

Introduction

Good morning, my name is Mike Collins-Williams and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the West End Home Builders' Association. I am also a Registered Professional Planner. The West End Home Builders' Association (WE HBA) is the voice of the land development, new housing and professional renovation industries in Hamilton and Burlington. We represent approximately 300 member companies made up of all disciplines involved in land development and residential construction, including: builders, developers, professional renovators, trade contractors, consultants, and suppliers. During the global pandemic, the residential construction industry was a stabilizing force for our local economy, employing 25,300 people, paying \$1.7 billion in wages, and contributed over \$3 billion in investment value within Halton Region.

CMHC 1

Much as they have been doing for the past 80 years, our members will be building the future of Burlington. I would like to begin by acknowledging that 80% of Canadians currently and will continue to have their housing needs met through the private market according to CMHC. When the housing sector is efficient and well-functioning, the marketplace should be able to meet most people's housing needs. Right now, we can agree that is not the case. As such, solutions for housing affordability should have a strong emphasis on ways to enhance and support the private market in the delivery of new housing supply. Solving market affordability concerns is an important step to deliver solutions across the full housing continuum. I want to be clear that there is a need for government financial contributions (subsidizations) for solutions across the continuum for below market interventions to address homelessness to build new affordable housing projects. The solutions we need from a market housing supply perspective can relieve pressure across the continuum and enable easier development of affordable housing as well. The more Ontarians and Burlington residents that can be accommodated through private sector housing – the less pressure and resources that will be required from government. Ideally we can work together to make Burlington a more welcoming city for everyone.

Burlington Housing Strategy

The West End Home Builders' Association has appreciated being involved throughout the development of Burlington's Housing Strategy. It was a great experience for me

personally to hear from so many different local housing experts and those with a rich lived experience that they could share with members of the task force. WE HBA strongly supports the vision for housing in Burlington where everyone is welcome, and believe the City has an important role to play in translating that vision into the welcoming of new housing units. The availability of housing is directly correlated to Burlington's ability to welcome and retain residents. Our members have the expertise to build and deliver homes to people, but we cannot do it entirely alone.

How Did We Get Here?

Our region is growing rapidly – Between 2015-20, Ontario's population grew by over 1,000,000 people-nearly 400,000 more people than we'd experienced in 2010-2015. In Burlington, and across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, new home building has been unable to keep pace with population growth. High housing prices in Toronto have caused an influx of families to move to Burlington, paired with a growing influx of international talent to our local market. This trend of not producing enough housing at the municipal level is beginning to have significant impacts on Ontario's ability to attract and retain talent. Despite these ongoing challenges, the need for new housing supply is not widely recognized at the municipal level. However – it certainly was recognized at the provincial level where all major parties: the PCs, the Liberals, the NDP and the Green Party all made campaign commitments to double housing production in Ontario and build 1.5 million units over the next 10 years.

Red Tape

In the November 2021 *Housing Needs and Opportunities Report* presented to Council it identified that zoning is “one of the largest barriers to meeting housing needs along the continuum” of housing in Burlington. Right now we have significant challenges as it relates to supporting that range of housing options through as-of-right zoning, requiring nearly all applications to proceed through a lengthy municipal rezoning process. Therefore, the most impactful role the City can play in supporting a diversity of housing options is through the development of an “as-of-right” zoning framework that reflects the types of applications being brought forward and has a vision towards the future. This framework should provide flexibility and predictability for both developers and residents in terms of how Burlington is to develop and grow into the future.

As of right zoning should include a more permissive framework to allow missing middle density within existing neighbourhoods as well as accessory dwelling units (sometimes referred to as secondary dwelling units). This more permissive framework should also extend to nodes and corridors, MTSAs, the downtown and all strategic growth areas to allow for and encourage high density residential and mixed-use built form as of right, and to also address other barriers like parking requirements and angular planes.

Human Rights

As such, WE HBA recommends the Comprehensive Zoning By-law project be prioritized to implement the necessary and aforementioned development of a more permissive zoning framework in the near term. Such a bold action would enable the strong welcoming and more inclusive vision towards the future.

In short, allowing the market to provide more housing units of all types and tenures on a larger variety of potential sites city-wide through permissive zoning—and encouraging more construction of market housing—will have immediate impacts on broadening the range and mix of housing provided. Such an initiative will help ensure Burlington is able to welcome everyone. This change in approach to zoning will also alleviate pressures on planning staff resources dedicated to processing zoning by-law and official plan amendments, as Burlington will have significantly streamlined the process for new homes to be built.

CMHC 2

Finally, I'd like to bring us back to this diagram of the Canadian housing continuum from CMHC to talk about Inclusionary Zoning. The West End Home Builders' Association supports the development of mixed income communities in Burlington's Major Transit Station Areas. However, we cannot overstate that there are significant costs associated with the delivery of below market housing which should not be carried entirely by young first time home buyers struggling to enter the housing market. We (as a society) are struggling on both sides of the housing continuum. While lack of government investment has created a crisis on the affordable and social housing side of the spectrum, a lack of new home construction on the market side has made it difficult for the private market to deliver homes for the 80% of Canadians who meet their housing needs there. Due to a wide range of factors including costs of labour and materials, approval timelines, taxes on new housing such as development charges, and appeals to

the Ontario Land Tribunal, our members struggle to provide new housing at attainable prices. Adding on the costs of an affordable housing program without offsets to newly built homes will only serve to increase the costs of new market home construction. We cannot solve the lack of government investment in Affordable Housing by forcing the private sector to compensate for a lack of public investment.

While WE HBA members have the knowledge and capacity to contribute to building more housing for Burlingtonians, for any type of inclusionary zoning program to work, it needs to be built as a true partnership with the necessary economic offsets to ensure it's success. Without that, new home buyers and renters of entry level condos are burdened with significant additional costs in an already unaffordable housing market. Our association is pleased to be participating in a workshop with City Staff and Consultants on the Municipal Assessment Report for Inclusionary Zoning, and we hope that our requests for a true partnership will be taken under advisement.

Conclusion

Thank you members of Council for your time and attention today. We look forward to continued work together to build Burlington's future.