

Burlington Housing Strategy Engagement Plan

Background

The City of Burlington's Strategic Plan "2018 -2022 Burlington's Plan: From Vision to Focus" highlights housing as a top priority. It identifies the need for a Burlington Housing Strategy to increase options for housing across the city. In January 2021, City council endorsed the Burlington Housing Strategy Terms of Reference, directing staff to commence work on the Housing Strategy.

The Housing Strategy will provide an opportunity to look for creative and innovative solutions to address local housing issues by exploring planning policy and financial tools, partnerships, collaboration and advocacy opportunities, strategies and initiatives that will build on and support the Region's Housing Strategy to develop innovative local solutions to housing issues in Burlington.

To include as many voices as possible in this important conversation about housing, the Housing Strategy will incorporate public engagement as a key element of the project and will be hosting several public engagement activities designed to give current and future community members and stakeholders an opportunity to provide meaningful input. The input that is gathered will inform both the interim report in December 2021 and the final report recommendations to City Council in mid-2022.

Engaging people on issues that affect their lives and their city is a key component of democratic society. Public involvement encourages participation, actions and personal responsibility. Burlington's commitment to public engagement is reflected in its [Community Engagement Charter](#), adopted by City Council. The Charter establishes the commitments, responsibilities and concepts of the relationship between the City of Burlington and the citizens of Burlington related to public engagement. The goal of community engagement is to lead to more informed and, therefore, better decision-making.

The following plan provides a roadmap of the engagement activities that will take place over the next few months, highlighting at which points in the process engagement will take place, who will be engaged and the level of engagement. The plan also clearly defines which aspects of the process the City and public can influence throughout the discussion. This plan is intended to provide a broad overview of the engagement activities that will take place and is subject to change over the course of the project.

Project Overview

- On Feb. 7, 2019, Burlington City Council voted to approve [2018 -2022 Burlington's Plan, From Vision to Focus](#).
- On January 14, 2021, Burlington City Council voted to endorse the [Burlington Housing Strategy Terms of Reference](#).
- On March 8, 2021, City Staff hosted a [Virtual Launch](#) to introduce the Housing Strategy initiative to residents and key stakeholders in the community. The purpose of the event was to seek input on the development of the Housing Strategy and to seek input on how the community would like to collaborate on the Housing Strategy throughout the process.

Decision Statement

At the beginning of an engagement process, it is helpful to know, “what is the decision to be made?” The decision statement clearly identifies:

- What decision needs to be made;
- Who is the decision maker; and
- When the decision is required.

The following decision statement has been refined through the preliminary engagement undertaken at the Virtual Launch and online survey.

Housing Strategy Decision Statement:

In 2022, Burlington City Council will consider endorsing a City of Burlington Housing Strategy to increase options for housing across the city.

Summary of Stakeholders

- Current and future residents
- Resident groups
- Indigenous communities
- Community organizations; special interest, advocacy, and activism groups
- Development industry
- Business community
- Government and public service providers (internal and external)
- Project Working Group and Steering Committee
- City Advisory Committees and arms-length city agencies
- Private and non-profit community service providers
- Elected Officials

Objectives of Engagement

The following objectives describe what the public engagement will strive to achieve through the community discussion about the Burlington Housing Strategy:

- Provide relevant information about the project, decision-making process, and how the public can provide input and feedback;
- Work with Project Consultants to provide a coordinated approach to engagement, communication and preparation of the Housing Strategy;
- Provide multiple channels for people to provide meaningful input virtually at appropriate decision points;
- Work with the Housing Strategy Working Group provide direction and advice on matters related to the Housing Strategy to advise on local issues, be champions for the project, provide key insights given their diverse backgrounds, and contribute to the refinement and implementation of the engagement plan;
- Create an ongoing record of what is said during engagement opportunities and make it available to the public throughout the process, so they can track the progress of the project, including reports back to the community that highlight how feedback was or was not incorporated into the final recommendations to Council;
- Gather meaningful input from members of the community whose voices are historically underrepresented in conversations about city issues;
- Establish a project page on getinvolvedburlington.ca as the main online platform for up-to-date information about the project and upcoming engagement opportunities; and
- Use clear, plain language in the delivery of the Engagement Plan to inform the public about what can and cannot be influenced through the Housing Strategy

COVID-19

The City of Burlington continues to take appropriate action to prioritize the health and well-being of our community and staff. Our goal is to keep the public and staff safe and help minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Following Provincial and Public Health directives, the City is currently offering engagement opportunities virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will do so until further direction is given by the Province and Public Health allowing in-person engagement. The intent is to offer both virtual and in-person engagement opportunities where and when possible.

Potential Engagement Barriers/Risks

The following potential risks and barriers to engagement have been identified and will be used to guide the design of the engagement program for each round of engagement.

- **Misconceptions about Project Scope:** Engagement messaging will need to be clear on roles and responsibilities of the City and Halton Region with respect to housing, allocations, etc., as well as how the Housing Strategy will connect to the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review. There may also be misalignment on expectations for what the Strategy can deliver, thus messaging will need to highlight that the Strategy is action oriented and identify longer term items that can be delivered.
- **Alienation or Lack of Trust:** Participants may be reluctant to participate based on past experience of not feeling heard, or concern about how

feedback will be brought forward. The engagement program and reporting will need to show in real time how decision making is being influenced by the engagement program, and have the outputs reflected back to communities

- **Safe Space:** Some elements of the engagement process will require careful consideration of how to create safe space for the conversation, as the Project Team will be asking for sensitive information and may be facilitating conversations that are triggering - framing of the questions and subject matter will be a key element of these stages of the program.
- **Broad Outreach:** The limitations of digital engagement during COVID will need to be considered in the context of reaching vulnerable or historically underrepresented communities. The engagement program will need to utilize a mix of digital tactics, virtual engagement, asynchronous engagement, and outreach through organizations on the ground. Input from the Working Group will be key to formulating analog tactics and mechanisms to reach those with a digital barrier or constraints. There will also need to be space for smaller group conversations, to support all voices to be heard.
- **Timing/Schedule:** Based on the Project timeline, the bulk of data validation work would need to be done over summer – this poses some potential risks in being able to reach participants and will require active communications across the city.

Project Milestones and Engagement Level

At its meeting on Jan. 19, 2021, City Council approved the terms of reference for the Burlington Housing Strategy. The key milestones for the project are below. For each milestone, the Engagement Plan identifies where public input will take place, who will be involved in the engagement and what level of engagement will occur. The different levels of engagement are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)'s Public Participation Spectrum, which is also a component of Burlington's [Community Engagement Charter](#).

The shaded areas in the table below indicate project milestones where significant public engagement opportunities will take place.

Timing (WHEN)	Milestone	Message (WHAT)	Stakeholders (WHO)	Level of Engagement
Project Launch				
January 14, 2021	1. CPRM Meeting to present the Housing Strategy Proposed Terms of Reference	Outline the scope of work related to the preparation of a Housing Strategy for the City of Burlington. The purpose of the strategy will be to develop creative and innovative solutions to local housing issues.	Burlington City Council, Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy.	Inform with stakeholders Involve/Collaborate with City Council
Engagement – Round 1				
March 8, 2021	2. Housing Strategy Virtual Launch	Introduce the Housing Strategy initiative to residents and key stakeholders in the community and to seek public input on the development of the Housing Strategy along with how the community would like to collaborate on the Housing Strategy.	Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy.	Consult
March 2021	3. Engagement Plan Develop the DRAFT Engagement Plan through pre-engagement with stakeholders through the online survey results and through feedback received at the Virtual Launch on March 8.	Develop a DRAFT Engagement Plan with input from stakeholders.	Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy.	Collaborate with Working Group and Steering Committee Consult with stakeholders
April 6, 2021	4a. CPRM meeting to present the DRAFT Engagement Plan, Refined Milestones and virtual launch Consultation Summary.	Staff will present the DRAFT Engagement Plan informed by the initial consultation as well as refined project milestones.	Burlington City Council, individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy.	Consult with City Council Inform stakeholders
	4b. Report back to the public about how their input was or was not used in the creation of the draft Engagement Plan.			

Timing (WHEN)	Milestone	Message (WHAT)	Stakeholders (WHO)	Level of Engagement
May - August 2021	5a. Refine and finalize the Engagement Plan using input from Council (April), the Housing Strategy Working Group and the Steering Committee in collaboration with the Project Consultant.	Staff will work with the identified groups to finalize and release the FINAL Engagement Plan to be posted on Get Involved.	Housing Strategy Working Group, Steering Committee and Project Consultant.	Collaborate
	5b. Post recording of the Working Group meeting and a list of actions to the Get Involved website.			
Technical Work: Housing Background Memo and State of Housing in Burlington and Housing Needs Assessment Memo				
June - July 2021	6. Prepare Housing Background Memo	Project Consultants will prepare a Housing Background Memo based on the work outlined in the Housing Strategy Terms of Reference.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
June - July 2021	7. Prepare State of Housing in Burlington Memo	Project Consultants will prepare a State of Housing in Burlington Memo based on the work outlined in the Housing Strategy Terms of Reference.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
Engagement – Round 2a				
Purpose: to validate findings from the research conducted and gather input to complement the data story				
July - August 2021	8a. Release the Housing Background Memo and State of Housing in Burlington Memo	The Working Group and Steering Committee will review this work and will provide advice and recommendations.	Working Group and Steering Committee	Involve/Collaborate
	8b. Post recording of the Working Group meeting and a list of actions to the Get Involved website.			
August - September 2021	8c. Online survey to collect data that will be used to supplement / validate the data for the State of Housing in Burlington and Housing Needs Assessment Memo	Project Consultants will prepare survey to be uploaded to the Get Involved project page.	Public	Consult

Timing (WHEN)	Milestone	Message (WHAT)	Stakeholders (WHO)	Level of Engagement
September 2021	8d. Internal Staff Workshop to understand the City's role in housing	Project Consultants will guide a discussion on the City's role in housing and relationships with other housing stakeholders to better understand the role the City can play on a go-forward basis.	Steering Committee	Collaborate
Technical Work: Housing Trends and Analysis and Best Practice Scan				
July - August 2021	9. Prepare the Housing Trends and Analysis Memo	Project Consultants will prepare the Memo based on the work outlined in the Housing Strategy Terms of Reference.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
August 2021	10. Prepare the Best Practice Scan/Innovative Practices Memo	Project Consultants will prepare the Memo based on the work outlined in the Housing Strategy Terms of Reference.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
Engagement – Round 2b				
Purpose: to validate findings from the research conducted and gather input				
August 2021	11. Release the Housing Trends and Analysis Memo and Best Practice Scan/Innovative Practices Memo	The Working Group and Steering Committee will review this work and will provide advice and recommendations.	Working Group and Steering Committee	Involve/Collaborate
	11a. Post recording of the Working Group meeting and a list of actions to the Get Involved website.			
August - September 2021	12. Prepare the Interim report which will provide the basis for the Housing Strategy	Project Consultants will prepare the Interim Report based on the information obtained and presented within the four background memos.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
Engagement – Round 3				
Purpose: present key findings as set out in the interim report to seek input, validate findings, and go-forward directions				

Timing (WHEN)	Milestone	Message (WHAT)	Stakeholders (WHO)	Level of Engagement
September - October 2021	13a. Release the Interim Report	The Working Group and Steering Committee will review this work and provide advice and recommendations.	Working Group and Steering Committee	Involve/Collaborate
	13b. Release the Interim Report	The Interim Report will be shared with the public to inform and seek input to validate findings and go-forward directions.	Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy	Involve
	13c. Post recording of the Working Group meeting and a list of actions to the Get Involved website			
November 2021	14. CPRM meeting to share Housing Strategy Interim Report.	Project Consultants and City Staff will present the Interim Report to Council	Burlington City Council, Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy	Consult
Technical Work: Inclusionary Zoning				
September – October 2021	15. Prepare Inclusionary Zoning Municipal Assessment Report	Project Consultants will prepare the Memo based on the work outlined in the Housing Strategy Terms of Reference.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
Engagement – Round 4 Purpose: to gather input and present key findings from inclusionary zoning municipal assessment report to the public, stakeholders and indigenous communities				
October - November 2021	16a. Prepare Inclusionary Zoning Municipal Assessment Report	To obtain stakeholder input into the development of the Municipal Assessment Report.	Developer and Industry Roundtable	Involve/Collaborate
	16b. Release the Inclusionary Zoning Municipal Assessment Report	The Working Group and Steering Committee will review this work and provide advice and recommendations.	Working Group and Steering Committee	Involve/Collaborate

Timing (WHEN)	Milestone	Message (WHAT)	Stakeholders (WHO)	Level of Engagement
	16c. Release the Inclusionary Zoning Municipal Assessment Report	The Inclusionary Zoning Municipal Assessment Report will be shared with the public to inform and seek input to validate findings and go-forward directions.	Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy	Involve
December 2021	17a. CPRM meeting to share Inclusionary Zoning Municipal Assessment Report	Project Consultants and City Staff will present findings to Council which may include how Inclusionary Zoning can be integrated into the MTSA Area Specific Plans	Burlington City Council, Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy	Consult
	17b. Post recording of the Working Group meeting and a list of actions to the Get Involved website			
Technical Work: Housing Strategy				
December 2021 - February 2022	18. Prepare Draft Housing Strategy	Based on direction from Council, and the Project Consultant lead work, the Project Consultants will develop a Draft Housing Strategy, outlining initial City housing objectives, recommendations and actions plans to support implementation for public engagement and Council consideration.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
Engagement – Round 5 Purpose: to confirm the objectives, targets, and actions in the Draft Housing Strategy, honing in on whether the feedback received to date has been captured, and input on the measures of success and establishment of the engagement approach that will be applied throughout the implementation of the Strategy				
February – March 2022	19a. Release the Draft Housing Strategy.	The Draft Housing Strategy will be shared with the public to seek input on City housing objectives, recommendations and actions to support the drafting of the Final Housing Strategy.	Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy	Involve/collaborate
	19b. Report back to the public about how their feedback can or cannot contribute to the development of the Final Housing Strategy.			

Timing (WHEN)	Milestone	Message (WHAT)	Stakeholders (WHO)	Level of Engagement
	19c. Release the Draft Housing Strategy	The Working Group and Steering Committee will review this work and provide advice and recommendations.	Working Group and Steering Committee	Involve/Collaborate
	19d. Post recording of the Working Group meeting and a list of actions to the Get Involved website.			
March-April 2022	20. Prepare Final Housing Strategy	Based on consultation feedback and direction from Council, the Project Consultants will prepare a Final Housing Strategy that sets out City housing objectives, a set of recommendations and actions plans.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
Technical Work: Final Project Report				
April – May 2022	21. Prepare Final Project Report	Project Consultants will prepare a Final Project Report based on comments received throughout the duration of the project. The Final Project Report will be read in conjunction with the Final Housing Strategy.	n/a	n/a (no engagement)
Engagement – Round 6 Purpose: presentation of the Final Project Report and Final Housing Strategy for Council approval				
May 2022	22. Release the Final Project Report and Final Housing Strategy	Final Project Report and Final Housing Strategy will be presented to the Working Group and Steering Committee	Working Group and Steering Committee	Inform

Timing (WHEN)	Milestone	Message (WHAT)	Stakeholders (WHO)	Level of Engagement
June 2022	23a. CPRM Meeting for approval of the Final Project Report and Final Housing Strategy	Project Consultants and City Staff will present the Burlington Housing Strategy Final Report, Final Housing Strategy and Working Group Memo for approval. Members of the public may delegate at this meeting.	Burlington City Council, Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy	Inform with stakeholders Involve/Collaborate with City Council
	23b. Report back to the public about Council's decision and Report back to the public about how their feedback did or did not contribute to the development of the Final Project Report.			
Fall, 2022	24. Engagement Evaluation Report	Staff will evaluate each form of engagement and report back on how they impacted the overall public participation process over the course of the project.	Burlington City Council, Individuals and groups interested and affected by the Housing Strategy	Inform

Policies and Factors That Cannot be Influenced

In every public engagement process, it is important to be aware of the things that cannot be influenced: either because they are beyond the City's control (for example things that are required by regional or provincial policy or law), or because they are outside the scope of the project as set out in the Council-approved work plan. In discussing the Burlington Housing Strategy, the following aspects of the project are considered 'givens' and will not be included in engagement activities:

1. The City does not build housing or have a direct responsibility for housing. Through Official Plan policies, zoning and actions the City of Burlington guides city building which supports the development of a more diverse range of housing options across the entire City.
2. Housing is a shared responsibility across all levels of government and with the private and non-profit sectors. Through the Housing Strategy, the City is not looking to duplicate or replace the role of these stakeholders but to build on or support the work they are already doing. Where stakeholders have a defined role in housing, the City's Housing Strategy could identify advocacy and partnership opportunities with those stakeholders.
3. Housing policy is guided by various legislative requirements and policy documents such as the Housing Services Act, the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, provincial plans, the Halton Region Comprehensive Housing Strategy and Halton Region Official Plan.
4. Halton Region is the designated Municipal Service Manager for housing under the Housing Services Act and is responsible for the planning, management and program delivery across the housing continuum, including the creation of assisted housing options to house those on the Region's social housing waitlist.
5. The scope of work, timing and resources, including the terms of reference for Phase 1 of the Housing Strategy project has been approved by Council through staff report PL-02-21. Please refer to the [terms of reference](#) to understand what will not be discussed as part of this

project.

6. There is no one solution to address local housing issues. The Housing Strategy will provide an opportunity to look for creative and innovative solutions through policies, tools and actions to address housing needs now and in the future.
7. The Housing Strategy will not explore solutions to increase income levels.
8. The Housing Strategy will not be addressing land supply or urban boundary expansions. These matters are being addressed through [Halton Region's Official Plan Review/Municipal Comprehensive Review](#), currently underway.
9. The Housing Strategy is not specifically an Affordable Housing Strategy. Affordable Housing is a term that will be used in the project and is defined in both the Halton Region Official Plan and the City of Burlington Official Plan. The Housing Strategy will explore the concept of attainable housing in the Burlington context.
10. The City does not have control over the speed of change related to development. Property owners decide when and if they will develop or redevelop their property.

Forms of Engagement and Communication to the Public

The strategies that will be used for public involvement in the Burlington Housing Strategy directly reflect the feedback provided by interested and affected stakeholders at [the Housing Strategy Virtual Launch](#) hosted by Staff on March 8, 2021 and through the Housing Strategy Launch online survey. These strategies will be refined by the Housing Strategy Working Group and the Steering Committee. The input provided encouraged the City to provide engagement opportunities that allow for flexible online engagement. Details of the themes captured during this engagement are available in Appendix A.

How the City Will Collect and Respond to Feedback

Throughout the engagement process, City staff will collect all input provided by stakeholders by theme into engagement feedback reports, showing how the comments shaped the study process, the housing objectives and the recommended action items proposed to Council. For an example of how the City will respond to feedback throughout the process please see Appendix A for the Housing Strategy Engagement Feedback Report detailing the pre-engagement process and how it informed the development of this Engagement Plan.

Evaluating the Public Engagement Process

To assist in measuring how public participation contributed to the project decision to be made, the following will be used to evaluate the public participation process.

1. Once the project is complete, measure the degree to which community members felt they:
 - a. Understood the project's process, including how the City and Region can work together on housing
 - b. Understood how the feedback they provided influenced the outcome of the City Council approval.
 - c. Had a meaningful experience participating in the process and felt heard.
2. Evaluate each form of engagement.

How did each of the engagement approaches used help to achieve the engagement objectives?

How many people across key demographic groups and historically underrepresented populations were involved in the process?
3. Analyze how the feedback received about the forms of engagement impacted the overall public participation process as the project moved forward.

In particular, collect feedback from the Working Group on the engagement process and outcomes.

Consult with the development community on advancing housing affordability, building buy-in and partnerships to support the recommendations of the Strategy.

List of Appendices

- A. Consolidated feedback from the Virtual Launch and online survey
- B. Working Group Guidelines