

# Burlington New Residential Zoning Bylaw

Community Engagement  
Backgrounder to Draft 1

July 2025



# Outline and purpose of this Backgrounder



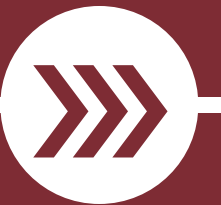
## Outline

- 1. Understanding Zoning**
- 2. The New Zoning Bylaw Project**
- 3. What's Proposed in the New Residential Zoning Bylaw**
- 4. Next Steps**

## Purpose

- ✓ Describe what is zoning and its role in city building
- ✓ Communicate the reasons for updating the zoning by-law
- ✓ Share insights from community feedback gathered so far
- ✓ Present the anticipated impacts on residents and businesses
- ✓ Guide participants on how to get involved and provide feedback

# Part 1: Understanding Zoning



# What is a Zoning Bylaw and what does it do?

A zoning bylaw is a document that sets out rules for:

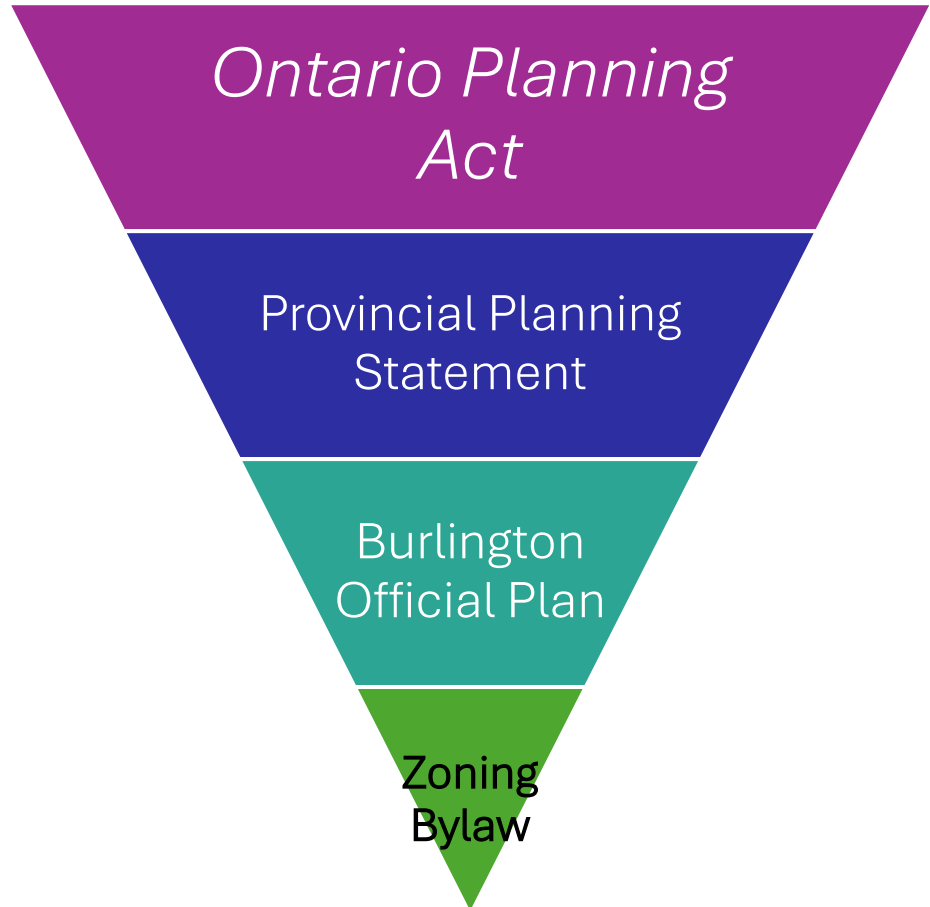
- how land can be used (e.g., as commercial residential, industrial or institutional);
- the types of buildings and activities that are allowed;
- where buildings and other structures can be located; and,
- other details like lot sizes, parking requirements, setbacks from property lines or other structures and building height and density.

Zoning helps keep land uses organized, sustainable and ensures community needs are met.



Source: City of Guelph Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Review

# Why do we have Zoning?



**Zoning is Part of the Planning Framework:** Zoning executes Ontario's provincial planning framework at the property level.

**Official Plan Alignment:** It helps implement the policies in the city's Official Plan.

**Regulatory Tool:** It provides enforceable rules for land use and is a set of guidelines everyone must follow.

**Community Protection:** It prevents land use conflicts and supports balanced city growth.

**City Planning:** It ensures access to essential amenities like roads, parks, schools, and shops.

# What is Zoning about?



## Zoning is about

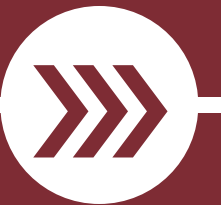
- The types of businesses and activities on a property
- The size, height, type and location of a building
- How much parking must be provided on a property
- Landscaping and open space on a property
- How lands or buildings are used



## Zoning is not about

- Property maintenance and general upkeep
- Who can own a property
- Determining business licensing
- How a building is constructed
- Controlling what a building looks like

# Part 2: The New Zoning Bylaw Project



# Policy Context

2020

The City's new Official Plan is approved, with modifications, by Halton Region.

2022

The City initiates the New Zoning Bylaw Project to update its Zoning Bylaw and implement the policies of the new Official Plan.

2023

The City approves further changes to its Official Plan and Zoning By-law 2020 to respond to new provincial legislation. It progresses the New Zoning Bylaw Project, deciding to take a phased approach.

2024

The consulting team is selected to advance the New Zoning Bylaw Project and starts working on the first phase of the project which is centered around the City's Residential Zones.

2025

The City approves Official Plan Amendment No. 3 to increase housing options. The consulting team continues to work on the New Zoning Bylaw Project concurrently with other municipal studies and initiatives like the Targeted Realignment Exercise and the Housing Strategy.

# Why are we creating a new Zoning Bylaw?

The current zoning bylaw is over 20 years old. The goal of the New Zoning By-law Project is to provide an updated set of rules for land use planning and development across Burlington that is in line with the new Official Plan.

The New Zoning Bylaw will:



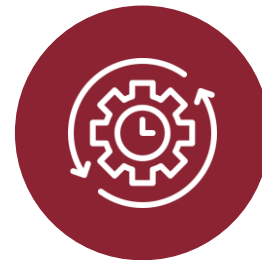
## Be user-friendly

Simplify the rules and make them more accessible and easier to use



## Reflect modern practices

Reflect modern and innovative zoning practices



## Be a catalyst for development

Facilitate a streamlined process for development in alignment with the City's priorities and strategies



## Be developed through a consultative process

# Project Scope and Phases

The New Zoning Bylaw Project will be completed in phases.

**Phase 1 of the New Zoning Bylaw Project focuses on the City's Residential Zones and supporting more housing options in Burlington. It will broaden the range of permitted uses and allow for less restrictive regulations.**

- Subsequent phases will cover one or more of the following sections:
  - Uptown Zones
  - Downtown Zones
  - Mixed Use Zones
  - Commercial Zones
  - Employment Zones
  - North Aldershot Zones
  - Natural Heritage Zones
  - Parks and Open Space Zones
  - Other Zones



# Phase 1: Focus on Residential Zones

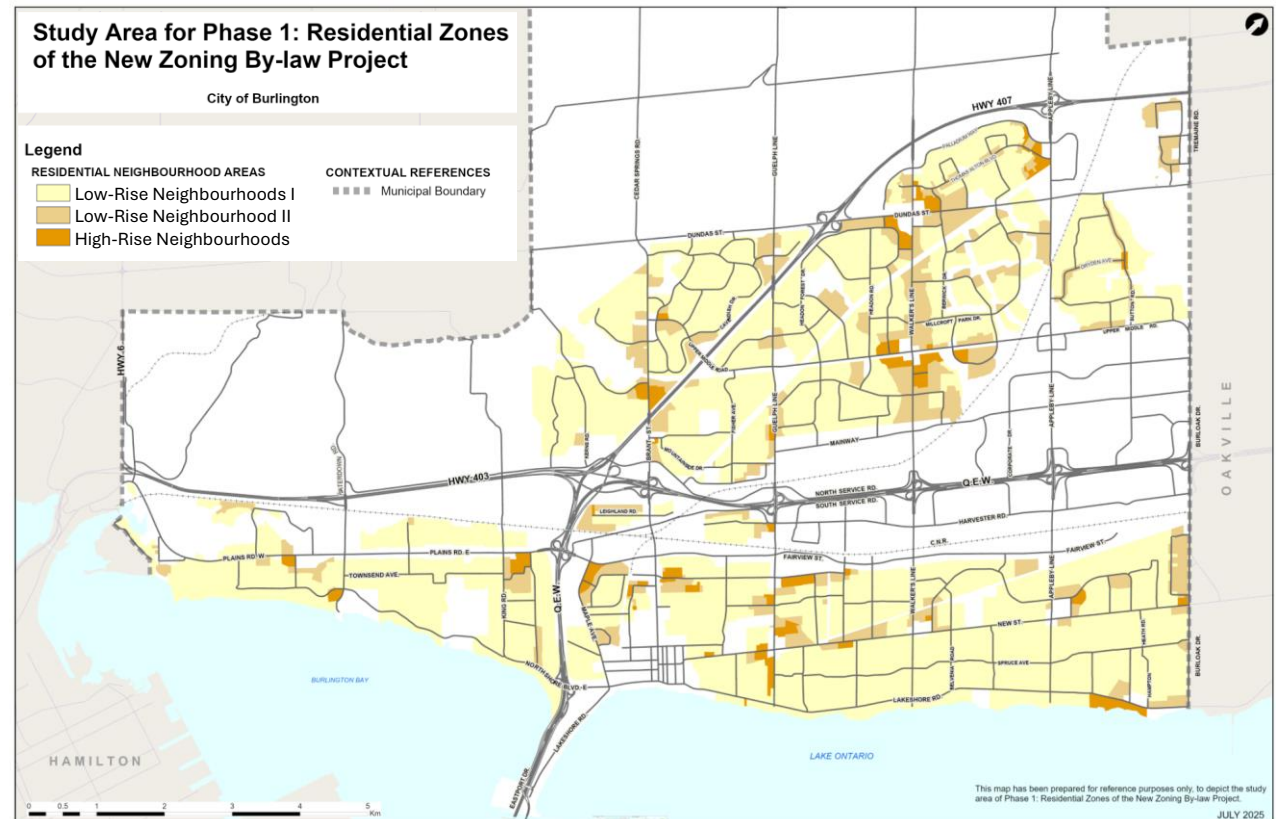


Phase 1 of the project focuses on Burlington's Residential Zones and will help support more housing options in Burlington's neighbourhoods by:

- Broadening the range of permitted uses
- Allowing for less restrictive regulations
- Supporting appropriate opportunities for residential intensification and gentle density

It will implement the objectives and policies of the new Burlington Official Plan (2020), particularly Section 8.3 Residential Neighbourhood Areas.

**This phase will result in a New Residential Zoning By-law and associated sections (e.g. Definitions, General Provisions, mapping, etc.) for residential neighbourhood areas in Burlington.**



# Supporting Burlington's housing priorities and strategies

**Phase 1 of the New Zoning Bylaw Project is essential for advancing Burlington's housing goals.**

**It aims to:**

## **Increase Housing Diversity**

By permitting various housing types, it addresses diverse needs and preferences, making it easier for residents to find suitable homes

## **Sustain Community Growth**

In line with the Housing Strategy and Official Plan, it ensures sustainable growth that benefits the entire community

## **Advance Housing Vision**

This project is a vital step toward realizing Burlington's housing vision, complemented by the City's Official Plan Amendment No. 3 (OPA 3) to increase housing options in Burlington's residential zones



Housing Continuum. Source: CHMC

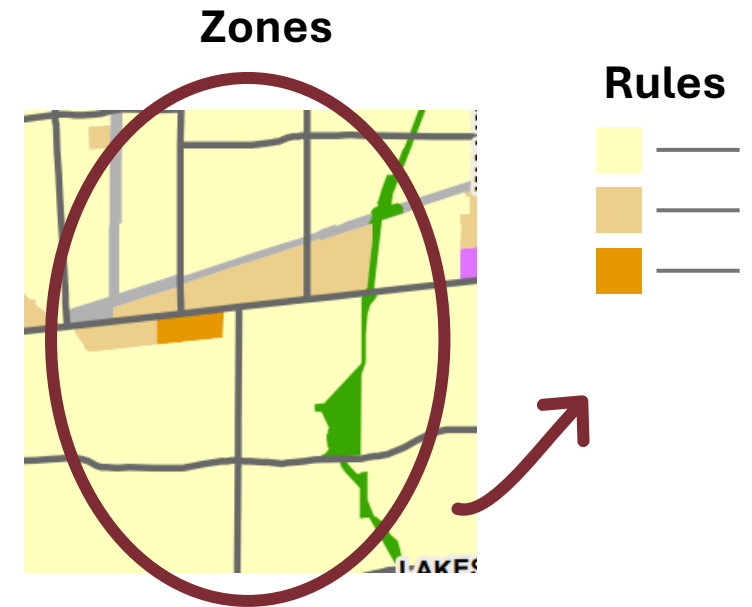
# How does this review impact you?

## The New Residential Zoning Bylaw may change the rules for your property.

### Depending on the new rules for your property it may mean:

- **No Change:** Current rules remain the same.
- **New Uses:** You may have new options for using or developing your property.
- **Legal Non-Conforming:** Current use may not comply with new rules, but no immediate changes are required.

**When changes apply:** New rules only affect you if you make changes, like adding to your house or converting it to multiple units.



# Phase 1 Project Schedule



## Step 1 Research and Analyse

Winter to Summer 2024

- Review relevant studies, reports, and plans that will inform the Zoning Bylaw
- Identify gaps
- Review best practices
- Summarize findings and release in a Discussion Paper
- Launch of public webpage and baseline survey

## Step 2 Build and Engage

Summer 2024 to Summer 2025

- Prepare Discussion Paper Addendum in response to OPA 3
- Develop first draft of the Residential Zoning Bylaw
- Release Discussion Paper Addendum
- Release first draft of the Bylaw
- Undertake broad and targeted engagement on the first draft of Bylaw

**We Are Here**

## Step 3 Council Adoption

Fall 2025

- Continue to gather feedback on first draft of Residential Zoning Bylaw
- Prepare the final draft of the Residential Zoning Bylaw
- Public Open House
- Statutory Public Meeting
- Council Adoption

# How we got here



## Best Practice Review

Reviewed zoning by-laws from other municipalities for best practices regarding regulated elements like lot area, frontage and height. Municipal by-laws reviewed included Guelph, London, Oakville, St. Catherines and Vaughan

## Minor Variance Analysis

Analyzed trends in minor variance applications in the City of Burlington

## Discussion Paper and Addendum

Prepared a Discussion Paper in 2024 and subsequent Addendum in 2025, which present findings from the best practices and minor variance review and analysis

## Community Feedback

Engaged with and surveyed the community and key interest groups in Summer 2024 to gather input on zoning issues and opportunities

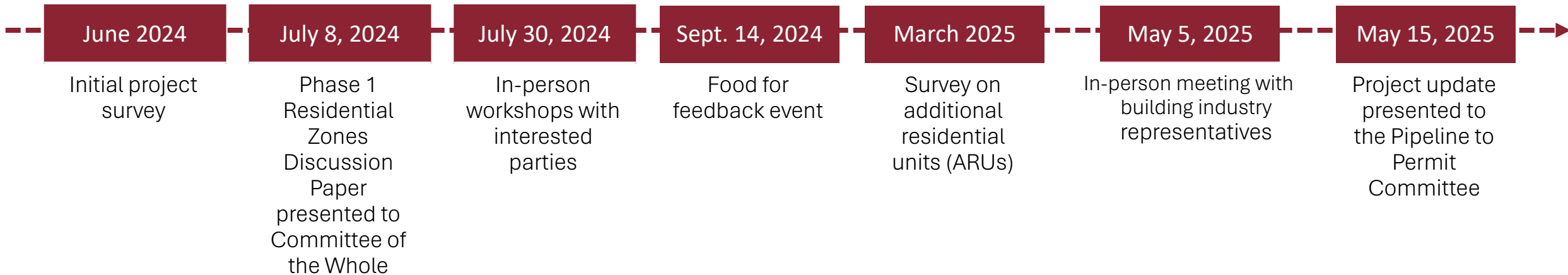
## New Residential Zoning By-law Development

Combined community insights with research and best practices to shape the first draft of the New Residential Zoning By-law

# Overview of consultation to date

Draft 1 of Burlington's the new Residential Zoning Bylaw is based on feedback gathered over the past year.

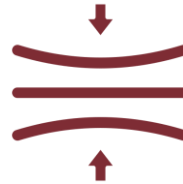
Here's a summary of the engagement events, meetings, sessions and tactics used to collect input that helped shape the draft Bylaw:



# What we've heard to date



**Increase housing options**



**Simplify and include flexible zones**



**Modernize zoning rules**



**Environmental impact and infrastructure capacity**

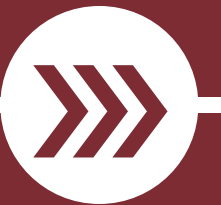


**Long-term vision and holistic community planning**

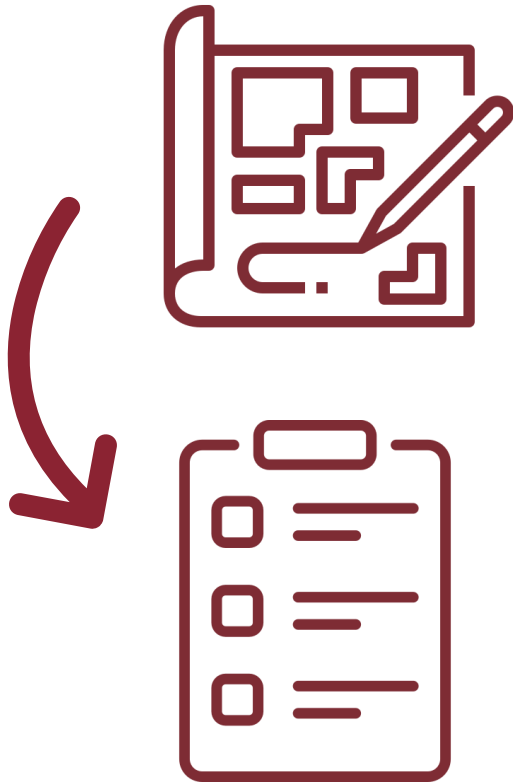


**Community engagement**

# Part 3: What's Proposed in the New Residential Zoning Bylaw



# Proposed Changes in the New Zoning Bylaw



- The first draft of the new Residential Zoning Bylaw introduces several changes.
- This section highlights some of the key changes that will help the City advance the goals discussed in Parts 1 and 2 above.
- At the top right corner of each slide in this section are symbols showing how the key changes relate to the feedback themes we have heard to date.



# Updated Definitions

## What's Changing?

- The definitions in the zoning bylaw have been modernized based on a best-practice review.
- Many definitions have been updated.
- Some terms have been consolidated.
- Some new terms have been added.

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- Modern definitions will make the zoning bylaw easier to apply and interpret.

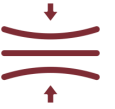


# General Provisions

Increase housing  
options



Simplify and  
include flexible  
zones



## What's Changing?

- General Provisions have been updated based on a Best Practice Review to simplify and streamline.
- Removed parking provisions from the General Provisions and put it in its own section.
- Removed all provisions not related to residential zones.

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

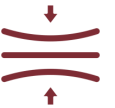
- Reorganizing and using plain language for the general provisions related to residential zones will make the zoning bylaw easier to apply and interpret.

# Number of Residential Zones

Increase housing options



Simplify and include flexible zones



## What's Changing?

- Nine (9) primary Residential Neighbourhood Zones are proposed.
  - From 21 primary Residential Zones (R1-R5, RM1-RM5, RH1-RH4, RO1-RO4, RAL1-RAL4) and 10 subzones (R1.1 through R3.4) to eight (8) primary LN1-8 zones and one (1) HN zone.

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- The new provisions have been streamlined, making it easier to understand the differences between them.
- This approach encourages flexibility and aligns with the City's goal of expanding housing options.

**31 primary zones and subzones**

**(existing Zoning Bylaw)**



**9 Zones**

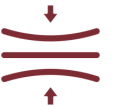
**(draft new Zoning Bylaw)**

# Zoning Standards for Accessory Residential Units (ARUs)

Increase housing options



Simplify and include flexible zones

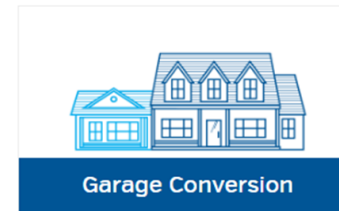


## What's Changing?

- New permissions allowing up to 2 ARUs within an accessory building (subject to conditions).
- Increases building heights for a detached ARU to 6 and 7 metres for a flat and peaked roof, respectively.
- Continues to allow:
  - Detached ARUs to be up to 80 m<sup>2</sup>.
  - 45% lot coverage where a property contains an ARU.
  - Tandem parking to accommodate an ARU

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- These changes aim to balance development flexibility with privacy and community impact considerations.



Garage Conversion

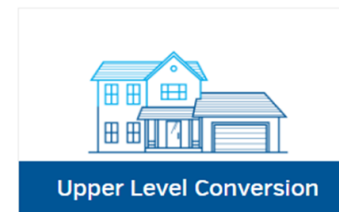


Accessory Building



Basement Conversion

check out the new **Garage Conversion Kit** to help you convert your garage into a separate dwelling unit



Upper Level Conversion



Main Level Addition



Above Garage

# Built Form Provisions

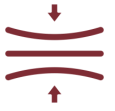
Long-term vision and holistic community planning



Increase housing options



Simplify & flexible zones

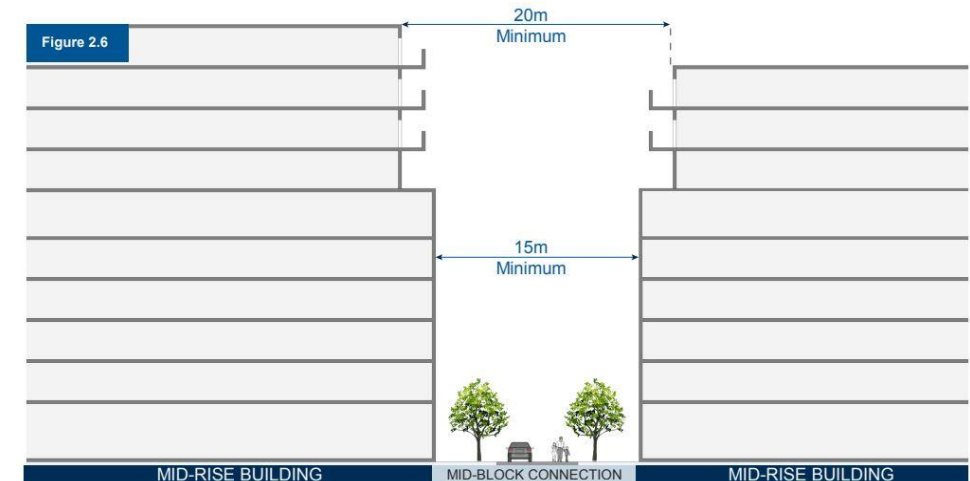


## What's Changing?

- The draft Bylaw proposes new provisions for residential zones to:
  - Simplify lot area and lot frontages and permit semi-detached dwellings in all LN zones.
  - Introduce built form standards (such as minimum building and tower separation distances, step-backs, and angular plane requirements) and functional standards (such as front yard soft landscaping and amenity area requirements).

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- Enhances residential character by focusing on built form regulations.

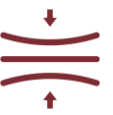


# Character Area Maps

Long-term vision and holistic  
community planning



Simplify and  
include flexible  
zones

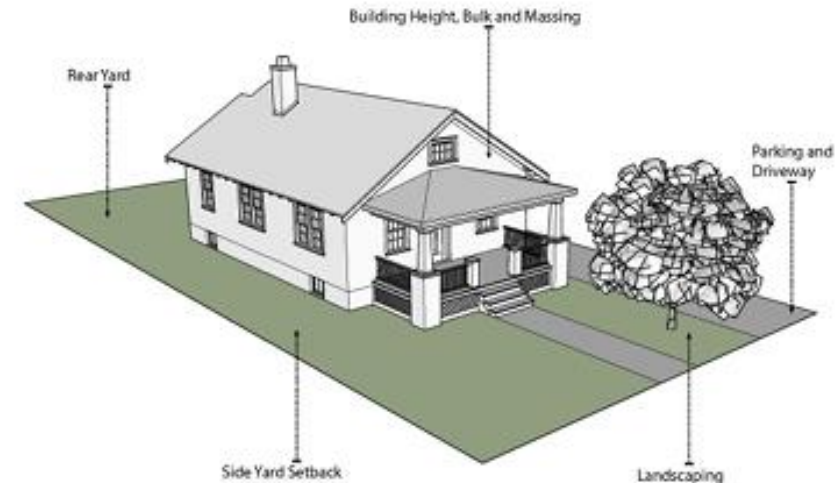


## What's Changing?

- Maps and provisions specific to Character Areas (Roseland, Indian Point, and Shoreacres) are removed.
- Some character area provisions will be carried forward:
  - Garage Width Restriction: Limit attached garage width to max. 50% of building elevation for smaller lots

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- These changes aim to preserve neighborhood character while adapting zoning regulations to broader applications.



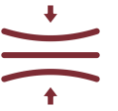
Source: City of Ottawa

# Missing Middle Housing Forms

Increase housing options



Simplify and include flexible zones



## What's Changing?

- Permitting 'missing middle' housing forms in Low Rise Neighbourhood Zones:
  - Additional Residential Units (ARUs).
  - All townhouse dwelling forms.
  - Duplex, triplex, fourplex, multiplex.
  - Low rise apartment buildings.



Source: City of Vancouver

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- These changes aim to address housing needs by diversifying available housing types in Burlington's low-rise areas

# Neighbourhood Periphery Considerations



## What's Changing?

- Triplexes and fourplexes may be permitted at the periphery of some LN1-6 zones, subject to:
  - Locational criteria (to be confirmed – see pages 4 to 6 in Discussion Paper Addendum for suggestions).
  - Minimum lot area, frontage and coverage standards.
  - Maximum 2 storeys in height.
- Low-rise apartment buildings permitted in the LN8 Zone.

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- These changes aim to strategically increase housing diversity at neighborhood edges, aligning with broader development goals.



Source: City of Hamilton



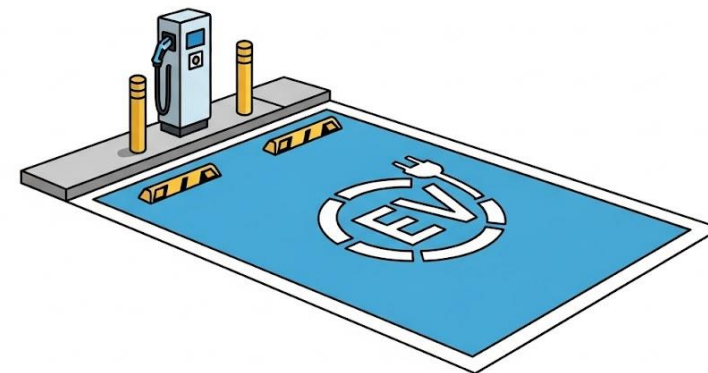
# Updated Parking Regulations

## What's Changing?

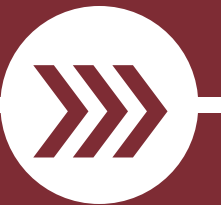
- Parking regulations have been updated.
- New regulations for electric vehicles.

## Why is this important and how does it affect you?

- The new zoning bylaw is set up to accommodate existing and future parking technologies.



# Part 4: Next Steps



# Learn More and Get Involved



**Visit the project website to learn more and stay informed of upcoming engagement events**

[getinvolvedburlington.ca/newzoningbylaw](http://getinvolvedburlington.ca/newzoningbylaw)



**To provide comments or ask questions, send them to**

[newzoning@burlington.ca](mailto:newzoning@burlington.ca)

# Next Steps in Project Schedule



## Step 1 Research and Analyse

Winter to Summer 2024

- Review relevant studies, reports, and plans that will inform the Zoning Bylaw
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