



# **PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

---

**2023 // HUNTER OBEE**



# 2023

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PRESIDENT'S GREETING**

**3**

**PRESIDENT-ELECT NOTE**

**5**

**PRESIDENT'S NOTABLE UPDATES**

**6**

**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**11**

**EVENTS**

**14**

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING**

**16**

**ADVOCACY & PROFILE**

**18**

**SUPPORT & SERVICES**

**23**

**REGIONAL MLS® & IT SERVICES**

**24**

**OMDREB COMMUNICATIONS**

**25**

# PRESIDENT'S GREETING



## HUNTER OBBEE

Hello OMDREB Members,

I would like to thank you for putting trust in me as your President to lead the Board through this past year. 2023 certainly proved to be another pivotal year for OMDREB, and one constant throughout was the great work of our Board of Directors, Committees, and OMDREB's staff lead by CEO Lorraine McLachlan.

As we approach the end of another full year of unprecedented supply shortages, higher prices, and interest rate hikes, it's clear that despite any market challenges, the long-term outlook for housing is still optimistic as home ownership remains a goal for many. And this bodes well for our members, because an experienced OMDREB REALTOR® is a necessity when potential buyers are ready to take the next step, and turn into clients.

Looking back on 2023, I had several goals I wanted to see accomplished during my time as President, which I am happy to say have crossed the finish line:

- OMDREB Head Office – A bright, modern office, easily accessible with plenty of member parking! Our Task Force did an incredible job, and I'm happy to say that the building at 1935 Ironoak Way has now closed, and we're currently designing the interior.
- Bylaw Review and Updating – The Bylaw committee worked overtime this year reviewing, editing, and modernizing our outdated bylaw. The work was long and tedious, but we finished everything and presented the updates to the members, who approved of the changes.
- Increase Communication and Transparency — This year, we held various member town halls for various topics such as the aforementioned OMDREB bylaw, and the Ontario REALTOR® Wellness Program. It's important that members be involved every step of the way when large-scale changes are happening, whether it be within OMDREB or the industry as a whole, and I believe we opened the doors to allow members a front-row seat into process, execution, and completion of various projects.

And a few more are nearing completion:

- Website – The complete overhaul of our public-facing website, as well as our new Members Area, is nearly done. We have completed the back-end development, and content population is underway. After that, the only remaining steps are website testing, and launch!

- Regulatory Updates – One of my goals was to continue working with our partner Boards and Associations more closely to improve how we do business. This year we saw the implementation of Phase 2 of the Trust in Real Estate Services Act, and soon, an updated REALTOR® Cooperation Policy from CREA. I was also happy to proactively advocate for positive industry change with various government officials. Finally, I continued working with our Information Technology Services Ontario (ITSO) representative and neighbouring boards to work towards the goal of a provincial MLS system, which as we know, is an ongoing project.

Additional details on the projects above, and more, are included in the “Notable Updates” section of this report. Please be sure to have a look, because it’s important you stay informed on what OMDREB is working on for you!

Thank you once again for the privilege to be your President, and I look forward to continuing to serve as Past-President.

**Hunter Obee**  
2023 President



# PRESIDENT-ELECT NOTE



## ANTHONY DANKO

Dear OMDREB Members,

I am grateful for the confidence and trust you have placed in me to be OMDREB President for 2024. I have my eye on a number of things for the coming year, as noted below, and I look forward to serving you.

The last half of 2023 saw a much different real estate market than the first half of the year. As of this writing on December 4, many economists agree that the fight against inflation has been won and that interest rates will come down in 2024.

Nationally, in 2024, we will see CREA debate the matter of creating a for-profit entity to manage Realtor.ca. The new CREA REALTOR® Cooperation Policy will also take effect on January 3rd.

Provincially, Phase 2 of TRESA went into effect on December 1, 2023. OMDREB will be continuing to support you in being compliant with the new legislation. Efforts are also underway to establish a provincial-wide MLS data sharing platform. This objective is subject to its own set of political forces, so it remains to be seen how this will evolve.

On the local level, we have seen many of our neighbouring boards decide to explore the idea of merging their organizations. We have much to explore in the coming year.

OMDREB will hopefully settle into our new building at 1935 Ironoak Way sometime in the second half of the year. As such, we look forward to hosting in-person training sessions and face-to-face meetings.

My immediate objective will be to hold strategy sessions in January with the incoming Board of Directors. OMDREB has always been committed to transparency and to keeping our members up to date by way of frequent communications and town hall meetings. I am committing to providing opportunities for members to provide feedback on various things throughout the year. Your participation will be vital for the board in their decision-making.

Once again, I am honoured to serve as your President, and I wish all of you prosperity in the upcoming year.

**Anthony Danko**  
Incoming President for 2024

# THE PRESIDENT'S NOTABLE UPDATES FOR OMDREB & THE INDUSTRY



**HUNTER OBEE**

## **OMDREB Projects**

### **OMDREB Head Office**

Earlier in the year I shared a video with members, giving a quick walkthrough of the property. If you haven't watched it, it's available on the OMDREB YouTube channel.

The exterior development of the building is complete. Now, we have shifted our focus to the space planning phase, with the goal of having a state-of-the-art facility, offering a dynamic work environment for OMDREB staff, with a welcoming, professional and innovative atmosphere for our members.

We hope to return to a range of on-site events and training sessions, which I know is important to many members that used to attend in-person sessions quite often at Navy Street. One of the things I know you'll appreciate is that there is lots of free parking at the new location!

Just as important, having a new head office in a high profile and desirable location means we'll be back to enjoying a commanding physical presence - a place where community leaders and association partners know they can go for the latest on local real estate.

The new office is conveniently located at the southwest corner of Upper Middle Road and Ford Drive, this location will be extremely easy for all our members to access via all major highways. It is the only stand-alone building in a brand-new office condominium complex. Facing right on to Upper Middle Road, it has high profile and exposure.

It is still early, but it's possible we could have the opportunity to move in during the second half of next year.

I want to thank the Building Task Force, Chaired by Anthony Danko, who worked diligently to find 1935 Ironoak Way, and ensure it meets the needs of our members and staff team.

### **OMDREB Bylaw**

One of the largest projects we undertook this year was the major overhaul of OMDREB's bylaw and policies.

There were two reasons for this - the first being a legal requirement that our Bylaw conforms to the recently enacted Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, known as ONCA.

This law requires all not-for-profit corporations in the province to bring their corporate documents into compliance, including Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaw.

The second is work that has been ongoing over the past few years to modernize and streamline our Bylaw.

As we reviewed the Bylaw in copious detail, it became evident we had the opportunity to simplify and clarify it in plain, and gender-neutral language. Over time, the Bylaw has come to contain redundancies, and confusing and contradictory language. There were also many sections which, by best practice standards, should be incorporated into policy.

Changing our Bylaw required a special meeting of membership at which a vote to approve the final changes was passed. Prior to that though, we were determined to provide complete, comprehensive information in full transparency by means of a member town hall, which provided a forum for members to review the changes, and ask any lingering questions prior to the special meeting.

I am proud of the work that we did, and even happier that the entire process from start to finish was understood and accepted by all of our members.

Thank you to the members who volunteered on the committee, or remained engaged throughout the process by reviewing the provided documentation and participating in the town hall.

### **New OMDREB Websites**

Rebuilding OMDREB's websites from the ground up – both the public-facing OMDREB.ca, and the members-only site – has been an incredibly ambitious project.

Throughout the year, the Website Redevelopment Task Force, chaired by OMDREB Director David Marshall, undertook a scope of our current site, had each individual webpage layout completely redesigned, sorted through hours of existing content, and developed new content.

We are finally approaching the finish line of the redevelopment, and soon we'll be engaging our website testing group to ensure the site is bug-free and meets the needs of members upon launch.

The goal is to provide a consumer-facing website that will provide value to consumers looking to buy or sell a home and direct them to an OMDREB REALTOR®. So, in this aspect it's essentially lead generation for members.

The other critical objective is to be the easiest way for our members to access the tools they need. With direct access to Matrix and quick links to all of the other most used daily resources such as GeoWarehouse, MPAC, Webforms, and OMDREB's Video Training Bank, our goal is to have our members log in daily to OMDREB.ca as a one-stop shop, and have everything they need at their fingertips.

We are optimistic that this website will enhance our members experience, and become a vital resource for OMDREB REALTORS®.

The complete overhaul of the public-facing website, and the new Members Area, is nearly done. We have completed the back-end development, and content population is underway. After that, the only remaining steps are website testing, and launch!

## **Around The Industry**

A lot of time throughout the year was spent on a number of other major things that are technically outside of OMDREB's control, but we still worked hard at to ensure members are well prepared.

### **ORWP**

I know it's been a contentious issue. But no matter how you feel about it, or what the outcome was, we wanted our members to be informed every step of the way, from the original announcement of the program, all the way up to the recent OREA Special General Meeting where it was voted on.

We did this by making it a top priority to be transparent, communicate often, and ensure your voice was heard.

We sent members many text-based communications, shared resources, videos, and held virtual Town Halls so that you were able to hear information straight from the source - being OREA - and vocalize your feedback directly to them.

We took it a step further and opened up a poll, so that members could share with me directly how they felt about the program. I took your feedback into the OREA SGM on Wednesday, November 29, and voted in accordance with the results of that poll.

It's my hope you feel as if OMDREB represented you properly on such a contentious issue.

### **TRESA**

Another industry change that required frequent communication was the introduction of TRESA, which was put into force on December 1, 2023. TRESA is a big deal – it's new legislation, and is something that we all have to abide by.

Again, we wanted to make sure that all OMDREB members were armed with the information you need in order to do your job properly and effectively.

To that end, we once again sent a myriad of communications to members – text, videos, and links to resources. We held multiple training sessions directly from OREA, hosted by Ray Ferris – who I'm sure you're all familiar with at this point. There were virtual sessions tailored to the boots-on-the-ground agent, as well as virtual and in-person Managing Brokers meetings, who need to ensure compliance across their brokerage. And in the month leading up to TRESA coming into force, we sent weekly emails, called "What's The Latest On TRESA?", containing all of the information to date that was available ahead of the December 1st launch.

However, our work doesn't stop just because TRESA is now in effect. OMDREB will continue to provide members with TRESA-related resources, so that everyone feels confident they understand the new legislation, and when using the new OREA forms.



## **CREA REALTOR® Cooperation Policy**

Another change coming soon is the CREA REALTOR® Cooperation policy, putting into effect the new “Duty of Cooperation” in Article 30 of the REALTOR® Code.

In summary, under the policy, REALTORS® must place their property listings on an MLS® System within three days of public marketing, unless an exemption applies.

To help you navigate this change, we’ve compiled resources to support you and your brokerage. Communications have already been sent, and will continue to be sent more frequently throughout December, containing other relevant information from CREA.

Once again, we want to ensure you’re prepped and ready for the implementation. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, reach out OMDREB and we’ll be happy to assist.

## **REALTOR.ca**

We all know that earlier this year, CREA proposed a significant overhaul of REALTOR.ca.

Back in February, CREA sent all boards and associations a letter outlining a plan to convert REALTOR.ca into a standalone, for-profit technology company. The new company will have its own board of directors and CEO, and will still be controlled by CREA on behalf of its members. CREA’s board partners will have a stake in the new company, and an advisory board will guide REALTOR.ca’s new board made up of “skilled real estate practitioners and leaders.”

In October, CREA held a Special General Meeting about REALTOR.ca, sharing with Board leaders across the country more information about the vision for the standalone company. At that meeting, CREA pointed out there are plenty of statistics and market data pointing to REALTOR.ca being a significant force in property searches for Canadians.

From that perspective, it’s obviously a viable technology. It has grown its market share for a few different reasons. This comes down to a business model that is employed, and REALTOR.ca – by virtue of its ownership through CREA – has enjoyed essentially a monopoly on its asset, which is the listing inventory.

No one else can point to a monopoly on acquiring that listing data. Any other real estate portal needs to acquire the data through some other means, whether it’s through affiliation, membership, or a partnership of some other nature with CREA.

The question then is how do you capitalize on that monopoly, how do you capitalize any future growth, and how do you capitalize while continuing to meet the demands of an evolving and changing consumer base?

This is where the REALTOR.ca spinoff conversations are ultimately leading, and we are being reminded that members will continue to be on the forefront of it all – without having their own data sold back to them, like what happened with NAR when they sold Realtor.com.

While we have no other information at this time, I wanted to remind you of what’s happening with REALTOR.ca, and as always, we’ll do our best to keep you informed every step of the way.

## Province-Wide Data

The issue of province-wide data is one that's been lingering for quite some time, and during my time as President I was happy to contribute to various conversations around provincial data, and how it can ultimately be achieved.

I had the opportunity to be a part of Province-Wide Data meetings, held by ITSO and attended by Boards across the province, with the mandate of trying to find common solutions to this data issue.

I know that the data divide does nothing but hurt Ontario REALTORS®. For members, it can be frustrating having to manage multiple sets of MLS rules, data input forms, and different professional standards processes. And what's worse is we don't have the data we need all in one system.

Consumers see all information on Realtor.ca or VOWs, and they can't understand why REALTORS® don't have the data they need. That's a big problem, and that's what we're trying to solve.

Simply put, my stance has been to get past the politics that exist and find a solution – and my conversations with other boards have always reflected that.

On a similar note, I'm sure many of you have heard about the amalgamations that are taking part between a number of different boards in Ontario.

With respect to any mergers or amalgamations, during this year I have recommended OMDREB take a "wait and see" approach for the time being. I don't necessarily see the benefits yet, because keep in mind – we already have access to the data that these boards already share. We need the rest of it. So provincial data comes first, and then we can see if amalgamations or mergers make sense.

For now, I am recommending OMDREB continue its strong focus on professionalism, education, training, transparent communications, and local initiatives which are important to members.



# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



## **The OMDREB President's Charity**

The 2023 President's Charity, Halton Women's Place, assists those in our communities who are most vulnerable. OMDREB is proud to have supported this wonderful organization this year.

Through all of our various fundraising efforts this year, we were able to raise a grand total of \$47,860.04 for Halton Women's Place.

A big shout-out to the volunteers and Board staff who worked on making these accomplishments possible, and to all of you supporting this important community involvement.

## **Scholarship**

The Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board's annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony recognizes the talented students and winners of the OMDREB Annual Scholarship. This year's Awards Ceremony was held the evening of Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

For 2023, OMDREB's Scholarship focus was surrounding housing, community resources and support. This is in line with OMDREB's President's Charity for this year, which is Halton Women's Place. This year's essay submissions were creative, thought provoking, and well-researched.

In alphabetical order, the winners of the 2023 OMDREB Scholarship Awards are:

### **Leena El-Said - Thomas A. Blakelock High School**

Leena is a dedicated leader in her school community. She has been heavily involved in various extracurricular activities and impactful initiatives during her time at Blakelock. One notable achievement was her role in organizing the first ever Blakelock Multicultural Night.

Leena has also been actively involved in the school Eco Club, where she has displayed a strong passion for environmental sustainability. She was an integral member of the Truth and Reconciliation team, playing an active role in planning and organizing events to raise awareness.

Her representation of student-led events and highlighting of cultural organizations within the school has been impactful to all students within the community.

Her leadership skills, organizational abilities, and passion for promoting diversity and inclusion made her a well-rounded candidate for this scholarship.

A notable quote from Leena's essay was, "Addressing the affordable housing crisis in Halton will require a combination of strategies that increase the supply of affordable housing, provide funding for affordable housing initiatives, reduce regulatory burdens, and provide direct assistance to low-income individuals and families."

By taking these steps, Halton can help make housing more affordable for its residents and improve the quality of life for all those who call the region home. By engaging residents, promoting information, and building partnerships, municipalities can help create a community that values and supports affordable housing for all.”

### **Kriti Kharbanda - Milton District High School**

As a Grade 12 Student Government representative, Kriti has assisted in the planning and execution of sports tournaments, spirit days and dances, as well as maintaining membership in the school’s Eco Club. Kriti’s commitment to the Milton community is just as admirable, volunteering in the Santa Claus parade by distributing gifts to children along the parade route.

Kriti’s dedication to academic excellence is further highlighted through part time employment as a tutor, assisting students with success in both mathematics and English.

She always demonstrates a strong will to meet expectations in an ever-changing environment. She has a strong sense of responsibility and embodies her school’s motto: Belong. Elevate. Respect.

Kriti incorporates balance amidst her studies and commitments, as she carves out time to tap into her creative side through reading, drawing and playing the piano.

A notable quote from Kriti’s essay was, “In light of the housing crisis in Southern Ontario, it is essential to explore sustainable and responsible approaches to address the issue. While utilizing the Greenbelt for housing development may appear as a quick fix, it would come at a significant cost to the environment, recreation, and quality of life. It is crucial to strike a balance between meeting housing needs and protecting the environment to ensure that Southern Ontario continues to thrive as a sustainable region.”

### **Ezekiel “Keze” Tatem - Aldershot High School**

Ezekiel’s gentle and kind attitude always brings a feeling of warmth to everyone he meets. He is never the loudest one in the room and he does not seek to be “in the spotlight,” but he nonetheless positively influences the people around him. He is a driven worker, and he is adaptable to new or difficult situations.

He is quick to smile at, and chat with anyone, regardless of who the person is. He lends a hand in small ways whenever help is needed, and strives to set a good example wherever he goes.

A notable quote from Ezekiel’s essay was, “Many in society today have become used to describing natural disasters, climate change and social upheaval as crises - big issues which can result in citizens feeling hopelessness. The housing shortage in Southern Ontario is a wide-reaching reality and since shelter is a basic human right, then housing options need to be created without delay.”

### **Thank you to our panel of judges for their time and effort in determining the winners:**

- Kathie Anderson, OMDREB Director
- Carm Bozzo, Director of Philanthropy and Community Engagement at Halton Women’s Place, which is OMDREB’s President’s Charity for 2023.
- Laura Pipes, OMDREB’s Manager of Operations and Administration
- Yiin Shayegan, OMDREB Director and the Chair of OMDREB’s YPN Committee

We also wish to thank Mayor Rob Burton of Oakville and Mayor Gordon Krantz of Milton for joining us and celebrating our winners!

To read the winning submissions, click on a corresponding name below:

- [Leena El-Said](#)
- [Kriti Kharbanda](#)
- [Kaelyn Silva](#)
- [Keze Tatem](#)

To our award winners, we wish you the best of luck in your future academic endeavours.

[Watch the virtual awards ceremony recap by clicking here.](#)



**LEENA EL-SAID**

**KAELYN SILVA**

# EVENTS



## Events

For the first time in four years, some OMDREB events made a return to in-person gatherings, including meetings of the Your Professional Network (YPN) and the Managing Brokers Council, as well as the Christmas Luncheon and Mini Trade Show. Find more information about these highlights below.

### Golf Tournament

On September 15, [OMDREB's annual Golf Tournament](#) took place at Piper's Heath Golf Club.

This year, we raised a remarkable \$21,551.04, the second-highest total in the tournament's history, for the 2023 President's Charity, Halton Women's Place - a local organization dedicated to assisting and empowering women in need. We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the execution of this event. Our sponsors, volunteers, staff, and participants played a vital role in making this year's charity golf tournament a resounding success.

Be sure to watch out for more information regarding our next Charity Golf Tournament at Piper's Heath, being held on September 10, 2024. Save the date in your calendar now!

### Your Professional Network

OMDREB's YPN is geared toward those new to the industry (5 years or less), and aims to provide new REALTORS® with the resources and confidence they need to succeed in their careers.

On September 28, the YPN gathered at the Oakville Italian Club to connect, network, and learn from a panel of experts in the industry:

- Allan Spisak of ACISS Home Inspections discussed hot issues in the home inspection industry
- Henry Vincent of RBC Mortgages presented "Qualify your clients before they sign" and,
- Alanna Stephen, Lawyer, presented "Closing 101."

We can't wait to host more YPN events in the new year! If you're a new REALTOR®, keep an eye out.

### Managing Brokers Council: TRESA Forms

With the pending implementation of TRESA, Monday, November 20 proved to be a popular date with our Managing Brokers, who understood the importance of knowing the implications TRESA would have on their real estate businesses.

At the Oakville Italian Club, we discussed the changes to OREA Forms, and what Managing Brokers and their agents would need to pay attention to, such as:

- Sharing the new and revised forms, and how to implement them into your brokerage
- Breaking down situations to manage clients, listings, disclosures, and brokerage to brokerage documentation
- Standard clause considerations related to TRESA
- A roundtable discussion about Forms with TRESA effects
- A question-and-answer period

### **Annual Christmas Luncheon and Mini Trade Show**

For the first time in four years, OMDREB's Christmas Luncheon and Mini Trade Show is making a return!

Held at Rattlesnake Golf Club in Milton on Wednesday, December 6, this was the perfect opportunity to reconnect with peers, or bring your team of agents or staff for an afternoon of good food, fun, and camaraderie!

Thank you to all who took the time out to join us.



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING



As OMDREB's [professional development and training opportunities](#) continue to be presented in an online-only format, we have conducted more than 280 professional development webinars, engaging with an audience of over 3,700 participants in 2023!

Our commitment to offering education and professional development as a member service has consistently proven to be beneficial to both our organization and its members. Our staff have actively pursued new sessions, introducing several new speakers this year and covering a diverse range of topics.

Some of the latest additions to our inventory were: "Qualifying For More Mortgages," "How To Read A Condo Certificate," "Selling To Different Cultures," "Starting Over – A Game Plan For Agents" and the popular "AI in Real Estate."

The highly successful series, Coffee With Colin, remains a favoured staple in Milton thanks to OMDREB member and Milton Councillor Colin Best.

For the past few years, we have been fortunate to have Regional and Oakville Town Councillor Sean O'Meara presenting Oakville Town Talk, and Paul Sharman, Ward 5 Regional Councillor, presenting our City of Burlington Updates.

OMDREB is dedicated to maintaining these fantastic town and city updates from your local representatives, and we are excited to have them back on our Professional Development roster for 2024.

Keep an eye out for additional seminars at the start of 2024 including: "Social Media – How To Use It and Why," "Virtual Staging," "Kitec Plumbing and Aluminum Wiring," "Business Planning For New and Seasoned Salespeople," "Agreement of Purchase and Sale Updates" and "AI for Real Estate Marketing."

If there are topics or speakers that you would like the Board to offer in 2024, please forward your suggestions to [cyndi@omdreb.ca](mailto:cyndi@omdreb.ca). As always, we welcome your input!



## Training

This year has certainly marked significant updates to not only our MLS® environment, but also to the technology and tools we access daily in organized real estate in Ontario. Training and education at OMDREB continue to be a top priority. Our main goal is to assist our members in taking full advantage of the tools we provide through membership with OMDREB.

We also take your feedback very seriously. Throughout 2023, OMDREB has seen a continued increase of member inquiries arriving from all channels. To be proactive, our Trainer, Eric Garand, has been working closely alongside OMDREB's MLS, Membership, and Communications departments to develop tailored training solutions in response to this increased demand.

Many of you also made comments about the video hosting platform we were using (YouTube), and how finicky it can be to use when trying to access related training videos. In order to address this, we have switched to Vimeo, another hosting service, which allows for better video customization, and sandboxing of playlists. This should help alleviate frustrations members may have had about YouTube's video player.

OMDREB's popular Video Training Bank saw significant updates this year as well. There were tweaks to the Matrix training that many members appreciate, in order to cover more ground for different member types (dual members, Managing Brokers, etc.). New additions to our online training included the Top 5 Matrix Tips, and Matrix In A Minute: Reporting A Sale Using "NONMEM" videos, along with dozens of other professional development webinars.

Training for new OMDREB members was a large focus of the start of the year. OMDREB's New Member Orientation is now completely virtual, and contains new video resources that are available to all members as a refresher.

In 2024, we'll be doing an even deeper dive into the new member training videos, and adjusting where necessary. A quick change to the Personal Interboard Service training is also warranted, as the service is now free for non-members. Expect to see updated videos about that as well.



# ADVOCACY & PROFILE



## Government Relations

When issues arise that affect the real estate sector, and therefore our REALTOR® members, OMDREB engages elected officials and government to discuss solutions and make recommendations on behalf of members.

Our Government Relations Committee and staff liaisons met often with government officials this year to discuss the local housing market, the current supply crisis, as well as other issues or needs that impact OMDREB members.

## Halton Regional Housing Roundtable

Perhaps the biggest advocacy win for OMDREB this year was the formation of the Halton Regional Housing Roundtable. On Friday, September 9, at the Sixteen Mile Creek Sports Complex in Oakville, OMDREB met with a number of officials across the housing spectrum to form and commence the first meeting of the Halton Regional Housing Roundtable.

## Background

The real estate industry has been pushing the creation of a National Housing Roundtable through its advocacy efforts. While progress has been made, creating a permanent Housing Roundtable at the national level is a daunting task.

We recognize that having an established permanent Housing Roundtable in some capacity is inherently necessary for positive legislative progress. As such, we have developed a framework for the creation of a Halton Regional Housing Roundtable, containing personnel from the OMDREB and RAHB real estate boards, officials from various levels of government, and other industry stakeholders.

The following individuals and groups participated in the inaugural Regional Housing Roundtable meeting:

- Pam Damoff, MP for Oakville-North Burlington, Chair of Regional Real Estate Roundtable
- The Honourable Anita Anand, President of the Treasury Board, MP for Oakville
- Chad Collins, MP for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek
- The Honourable Karina Gould, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, MP for Burlington
- Lisa Hepfner, MP for Hamilton Mountain
- Adam van Koeverden, MP for Milton
- John Rich, Manager, Communications and Public Affairs, Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board (OMDREB)
- Amanda Stringer, Government Relations and Communications Specialist, Realtors Association of Hamilton-Burlington (RAHB)
- Nicolas von Bredow, President, Realtors Association of Hamilton-Burlington (RAHB)
- Colin Best, Milton Ward 1 Regional Town Councilor

- Rob Burton, Mayor of Oakville
- Shawna Stolte, Burlington Ward 4 City Councilor
- Nrinder Nann, Hamilton Ward 3 City Councilor
- Justin Lewis, Director of the Housing Secretariat for the City of Hamilton
- Raymond Kessler, Chief Corporate Real Estate Officer
- Michelle Diplock, Manager of Planning & Government Relations, West End Home Builders Association
- Lorraine McLachlan, CEO of Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board (OMDREB)
- Liz Polak, Government Relations Committee Chair of Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board (OMDREB)

### **Recognizing The Current Crisis**

It is no secret that the Halton Region is in a housing crisis. Recognizing this, and understanding the sense of urgency, is critical. For the past few years, housing costs have escalated to almost unattainable amounts, while renters are living in unaffordable, improper conditions. There are currently waitlists for supportive housing for people in Halton and the surrounding regions. Shelters are full and are shuffling refugees and newcomers within the region. The Ontario Human Rights Commission states that access to safe, adequate housing is an essential for a healthier society. The Halton Region and its municipalities need to make decisions now to help ensure future generations will be able to maintain this fundamental human right.

### **Identifying The Challenges**

- In July 2023, the Canadian Government released a Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), to help local governments access funds to encourage initiatives aimed at increasing housing supply. While the HAF helps the situation, local governments will still need additional supports to be able to achieve their housing goals.
- For building developers to be able to begin construction on new builds, they would require a variety of permits. These permits can take 3-5+ years to have these permits approved. These applications can become stalled for various reasons. In the Roundtable meeting, it was stated that in Milton, almost 91% of applications are currently stalled. This is obviously creating a backlog of an already prolonged shortage of housing. Early indicators show that the residential markets have been transitioning from single detached homes to more condo buildings to create more housing opportunities for residents, but this is ultimately not enough.
- It is important to understand the role infrastructure plays, and how this complicated framework is fundamental to a developing proper housing. The Halton Region has stated their difficulties with affording and upgrading sufficient infrastructure for their growing populations. Some concerns raised indicated that local towns/cities often generate infrastructure targets, estimates and forecasts, but rarely ever to achieve them due to the complexity and expensive costs associated.
- Another concern with the increasing housing and rental costs is the potential of residents looking at other towns/cities to relocate to achieve their housing goals. With expensive living conditions, it is possible that employers will begin to relocate as their staff will not be able to live nearby or have access to adequate infrastructure such as public transit to commute to their jobs.

## Recommendations

- Since the Covid-19 pandemic, many aspects of people's everyday life have changed for the long term. Many businesses allow work from home or hybrid working conditions, they understand the importance of family, and understand the time and money workers are spending on commuting to work every day. With so many businesses going virtual, an increasing number of brick-and-mortar businesses have been vacant and could be repurposed. For example, vacant parking lots can be repurposed into residential spaces. Currently in Milton, roughly 70 Acres of land is available for rezoning.
- Tax Incentives and financial arrangements could be a great way to encourage builders to help expedite the building process of residential spaces. These incentives would need to specifically focus on supply versus demand to ensure the best outcomes.
- With the high cost of rental accommodations, and the lack of affordable housing, there is a large portion of the population that is in need of financial assistance to remain in their homes. A rent subsidy would be extremely valuable for those who are struggling to keep their households financially afloat. These subsidies are a direct way to reduce the stress of financial burden for people living with lower incomes.
- Building a variety of Co-operative housing is a lower-cost way to create and maintain affordable housing opportunities. According to the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, co-operative housing costs less about 14% less than municipal housing. The co-op will also ensure that housing will remain affordable even after several turnovers. In addition to Co-op housing, asylum and supportive housing opportunities can be the difference between being homeless and having a home for many vulnerable people. Creating a variety of housing opportunities will safely enable these vulnerable people to live independently within their communities, while being functional members of society.
- Ensuring the Regional Housing Roundtable remains permanent is imperative to identify any new or reoccurring concerns, and review and address them on a regular basis. The members of the Roundtable will continue to be diverse stakeholders who represent that housing industry. These stakeholders can assist all levels of government to make informed decisions by contributing accurate and diverse perspectives to help make an impact on the Halton Region housing spectrum.

## Next Steps

- The Regional Housing Roundtable will meet again in approximately 6 months to discuss any new updates or changes that can be addressed.
- It was agreed upon to try to have a representative from the province attend the next meeting, as well as Urban and Indigenous Housing representatives. These representatives would help diversify the perspectives of the stakeholders and would be valuable to the future roundtables.

## **CREA PAC Days**

A large part of CREA's mission is to enhance the real estate industry as a whole through government lobbying using its Political Action Committee (PAC). CREA PAC Representatives gather annually in Ottawa for the CREA PAC Days conference, which was held from October 15-17 this year.

In addition to the conference, PAC Reps take on the role of engaging directly with Members of Parliament at Parliament Hill to discuss CREA's REALTOR® Recommendations (their term for their GR asks).

Outlined below are CREA's REALTOR® Recommendations that we shared with MPs this year:

### **Establish a Permanent National Housing Roundtable**

CREA strongly believes the federal government needs to take a leadership role in convening a permanent, national housing roundtable, bringing together federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal authorities along with builders, real estate professionals, Indigenous partners, and civil society organizations.

A combination of short-term and long-term strategies are necessary to make a substantial impact on Canada's housing supply. An inclusive and holistic approach that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and policy coordination are critical to successfully addressing the housing crisis at hand.

### **Housing Supply and Infrastructure**

CREA recommends any new federal infrastructure funding, including but not limited to bilateral agreements, have conditions requiring the creation of new housing indexed to population growth. With the federal government expected to roll out significant new infrastructure spending, these new funding commitments must be leveraged and include clauses that incentivize provinces, territories, and municipalities to take action in the following areas:

- Revising zoning bylaws
- Speeding up planning and approval processes
- Converting distressed properties into housing
- Aligning infrastructure funding with new housing commitments
- Promoting construction innovation that could speed up housing developments

### **Immigration and Housing**

CREA recommends developing a housing workforce immigration strategy to attract trade workers from abroad, while streamlining the immigration process for qualified professionals willing to work in the construction industry. By focusing on increasing immigration in the construction sector, we can effectively address the housing crisis, fill labour shortages, create jobs, and pave the way for sustainable housing growth. Implementing the proposed recommendations will not only alleviate housing pressures but also foster a more robust and resilient housing market for all Canadians.

## **OREA REALTOR® Advocacy Day**

Similar to CREA's PAC Days, OREA's GR efforts are targeted at Members of Provincial Parliament. In November, OMDREB met with MPPs to discuss the following:

### **Eliminate Exclusionary Zoning**

Exclusionary zoning means that many regions across Ontario are zoned to only allow specific types of housing to be built. Converting a single-family home into a low-rise apartment in such regions requires a long and drawn-out approval process.

When the province introduced Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, in 2022, they made some important progress towards limiting exclusionary zoning, but we need to go even further to truly tackle this crisis. We're asking the Ontario Government to allow "as of right zoning." This would allow the development of missing middle housing across the province without being hampered by red tape and a lengthy approvals process.

We know that all thriving communities require a mix of housing that includes low rise apartments, duplexes, townhomes, and single-family homes. The full spectrum of housing allows families to find a place that meets their needs at prices they can afford.

### **Increase Funding For Skilled Trades**

The province has put forward a goal to build 1.5 million homes over the next decade but there is a dire lack of skilled labour to meet this demand.

According to a CIBC report released earlier this year, one fifth of Canada's construction workforce is nearing retirement, 300,000 workers are projected to retire in the coming decade, and there are currently over 80,000 vacancies in the skilled trades labour force.

Our solution is to encourage the Ontario Government to increase funding for skilled trades programs in colleges, trade schools, and apprenticeship programs.

### **Implement Provincial Loan Guarantees For Purpose-Built Rentals**

Ontario needs more housing supply and rental housing is a critical component of it. Canada's rental supply shortage is projected to quadruple by 2026 without appropriate policy changes. Building housing is a huge investment and we need to encourage the development of more affordable rentals so that Ontarians can find a safe and affordable place to live.

Programs like the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CHC) Rental Construction Financing Initiative provide crucial low-cost loans to borrowers seeking to build purpose-built rentals.

Infrastructure Ontario is looking to expand eligibility for a complimentary program, but in order to be successful, it needs to be sufficiently funded. In addition, any new loan guarantee programs should be accessible, accountable, and have minimal administrative burden.

To alleviate the rental supply crunch, we believe that the Ontario Government, through Infrastructure Ontario, should incentivize the development of purpose-built rentals through provincial loan guarantees.

# SUPPORT & SERVICES



## Membership

Every year, as is the case with all real estate boards, we gain some members and lose some members. But the good news is that OMDREB's membership continues to remain fairly steady.

Even though this year there were 266 resignations and 66 terminations, we are proud to report that 9 new brokerages joined, and we gained 179 new members, 51 members reinstated, 23 subscribers, 71 admins, 1 appraiser, and processed 211 transfer applications. In total, as of December 4, 2023, OMDREB has a total of 2,025 members.

## Affinity Program and Business Directory

OMDREB is pleased to offer our members discounts from many businesses ranging from clothing, entertainment, health & wellness, hotels & travel, food, and a wide variety of other services.

Additionally, there are trusted local proprietors that have partnered with OMDREB through our Business Directory. We encourage our members to shop at or use the services of these local businesses, as they help keep membership fees low through their paid sponsorship and promotion with OMDREB. 2023 has seen a great number of additions and renewals to both directories, and we look forward to new partnerships as well as maintaining our current roster.

## Staff Updates

OMDREB was pleased to welcome a new staff member to the Team this year!

In January 2023, OMDREB welcomed Moji Ogundare to the team as OMDREB's Administrative Assistant.



# REGIONAL MLS® & IT SERVICES



## **Complaints and Inquiries Database Real Estate Canada (CIDREC):**

OMDREB has adopted the use of CIDREC, which was developed by the Manitoba Real Estate Association. CIDREC is a tool which has allowed us to track inquiries and feedback that come into the Board for a range of topics including MLS, professional standards, provincial and national legislation, etc. With the information captured, we are able to identify trends and tailor communications or training materials accordingly for our members.

## **New Member Orientation:**

The membership department has revamped the orientation process for new agents joining the Board. This training puts a focus on educating new members on the Matrix system, the ITSO Rules and Policies, as well as all necessary information and resources provided by OMDREB. The new orientation is designed to provide new agents with the tools required to hit the ground running as a member of OMDREB, and as a Real Estate professional in general.

## **Admin Training:**

We are aware that a lot of our Brokerages and agents employ administrative assistants to manage their listings within Matrix. This year, OMDREB has focused on providing those admins with the education and resources to help them navigate the system, and provide better support to their Brokerages and REALTORS®. These resources include training videos detailing the different admin accounts available to members and their uses, as well as tutorials showing how to carry out different tasks in the Matrix system.

## **Interboarding Fee:**

We understand that having access to as much MLS data as possible is integral to the workflow of a REALTOR®. With this in mind, we have made interboarding free to non-members, in order to encourage more agents to list their properties with OMDREB. To make it easy, we have our Personal Interboard System, which adds a layer of convenience for non-members by allowing them to directly upload their listings. This is intended to lower the barriers to getting more data on our MLS system, and give our members access to even more listings.

## **Geography Update:**

This year, we have worked with ITSO to update the OMDREB maps and add the Walker neighborhood in the town of Milton. We will continue to monitor the feedback received and take the steps as necessary to stay updated.



# COMMUNICATIONS



## **A Year in Review:**

OMDREB's Communications department welcomed Jen Burton, Communications and Public Affairs Specialist, to the team at the end of December 2022 to work alongside John Rich, Manager of Communications and Public Affairs, with goals to strengthen OMDREB's communications across all channels.

Given the large amount of industry changes that were planned over the past year, it was clear that the focus of our communications was to ensure frequent delivery of information in a clear, concise, and easily digestible way for our members. Increasing engagement between the Board and members was also a goal, and we believe we met that.

Having an additional member of the communications team allowed us to expand on communications in greater detail, increase the number of communications sent out, and elevate our presence in the community, both in-person and on social media.

## **Social Media**

In 2023, we amplified our social media presence by increasing the number of posts across all platforms, highlighting valuable information for the variety of audiences (members, public, corporate partners, government officials) that OMDREB targets.

With the heightened emphasis on social media, we have seen an increase of profile impressions, and an extended reach on all of OMDREB's social media accounts.

The closed member Facebook group, along with our social media direct messages, continue to provide an easy and accessible way for OMDREB REALTORS® to connect with the board 24/7.

## **Member Focused Communications**

At the end of last year, we set out with a goal to better understand how our members consume their information. This led to one of the biggest improvements to our member-focused communications this year, which was building from the better understanding we acquired, and tailoring our messaging accordingly.

As such, we reduced the amount of unnecessary pop-ups on Matrix, created better filters for email blasts to cut down on clutter, increased social media posts as follower counts rose, and created communications specifically for certain membership groups, such as Managing Brokers, who now receive the monthly Managing Brokers Digest.

## **A Public Profile & Community Presence**

A return to in-person events for many community organizations helped to boost OMDREB's public profile. We sponsored a number of local events (For example: Milton Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament, Community Awards Gala, and the Hope In Every Step Walk for Halton Women's Place), and in turn, received ample public recognition and reciprocated sponsorships for our own initiatives.

We also set out to increase OMDREB awareness through the media. Our Communications team aimed to have OMDREB mentioned in the media, or conduct interviews with reporters, at least once a month, to keep conversations around housing prevalent. We are happy to say we met this goal. Big ticket items were shared with members across all communications platforms, while smaller mentions were spread via social channels.

## **Website Redevelopment**

OMDREB's new site development is currently at the content population phase. Our Communications department scrubbed all content from the present site, and re-worked it according to the Website Redevelopment Task Force recommendations made earlier in the year. The re-worked content was then given to our developers for population onto the new site.

As content population continues on the back end, we are developing a site testing framework, instructions, and fillable documentation. When ready, the Website Redevelopment Task Force will be engaged for their feedback on the materials, and make any necessary changes before site testing begins. When a more established timeline is known, OMDREB will engage the Website Testing Group to begin next steps.

The Testing Group is comprised of the Board of Directors, the Website Redevelopment Task Force, OMDREB staff, and 12 other volunteers who put their name forward at a Town Hall held earlier this year, during which a website redevelopment update was given to the membership at large.

It is important to note that to avoid future delays, site testing will likely commence prior to the implementation of the CREA REALTOR.ca Single Sign-On, which is what OMDREB will be using to authenticate users into the Members Area. While the login is essential, it is a component that can be tested between our web developers and CREA prior to implementation, and does not necessarily require member or staff intervention. All other features, functions, and sections of the website will be active for the Testing Group upon completion of content population.





The Oakville, Milton  
and District Real Estate Board



THANK YOU



[OMDREB.CA](http://OMDREB.CA)



[BIT.LY/OMDREB-TWEETS](https://bit.ly/OMDREB-TWEETS)



[BIT.LY/OMDREB-FACEBOOK](https://bit.ly/OMDREB-FACEBOOK)



[BIT.LY/OMDREB-LINKEDIN](https://bit.ly/OMDREB-LINKEDIN)



[BIT.LY/OMDREB-INSTAGRAM](https://bit.ly/OMDREB-INSTAGRAM)