

March 8, 2026

Dear Madam Mayor and Councillors,

We are writing in support of the recommendation from City of Burlington Community Planning and Legal staff to use municipal land for affordable housing development by Indwell.

We write as Burlington residents and parents raising our family in downtown Burlington. Like many residents, we have seen firsthand how the housing crisis is becoming more visible in our city. Near our children's school (Central), in shopping areas, and even along our waterfront, we have encountered individuals clearly struggling without stable housing. In one particularly difficult situation outside the school, we attempted to help a man who appeared to be in distress by offering food and water, but the situation escalated and police assistance was ultimately required.

Experiences like this highlight that many people experiencing homelessness are facing complex challenges involving housing, health, and stability. Leaving people to struggle in parks, public spaces, or encampments is neither compassionate nor effective for those individuals or for the broader community.

Before moving to Burlington, we lived in the Kitchener–Waterloo region where we witnessed the consequences of municipalities waiting too long to address housing affordability and homelessness. While organizations such as Indwell now operate there, earlier action could have prevented many of the challenges that communities in that region are now working hard to manage.

Burlington has an opportunity to act earlier and more thoughtfully.

Supportive housing models like those developed by Indwell combine deeply affordable housing with professional on-site supports that help residents rebuild stability in their lives. This approach has been successfully implemented across Southern Ontario and has helped many individuals transition out of homelessness while maintaining safe, well-managed buildings within their communities.

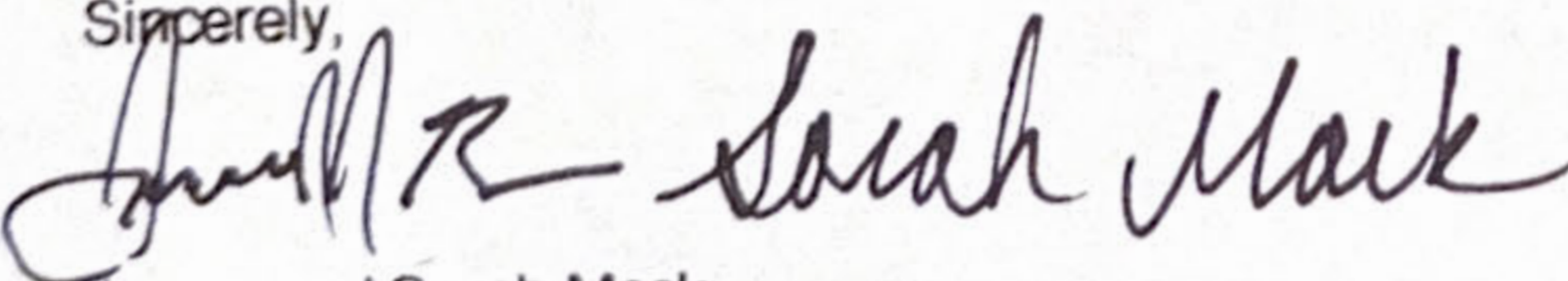
The scale of the need in our region is clear. According to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, 319 individuals are currently experiencing homelessness across Halton Region, a 10% increase since 2021. At the same time, Halton's community housing waiting list has grown to more than 8,000 households. In Burlington alone, 45% of renter households are paying unaffordable rents according to the 2021 Census.

Given these realities, projects like the proposed development at 1022–1030 Waterdown Road represent an important opportunity for Burlington to respond in a proactive and responsible way. Supportive housing provides stability for vulnerable residents while also contributing to safer, healthier, and more resilient communities for everyone.

For these reasons, we respectfully encourage Council to support the proposal to enter into a long-term land lease with Indwell and to provide funding from the City's Housing Accelerator Fund to support the development of 75 units of deeply affordable housing.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering our comments as you work to address housing needs in Burlington.

Sincerely,


James and Sarah Mack

