



SUBJECT: Proposed Pipeline to Permit Housing Committee
TO: Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.
FROM: Office of the Mayor

Report Number: MO-01-23

Wards Affected: ALL

File Numbers:

Date to Committee: October 4, 2023

Date to Council: October 17, 2023

Recommendation:

Endorse the new Pipeline to Permit Standing Committee; and

Direct the Mayor and City Manager to incorporate input from Council, staff and stakeholders and bring a Terms of Reference to the Nov. 1 Corporate Services Strategy Risk & Accountability Committee for final approval at the Nov. 14 Council meeting.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Executive Summary:

Burlington City Council has unanimously accepted the Province's housing pledge of 29,000 units by 2031. We currently have an unprecedented 38,219 housing units in our development pipeline — everything from early stage pre-consultation with developers for their land, up to approved site plans units that are ready for submission of building permit applications. While municipalities don't build housing – we set policy and issue various development permits - we are ready to turn this pipeline into permits. We also

know we need to become more streamlined in our business processes and issue permits more quickly.

By establishing a new Standing Committee with participation from council, staff, stakeholders and the public, together we can identify opportunities and gaps to improve processes, update and amend policy and/or adjust resources to do our part to issue 29,000 permits by 2031 so developers can get shovel in the ground. A Standing Committee also ensures we can track our monthly progress and position ourselves to take advantage of funding opportunities at other levels of government.

A Standing Committee provides maximum transparency and accountability to the public, provides opportunities for greater participation, and highlights the seriousness with which we approach our responsibility to do our part to tackle the need for affordable and attainable housing.

Background and Discussion:

Burlington City Council unanimously accepted the provincial housing pledge of 29000 units by 2031. [See Council minutes of March 21, 2023, and Staff reports PL-24-23, PL-29-23 and related Appendices]

The city's primary role in housing is to issue set policy and issue permits to enable the development industry to build housing.

The attached chart in Appendix A provides a point in time of where we are currently at – tracking everything from “pre-consultation” to waiting for permits to be pulled. As of July 2023, Burlington had 38,219 units in the pipeline including:

- 15,763 units in Pre-application consultation
- 7,754 units under review
- 3,642 units approved, waiting for permit application
- 3,112 units waiting for site plan application
- 7,948 units appealed to the Ontario Lands Tribunal

Council has also unanimously endorsed a made-in-Burlington Housing Strategy with 12 recommended actions to move us closer to our vision of housing that meets the needs of all our residents, current and new. The strategy was developed through extensive community and stakeholder consultation, including the work of the Housing Strategy Working Group, chaired by Councillor Shawna Stolte.

Burlington is ready to do our part to address the housing affordability crisis, so newcomers and long term residents at all ages and stages, and all levels of income, can find a home in our city. A Special Standing Committee to speed the process of getting units from pipeline to permit will serve this goal.

We also know we can't do it alone. Partnerships with the development industry, non-profit sector, commenting agencies, and all levels of government – Regional, Provincial, Federal – will be necessary to meet the challenges of housing affordability.

Composition:

To that end, the Standing Committee on Pipeline to Permit will

- will set clear objectives with related performance measures; report out on achieving these performance measures;
- will track progress each month toward issuing permits;
- review processing timelines and suggest improvements;
- comment on enabling policies;
- review human and other resource needs or requirements;
- review and report on digital transformation opportunities including opportunities for use of AI and other technology enhancements;
- review and track eligibility for upper level government funding programs, and report on status of applications;
- identify appropriate advocacy opportunities to upper levels of government;
- and provide an opportunity for members of the public to attend and provide advice regarding process or policy improvements.

What it won't do is assess and approve individual development applications. That will remain the sole responsibility of the Community Planning Regulation and Mobility Committee. That said, participants and delegates will be able to bring examples of specific applications in order to comment on policy, process, resource or other matters within the Pipeline to Permit Committee's purview.

A monthly two hour meeting is proposed, the same week as other Standing Committees of Council.

Membership would be open to all members of council (though not required). Four are proposed to be appointed, with room for the balance of council to be appointed should they wish:

Co-Chairs: Mayor Marianne Meed Ward & Deputy Mayor for Housing Shawna Stolte
(Chair duties to rotate each meeting)

Deputy Mayor for Business and Red Tape Reduction Kelvin Galbraith

Deputy Mayor for Strategy & Budgets Paul Sharman

Membership would be open to the balance of Council Members/Deputy Mayors for Wards 2, 3, and 6 should they also wish to participate.

A Standing Committee also allows members of the public to participate around the table, following a similar model as our existing Audit Committee. Currently the Audit Committee is composed of two members of council, and four members of the public with expertise relevant to the committee. The Pipeline to Permit Standing Committee can similarly recruit members of the public to sit on the committee.

As partnerships and collaboration are key in tackling the housing crisis, public and stakeholder membership of the committee is proposed to include:

- Representative from non-profit housing association
- Representative from Halton Region housing division
- Representative from Conservation Halton
- Representative from West End Home Builders Association (WE-HBA)
- Representative from Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD)
- Two members of the public with relevant background/experience
- Four (and up to seven) members of Burlington City Council

Other members/stakeholders could be added to the Standing Committee during discussion of this report, and/or over time as work evolves.

Staff support for this committee is proposed to be:

Executive Director of Community Planning Regulation & Mobility, and relevant staff in planning to be determined

Executive Director of Environment Infrastructure & Community Services, and relevant staff involved in development matters (eg. Site engineering, forestry) to be determined

Executive Director of Strategy, Risk and Accountability, related to process improvement and performance objectives and related key performance objectives (KPIs), and government relations staff lead for connectivity to policies, political advocacy support and pursuit of funding from upper levels of government. Political advocacy by Council could also extend to support of building and development industry partner requests and needs (e.g. workforce training and development).

Corporation Counsel

- Burlington Economic Development
- City Manager including Burlington Lands Partnership

Why a standing committee of council?

A Standing Committee provides maximum accountability to the public, with meetings held in public session, livestreamed and archived, with agendas posted in advance online and ability for members of the public to delegate.

A Standing Committee also allows a quorum (four or more) of council members to participate. At minimum on this committee, it would be beneficial to our discussions to have participation from the Mayor, and the Deputy Mayors of Housing; Strategy & Budgets; and Business & Red Tape Reduction, which represents quorum. Other members of council could also participate if they choose, and a standing committee provides that flexibility. When a quorum of council meets, we must adhere to the Open Meeting provisions of the Municipal Act, which we can do under the Standing Committee structure.

Other models considered (for example, task force, advisory committee) do not provide full flexibility, public participation and transparency that a Standing Committee does in all of the areas outlined above.

It is important to note that, as with all Standing Committees, decision-making rests with council. Standing Committees make *recommendations* to council, and council makes the final decision. The same would be true for the Pipeline to Permit Standing Committee. That retains the existing governance and decision-making structure, while also providing stakeholders and the public opportunity to participate in forming these recommendations as members of the standing committee.

Financial Matters:

There are financial benefits in ensuring speedy processing from pipeline to permit for housing applications, and significant corresponding risks if we don't, including not qualifying for funding through the *Building Faster Fund*, related application fee refunds and significant delays in property tax assessment growth.

The provincial government has recently introduced the Building Faster Fund, a three year \$1.2 billion program that provides new funding for municipalities based on performance against achieving provincial housing targets for municipalities. The fund will flow to municipalities that achieve a minimum of 80% of their housing pledge targets, and bonuses for those that achieve more than 100%. Those municipalities that do not achieve 80% will not be eligible for any of the funding.

As such, it is absolutely critical that we ensure timely issuance of permits so that Burlington residents benefit directly from the funding available. The Standing Committee will be focused on tracking our monthly progress toward speeding applications from pipeline to permit, which will position us to receive our share.

In addition, Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, requires municipalities to refund Zoning By-Law Amendment and Site Plan Approval application fees in a phased approach if no decision is made or no approval is issued within legislative timelines. Zoning by-law amendment applications are required to have a decision made within 90

days (or 120 days if there is a concurrent Official Plan Amendment) and Site Plan Approval is required within 60 days. These changes came into effect July 1, 2023 for new applications submitted after that date.

Timely issuance of permits, the tracking of which will be the focus of the Standing Committee, is needed to protect taxpayers from having to subsidize fee-for-service development applications.

Additionally, each new housing unit built in Burlington delivers new property tax assessment growth, that helps to fund the costs associated with new residents, including more community amenities and programs, transit and more. Currently assessment growth is projected at .75%, for the proposed 2024 Budget, which does not cover the growth related costs on our budget.

Low assessment growth puts undue pressure on existing taxpayers to cover the costs of growth, so it is incumbent on us to ensure speedy issuance of permits, so developers can get shovel in the ground to get housing built to deliver assessment dollars to the municipality.

Finally, the new federal Housing Accelerator Fund provides incentive funding to local governments on initiatives that increase housing supply, and promote the development of affordable, inclusive and diverse communities that are low-carbon and climate-resilient. Led by our Government Relations Manager, Burlington has made a significant application to the fund representing an ask of \$44M in total. The Standing Committee will provide an opportunity to track and report on our success in receiving these funds, and track any new funding streams that come available.

Total Financial Impact

There is no additional cost related to the establishment of the Standing Committee. Staffing and resources required would be absorbed within existing budgets as part of the normal course of business in the municipality.

Climate Implications

As we work to achieve our pledge, we are committed to doing more than simply enable new units of housing to be built. We are aiming to enable complete communities, that serve the diverse needs of our residents inclusive of community amenities, parks, jobs, shops, and services. These communities will be designed to be low carbon and climate-resilient, offering daily needs within walking distance and green forms of transportation, including walking, cycling, and public transit.

We are in a position to set the foundation for the future neighbourhoods of Burlington, to ensure the next seven generations of residents enjoy the same or better quality of life than we have come to appreciate and expect in Burlington.

As the Standing Committee focuses on the permits of today, we will keep our long term vision and decision-making on the quality of life of current and future generations.

Engagement Matters:

The Mayor consulted with the City Manager and the Deputy Mayors proposed to be appointed to this committee, as well as representatives of WE-HBA and BiLD, who were all supportive in principle of the concept of the committee, subject to further input and refinement as part of the forthcoming Terms of Reference. Additional engagement with staff, council, the public, and stakeholders, will occur between the approval of this report and bringing back the Terms of Reference in November for final approval.

Conclusion:

By establishing a Standing Committee with participation from council, staff, stakeholders and the public, together we can identify opportunities and gaps to improve process, policy and/or resources to do our part to issue 29,000 permits by 2031 so developers can get shovel in the ground. A Standing Committee provides maximum transparency and accountability to the public, opportunities for greater participation, and highlights the seriousness with which we approach our responsibility to do our part to tackle the need for affordable and attainable housing.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Meed Ward

Mayor of the City of Burlington

905-335-7600 ext. 7607

Appendices:

- A. City of Burlington Major Planning Application Housing Pipeline - July 2023

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.