

## BAAC Delegation to City Council – Draft Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Housing Amendment

### 1. Opening and Mandate

- Good morning, Mayor, Members of Council, City officials and other interested parties.
- My name is Garth Napier, and I am a proud member of the Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee. Myself, Lucy Nixon and Jill Randall, the Chair of BAAC are here today to present this delegation. As you may recall, BAAC presented advice to City council on February 10, 2026, regarding the New Residential Zoning By-law.
- On behalf of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to delegate today.
- BAAC is a committee of dedicated volunteers with a legislated mandate under the AODA to advise Council on the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities.
- For Council’s awareness, neither BAAC, nor the City’s Accessibility Coordinator, were engaged or consulted during the development of the draft Community Improvement Plan.
- We see significant opportunities to explicitly embed accessibility within the draft Community Improvement Plan. More broadly, we recommend that accessibility be integrated into all City programs, policies, and initiatives at the development stage, rather than being addressed later through delegations.

### 2. Purpose of the Delegation

- BAAC would like to provide advice regarding the draft amendment to Burlington’s Community Improvement Plan.

- The 2022 Council-approved Burlington Housing Strategy sets out a clear vision that “everyone is welcome in Burlington” and that “all current and future residents have access to housing options that meet their needs at all stages of life.”
- However, the draft Community Improvement Plan does not explicitly include incentives for accessible housing. As a result, BAAC believes this represents a missed opportunity to support a key component of the Strategy’s vision. Without targeted measures to encourage accessible housing, the city risks falling short of its goal of meeting the needs of all residents.
- While the CIP includes strong financial incentives to accelerate housing supply, particularly purpose-built rental and missing middle housing, it does not include or incentivize the creation of accessible or barrier-free units.
- This is despite Action #8 of the 2022 Council approved Housing Strategy that encourages the Community Improvement Plan to include accessible housing solutions through incentives.
- Given that the draft CIP is a tool that directs funds and policy initiatives towards specific strategic and planning objectives BAAC believes these incentives should explicitly support the development of accessible housing. It is both reasonable and necessary that public funds be tied to public interest outcomes, including improved accessibility.
- Without deliberate policy direction, the market will continue to underdeliver accessible housing.
- As well, relying solely on the Ontario Building Code to ensure accessible housing is insufficient. The OBC sets minimum baseline requirements primarily for common areas and basic access but does not ensure:
  - Measuring or requiring a meaningful supply of fully accessible units;
  - Housing that can easily be adapted or retrofitted, over time, for residents’ changing mobility needs; or

- Equitable access to the funding envelopes in the plan.

### **3. Why this matters?**

- Accessibility is not a niche concern. As we mentioned in our last delegation .... Almost 30% of Ontario residents have a disability. And ~ 40% of seniors live with a disability
- Burlington has a higher-than-average population of residents aged 65 and older, and this group is growing faster than any other.
- And finally, nearly 90% of this demographic want to age in place.
- We also encourage you to review Appendix 1 of this delegation which is an excerpt of the City of Burlington's latest Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This appendix provides additional statistics on persons with disabilities in Halton.

### **4. Key gaps in the current CIP**

The current plan does not:

- Define or require accessible or adaptable dwelling units;
- Include a minimum percentage of accessible units in developments;
- Link financial incentives to accessibility outcomes; or,
- Include metrics for Council and City Officials to track and benchmark success.

### **5. Advice to Council**

BAAC respectfully recommends that Council consider incorporating the following measures:

- Require all or alternatively a percentage of new builds under the program to follow the Federal Government of Canada's Accessible-Ready Housing Standards (CAN-ASC-2.8:2025) These

standards provide guidelines for designing homes that can be easily adapted to meet accessibility needs without major reconstruction.

- For each funding envelop embed accessibility requirements.
- Consider incentive-based accessibility tiers to increased accessibility performance—for example:
  - Base incentive: compliance with minimum standards;
  - Enhanced incentive: provision of a higher percentage of accessible units;
  - Maximum incentive: inclusion of accessible ready housing standards or universal design across a majority of units;
  - Require reporting on accessibility outcomes, including the number and type of accessible units delivered through CIP supported projects.
- Finally, as a go forward when City Council directs staff to develop new or revised policies, programs or by laws accessibility should be explicitly considered.
- Accessibility should not be an afterthought or an optional feature. It should be a foundational element of all publicly supported initiatives.

## **6. Conclusion**

- The CIP is a powerful tool. It will shape not only how much housing is built, but who that housing is built for.
- By adopting the recommendations above Council can ensure that public investments deliver inclusive, future-ready communities rather than reinforcing existing barriers.
- Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Appendix #1: Excerpt from City of Burlington's 2025-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (...page 3)

### Disability in Canada and Halton Region

Twenty-seven per cent of Canadians aged 15 and older, or 8 million people had at least one or more disabilities limiting their daily activities according to findings from Statistics Canada 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD). This represents an increase of five percentage points from the previous survey conducted in 2017.

The 2022 CDS data show that 23 per cent of residents of Halton or approximately 111,000 individuals, reported one or more disabilities. The rate of disability in Halton has increased by four percentage points since 2017, when 19 per cent of Halton's residents, or about 80,000 people, reported they had one or more disabilities.

According to Statistics Canada, the increase can be partially attributed to both the aging population and the large increase in mental health-related disabilities among youth and working-age adults. In 2022, the rate of disability was higher among women (25 per cent] than men (21 per cent), following the same pattern as 2017.

Since 2017, the rate of disability has increased to 23 per cent of residents in Halton or approximately 111,000 individuals reporting one or more disabilities.