



June 6, 2022

To: Members of the Burlington Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee and City Council
City of Burlington
426 Brant Street, Burlington

Thank you for accepting this delegation from the REALTORS® Association of Hamilton-Burlington (RAHB). We are a 100-year-old not-for-profit organization that proudly represents over 3,750 local REALTOR® members.

We are writing to you today as a key stakeholder involved in housing whose values include quality of life, private property ownership, a fair and efficient real estate marketplace, and promoting economically vibrant communities. We feel it is important to weigh in on opportunities such as Burlington's Housing Strategy.

The Issue

We are amid an affordability crisis. In May of this year, the average price of a home in Burlington was \$1,231,174, and with the lead time in constructing new units, it is unlikely that the price point will trend downwards in the foreseeable future. That said, steps can be taken to address attainable housing, and the Housing Strategy prepared by City staff represents a leap forward for the City of Burlington. REALTORS® are supportive of the efforts to develop and modernize Burlington's housing strategy.

The Solution

The themes laid out in the Strategy address are what we believe to be systemic issues at the root of the housing crisis, primarily a sheer lack of housing supply. With the City's commitment to tackling supply-side issues through support for ARUs (Additional Residential Units), the conversion of underutilized sites into housing stock, higher-density residential housing and purpose-built rental housing, RAHB applauds the solutions presented in Burlington's Housing Strategy.

The diversification across semi-detached, townhouse, mid-rise, high rise, and alternative housing forms is another critical step to take in addressing the housing crisis. Housing exists along a spectrum, and as the population of Burlington becomes increasingly diverse, there must be options for residents and families of all shapes and sizes.

RAHB is encouraged by the City's intention to embrace the bold recommendations presented in the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force. One item in particular from the report that will significantly impact the housing supply in the City is by putting limits on Exclusionary Zoning. This action item is an ideal form of gentle intensification and will increase housing attainability in the City.

RAHB is also delighted to see progress made on Inclusionary Zoning while acknowledging that we are still a distance away from realizing it. Inclusionary Zoning is not a silver bullet, but it is a robust tool that can and will play a significant role in bringing homeownership back within reach of constituents. To that end, RAHB advocates that the City use what resources it can to encourage the province to allow for a more comprehensive implementation of Inclusionary Zoning and remove the restriction limiting it to Protected Major Transit Station Areas.

Lastly, in alignment with Theme #4 of the plan - “to Partner with a wide range of organizations to increase housing options and advocate for change to address the gaps in housing options today and tomorrow” - RAHB offers ourselves as one of those partners. The resources RAHB can bring to the table for Burlington would prove invaluable in understanding the real estate market landscape. Our on-the-ground experience gives us a critical and unique perspective.

Conclusion

The REALTORS[®] Association of Hamilton-Burlington believes that the actions outlined in the Housing Strategy are essential to addressing the housing crisis in Burlington. We wish to reiterate our support for the policy recommendations put forward today and offer our resources to participate in the process as a stakeholder.

Sincerely,

Lou Piriano
2022 President
REALTORS[®] Association of Hamilton-Burlington