

March 18, 2024

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
17th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

****SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY****

RE: Environmental Registry of Ontario Posting 019-8273: Get It Done Act, 2024 – Amending the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023

Please accept this letter in response to Environmental Register of Ontario (ERO) proposal 019-8273 regarding the proposed modifications to the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023. Staff have undertaken a review of the proposal and offer the following comments.

Proposal Summary

The proposed amendments to the Official Plan Adjustments Act, 2023 would, if passed, update official plans in response to municipal feedback while protecting the Greenbelt, and safeguarding public health and safety. The proposed amendments follow recent consultation with the affected municipalities, including the City of Barrie.

Comments

Generally, staff are supportive of the Province's modifications as outlined in Schedule 3 Table, Column 3, and generally align with the feedback submitted by Mayor Nuttall to the Minister on December 6, 2023.

Staff have some concerns with the implementation of the City's Official Plan with the proposed removal of Appendix B: Phasing Plan, in Section 4: Additional Modifications.

4. The official plan adopted by the City of Barrie pursuant to By-law 2022-016 is modified as follows:
 - i. Appendix 2: Phasing Plan is deleted in its entirety.
 - ii. Policy 2.4.2.3.e) is modified by adding the following new sentence at the end "The portion of Designated Greenfield Area lands identified as Phase 1 West, Phase 2 West, and Phase 3 West on Appendix 2: Phasing Plan as adopted by By-law 2022-016, excluding the Employment Areas, may be planned to achieve a minimum density of 52 persons and jobs per hectare to 2051".
 - iii. Policies 9.5.2.c), d) and j) are deleted and section 9.5.2. is renumbered accordingly.

In the letter provided to the Minister, the City of Barrie provided an alternative map for Appendix 2 which is a simple and easy way of illustrating the Greenfield areas within the Provincially approved Official Plan and the special policy permissions for these lands specifically. We ask that the version of Appendix B provided by the City of Barrie replace the existing Appendix B: Phasing Plan and that the Phasing Plan be renamed and included as requested in the Mayor's submission.

There were a number of new requests in Mayor Nuttall's letter to the Minister that were not addressed through this proposed legislation which he would like to reiterate are of great importance to the City.

- A request to amend the designation from Employment Area Non-Industrial to Employment Area at 25 Hart Drive to maximize the permitted uses on this property which is a multi-tenanted employment building.
- Amend Policy 2.5 a) as follows:
 - Slight variations from land use designation development standards, with the exception of variations to minimum density ~~and maximum height~~, may be permitted without an amendment to this Plan if such variations are in response to unique conditions or site context, to the satisfaction of the City.
 - Variations from these development standards may need to be supported by an urban design brief or planning justification report that has been prepared to the satisfaction of the City.
- Municipal boundary expansion and the need for employment lands.

Given the urgency to address the housing crisis, Council has declared three pieces of City owned land as surplus. To bring these parcels to market for development with an expedited timeframe, the City is currently working to rezone these three parcels to their highest and best use. Council believes that one of these properties is very much suited for a high-density residential development but is limited in the ability by the Official Plan. By means of this letter we are requesting a special policy area for 29 & 39 Sperling Drive to redesignate these lands from Strategic Employment and Economic District (SEED) to High Density, with a minimum height of 20 storeys and a minimum density of 300 units per hectare, with maximum heights and densities to be further directed by the Zoning by-law.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Respectfully,



Michelle Banfield, RPP,
Executive Director of Development Services

cc Mayor Alex Nuttall
Michael Prowse, CAO, City of Barrie
Wendy Cooke, Clerk, City of Barrie