

November 23, 2022

Steve Clark,  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing,  
Queens Park  
110 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A2

Dear Minister Clark,

Please see attached our Development Brief in support of  
ERO 019-6216 for your consideration.

Thank You.

**urbanMetrics inc.**



Mr. Doug Annand, CMC, PLE  
Partner

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# Development Brief – Recommended Proposition to Increase the Supply of Attainable Housing in the Greater Toronto Area

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To: Bathurst Green Lane Limited Partnership

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From: Mr. Doug Annand, CMC, PLE

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Date: November 23, 2022

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## 1.0 Introduction

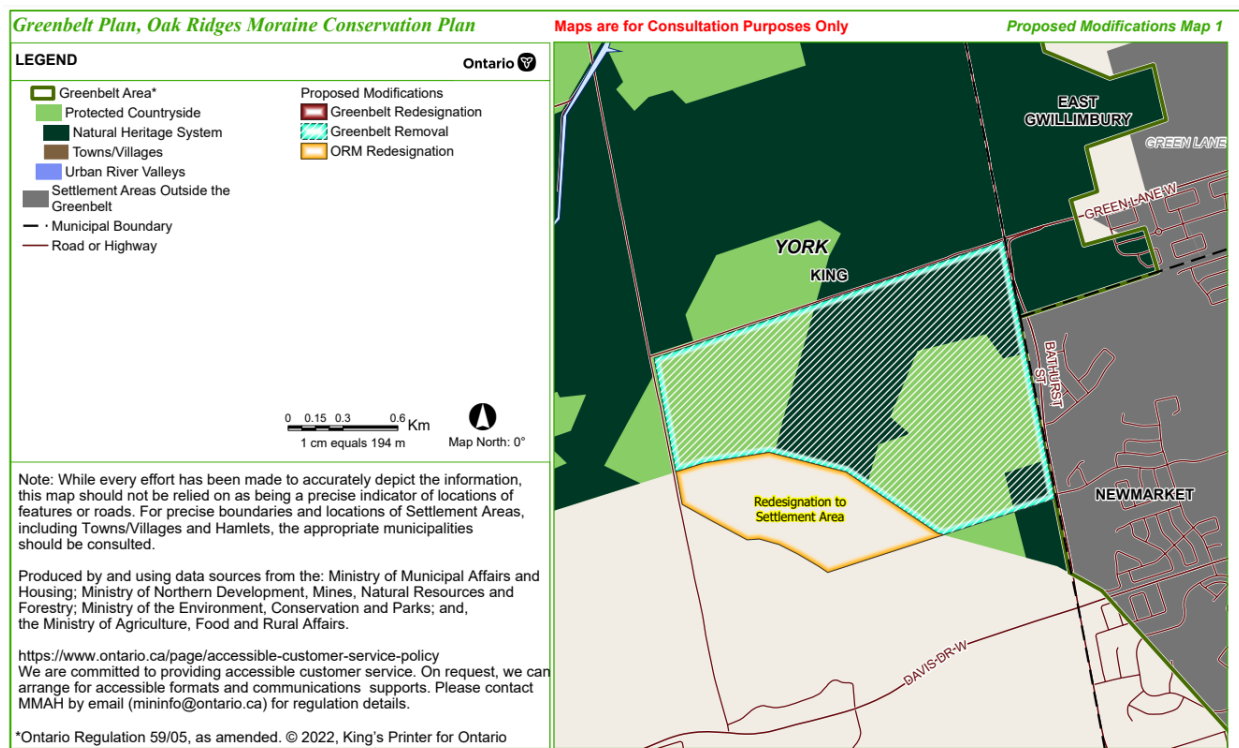
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### 1.1 Background

urbanMetrics inc. (“urbanMetrics”) has been retained by Bathurst Green Lane LP (“BGL”) to consider the rational for removing some 687 gross acres, (469 net acres), currently located within the Township of King from the Greenbelt.

The Province has identified the BGL lands as a candidate site to increase the supply of housing that will potentially result in more affordable housing in the Greater Toronto Area (“GTA”). Specifically, ERO posting 019-6216 on Map 1 (see Figure below).

Figure 1: Map 1 – ERO posting 019-6216



SOURCE: Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Redesignation, Removal Map - Ontario Regulation 59/05, as amended.

Housing supply in the GTA has been constrained by the current restrictive land use policies, in place at a time when the areas population growth continues to accelerate. As a result, housing prices have escalated to a point where affordable housing has become unattainable for a substantial portion of Ontario's population.

The GTA is surrounded by a significant amount of protected and undevelopable land through the Greenbelt Plan that was established in 2005. This geographic policy, combined with the lengthy planning process between project initiation and approval, has made it increasingly difficult to create sufficient residential supply to meet the growing demand for housing in the GTA, resulting in major increases in the cost of all types of housing.

With housing affordability becoming a major concern for a significant portion of the provincial population it may be time to consider removing restrictive policies that affect portions of land located in the provincial greenbelt. Strategic or appropriate portions of these lands could instead be brought to market to increase the supply of attainable housing, particularly at a time when rising interest rates are having a greater impact on housing affordability.

## 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Development Brief is in support of ERO posting 019-6216, Map 1 and focuses on why the Bathurst Street lands are an appropriate parcel of land to remove from the Greenbelt for the development of a sizable and well-located residential community that could also include a Hospital Block. Further it is to highlight the benefits of the proposed development in the context of the Township of King, York Region, and more broadly in the GTA. Specifically, we have assessed the positive affects of increasing the total supply of housing units across York Region, an area where the supply of new housing—specifically attainable housing has been in short supply.

## 1.3 Proposed Development

The Bathurst Street property, as illustrated in Figure 2 below, is comprised of six land parcels. Collectively these parcels encompass some 687 gross acres within the Township of King in the area that borders the Town of Newmarket.

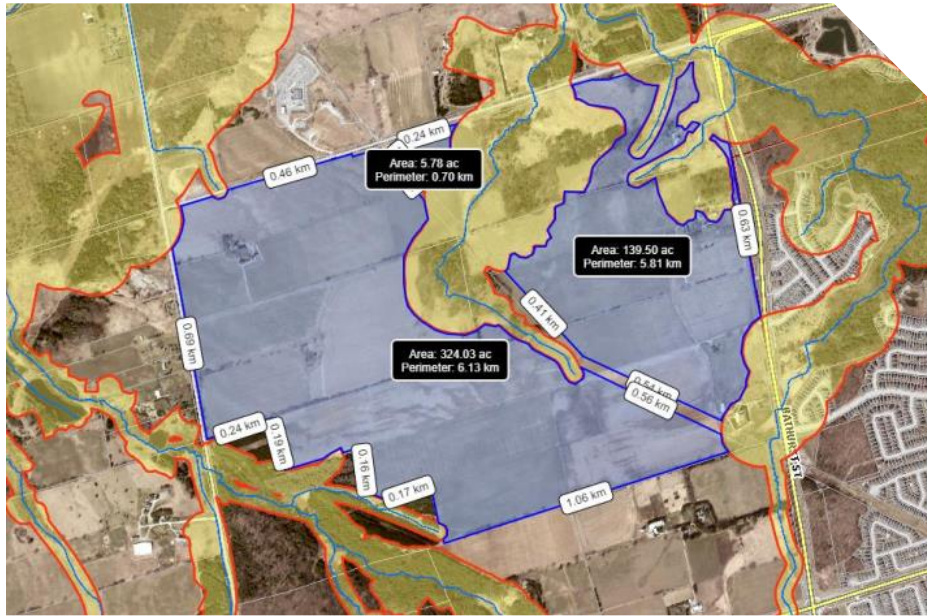
Figure 2: Bathurst Street property



SOURCE: Rice Group

This property currently lies within the Greenbelt with a portion also located within the Oak Ridges Moraine. In total, the developable area of the site includes some 469 acres as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 3: Property Developable Acreage



SOURCE: Rice Group

Based on a preliminary development concept, BGL is proposing to develop this property with some 5,200 – 6,000 residential units. Based on the form and size of residential units being contemplated, this would result in an on-site population of approximately 15,000 persons.

The preliminary development concept is also proposed to include a Hospital Block on some 19.86 hectares (49.07 acres) of land. The Hospital Block is proposed to be located at the eastern edge of the property, just west of Bathurst Street. The Township of King is encouraging the province to fast track the approval of this land as it is a prime location for the destination of a new Southlake Regional Health Centre. See Appendix A for the attached resolution in support of this initiative, which was unanimously passed by the Council of the Township of King.

## 2.0 Site and Access

The property is located at the south end of the Township of King, in York Region. It sits directly west of Bathurst Street, on the western boundary of Newmarket. The property combines six land parcels for a total of some 687 gross acres of land. As shown below, it extends east a full concession to Dufferin Street, north to just beyond Miller's Sideroad and in the south, just beyond Davis Drive West. The Hospital Block is proposed to be located at



the corner of Bathurst Street, north of Davis Drive, at the border between King and Newmarket.

Figure 4: Property Location



SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc., based on Rice Group.

As previously mentioned, the property currently lies within the Greenbelt and falls under the jurisdiction of the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority. A portion of the southwest corner is also located in the Oak Ridges Moraine. These restrictive land use policies currently prevent any development from occurring on this property.

Even with the existing land designations and policies associated with the subject property, the development concept being proposed exhibits many features and characteristics that make it an appropriate parcel to be removed from the Greenbelt through the development of a sizable, well-located and in demand residential community that will significantly increase the supply of housing in this portion of York Region.

## 2.1 Subject Site Characteristics

The property is situated in close proximity to a range of retail/service commercial amenities, transit services, transportation opportunities, and community amenities.

### Surrounding Amenities

- The subject site benefits from a range of existing amenities that provide the foundation for a complete community with uses that would be beneficial for residents living in the proposed residential development on the subject site.
  - **Parks:** South of the property is the Thornton Bales Conservation Area, a prominent hiking area known for its steep slopes and rugged beauty. Lands located east of the property include a range of other parks, including Proctor Park, Fairy Lake Park and the Dave Kerwin Trail.
  - **Residential Development:** The property is located adjacent to a substantial amount of residential development just to the east, in the neighbouring Town of Newmarket. The proposed development will complement existing housing development in this area, while at the same time diversifying the type of available housing units through the addition of various types of townhomes. The Hospital Block will introduce and improve access to high-quality health care services for current and future residents.
  - **Retail/Service Commercial:** East of the property along Yonge Street there is a range of retail/service commercial uses, including: a Wal-Mart Supercentre, a Home Depot, and a Costco, among other local-serving retail/service commercial uses. Further south is the Upper Canada Mall which includes a range of retail uses including, food services and home furnishing stores.
  - **Entertainment Services:** The property is also located near a range of entertainment uses such as the SilverCity Newmarket Cinemas and XSCAPE Entertainment Centre located at Yonge Street and Green Lane, and the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex at 100 Eagle Street West in Newmarket.

### Surrounding Transportation and Mobility Network

- Multi-modal access is an important factor when evaluating the market opportunity for residential units and a potential hospital block on the subject site. The property being considered for development has good access to a range of current and potential future transportation options within King and York Region. These include:

- **Connected to Major Roadways:** The property is situated between Highway 400 and Highway 404, located west and east of the site respectively. These major highways efficiently connect the site with other portions of the Region, in addition to other surrounding municipalities including those located in the GTA and beyond.
- **Existing Transit Network:** Future residents and visitors to the property will benefit from access to York Region's Transit Service ("YRT") that offers a rapid transit service known as Viva. Viva does not operate specifically through King Township but travels along major corridors including Yonge Street, just east of the property. Residents and visitors will benefit from their proximity to this transit service, which offers connections throughout York Region, and into Toronto, the GO Transit System and the Region of Peel.

Further the property is located within five kilometres of both the Newmarket and East Gwillimbury GO Train Stations, making it very accessible for commuters.

- **Proposed Transit Network:** The Bradford Bypass has been proposed as a 16-kilometre route to connect Highway 400 and 404, between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Line. One of the interchanges proposed is located at Bathurst Street providing enhanced regional access in proximity to the subject site. The Bradford Bypass will help support additional population growth in this area, and minimize any potential impacts generated from increased congestion on the local and regional road network in the vicinity of the property.

## Other Factors

- The subject property offers other features that solidify its value as a potential residential community. Its existing proximity to transit and the existing hospital, also makes it a prime location for a new Hospital Block development.
  - **Minimal Environmental Constraints:** It is estimated that some 70% of the subject property is not limited or constrained by environmental features such as woodlands, wetlands, and / or provincially significant wetlands. As a result, approximately 469 net acres of land are available for development within the property that further validates the appropriateness of removing this parcel from the Greenbelt in favour of development.
  - **Availability of Infrastructure:** The property can be easily connected to water and wastewater infrastructure because of its proximity to established residential subdivisions just east in the Town of Newmarket. A watermain can be constructed along Green Lane and connected to the existing watermain at Yonge and Green Lane (border of Newmarket). See GEI Consultants report dated Oct. 13, 2022, Section 11 Site Serviceability Strategy.



Access to servicing and infrastructure would also ease the ability (and costs) required for King Township to host the hospital, and meaning the land is already primed for such a significant and valuable facility. BGL is also committed to provide the necessary lands for the Southlake Regional Health Centre site for a nominal fee.

In summary this property exhibits optimal development characteristics and is not inherently limited by environmental or servicing restrictions. BGL is also prepared to cover the upfront costs of infrastructure servicing and connectivity to ensure that the property is integrated with existing municipal and regional services.

## 2.2 Fiscal Benefits

The redevelopment of the subject property—including the redesignation of a portion of the property located in the provincial greenbelt to a residential designation—will generate a variety of fiscal benefits that would flow directly to the Township of King and York Region more generally.

The development concept on the subject lands is expected to generate a variety of direct financial benefits to the Township of King and York Region. For example, fees for planning applications, building permits, and development charges will provide an immediate source of revenue to the municipality. Additional revenues will be derived from ongoing and increasing property tax revenues in future years.

## 3.0 Additional Benefits of the Proposed Development

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In addition to the fiscal benefits generated by the subject property, the proposed development will also generate other benefits for the Region and the Township.

### Other Residential Benefits

In particular, the proposed development will substantially support housing development in the area. It will introduce a more balanced distribution and diversity of housing in this portion of York Region, but also potentially support and alleviate the ongoing issues of housing attainability and availability by significantly increasing the local housing stock.

Specifically:

- Consistent with the policy direction of the *Provincial Policy Statement* and other more localized planning documents (e.g., the *York Region Official Plan*), the proposed development introduces an efficient use of land, that contains a diversity of housing forms including more compact built forms to those in King Township currently.
- The proposed development will introduce a valuable supply of new housing in King Township, increasing the quantity and diversity of housing in King Township and in York Region more generally.
- The proposed development will serve as a catalyst for additional residential development activity in the area, and potentially increase developer interest in this portion of York Region and King Township.
- It will also take advantage of the surrounding transportation and transit network, existing road network, community amenities, and the abundance of retail amenities and services already established in the area.

The significant concentration of housing units proposed on the property will also support the general attainability of housing across the GTA.

Significant population growth across the GTA has placed undeniable pressures on the housing market. Continued growth driven by heightened levels of immigration is anticipated to continue putting increasing pressure on the housing market and ultimately making it harder to meet the growing demand for housing at attainable prices.

Furthermore, housing development in the GTA has been restricted through the substantial amount of undevelopable land protected under the Greenbelt Plan which was established in 2005. Restrictive and legislative policies prevent development on these lands irrespective of their potential viability for residential or other purposes.

Shrinking supply and surging demand spurred by rapid population growth and restrictive land policy is limiting housing availability and placing upward pressures on housing prices. This trend of long-term price and rent appreciation will continue unless supply is significantly brought to market. In our opinion approval of the subject development should in some degree mitigate this trend.

The lack of new housing across the GTA, and more specifically in York Region, has placed continued pressure on the price of housing units. In turn, it has reduced the supply or

percentage of housing units that are considered affordable<sup>1</sup>. It has also limited the ability for York Region to meet their housing targets, specifically:

*“That 35% of new housing in the Region’s Centres and key development areas be affordable and that 25% of new housing outside of those areas be affordable.”*

*- York Region Affordable Housing Measuring and Monitoring Guideline*

We note that the Region has failed to meet its 25-35% target for new affordable housing units for the past three years.

As shown below, the York Region, *Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone 2021 Progress Report* indicated that the average price of a single-detached home in York Region in 2021 was \$1,395,819. At the same time in 2021, the threshold for an affordable housing unit in York Region was some \$535,809 meaning that only 0.15% of new ownership housing was considered affordable in 2021. The difference between pricing and affordability has been increasing in recent years and is expected to increase if additional lands are not brought to market where affordable housing can be developed. In our opinion, the subject proposal and potential others will assist in reversing this trend.

Figure 5: Affordable Ownership Housing in York Region

	2019	2020	2021
Average Price <sup>1</sup>	1,392,723	1,358,589	1,395,819
Average Resale Price <sup>1</sup>	937,546	1,067,134	1,292,351
Percentage of New Ownership Housing Considered Affordable <sup>2</sup>	11%	5%	0.15%

SOURCE: urbanMetrics inc., based on the York Region, *Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone 2021 Progress Report*.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Toronto Real Estate Board Market Watch Reports, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Toronto Real Estate Board Market Watch Reports, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 and York Region Affordable Housing Measuring and Monitoring model, 2019, 2020 and 2021

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with reporting from York Region, the affordable housing threshold is based on the highest price households in the sixth decile (60<sup>th</sup> percentile) of income can afford.

The proposed mix of housing units—including singles and semi-detached units, townhouses and smaller stacked and back-to-back townhome units that will increase the future housing opportunities for a mix of household sizes and housing preferences, that cater to various socio-economic needs and characteristics. In particular, the range of housing proposed will introduce different housing formats that require less land and lower maintenance costs. The smaller, more attainable townhome units that are proposed on the site will also increase opportunity for younger households seeking to enter the home ownership market.

More generally, the proposal will inject an additional supply of housing into York Region, helping create a more balanced distribution of housing development, but also helping alleviate ongoing issues of availability by achieving greater equilibrium between supply and demand.

## Other Hospital Block Benefits

The Hospital Block proposed to be integrated as part of the concept plan will help support growing demand for health care services and facilities in York Region and Simcoe County. Specifically:

- It will increase the provision of health care services for people, in close proximity to their homes, ensuring that people have better support and care when they need it.
- It will include the development of a support services campus that caters to ancillary hospital activities (i.e., doctors office, medical testing & processing services, rehab training, nursing accommodation & training support services, seniors care services etc.)
- It will provide valuable job opportunities in King Township and the Region more generally, further supporting the type and variety of benefits that will be accrued by the Town and the Region as a result of this development. It may also generate spin-off benefits by drawing more people into the community, including those who are using the hospital facility, visiting patients at the hospital and/or working there. Recognizing these benefits, the Council of the Township of King unanimously passed a resolution in support of this initiative. It is attached as Appendix A.
- The proposed location of the hospital will likely spur additional development activity in the area by enhancing the public realm and attractiveness of this portion of Bathurst Street, including additional residential development activity and other complementary uses.
- The proposed inclusion of the hospital block will also take advantage of the surrounding transportation and transit network, existing road network, community amenities, and will support existing and future residents of the community and broader area.

## 4.0 Other Government Programs

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The nature, realities and attainability of affordable/attainable housing differ in each community. There are a number of established financing options and government programs that exist to support the different types of households that will help families enter and navigate ownership in the housing market.

Below we have highlighted some examples that exist and can be initiated to support or ensure that a significant component of the residential development being proposed on the subject lands is affordable/attainable to a larger portion of the regional population. These include:

**Shared Equity Arrangements** – This arrangement exists between home buyers and a determined equity investment partner(s). The equity investment partner's role is to support the homebuyer by providing a portion of the down payment, such that the home buyer can more easily and readily afford the down payment. It enables the home buyer to potentially lower their monthly mortgage payments and / or maintain some liquidity for other uses and purposes. After the down payment has been purchased, the homeowner then becomes responsible for obtaining and paying the mortgage and has sole right to the home.

In time, the shared equity partner is entitled to a portion of the appreciation (increase) or depreciation (decrease) of the home's value, typically on top of their initial investment or contribution to the purchase. The timing of access to this fee is generally at a pre-determined time, or upon resale or rental of the home.

The Ontario program for shared equity arrangement is known as the **Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative**. This housing program is offered collectively by a federal-provincial initiated housing program that assists low-to-moderate-income renter households who are interested in entering the ownership market. While the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative is a joint program offered by upper levels of government, it is administered by local municipalities and Indigenous program administrators. Examples of local service providers already include: the City of Burlington, the Town of Oakville, the City of Hamilton, the City of Sarnia, the City of Kingston, the Township of Minden Hills, among others.

**First-Time Homeowners Buyer Incentive** – This program assists qualified first-time home buyers by providing a 5% to 10% loan for their down payment. It intends to help existing renters become homeowners. Eligibility is determined based on the locality of the homes.

For example, in Grey County the purchase price of the home must be at or below \$423,328, whereas in Waterloo the purchase price of the home must be at or below \$506,000.

**Down Payment Assistance Loan** – This program offers a forgivable loan to low-to-moderate income households to buy a home. The exact implementation of the program



may vary; however, the loan payment is generally limited by a pre-determined maximum housing price, in addition to a maximum loan (or percentage of the purchase price).

The City of Kingston or County of Frontenac provides this program. Currently, down payment assistance is equal to 10% of the purchase price to a maximum of \$44,000 and it is funded through municipal and provincial funding. By contrast, the Gateway Muskoka Homeownership Program offers down payment assistance loans of up to \$43,500. Funding for the program in Muskoka comes from the Muskoka Affordable Housing Initiatives Program (MAHIP) with contributions from the Gateway Homes Muskoka Reserve Fund and the District of Muskoka.

**Tax-Free First Home Savings Account** – The Canadian Government is considering developing a tax-free in, tax-free out savings account that would allow first-time home buyers to save up to \$40,000, similar to an RRSP. The intent is to work with financial institutions to get this program running by 2023. As a tax-deductible initiative, the intent is to help first time home buyers save to afford the cost of a down payment, while also receiving an annual tax refund.

**Bill 23** – The Province has proposed to make housing more attainable through the provision of Bill 23 – *More Homes Built Fast Act, 2022*. Bill 23 is planned to incentivize private market investment in housing, aiming to increase the overall housing supply and as a result place downward pressure on pricing. Proposed mechanisms to spur development include waiving development charges, minimized requirements for site plans provisions, and proposed changes to municipal fees to spur, prioritize and expedite housing development.

## 5.0 Conclusions

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The subject property represents a prime location to accommodate significant residential development and a Hospital Block. The potential of the property given the current issues of housing affordability and attainability across the province and York Region is a prime opportunity to increase housing supply. Also, the addition of a Hospital Block—specifically the potential lands for a new Southlake Regional Health Centre—will help support the provision of a more resilient health care system to serve York Region and Simcoe County.

In our opinion, it may be time to remove the restrictive policies that affect portions of the property which are located in the provincial greenbelt. **Rather these lands should instead be brought to market to increase the supply of attainable housing**, particularly at a time when rising interest rates are having a greater impact on housing affordability. By increasing the supply of housing, they will increase the potential for people to enter the housing market, while taking advantage of the property's location adjacent to community amenities, retail services and transportation and transit facilities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. R. Annand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Douglas" and last name "Annand" clearly distinguishable.

Douglas R. Annand, CMC, PLE  
Partner  
[dannand@urbanMetrics.ca](mailto:dannand@urbanMetrics.ca)

# **Appendix A Southlake Regional Health Centre Resolution**

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## Southlake Regional Health Centre - Resolution

*Moved by Mayor Pellegrini, Seconded by Councillor Cober*

**WHEREAS** the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing introduced Bill 23 titled “[\*More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022\*](#)” on October 25, 2022, the intent of which is to streamline the development approval process to expedite the delivery of housing to the market;

**AND WHEREAS** on November 4, 2022 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing proposed changes to the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001* and posted its intentions on the Environmental Registry of Ontario as number [019-6218](#);

**AND WHEREAS** on November 4, 2022 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing proposed changes to the Greenbelt Area boundary regulation and posted its intentions on the Environmental Registry of Ontario as number [019-6217](#);

**AND WHEREAS** the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has identified “*Land located in the Township of King east of Dufferin Street, south of Miller’s Sideroad and west of Bathurst Street*” and illustrated those lands on [Map 1](#) of the registry posting;

**AND WHEREAS** the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is proposing no changes to the portion of those lands that contain Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Core Area;

**AND WHEREAS** the noted lands are considered to be an ideal candidate site for the new Southlake Regional Health Centre site;

**AND WHEREAS** the lands satisfy our understanding of the locational criteria for the new Southlake Regional Health Centre site;

**AND WHEREAS** the landowner is committed to providing the necessary lands for the Southlake Regional Health Centre site for a nominal fee;

**AND WHEREAS** it is also proposed that a portion of lands in the Oak Ridges Moraine be redesignated to “Settlement Area”;

**AND WHEREAS** based on our understanding of the locational criteria for the new hospital, the area designated as “Settlement Area” is not required;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of the Township of King:

1. Supports the location of the new Southlake Regional Health Centre site on these lands; and
2. Formally requests the Province of Ontario to fast track to approval of the new Southlake Regional Health Centre site on these lands; and
3. Does not support the proposed redesignation of a portion of the Oak Ridges Moraine to “Settlement Area”; and

4. Directs staff to work with the landowner, Province and Southlake Regional Health Centre to expedite development approvals for these lands; and
5. Directs the Clerk to forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Minister of Health, and to the President and CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre.