



May 22, 2025

From:
West End Home Builders' Association
1112 Rymal Road East
Hamilton, Ontario L8W 3N7

To:
Mayor of Burlington and Members of Council
City of Burlington
426 Brant St, Burlington, ON L7R 3Z6

WE HBA Letter: Housing Enabling Infrastructure and Stimulus Funding

The West End Home Builders' Association ("WE HBA") is the voice of the land development, new housing and professional renovation industries in Hamilton, Burlington, and Grimsby. WE HBA represents 320 member companies made up of all disciplines involved in land development and residential construction. In Burlington, residential construction contributes over \$423 million in investment value and provides nearly 2,000 jobs paying about \$144 million in wages. WE HBA notes that these economic indicators are in decline as housing starts continue to drop.

While declining housing starts and new housing sales are a major concern, we know that consumer confidence will eventually rebound. We still a great deal away from meeting Burlington's housing target of 29,000 new homes by 2031. The need for new housing remains elevated and continues to grow. WE HBA and our members are requesting that the City consider adding and prioritizing major housing enabling infrastructure projects to the list of capital projects to utilize potential stimulus funding from senior levels of government for. These projects would provide high-yield benefit to housing supply and ensure that developers are able to meet the pent-up demand as quickly as possible.

The first housing enabling infrastructure project WE HBA would like to see prioritized is what is known as the "last-mile" of electricity connection for new homes. Burlington Hydro is ready to meet the electrical grid demands to accommodate future housing supply projections. The capacity exists; but the distribution system is not set up to accommodate the specific priority areas identified by the City for major housing development.

Under the current system, it is up to the first developer to put shovels in the ground to construct and pay for the upfront capital costs required to provide electric servicing infrastructure. A financial burden of this magnitude is an inequitable and economically challenging approach that places extraordinary financial risks on future investment and housing construction. Housing enabling electrical infrastructure would speed up development and make it more affordable particularly near Burlington's Major Transit Station Areas which the City and province have identified as priority growth areas. **For this reason, we ask that the City request "last-mile" electrical infrastructure stimulus funding from the province.** The funding would result in fueling workforce development, tremendously increasing housing supply and reducing costs for homebuyers.

The second housing enabling infrastructure project WE HBA encourages the City to prioritize is the much-needed **Rambo Creek flood hazard mitigation project**. The flood hazard mitigation project would significantly reduce the risk of flooding to existing homes and businesses in the



Downtown. In addition, it would unlock land for significant housing opportunities that would greatly assist the City's efforts to implement its Housing Strategy.

The current mitigation infrastructure was designed and constructed in accordance with the standards which existed at that time. However, the risk of potential flooding is significantly increasing due to the impacts of climate change. The flood mitigation infrastructure that was constructed in the 1970's mitigates impacts related to "25-year storm" events which is no longer a viable measurement as storms of that magnitude and greater are becoming more frequent. In fact, by the end of the century storms of this magnitude are predicted to be more intense, occur more frequently, and have significantly greater impacts.

Current provincial policies and guidelines require municipalities to provide flood mitigation infrastructure that will protect against the impacts of "100-year storm" events at a minimum. To satisfy minimum flood mitigation standards, major flood mitigation improvements are required for Rambo Creek. Leveraging stimulus funding to address this issue is key to ensuring the protection of existing homes and businesses and will have the additional benefit of unlocking land for thousands of new homes. Moreover, this infrastructure will promote private sector investment within the Downtown, which has been identified by City Council as a priority growth area.

The newly mandated federal and provincial governments have indicated a keen interest to invest in housing-related infrastructure projects. The goal is to keep the economy healthy in these uncertain times while building desperately needed homes. We encourage the City to leverage the opportunity this presents and advocate that these projects be funded due to their significance in creating jobs, building housing and seeing the City's vision to fruition.

WE HBA and our members appreciate the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,

Mike Collins-Williams, MCIP, RPP
Chief Executive Officer
West End Home Builders' Association