



May 10, 2024

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Provincial Planning Policy Branch
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Toronto ON, M7A 2J3

Strategic Initiatives and
Government Relations
Office of the CAO
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville, ON L6M 3L1
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RE: Proposed Changes to the *Planning Act* and *Municipal Act, 2001* – ERO #019-8369

Dear Sir/Madam:

On April 10, 2024, the Province announced a wide range of changes to various acts, regulations and planning policy direction. Halton Region appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* (Bill 185). Specifically, Bill 185 proposes to make changes to the *Planning Act* and *Municipal Act, 2001* which have a direct impact on Halton Region.

On April 17th, Halton Regional Council received report [CA-11-24/FN-14-24 – April 10 Provincial Announcements](#) for information. This report provides an initial analysis of the changes and the following letter provides additional detailed comments. Halton Region recognizes that Bill 185 identifies the Region as an “upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities” with an effective date of July 1, 2024. Given this change, the comments provided here are focused on Regional interests related to water and wastewater infrastructure, transportation systems, waste management, assisted housing etc. that will continue to exist after the July 1st date.

Elimination of Third-Party Appeals

Bill 185 continues to remove appeal rights for upper-tier municipalities with no planning responsibilities. Although Halton Region does not often exercise appeal rights, there is concern with not having any status at the OLT when there is an appeal directly related to a continued Regional interest (i.e. infrastructure). Halton Region would ask that the Province consider providing options for appeal rights where there is a clear Regional interest.

Bill 185 proposes to eliminate third-party appeals related to Official Plans, Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-laws and Zoning By-law amendments. While we can appreciate that this may reduce time, cost and the burden on the OLT, Halton Region feels that it is important members of the public and other stakeholders have a voice in planning for their communities. We recommend that the Province reconsider eliminating appeal rights when it comes to comprehensive changes.

Appeal Rights for Privately Initiated Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Bill 185 proposes to restore appeal rights for privately initiated applications for settlement area boundary expansions. Planning for boundary expansions involve a wide range of considerations, including the availability of infrastructure. There is a concern with allowing boundary expansions sporadically and not as part of a broader comprehensive review as it relates to understanding

Regional Municipality of Halton

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population projections and planning for roads, water and wastewater. Currently Halton's municipalities have urban area boundaries that provide enough land to accommodate growth to 2051. Planning for this land in a comprehensive and coordinated manner is the best way to get housing built faster, rather than expending resources on small individual requests. Given these considerations, the permissions for ad-hoc boundary expansions do not aid in delivering housing faster, and may in fact create delays.

New "Use it or Lose it" Tool

Halton is supportive of the changes made as it relates to the "Use it or Lose it" tool. Ensuring that development moves ahead within the specified timeline will provide more certainty in determining servicing allocation needs. Further, Halton supports the changes related to repealing Section 70.3 of the *Planning Act* related to servicing allocation and including new Section 86.1 to Part III (Specific Municipal Powers) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* in its place. Halton also supports the changes that allow for the creation of a servicing management tool to establish how water and wastewater will be approved.

Removal of Mandatory Pre-consultation

Bill 185 proposes to remove the ability for municipalities to require a pre-consultation meeting in advance of a formal application. Although Halton recognizes that we will no longer have planning responsibilities, we will still have a significant role related to the planning and delivery of Regional roads, water and wastewater, waste collection and other key services. Considerations for Regional interests will continue to be necessary in the development review process. Pre-consultation meetings allow for the opportunity to highlight all potential issues early in the process, it allows agencies to communicate expectations on the application and provides a list of what constitutes a complete application. When done properly, it allows for a much faster and efficient application review process. This process has proven to be successful and beneficial for both the applicants and participating agencies. Halton recommends that the Province reconsider the changes to the pre-consultation process.

New MZO Framework

The new MZO Framework does not formally require input from upper-tier municipalities when making submissions. Given the importance of servicing MZO lands and that any growth resulting from these decisions will be above any beyond planned growth and infrastructure (per the Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024), Halton feels it would be important to receive input from upper-tier municipalities that have a role in providing infrastructure. Halton recommends revising the framework to include this as a requirement.

We trust that these comments will be of assistance to the Province as they continue to consider sweeping changes to the planning framework in Ontario in an effort to build homes faster. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like to discuss these comments further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Benson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "B".

Curt Benson, MCIP RPP
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cc: Jane MacCaskill, CAO, Regional Municipality of Halton