



REPORT

Special Council

Meeting Date: October 22, 2024

FROM: Office of the Mayor

DATE: October 15, 2024

SUBJECT: Mayor's Annual Oakville Status Report

LOCATION: Town Wide

WARD: Town-wide

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RECOMMENDATION:

That the Mayor's Annual Oakville Status Report be received.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Oakville Town Council is committed to implementing its vision to be a vibrant and livable community for all. The Town's long-term strategy reflects the community's desire for an active, inclusive and thriving community where people of all ages and abilities have a place to call home. The plan has four strategic priorities:
 - **Growth Management:** Manage growth for a vibrant local economy, meeting infrastructure needs and ensuring we have complete communities and efficient mobility across the town.
 - **Community Belonging:** Enhance community belonging to ensure all residents are invited to engage in a fulfilling community life that is built to support well-being.
 - **Environmental Sustainability:** Ensure environmental sustainability to meet future needs related to greenspaces, natural areas, and act on climate change mitigation and adaptation.
 - **Accountable Government:** Provide accountable government for excellence in service delivery and responsible management of resources.
- Oakville's tax increase was the lowest of Halton Region municipalities and neighbouring municipalities. The town maintains strong reserves, while continuing to deliver high quality community infrastructure and services.
- Oakville and Halton Region maintain top credit ratings from rating agencies.
- Council continues to invest in community facilities and infrastructure, including new recreation centres and amenities, fire stations, parks, trail and bike paths, and our roads.

- Oakville continues to be recognized as a great place to live and work.
- Oakville and Halton Region consistently rank among Canada's Safest Large Communities.

BACKGROUND:

As part of Oakville Council's commitment to transparency, accountability and engagement, the Mayor began the practice of delivering an Annual Oakville Status Report in 2007. Since that time, in the autumn of each year, the Mayor – as head of Council – highlights the achievements of the Town and the progress made towards achieving its strategic plans.

This is Mayor Burton's 18th annual report to Council.

The Town of Oakville's 2023 Annual Report, covering the fiscal year from January 1 to December 31, 2023, was released on July 22, 2024. It showcased key achievements in advancing the goals set out in the town's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, along with Oakville's continued success in maintaining strong fiscal health.

The Mayor's Annual Oakville Status Report is delivered to complement the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Selected highlights of accomplishments from the current council term are outlined below. See Appendix A for more information.

- 1. Growth Management** – Managing growth to support a strong local economy, meeting infrastructure needs. Ensuring we have well-rounded communities with efficient transportation and mobility options across the town:
 - In response to the provincial housing mandate, Town Council pledged to accommodate 33,000 new housing units by 2031–2032, a necessary step to address the housing crisis. Oakville's pledge included 18 provincial actions needed to fund and support this growth.
 - Oakville's Rental Housing Protection By-law and Demolition Control By-law, approved in July 2023, aims to preserve existing rental housing and ensure tenant protection.
 - For the sixth consecutive year, Oakville was recognized as one of Canada's top 20 locations for investment by Site Selection Magazine. The Ford Motor Company's historic investment of approximately \$2.3 billion into the Oakville Assembly Complex reinforces our town's reputation as a prime destination for investment, innovation, and economic growth.
 - Plans are underway to transform Midtown Oakville into a livable, connected urban community. This major development will be shaped by feedback from

residents and will include residential, commercial, and public spaces to meet the needs of our growing population.

- Public input was received on key plans, including the Oakville Parks Plan 2031, Transportation Master Plan, Parks, Recreation and Library Master Plan and Fire Master Plan, ensuring that our infrastructure is prepared for the growth and needs of the future.
- There is a total of 0.54m² of indoor space at town-owned culture, recreation and library facilities per resident and 11 traffic calming locations across town.
- The Oakville delegation received a positive response to its advocacy for the Kerr Street Underpass Project and the reinstatement of the Neyagawa Station as part of the 407 Transitway from the Provincial Minister of Transportation at this year's Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference.
- The town held public consultations and gathered feedback on the Economic Development Plan: 2024-2029 – Draft Strategic Directions. The Planning and Development Council endorsed the staff report for public consultation.
- As Secretary of Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM), Mayor Burton advocates for federal and provincial policies that support strong and effective municipalities.
- Council approved a list of priority intergovernmental requests, as part of an effort to focus and align requests to other levels of government with the town's vision, growth targets, and needs. There has been ongoing advocacy and engagement with representatives and staff from all levels of government to advance the town's positions on our intergovernmental requests.

- 2. Community Belonging** – Enhancing community belonging to ensure all residents are invited to engage in a fulfilling community life that continues supporting our well-being.
- Work continues on the implementation of the town's multi-year plan to support inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) that was approved by Council in 2024.
 - In December 2023, we launched the Community Activation Grant as part of the 2023 Budget, with \$35,000 in annual funding. This program offers up to \$750 to local non-profits, community groups, and residents for small-scale projects like workshops and neighborhood block parties aimed at strengthening community bonds.
 - Responding to a proposal by two Halton youth, we introduced the *Pink Project* in 2023. With \$20,000 in funding, this initiative ensures free menstrual products are available at Town Hall, community centres, arenas, pools, and libraries, addressing period poverty in Oakville.
 - Oakville celebrated diversity and advancing Truth and Reconciliation in 2024. The town hosted and supported cultural events including: Asian Heritage Month, Sikh Heritage Month, Latino Festival, Moon Festival, Black History Month events, co-hosted the Emancipation Day Picnic, and marked National Indigenous History Month with Indigenous-led storytelling and cultural events. The town also partnered with STEPS Public Art to award a CreateSpace Public Art Residency to a BIPOC artist for the Ontario Culture Days Festival.

- A pilot pop-up food bank at Town Hall, run in partnership with Food for Life and the Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre, operated from June to December 2023. It has since become a permanent service, available every Wednesday. This initiative provided weekly food support to 60 families, reducing their food costs by an average of \$50.60 and improving food security by 33%.
- Oakville hosted community events in 2023 and 2024, including Family Day activities, Canada Day fireworks, Movies in the Park, Holiday Lights by the Lake and the 75th Oakville Santa Claus Parade.
- Hosted the Hockey Canada's National World Junior Team practices and events such as Curling Canada's PointsBet Invitational, the Skate Canada Challenge and Hockey Canada's Centennial Cup tournament brought significant local economic and tourism benefits to Oakville.
- Oakville's 2023 Culture Days earned the town national recognition for the second year in a row as the top mid-sized city participating in this celebration, with nearly 100 events, ranging from musical performances to woodcarving workshops and improv theater, fostered community connections and celebrated creativity.
- In June 2024, the 21st Community Spirit Awards celebrated individuals, organizations, businesses and community groups who are making a difference in Oakville through volunteer efforts or acts of kindness.

3. Environmental Sustainability – Ensuring environmental sustainability to meet future needs related to greenspaces, natural areas, and act on climate change mitigation and adaptation:

- In February 2023, Oakville welcomed its first batch of zero-emission battery-electric buses, funded through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. This transition aims to replace diesel buses—significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. Over the next five years, we plan to convert approximately 50% of Oakville Transit's fleet to electric vehicles, supported by the installation of 12 charging stations at the operations facility.
- The town has invested in Electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure to promote adoption of electric vehicles in Oakville. The town continues to replace fleet vehicles and equipment with fuel efficient, low emission and/or electric alternatives.
- Effective May 1, 2023, youth and seniors can ride Oakville Transit for free across all routes, seven days a week. This permanent service has resulted in an impressive increase in transit ridership, with approximately 700,000 additional boardings over the year, promoting sustainability and equity in our community.
- The Oakville Crosstown Trail is set to undergo significant improvements, funded by over \$1 million from the federal government. Enhancements include widening and paving a four-kilometer stretch and adding pedestrian crossings for improved safety, with construction scheduled for 2024-2025. In addition, Oakville's 2023 Budget allocated \$6.7 million for renewing over 200 parks and 250 kilometers of trails, alongside \$6.4 million for new neighborhood parks.
- Mayor Burton and staff represented Oakville at the UN COP28 Climate Change Conference in Dubai in December 2023. Mayor Burton participated in the inaugural

Local Climate Action Summit which led to a partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies and funding for the Mayor's Youth Climate Action Fund, an initiative aimed at empowering young Oakville residents to lead impactful climate projects.

- The town has integrated sustainable building design characteristics into several of our facilities, achieving LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification in seven of them. There has been a 13.6 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from town-owned buildings.
- The town has 826.8 ha of greenspace available for community use per 100,000 population.
- The town continues to make progress on the Rainwater Management Financial Plan, a sustainable funding model dedicated to protecting our stormwater infrastructure and natural assets and building resiliency against climate change impacts. A review of stormwater studies was completed in 2023, prioritizing infrastructure projects based on risk and service level objectives.
- In 2023, Oakville planted more than 35,700 trees, raising our tree coverage to nearly 32%. We are committed to reaching a goal of 40% tree canopy by 2057, which will help combat climate change and enhance Oakville's natural beauty.

4. Accountable Government – Providing accountable government for excellence in service delivery and responsible management of resources:

- The 2024 Citizen Survey results showed 89 per cent of residents expressed overall satisfaction with the quality of the services provided by the town.
- The Town's independent external auditors, KPMG, have again provided an unqualified audit opinion on the Consolidated Financial Statements.
- Oakville and Halton Region upheld top credit ratings from both Moody's Investors Service (Aaa) and S&P Global Ratings (AAA).
- In 2024, Oakville was selected to join the Bloomberg City Data Alliance, a program that supports cities in using data to improve services, enhance decision-making, and foster innovation. This initiative provides Oakville with access to world-class technical assistance, funding, and training in data governance, further empowering the town to make data-driven decisions that promote transparency and efficiency.
- Oakville's performance-based budgeting have earned international recognition from the City Data Alliance, the Research Data Manager at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Government Excellence said, "We think Oakville and New Bedford are really great examples of performance-based budgeting."
- The Town of Oakville launched a redesigned website in 2023, making it easier for residents to access programs and services. The new "In My Neighbourhood" section provides ward-specific information, including local councillors details and an interactive map of key town facilities, parks, and trails. Enhancements like improved search functionality, readable fonts, and better navigation significantly enhance accessibility. Additionally, the town refreshed websites for the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, Oakville Transit, and Invest Oakville to ensure they are user-friendly and mobile-accessible.

- New features in the Report a Problem tool simplify the process for residents to report issues including potholes and noise concerns. A keyword search helps users quickly find the appropriate service request, and the tool now includes general inquiry options and more frequent status updates for residents.
- As part of Oakville's commitment to transparency, the town has launched the Oakville Data Hub, a centralized online platform reporting key performance and growth metrics. The Data Hub includes: The Council Strategic Plan Dashboard, which tracks progress on growth management, environmental sustainability, community belonging, and accountable government. It currently covers 13 of 20 key indicators, with more to come. The Planning and Development Hub, provides data on planning applications, building permits, and town-building trends. The Housing Pledge Dashboard, monitors progress on housing targets and related funding including demographic data, maps, and community profiles, consolidating key data for easier access.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

The Town of Oakville is committed to public transparency and accountability. Progress towards Council's Strategic Plan is reported to Council every year. In addition, departmental business plans and the town's Annual Report provide progress updates to the public. Members of the public are invited to Livestream the Mayor's Annual Oakville Status Update and can also view it via YouTube.

(B) FINANCIAL

All initiatives highlighted in the Oakville Annual Status Report are approved through the Town's budget process. Town Council unanimously approved the 2024 Budget that set the property tax increase at 4.38 per cent, the lowest in comparison with neighbouring municipalities.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

None.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC GOALS

Support a transparent and accountable government.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

They Mayor's Annual Oakville Status highlights initiatives that reduce the town's greenhouse gas emissions. The Mayor and Council are committed to

initiatives that maintain and protect our community's environmental sustainability.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: [Town of Oakville Council Strategic Plan and 2023-2026 Action Plan](#)

Appendix B: [2023 Annual Report](#)

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