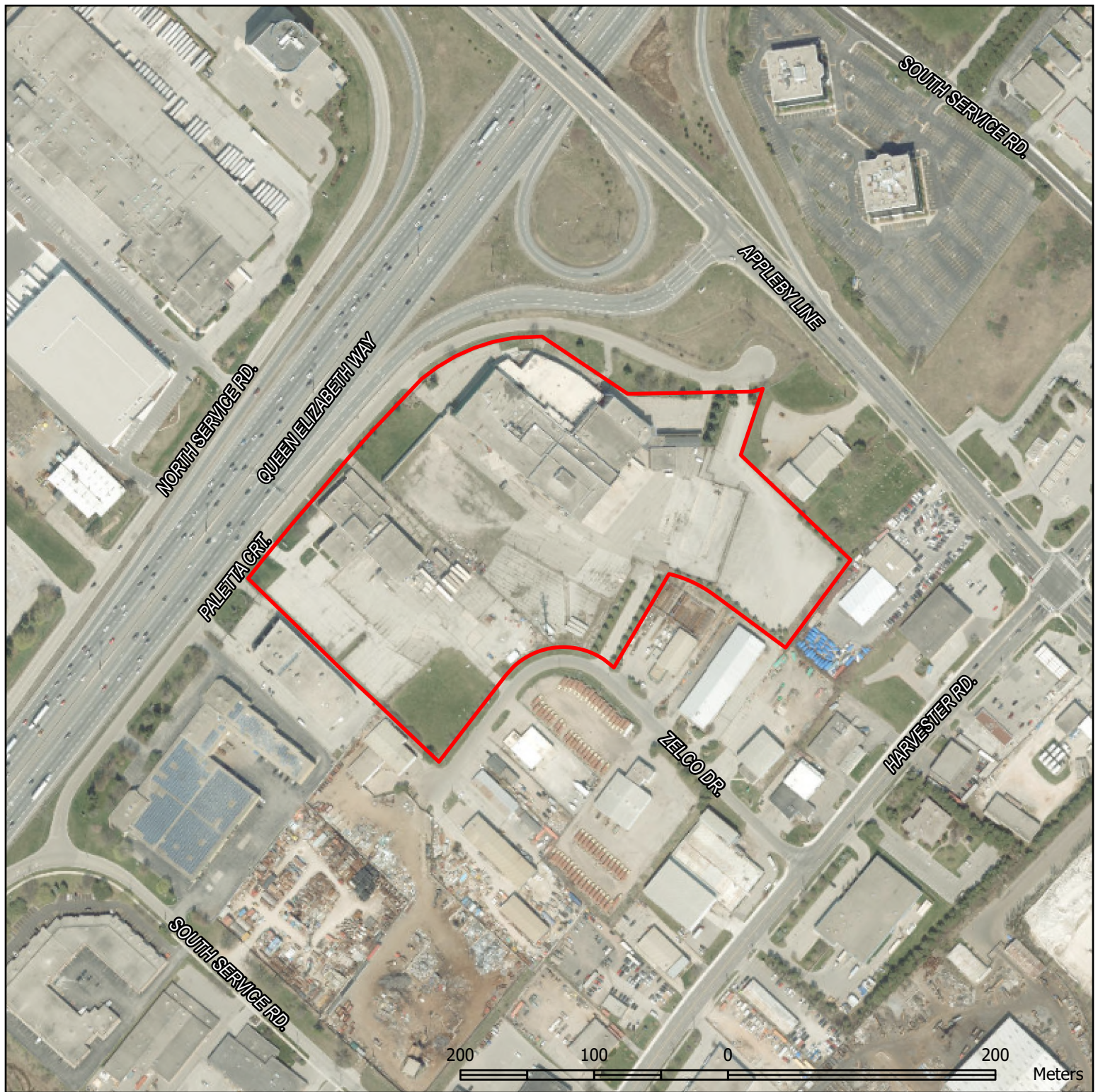


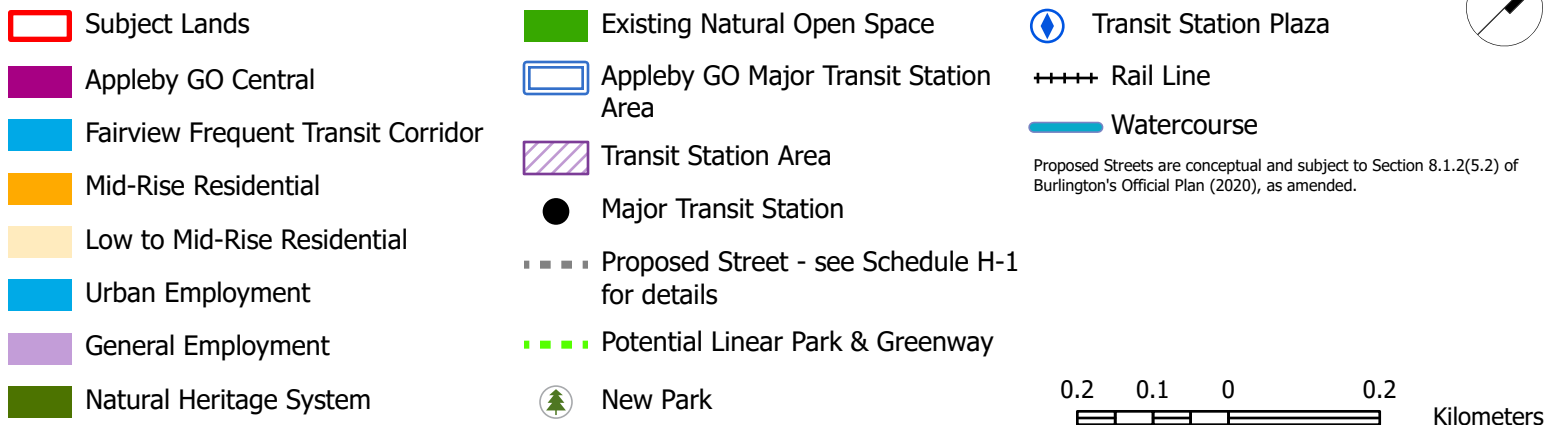
Figure 1 - Location Map

 Subject Lands





Figure 2 - Council Adopted OPA 2: Schedule H - Land Use - Appleby GO Major Transit Station Area



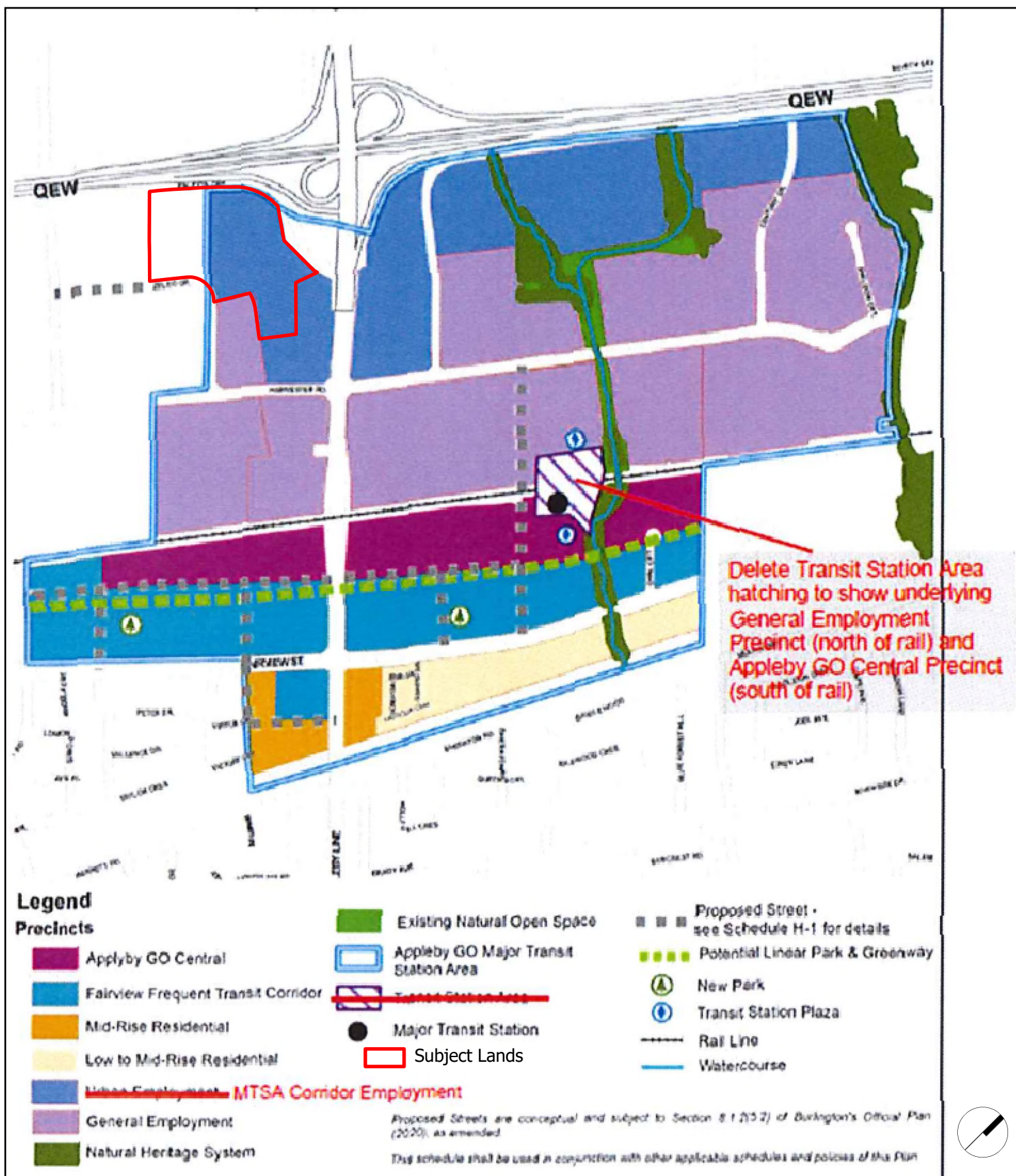


Figure 3: Minister's Modification to OPA 2: Schedule H - Land Use - Appleby GO Major Transit Station Area