



**SUBJECT: Better Homes Burlington Pilot Program Special Charge**

**TO: Committee of the Whole**

**FROM: Environment and Energy**

Report Number: EICS-03-24

Wards Affected: all

Date to Committee: March 4, 2024

Date to Council: March 19, 2024

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### **Recommendation:**

Approve the by-law substantially as shown in Appendix A to environment and energy report EICS-03-24, being a by-law to authorize the imposition of a special charge under the Better Homes Burlington Program in the form satisfactory of the Executive Director of Legal Services and Corporation Council or designate.

### **PURPOSE:**

#### **Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment.

The purpose of this report is to request Council approve the by-law required to add the Better Homes Burlington loans as local improvement charges to the 2024 tax roll.

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### **Background and Discussion:**

On June 1, 2023, Council received report [EICS-04-23](#), Better Homes Burlington Pilot Program. Committee approved the following motions:

Approve the establishment of the Better Homes Burlington Energy Retrofit Pilot Program to provide a maximum of twenty loans to Burlington homeowners who meet program eligibility criteria to support the implementation of air source heat pumps.

Approve By-law No. 40-2023, being the Better Homes Burlington Energy Retrofit By-law, substantially in the form attached as Appendix A to report EICS-04-23, in

the form satisfactory to the Executive Director of Legal Services and Corporation Council, or designate.

Authorize and direct the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services, or designate, to execute necessary agreement with each homeowner participating in the Better Homes Burlington Energy Retrofit Program, and any extension thereto, with content satisfactory to the Manager of Environmental Sustainability, or designate, and form satisfactory to the Executive Director of Legal Services and Corporation Council or designate.

That the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services monitor and access the results of the Better Homes Burlington pilot program and report back to council in one year with recommended next steps.

Staff launched the Better Homes Burlington concierge service in July 2023, and received applications for the zero-interest loan between September 2023 and February 2024. The Better Homes Burlington pilot program supported residential decarbonization by:

- Providing a concierge service for homeowners with guidance on options to complete a home energy efficiency retrofit;
- Offering loans to homeowners to accelerate the adoption of air source heat pumps;
- Engaging and educating homeowners and contractors to promote/deliver home energy efficiency retrofits; and,
- Developing and publishing the [Burlington.ca/BetterHomes](http://Burlington.ca/BetterHomes) website to provide information on home energy retrofits and incentive programs, including the City's zero percent loan.

The Better Homes Burlington Pilot Program granted 16 zero-interest loans to an expected sum of \$156,214. As per the program design approved in report [EICS-04-23](#), Better Homes Burlington Pilot Program, the loans will be repaid through a Local Improvement Charge.

The attached by-law which is required under Ontario Regulation 586/06 – Local Improvement Charges – Priority Lien Status requires Council's approval to allow the loan amounts from the Better Homes Burlington Pilot Program to be added as a special charge to the 2024 tax roll for repayment (refer to Appendix A)

The attached by-law currently reflects 13 of the 16 participating properties and will require an addendum to add the remaining three properties prior to the City Council meeting on March 19, 2024.

### **Strategy/process/risk**

Should this by-law – being a By-law to Authorize the Imposition of a Special Charge under the Better Homes Burlington Program – not be approved, this would cause significant delay to the City of Burlington beginning collection of the Better Homes Burlington loans, as the loan amounts from the Better Homes Burlington pilot program cannot be added to the tax roll for repayment without the passing of a by-law in accordance with section 36.14 of Ontario Regulation 586/06.

### **Options Considered**

Approval of the attached by-law is required under Ontario Regulation 586/06 – Local Improvement Charges – Priority Lien Status to add the loans as local improvement charges to the 2024 Tax Roll. A further report will be presented to Committee in the second quarter of 2024 on the results of the Better Homes Burlington pilot program, including lessons learned and recommended next steps.

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### **Financial Matters:**

A maximum amount of \$200,000 from the Energy Initiatives Reserve Fund was approved for the Better Homes Burlington zero-interest loans in report [EICS-04-23](#). 16 loans to an expected sum of \$156,214 were issued through the pilot program. These loans will be repaid with zero-interest over 5 years. The attached By-Law XX-2024 will enable repayment to begin in June 2024. No further funding is required to add the loan amounts as Local Improvement Charges to the tax roll for repayment.

### **Total Financial Impact**

Not applicable

### **Source of Funding**

Not applicable

### **Other Resource Impacts**

Staff time will be required from Finance to add the loan to the property tax bill for repayment.

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### **Climate Implications:**

The purpose of the Better Homes Burlington program is to support the adoption of air source heat pumps in the residential sector to transition away from the burning of fossil

fuels to generate heat (thermal) energy, resulting in reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The use of natural gas in Burlington represents just under half of all GHG emissions across the community (for all sectors – residential, industrial, commercial and institutional). The program is one of seven program areas identified in the Climate Action Plan to help the community reach net carbon neutrality by 2025.

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### **Engagement Matters:**

Finance and Legal staff were engaged in the required by-law and report.

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### **Conclusion:**

The approval of this by-law will allow the loan amounts totaling an expected sum of \$156,214 to be added as a special charge to the 2024 tax roll for repayment to the Energy Initiatives Reserves Fund.

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Respectfully submitted,

Lauren McAusland  
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### **Appendices:**

- A. By-law to authorize the imposition of a special charge under the Better Homes Burlington Program

### **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.