

ELECTION PRIORITIES

Burlington, Ontario



Building a Burlington That Makes Room for the Future

Burlington is at an important point in its evolution. As a largely built-out city with limited opportunities for outward expansion, Burlington's future will increasingly depend on how successfully it accommodates growth and change within its existing urban area. The challenge is no longer whether Burlington will grow, but how it will make room for that growth while maintaining the quality of life that has made the city such a desirable place to live.

That will require thoughtful intensification, greater housing choice, infrastructure that keeps pace with growth, and a municipal decision-making framework that recognizes housing supply as fundamental to affordability, economic competitiveness, fiscal sustainability, and the long-term health of the community.

Burlington must remain a city where young people can afford to stay, families can find homes that meet their changing needs, seniors can downsize within their communities, workers can live closer to where they work, and existing residents can continue to enjoy high-quality municipal services without carrying an ever-increasing share of the tax burden.

The decisions made during the next term of Council will help determine who gets to live in Burlington in the future and whether the city can successfully accommodate the next generation.

WE HBA believes Burlington can embrace responsible growth while protecting what residents value about their community. Doing so will require clear priorities, predictable policies, and a willingness to make decisions in the long-term interests of the entire community, including those who do not yet live here.



OUR PRIORITIES

- 1. Increasing Housing Supply and Choice Through Smart Intensification**
- 2. Aligning Housing Policy with Intergenerational Fairness – Who Gets to Live in Burlington in the Future?**
- 3. Streamlining Missing Middle Housing and Infill Development**
- 4. Planning Infrastructure for Growth**
- 5. Protecting Property Taxpayers Through Assessment Growth**

1. Increasing Housing Supply and Choice Through Smart Intensification

Burlington must significantly expand and diversify its housing supply to meet the needs of current and future residents. As a largely built-out city with limited opportunities for new greenfield development, Burlington's ability to accommodate growth will increasingly depend on successful intensification within the existing urban area.

This means making better use of land and infrastructure by enabling more housing in appropriate locations, including along major corridors, around transit, within strategic growth areas, and through sensitive infill in established neighbourhoods.

A thriving city requires a housing market that can accommodate people at every stage of life and across a range of incomes. Young professionals, families, seniors, newcomers, and essential workers are increasingly struggling to find housing that meets their needs and budgets. Without a substantial increase in the number and diversity of homes available, affordability challenges will continue to worsen, workforce attraction and retention will become more difficult, and economic growth will be constrained.

A successful housing strategy requires a broad spectrum of housing choices, including purpose-built rental, condominiums, townhomes, stacked townhomes, multiplexes, additional residential units, mid-rise buildings, and family-sized units. This requires predictable planning rules, appropriate height and density, and a willingness to embrace change in areas where additional housing can be supported by existing and planned infrastructure. Planning permissions alone do not create housing. Intensification policies must also be economically viable and capable of translating approved density into homes that actually get built.



WE Support:

- Increasing the supply of attainable and affordable housing across a range of incomes
- Making Burlington more intensification-friendly by reducing unnecessary barriers to new housing within the existing urban area
- Encouraging a diverse mix of housing types, including purpose-built rental, condominiums, missing middle housing, mid-rise development, and family-oriented units
- Supporting sufficient height and density in appropriate locations, particularly around GO stations, transit corridors, major corridors, and designated growth areas
- Making full use of existing and planned transit and infrastructure investments by supporting appropriate population and housing growth around them
- Supporting gentle and context-sensitive intensification within established neighbourhoods
- Expanding opportunities for homeownership alongside a strong supply of rental housing

The Opportunity

Burlington's future growth will largely occur within its existing urban area. The challenge, and the opportunity, is to ensure that intensification creates more housing choice, supports complete communities, makes efficient use of infrastructure, and allows Burlington to remain a place where people at every stage of life can find a home.

A stronger and more diverse housing supply will:

- **Create more housing choice for residents at all stages of life**
- **Allow young people and families to remain in Burlington**
- **Create more opportunities for seniors to downsize within their own communities**
- **Support workforce attraction and retention**
- **Strengthen Burlington's tax base and long-term fiscal sustainability**
- **Support construction jobs and broader economic growth**
- **Create complete, vibrant communities where residents can live, work, and raise their families**



2. Aligning Housing Policy with Intergenerational Fairness

– Who Gets to Live in Burlington in the Future?

Burlington has long been a community where families put down roots, build careers, raise children, and enjoy a high quality of life. But for many young people growing up in Burlington today, the path to remaining in the community they call home is becoming increasingly uncertain.

Rising home prices, limited housing options, and policies that restrict new housing supply are making it harder for young adults, first-time buyers, essential workers, and young families to afford living in Burlington. Many are being forced to move farther from family, jobs, and support networks in search of attainable housing.

Too often, housing debates are framed around preserving the status quo, with insufficient consideration for the long-term consequences of inaction. When communities resist new housing without creating alternatives, the burden is disproportionately borne by younger generations trying to buy their first home, start families, or remain close to parents and grandparents.

At the same time, many older Burlington residents want to downsize while remaining close to the neighbourhoods, friends, services, and support networks they know. A lack of suitable housing options can leave seniors with few choices other than remaining in homes that no longer meet their needs or leaving the community altogether.

Ensuring people can remain in Burlington throughout every stage of life requires a more balanced approach to housing policy that respects existing communities while recognizing the urgent need for more housing choice.



WE Support:

- Housing policies that consider intergenerational fairness and long-term community sustainability
- Expanding attainable homeownership opportunities for first-time buyers and young families
- Increasing housing forms that bridge the gap between detached homes and apartments, including townhomes, multiplexes, additional residential units, and other missing middle housing
- Creating more opportunities for seniors to downsize within their own neighbourhoods and communities
- Thoughtful intensification in appropriate locations, including strategic growth areas and transit-supportive communities
- Policy decisions that balance neighbourhood concerns with the broader public interest in housing supply

The Opportunity

Burlington's future depends on its ability to remain accessible to the next generation while providing greater housing choice for residents as their needs change. A more balanced housing policy framework will:

- **Help young people remain close to family and community**
- **Allow seniors to downsize without leaving Burlington**
- **Support workforce attraction and retention**
- **Strengthen long-term economic resilience**
- **Foster a more inclusive and diverse community**

Burlington should remain a place where young people can aspire not only to grow up, but also to build their futures. It should also be a place where residents can remain throughout every stage of life. If housing policy fails to create room for the next generation or sufficient choices for existing residents, the community risks becoming inaccessible to the very people who call it home.



3. Streamlining Missing Middle Housing and Infill Development

As a largely built-out city, Burlington's future housing supply will increasingly depend on intensification within the existing urban area. While higher-density development will play an important role, Burlington's housing needs cannot be met through high-rise development alone.

Missing middle housing represents one of Burlington's most important opportunities to increase housing supply, expand housing choice, and make better use of existing land and infrastructure. Missing middle housing includes a range of housing forms such as townhomes, stacked townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, multiplexes, additional residential units, and small- to mid-rise apartment buildings. These housing types can help bridge the gap between single-detached homes and high-rise apartments, creating more attainable opportunities for residents at different stages of life.

Young people and families need more attainable options to remain in the city, while many older residents want opportunities to downsize without leaving their neighbourhoods and communities. Missing middle housing can help create this range of choice while allowing Burlington to accommodate growth in a more gradual and diverse way.

Despite widespread recognition of the need for more missing middle housing, the development process can remain disproportionately complex and costly for smaller-scale projects. Lengthy approvals, unnecessary studies, restrictive zoning requirements, and regulatory uncertainty can make otherwise viable projects financially unfeasible. Smaller infill and missing middle projects also do not have the same economies of scale as major developments. Every additional study, delay, redesign, fee, or approval requirement can have a significant impact on project viability and, ultimately, the cost of the homes being created.

Creating a more responsive, proportionate, and predictable planning and approvals framework for missing middle housing represents one of the most practical ways Burlington can increase housing supply, make better use of existing infrastructure, and expand housing choice.



WE Support:

- Accelerating approvals for missing middle housing, including townhomes, stacked townhomes, multiplexes, and small- to mid-rise developments
- Ensuring zoning and planning policies actively enable a greater diversity of housing forms within Burlington's existing urban area
- Aligning municipal policies, zoning regulations, and approval processes with housing supply and intensification objectives
- Creating a more transparent, predictable, and efficient planning and approvals framework
- Reducing unnecessary regulatory and administrative barriers that can make smaller housing projects financially unviable
- Encouraging gentle and context-sensitive intensification within existing neighbourhoods
- Ensuring municipal policies provide flexibility for different forms of tenure, ownership, and unit configuration

The Opportunity

Missing middle housing can help Burlington accommodate growth while creating more housing choice within existing communities. By removing unnecessary barriers and creating a more predictable approvals process, Burlington can unlock new housing opportunities throughout the city.

A more supportive missing middle and infill housing framework will:

- **Expand attainable homeownership and rental opportunities**
- **Allow seniors to downsize while remaining in their communities**
- **Help families and younger generations remain in Burlington**
- **Make better use of existing infrastructure and public investments**
- **Support gradual and appropriate intensification within established communities**
- **Help Burlington achieve its housing and growth objectives**

If Burlington is serious about increasing housing supply and becoming more intensification-friendly, missing middle housing must become easier to plan, finance, and build.



4. Planning Infrastructure for Growth

Burlington's ability to accommodate future growth depends not only on planning for more housing, but also on ensuring the infrastructure needed to support that housing is available when and where it is required.

As a largely built-out city, future growth will increasingly occur through intensification and redevelopment within the existing urban area. This creates different infrastructure challenges. Existing water, wastewater, transportation, transit, stormwater, and community infrastructure must be assessed, renewed, expanded, and coordinated to support additional residents and businesses.

Infrastructure constraints should be identified and addressed proactively. They should not become long-term barriers that prevent housing from being built in areas where municipal and provincial planning policies direct growth. Burlington must also continue to work with Halton Region and the provincial and federal governments to secure the infrastructure investment required to support growth while protecting local taxpayers.



WE Support:

- Coordinating land-use planning, infrastructure planning, and capital budgeting
- Proactively identifying and addressing infrastructure constraints in areas planned for growth
- Prioritizing infrastructure investments that unlock housing and support intensification
- Ensuring infrastructure planning reflect approved and anticipated population and employment growth
- Making full use of existing infrastructure and public investments before imposing unnecessary barriers to development
- Coordinating municipal and regional infrastructure planning to support timely housing delivery
- Securing provincial and federal infrastructure funding to reduce pressure on local taxpayers

The Opportunity

Infrastructure investment is housing policy. When infrastructure planning and housing objectives are aligned, Burlington can accommodate growth more efficiently, provide greater certainty for residents and builders, and maximize the value of public investment.

A coordinated approach to growth and infrastructure will:

- **Unlock new housing opportunities**
- **Support successful intensification and redevelopment**
- **Make better use of existing and planned public infrastructure**
- **Improve coordination between Burlington and Halton Region**
- **Support complete and connected communities**
- **Ensure Burlington is prepared to accommodate future growth**

Burlington cannot meet its housing and growth objectives if infrastructure planning falls behind. By proactively planning and investing in the infrastructure needed to support growth, the city can ensure that planned housing becomes housing that can actually be built.



5. Protecting Property Taxpayers Through Assessment Growth

As municipalities across Ontario face rising infrastructure, service delivery, and operating costs, protecting property taxpayers has become an increasingly important priority. For Burlington, one of the most effective tools for maintaining long-term fiscal sustainability is responsible growth.

New housing and employment development expand the municipal assessment base, generating additional property tax revenue that helps fund infrastructure, municipal services, parks, recreation, and community amenities. When growth is well-managed and aligned with infrastructure planning, it can help distribute costs more broadly and reduce pressure on existing taxpayers.

Conversely, when housing and employment growth are unnecessarily constrained, municipalities risk limiting assessment growth while fixed, operating, and capital costs continue to rise. Over time, insufficient assessment growth can place increasing financial pressure on existing residents and businesses through higher property taxes or reduced service levels.

Growth should not be viewed solely as a source of infrastructure and service demand, but also as a critical contributor to Burlington's long-term fiscal health. A balanced approach must support both residential growth and the employment and commercial development needed to create jobs and strengthen the non-residential assessment base.



WE Support:

- Policies that recognize housing and employment growth as essential contributors to municipal fiscal sustainability
- Strategic infrastructure investments that unlock new residential and employment assessment growth
- Supporting employment areas and commercial development that create jobs and strengthen Burlington's non-residential tax base
- Supporting mixed-use growth that contributes to complete communities and a stronger assessment base
- Securing provincial and federal funding to reduce pressure on local taxpayers
- Long-term financial planning that aligns growth with infrastructure and service delivery
- Municipal decision-making that considers the fiscal consequences of unnecessarily constrained housing and employment growth

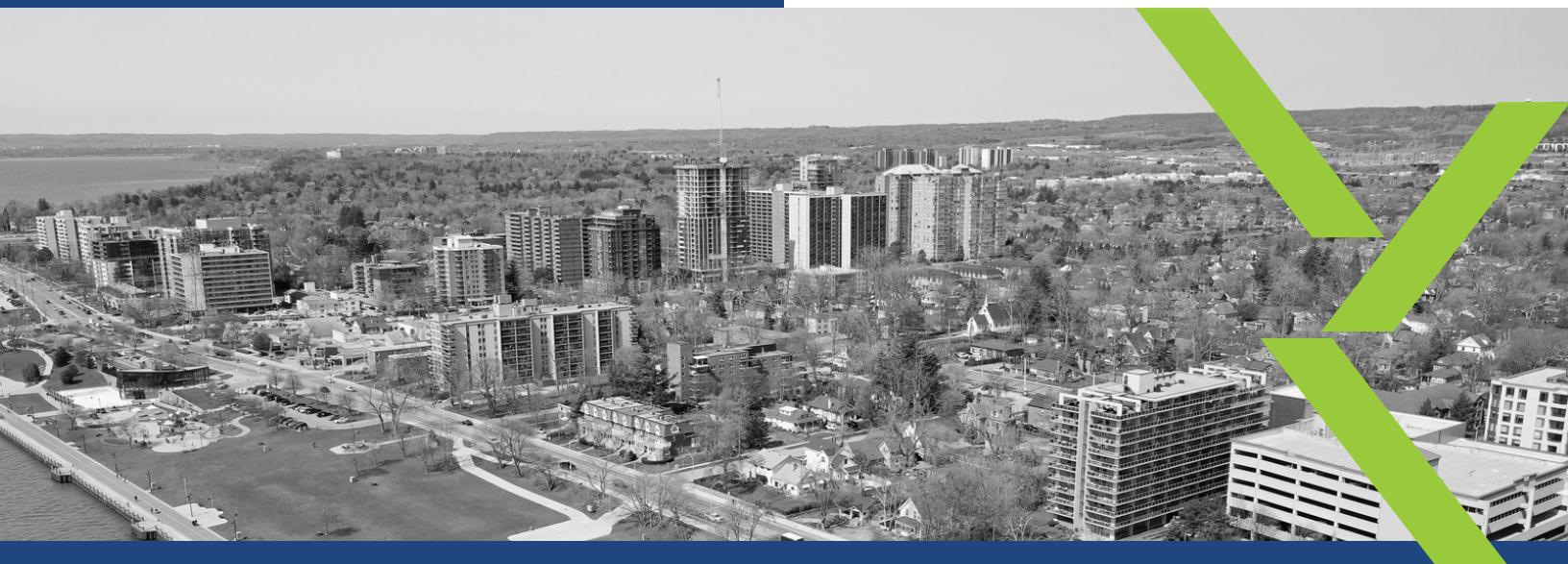
The Opportunity

Responsible growth strengthens Burlington's financial resilience.

A growing and diversified assessment base will:

- **Help reduce long-term tax pressure on existing residents and businesses**
- **Support infrastructure renewal and service delivery**
- **Strengthen Burlington's long-term fiscal sustainability**
- **Support local employment and economic growth**
- **Distribute the cost of municipal services across a broader tax base**

By supporting responsible residential and employment growth, Burlington can better protect property taxpayers while continuing to invest in the infrastructure and services residents expect.



A Burlington That Makes Room for the Future

Burlington's success has made it one of Ontario's most desirable communities. The challenge now is ensuring that future generations have the same opportunity to call it home.

That will require more housing, greater housing choice, successful intensification, infrastructure that keeps pace with growth, and municipal decision-making that looks beyond the loudest voices in the room to consider the long-term interests of the entire community.

Growth and change are inevitable. The choice before Burlington is whether that growth will be planned, supported, and shaped in a way that strengthens the city for the future.

By embracing responsible growth, Burlington can create more housing choices, support its economy, protect its long-term fiscal health, and remain a community where people of all ages and stages of life can build their futures.



WE BUILD THE FUTURE

Mike Collins-Williams, RPP | Chief Executive Officer
mikecw@westendhba.ca | (416) 435-6757

Amanda Stringer | Manager, Government Relations
amanda@westendhba.ca | (289) 684-9450

