

Backgrounder:

Memo on Forced Urban Boundary Expansions

October 4, 2023

SUMMARY

- Internal documents from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMAH) show that the Minister had full knowledge about the contentious nature of the ministerial amendments to municipal plans in Waterloo, Wellington, Guelph, Barrie, Belleville, and Peterborough
- The internal memo is a messaging document to help government officials answer questions on MMAH's decision to force expanded urban boundaries on municipalities. The Minister knew about the shortcomings of these decisions.
- Ministry is aware that they did not consult with Indigenous communities in majority of the municipalities prior to forcing urban boundary expansions. They see it as a contentious issue to be handled using messaging about housing. They know they skipped their duty to consult.
- The Ministry is aware that certain decisions **conflicted with the government's own planning policies and housing targets**. One has to wonder why the minister approved them in the first place.
- **Who benefited from these contentious decisions?**

HIGHLIGHTS

BARRIE:

- Page 12: "There may be concerns over why the Ministry is allowing for **lower density targets that may impact the City's ability to accommodate the forecasted population to 2051**. There may be concerns over why the Ministry modified some of the affordable housing policies." This raises questions about which developments were prioritized under the Ministry's directive.

BELLEVILLE:

- Page 15: "There may be **legal risks** on the PPS [Provincial Policy Statement] conformity."

PETERBOROUGH:

- Page 18: "The changes to policies regarding 190 hectares of City-identified excess lands and the resulting permissions for development **do not conform with the Growth Plan. The City may challenge the changes to these policies that were adopted by Council.**
- The Minister's decision to approve the Official Plan is likely to trigger the Crown's duty to consult. No prior notice was provided for Ministerial modifications and the length of the engagement period may be questioned."

WATERLOO:

- Page 5: "There may be some concerns about the lands proposed to be added **including third-party requests** that were assessed by regional staff and were not recommended for inclusion in the urban boundary. Other lands added to the urban boundary through modification were also **not assessed by regional staff.**"
- Page 5: "**Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations expressed support for the Region's adopted official plan amendment.** The support includes the incorporation of Indigenous views, the Region's intensification first approach to growth and settlement area boundary expansions. A Minister's decision to expand the Region's settlement boundary by 2,380 ha is likely to be met with opposition by Indigenous communities. **The Ministerial modifications to expand the Regions settlement boundary were not shared with Indigenous communities.**"

WELLINGTON COUNTY:

- Page 8: "The Ministry's modifications to expand settlement areas has **occurred prior to the County finalizing its Land Needs Assessment and growth management work**"

Minister’s Decisions on Official Plans – Site-Specific KMs
April 2023

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GENERAL KEY MESSAGES

Like the rest of the country, Ontario is in a housing supply crisis, and the government is acting decisively to fix it. The government is considering every possible option to get more homes built faster so more Ontarians can find a home that meets their needs and budget.

To help ensure Ontario meets its goal of building 1.5 million homes by 2031, the government has set housing targets for 29 of Ontario's largest and fastest growing municipalities. Municipal housing targets are based on the municipality's current population as well as 2011 to 2021 growth trends. Municipalities located in Ontario's largest and fastest-growing census divisions have been allocated the highest targets.

We recognize the need to build all types of homes for all types of Ontarians. The government's proposals will help cities, towns and rural communities grow with a mix of ownership and rental housing types, from single-family homes to townhomes and mid-rise apartments. We have also removed barriers to building more "missing-middle" housing by allowing up to three residential units "as of right" on residential lots and building more homes near transit.

Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future housing needs. We know that we already have a housing supply shortage and new home construction continues to lag far behind our current population growth.

Without an increase in housing supply to match this increase in market driven demand, housing prices will rise, and life will become even more unaffordable for too many Ontarians. This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade – especially when taking into account the new immigration targets set out by the federal government.

Failure to adequately prepare for growth means that future generations of Ontarians will be priced out of the housing market, and not provided the same opportunities that their parents and grandparents were.

As the approval authority for upper and single tier municipal official plans, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has the responsibility to ensure that these plans will maximize housing outcomes for all Ontarians. That is why, after careful review and consultation, the Minister took the necessary action to accommodate the significant growth the province is experiencing.

We know that there is an urgent need for more housing supply, as well as the land necessary to support it. That's why these bold decisions had to be made and the status quo was not an option. We also know that Ontario's municipalities will be attracting more and more immigration, and therefore need to be prepared with enough homes and opportunities for work.

We have a responsibility to act in the long-term interests of Ontarians to ensure there will be enough places for families to call home. That means municipalities must not only grow out by expanding their settlement boundaries, but they must also grow up and embrace increased height and density. Both must happen to address the housing crisis.

We are proud of the partnerships we have developed with local governments and will continue to work with them to build homes faster and address local challenges in their communities.

General Q: What is the total roll-up of additional land being made available for development?

A: The Ministry's decisions will result in over 4,700 hectares of land being made available for development to the year 2051 in Guelph, Wellington, Waterloo, Barrie, Belleville and the City of Peterborough.

WATERLOO REGION

Media Interest:

- There was a media request from CBC Kitchener-Waterloo asking about concerns from people and local advocates in Waterloo region that the region will be “forced” by the Ministry to expand its urban boundaries – affecting farmland and environment, as a result of Bill 23.
- Media have reported on concerns from environmental advocates and the local community about concerns that the countryside line will be expanded. They point to municipalities like Halton Region and the City of Hamilton which had their official plans overridden and urban boundaries expanded by thousands of hectares against their wishes in recent months. The region’s amended official plan, which was adopted last year, sets out a 30-year road map for growth in encouraging complete communities and protection of the countryside line. The changes the province is making do not go beyond that.
- An article from CBC (April 3) and The Record (April 2) reported on the rally planned on April 2 to “demand an end to provincially ordered urban boundary expansions, ensure respect for local decision-making, and the repeal of Bill 23.” A number of elected officials attended the rally, including Ontario Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner, Kitchener Centre MP Mike Morrice, Waterloo MPP Catherine Fife, and Kitchener Coun. Debbie Chapman.
- A Waterloo Chronicle article notes that wetland protections are at risk since the city’s official plan contemplates low-rise residential development.
- There have been some articles (CBC, Global News) about Waterloo Region’s Official Plan and that it’s based upon the idea of “15-minute neighbourhoods.”

Effects of decision / ministry modifications:

- The Ministry made a modification to add an additional 2,380-hectare to the urban area boundary for community and employment uses. This is in addition to the 606-hectare expansion adopted by the Region, which consisted of 150 hectares of community land, and 456 hectares of employment land supply
- The Ministry made modifications to bring Region of Waterloo Official Plan Amendment 6 into compliance with the *Planning Act*, conformity with A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement.
- The Ministry made modifications to convert 28 hectares of employment area to Urban Area for residential and mixed-use development.
- At the request of third parties, the Ministry is proposing three site specific modifications that direct area municipalities to permit additional industrial/commercial uses; redesignate for high density residential and institutional uses with provisions; and review and update phasing and staging of development policies to expedite housing projects.

Possible Contentious Issues:

- Media, environmental groups and the local community expressed strong opposition to expansions that will allow development on greenspace or farmland. The Region’s adopted official plan amendment proposed an expansion of 150 hectares of community land, and 456 hectares of employment land. The Ministry’s modifications to expand the Region’s settlement boundary by 2,380 hectares will be met with strong opposition by the municipality, environmental groups and the local community.
- As one of the options for settlement area boundary expansion, the Region’s Land Needs Assessment identified 2,208 hectares of community land need based on the Growth

Plan minimum intensification and density targets. For employment areas, the Land Needs Assessment identified 659 hectares of employment land need based on an assumed 15% intensification rate.

- There may be some concerns about the lands proposed to be added including third-party requests that were assessed by regional staff and were not recommended for inclusion in the urban boundary. Other lands added to the urban boundary through modification were also not assessed by regional staff.
- Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations expressed support for the Region's adopted official plan amendment. The support includes the incorporation of Indigenous views, the Region's intensification first approach to growth and settlement area boundary expansions. A Minister's decision to expand the Regions settlement boundary by 2,380 ha is likely to be met with opposition by Indigenous communities. The Ministerial modifications to expand the Regions settlement boundary were not shared with Indigenous communities.

Mitigation Tactics:

- Media will be quick to report on the Minister's decision. In response to inquiries from journalists, use approved key messages.
- Possible targeted social media.

Key Messages:

- As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government has a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget.
- Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. But too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs. Ontario needs more housing, and we need it now.
- Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.
- After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Waterloo Region's official plan amendment 6 which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians.
- We know that the population of Waterloo Region is expected to grow to 923,000 people by 2051. The government took action to ensure this significant growth could be accommodated by adding an additional 2,380-hectare settlement boundary expansion throughout the region.
- As one of the options for settlement area boundary expansion, the Region's Land Needs Assessment identified 2,208 hectares of community land need based on the Growth Plan minimum intensification and density targets. For employment areas, the Land Needs Assessment identified 659 hectares of employment land need based on an assumed 15% intensification rate.
- Today in Ontario, too many families are frozen out of the housing market. Without an increase in housing supply to match demand, housing prices will continue to rise, and affordability will worsen.
- This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade - especially when taking into account the latest immigration targets set out by the federal government.
- That's why we've committed to building 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

- As we take steps to achieve our goal, we will continue to take a balanced approach to protecting the environment, while supporting smart growth to create much-needed housing and jobs.
- We are proud of the partnerships we have developed with local governments and will continue to work with them to build homes faster and address local challenges in their communities.

If asked about Indigenous consultations:

- Ontario values the unique role and contributions of Indigenous communities in land-use planning and development, and we welcome their perspectives and traditional knowledge as part of an ongoing discussion to support Ontario's sustainable and responsible growth.
- The Ministry remains committed to working with Indigenous communities, including through consultation.

Additional QAs – Waterloo Region:

Q: Why has the Ministry expanded the Region's settlement area boundary by an additional 2,380-hectares?

A: The Region's Land Needs Assessment identified the need for 2,866 hectares of additional urban land using the Growth Plan minimum intensification and density targets for community area and a lower intensification target for employment area land needs. In addition to the 606 hectares of land added by the Region through the adoption of ROPA 6, the Ministry's addition of 2,380 hectares out to the Regions Countryside Line makes the totally settlement area boundary expansion closer to the higher growth scenario in the LNA.

After careful review and consideration of submissions to the Environmental Registry of Ontario, the Minister has made a decision on Waterloo ROPA 6, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians.

With the province set to grow by nearly two million people over the next decade, we are working with all levels of government to get more homes built faster.

Q: Why has the Ministry directed the City of Cambridge to permit higher density residential and institutional uses at 241 Queen Street West?

A: After careful review and consideration of submissions to the Environmental Registry of Ontario, the Minister has made a decision on Waterloo ROPA 6 which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians. The Ministry's decision directs the City of Cambridge to permit higher density residential and institutional uses at 241 Queen Street West to assist with housing supply in the city, and the Region.

Q: Why has the Ministry converted employment lands (28 ha) to residential in Waterloo Region? Don't people need to be able to work where they live?

A: After careful review and consideration of submissions to the Environmental Registry of Ontario, the Minister has made a decision on Waterloo ROPA 6 which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians.

With the province set to grow by nearly two million people over the next decade, we are working with all levels of government to get more homes built faster.

The need to change is clear. We know that housing supply is a problem. Without an increase in housing supply to match this increase in demand, housing prices will rise, and affordability will worsen.

That's why, the government has a plan to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031 so that more families can realize the dream of attainable homeownership.

We will continue to take a balanced approach to allowing for growth while protecting the environment for future generations.

WELLINGTON COUNTY

Media Interest:

- Media has reported on local municipal opposition from the Town of Minto regarding its perception the County of Wellington Official Plan Amendment 119 would restrict growth in small urban centres.
- Angelica Babiera from GuelphToday.com reported that the county heard concerns from the public regarding the proposed designation of the Hamlet of Puslinch.
- Patrick Raftis from the Wellington Advertiser has reported that Minto Council opposes the removal of an official plan policy allowing minor rounding out of hamlets in the County.

Effects of decision / ministry modifications:

- The Ministry made modifications to bring County of Wellington Official Plan Amendment 119 into compliance with the Planning Act, conformity with A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan, and consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement.
- The Ministry added 481 hectares of land to urban boundaries and converted 14 hectares of land from employment (i.e., industrial) to non-employment uses (e.g., residential and commercial).

Possible Contentious Issues:

- No proposed Ministry modifications were shared with Indigenous communities, and a 30-day engagement period is likely to be viewed as insufficient.
- The County, and potentially some local municipalities will be concerned that the Ministry's modifications to expand settlement areas has occurred prior to the County finalizing its Land Needs Assessment and growth management work through a future phase OPA.

Mitigation Tactics:

- Use approved key messages to respond to media and other public inquires.

Key Messages:

- As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government has a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget.
- Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. But too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs. Ontario needs more housing, and we need it now.
- After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Wellington County's official plan amendment, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians
- Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.
- It is expected that Wellington's population will grow to 160,000 people by 2051.
- That is why the Minister took the necessary action to accommodate this significant growth and allow for more desperately needed housing to be built.
- As part of our Housing Supply Action Plan, the government is committed to building 1.5 million much-needed new homes by 2031. To achieve this, it is critical that governments

at all levels are adequately planning for long-term growth – and that includes our municipal partners.

- This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade - especially when taking into account the new immigration targets set out by the federal government.
- We are proud of the partnerships we have developed with local governments and will continue to work with them to build homes faster and address local challenges in their communities.

If asked about Indigenous consultations:

- Ontario values the unique role and contributions of Indigenous communities in land-use planning and development, and we welcome their perspectives and traditional knowledge as part of an ongoing discussion to support Ontario's sustainable and responsible growth.
- The Ministry remains committed to working with Indigenous communities, including through consultation.

Additional QAs – Wellington County:

Q: Why did the Ministry's decision include modifications for settlement area boundary expansions when the Council adopted OPA 119 did not address settlement area boundary expansions?

A: Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs. After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Wellington County's official plan amendment, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Wellington County and Ontario.

A Place to Grow is implemented through municipal official plans. The deadline for upper- and single-tier municipalities to update and adopt their official plans to conform with the policies of A Place to Grow was July 1, 2022. Wellington County will need to complete several additional phases of Official Plan amendments to achieve conformity with A Place to Grow. The modifications made by the province are due in part to the County's timeline on achieving conformity.

CITY OF GUELPH

Media Interest:

- There do not appear to be any media articles to-date regarding City of Guelph Official Plan Amendment 80.

Effects of decision / ministry modifications:

- The Ministry made modifications to bring City of Guelph Official Plan Amendment 80 into compliance with the *Ontario Land Tribunal Act* and *Planning Act*, conformity with A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement.
- The Ministry made modifications to the Guelph Innovation District, the Downtown Secondary Plan policies, changing of various Downtown height restrictions, and mapping and policies to support the development of a cold storage facility.

Possible Contentious Issues:

- No proposed modifications were shared with Indigenous communities, and a 30-day engagement period is likely to be viewed as insufficient.
- The City of Guelph may view certain modifications as interfering with local land use planning matters.

Mitigation Tactics:

- Use approved key messages to respond to media and other public inquires.

Key Messages:

- As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government has a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget.
- Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. But too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs. Ontario needs more housing, and we need it now.
- After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Guelph's official plan amendment, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians.
- Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.
- It is expected that Guelph's population will grow to over 208,000 people by 2051.
- That is why, the Minister took the necessary action to accommodate this significant growth. This will allow for more desperately needed housing to be built.
- Additionally, as part of our Housing Supply Action Plan, the government is committed to building 1.5 million much-needed new homes by 2031.
- To achieve this, it is critical that governments at all levels are adequately planning for long-term growth – and that includes our municipal partners.
- This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade - especially when taking into account the new immigration targets set out by the federal government.
- Our plan would take advantage of new and existing transit by ensuring there is increased height and density allowed as of right near transit stations. Building more gentle density where there is already infrastructure in place supports neighbourhood and

downtown renewal and provides opportunities for more Ontarians to live closer to work and family.

- We are proud of the partnerships we have developed with local governments and will continue to work with them to build homes faster and address local challenges in their communities.

If asked about Indigenous consultations:

- Ontario values the unique role and contributions of Indigenous communities in land-use planning and development, and we welcome their perspectives and traditional knowledge as part of an ongoing discussion to support Ontario's sustainable and responsible growth.
- The Ministry remains committed to working with Indigenous communities, including through consultation.

If asked about more height / density:

- Modifications were made to the City's Official Plan to delete policies that would prescribe maximum building heights to provide clarity and consistency on building heights in major transit station areas.

Additional QAs – Guelph

Q: Why is the Ministry maintaining building height restrictions within the protected view corridor of the downtown basilica, and also within the Special Policy Area?

A: The Ministry's decision maintains the downtown building height restrictions for properties within the protected view corridor, as this is considered an important land use control for views to the Church of Our Lady. The Ministry's decision on building heights within the downtown Special Policy Area are intended to protect public health and safety.

The City can consider a review of the downtown Special Policy Area policies and designations, and the outcome of this review would require joint approval from MMAH and MNRF of the new policies. This review of the downtown Special Policy Area could consider increased building heights, while maintaining public health and safety protections.

Q: Why is it necessary for the Minister to remove natural heritage system mapping just for a cold storage facility?

A: The Ministry's mapping and policy modifications related to natural heritage features and systems will support an important economic development opportunity for a cold storage facility that will support the City's and the region's local agri-food processing industries.

CITY OF BARRIE

Media Interest:

- As reported in Barrie Today, Mayor Jeff Lehman called the city's Official Plan a "dramatically different blueprint for growth" and the "first really comprehensive overhaul of our Official Plan."

Effects of decision / ministry modifications:

- The Council adopted Official Plan included a settlement area boundary expansion of 841 hectares to the extent of the municipal boundary. If approved, the entire municipality will be settlement area.
- The City of Barrie proposed to convert 43 hectares of land from employment uses to residential uses. The Ministry made one additional conversion of 7.5 hectares of employment land to residential uses.
- The Ministry made modifications Barrie's affordable housing policies to provide flexibility and clarity.
- The Ministry made modifications to allow flexibility for:
 - a lower minimum density target of the designated greenfield area of 52 people and jobs per hectare for lands in the Salem secondary plan area,
 - to allow for a site-specific minimum density of 55 people and jobs per hectare for a property in the Hewitt secondary plan area, as well as
 - allowing for a minimum density of 50 people and jobs per hectare for lands in the Neighbourhood Area designation that are adjacent to the municipal boundary to provide appropriate transition to agricultural and rural areas.
- The Ministry made modifications to urban design policies to allow flexibility.

Possible Contentious Issues:

- There may be concerns over why the Ministry is allowing for lower density targets that may impact the City's ability to accommodate the forecasted population to 2051. There may be concerns over why the Ministry modified some of the affordable housing policies.
- There may be concerns over why the Ministry is converting additional employment land into residential uses.

Mitigation Tactics:

- Use approved key messages to respond to media and other public inquires.

Key Messages:

- As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government has a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget.
- Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. But too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs. Ontario needs more housing, and we need it now.
- After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Barrie's official plan, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians
- Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.
- It is expected that Barrie's population will grow to 298,000 people by 2051.

- As part of our Housing Supply Action Plan, the government is committed to building 1.5 million much-needed new homes by 2031. To achieve this, it is critical that governments at all levels are adequately planning for long-term growth – and that includes our municipal partners.
- This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade - especially when taking into account the new immigration targets set out by the federal government.
- We are proud of the partnerships we have developed with local governments and will continue to work with them to build homes faster and address local challenges in their communities.

If asked about Indigenous consultations:

- Ontario values the unique role and contributions of Indigenous communities in land-use planning and development, and we welcome their perspectives and traditional knowledge as part of an ongoing discussion to support Ontario's sustainable and responsible growth.
- The Ministry remains committed to working with Indigenous communities, including through consultation.

Additional QAs – Barrie:

Q: With lowering the designated greenfield area target, will this mean Barrie won't be able to accommodate the forecasted growth out to 2051?

A: Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. But too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs. Ontario needs more housing, and we need it now.

The designated greenfield area target is a minimum target, and it is anticipated that between now and 2051 the City could accommodate the forecasted growth via approvals that exceed the minimum target and development in other areas identified for higher density development.

Q: Why did the official plan decision make revisions to the City's affordable housing policies?

A: Provincial policies require a city-wide affordable housing target, which is being approved in the Ministry's decision. Flexibility was provided within other parts of the plan to recognize that the achievement of this target should be considered on a municipal level not within individual developments or sites.

Q: Why is the Ministry making modifications to the City's urban design policies?

A: Modifications were made to provide flexibility and clarity to some of the City's urban design policies.

Q: Why didn't the official plan decision protect the woodland south of Salem Road and east of County Road 27?

A: Municipalities have local discretion and local knowledge to inform where growth can be best accommodated in their municipality. The City's adopted official plan that was consulted on publicly didn't identify these lands as a wood lot, and the Ministry's decision reflects the city's position. No comments were received via the ERO by the public that spoke to concerns over the woodlot.

CITY OF BELLEVILLE

Media Interest:

- There do not appear to be any media articles to-date regarding the new City of Belleville Official Plan.

Effects of decision / ministry modifications:

- The Ministry made a 160-hectare settlement area boundary expansion for residential use.
- The Ministry made a modification to the Official Plan to convert an additional 24 hectares of employment land, known locally as the "Old Fairgrounds Area," to residential use.
- The Ministry made modifications to support the city's vision for implementation of the Black Bear Ridge Village MZO. The modifications were made at the request of the city. The Black Bear Ridge Village MZO was filed on October 14, 2022 as Ontario Regulation 495/22.
- The Ministry made further modifications to the Official Plan which addresses matters related to conformity with the Planning Act, the protection of natural heritage resources and drinking water, Indigenous consultation, and housing supply.

Possible Contentious Issues:

- There may be legal risks on the PPS conformity, including urban expansion, employment conversions, and the Black Bear Ridge Village MZO lands.
- No proposed modifications were shared with Indigenous communities, and a 30-day engagement period is likely to be viewed as insufficient.

Mitigation Tactics:

- Use approved key messages to respond to media and other public inquires.

Key Messages:

- As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government has strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget.
- Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. But too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs. Ontario needs more housing, and we need it now.
- After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Belleville's official plan amendment, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians
- Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.
- It is expected that Belleville's population will grow to 58,300 people by 2041.
- That is why, the Minister took the necessary action to accommodate this significant growth and allow for more desperately needed housing to be built.
- As part of our Housing Supply Action Plan, the government is committed to building 1.5 million much-needed new homes by 2031. To achieve this, it is critical that governments at all levels are adequately planning for long-term growth – and that includes our municipal partners.
- This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade - especially when taking into account the new immigration targets set out by the federal government.

- We are proud of the partnerships we have developed with local governments and will continue to work with them to build homes faster and address local challenges in their communities.

If asked about Indigenous consultations:

- Ontario values the unique role and contributions of Indigenous communities in land-use planning and development, and we welcome their perspectives and traditional knowledge as part of an ongoing discussion to support Ontario's sustainable and responsible growth.
- The Ministry remains committed to working with Indigenous communities, including through consultation.

Additional QAs – Belleville:

Q: Do the modifications to the official plan address PPS conformity?

A: Ontario has a housing crisis. Driven by a severe shortage of supply, rental housing and home ownership are out of reach for too many hardworking Ontarians. Young families, seniors and hard-working Ontarians are desperate for housing that meets their unique needs. We are working hard to get shovels in the ground to create jobs and increase the housing supply our province needs.

Q: Is the Ministry making any modifications to the Black Bear Ridge Village MZO lands?

A: On March 8, 2022, the City of Belleville Council voted in favour of requesting this Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) to help facilitate the development of a new resort known as Black Bear Ridge Village. This proposed resort will feature entertainment facilities, a golf course, accommodations for guests and parks.

This project will also support the creation of over 3,000 new residential units, including housing for seniors, and is expected to bring 580 new jobs to the local community. Additionally, environmental features located on the site will be protected.

The ministry has implemented modifications to the city's official plan which respond to the city's request to support the development envisioned by this MZO (filed as O. Reg. 495/22 on October 14, 2022).

Q: Is it appropriate for the settlement area boundary expansion to be so close to the highway and CN rail tracks? How will issues from that be mitigated?

A: The city's official plan establishes policies that make the connection between transportation and land use. These policies operate to alleviate impacts from adjacent freight traffic.

Ontario's Freight Supportive Guidelines support official plans by providing best practices and implementation strategies for urban and rural communities. These guidelines help planners, municipal engineers, developers and others better understand and plan for the vehicles that transport goods through our communities.

Q: Why has the Ministry converted 24 hectares of employment land (known locally as the “Old Fairgrounds Area” to residential in the City of Belleville? Don’t people need to be able to work where they live?

A: With the province set to grow by nearly two million people over the next decade, we are working with all levels of government to get more homes built faster.

The need to change is clear. We know that housing supply is a problem. Without an increase in housing supply to match this increase in demand, housing prices will rise, and affordability will worsen.

That’s why, the government has a plan to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031 so that more families can realize the dream of attainable homeownership.

We will continue to take a balanced approach to allowing for growth while protecting the environment for future generations.

The decision to convert the lands located at 40 Wilson Avenue and the adjacent “Old Fairgrounds Lands” from employment to residential came at the request of the landowner through the ERO, and by way of a Mayor’s letter and council resolution of support.

The lands in question will potentially accommodate medium and high density residential uses and be a catalyst to remediate former brownfield lands for re-development purposes.

CITY OF PETERBOROUGH

Media Interest:

- As reported in the Peterborough Examiner, demand for housing is a concern in Peterborough, and municipalities control housing timelines through the official plan. The Ministry's identifying 3,300 new housing units which may not be enough.

Effects of decision / ministry modifications:

- The Ministry has identified 190 hectares as designated greenfield area, enabling their development within the 2051 time-horizon.
- The Ministry identified the potential for 3,300 new housing units, including affordable townhomes, mid-rise, high-rise and rental units.
- The Ministry made modifications to the adopted Official Plan to remove height restrictions within the downtown core – the Urban Growth Centre - and allow existing single storey development along major mixed corridors to continue to be developed at one-storey.

Possible Contentious Issues:

- The city's official plan will replace the 1981 official plan. There may be concerns over why it took so long.
- The changes to policies regarding 190 hectares of City-identified excess lands and the resulting permissions for development do not conform with the Growth Plan. The City may challenge the changes to these policies that were adopted by Council.
- The Minister's decision to approve the Official Plan is likely to trigger the Crown's duty to consult. No prior notice was provided for Ministerial modifications and the length of the engagement period may be questioned.

Mitigation Tactics:

- Use approved key messages to respond to media and other public inquires.

Key Messages:

- As Ontarians face the rising cost of living and a shortage of homes, our government has strong mandate to help more Ontarians find a home that meets their needs and budget.
- Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. But too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs. Ontario needs more housing, and we need it now.
- After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Peterborough's official plan amendment, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians
- Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.
- It is expected that Peterborough's population will grow to 125,000 people by 2051.
- That is why, the Minister took the necessary action to accommodate this significant growth and allow for more desperately needed housing to be built.
- As part of our Housing Supply Action Plan, the government is committed to building 1.5 million much-needed new homes by 2031. To achieve this, it is critical that governments at all levels are adequately planning for long-term growth – and that includes our municipal partners.

- This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade - especially when taking into account the new immigration targets set out by the federal government.
- We are proud of the partnerships we have developed with local governments and will continue to work with them to build homes faster and address local challenges in their communities.

If asked about Indigenous consultations:

- Ontario values the unique role and contributions of Indigenous communities in land-use planning and development, and we welcome their perspectives and traditional knowledge as part of an ongoing discussion to support Ontario's sustainable and responsible growth.
- The Ministry remains committed to working with Indigenous communities, including through consultation.

Additional QAs – Peterborough:

Q: Why are decisions being made now for Peterborough when their Official Plan has been in place for over 40 years (since 1981)?

A: There have been significant updates to the City's Official Plan throughout the years through local official plan amendments, including a conformity exercise with the 2006 Growth Plan. Their new official plan, however, is the first cover-to-cover replacement of their official plan since 1981.

Q: How is the Ministry responding to the site-specific requests made to the Official Plan?

A: Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.

It is expected that Peterborough's population will grow to 125,000 people by 2051. That is why, the Minister took the necessary action to accommodate this significant growth and allow for more desperately needed housing to be built.

After careful review and consultation, the Minister has made a decision on Peterborough's official plan, which ensures the continued prosperity of the local community and supports the long-term interests of Ontarians

As a result of comments heard through the ERO, the Ministry identified certain lands in the city that has the potential for 3,300 new housing units, including affordable townhomes, mid-rise, high-rise and rental units.

Efforts were also made to provide an opportunity for greater intensification in the downtown core by providing flexibility to accommodate taller buildings, increasing opportunities to bring more people to the downtown to live, work and play.

Q: How do you respond to concerns from the City about the changes to policies regarding 190 hectares of City-identified excess lands and the resulting permissions for development not conforming with the Growth Plan?

A: While additional lands have been added for development purposes, the city still remains the approval authority for any additional planning approvals such as plans of subdivision, zoning and/or secondary plans. This gives the city the ability to consider the phasing of development, in accordance with other matters, such as infrastructure planning.

Official plans are among the most important tools municipalities and the province use in partnership to prepare for our future growth and housing needs.

Today in Ontario, too many families are frozen out of the housing market. Without an increase in housing supply to match demand, housing prices will continue to rise, and affordability will worsen.

This is particularly important given the population growth our province is expecting over the next decade - especially when taking into account the latest immigration targets set out by the federal government.

Q: Why did the Ministry not conduct enough engagement with Indigenous communities on the modifications?

A: The city undertook its own consultation process with communities during the development of its official plan. The Ministry also conducted multiple rounds of indigenous consultation with no substantive comments received from indigenous communities and groups.

Q: Why were height restrictions removed?

A: The city's current official plan which has been in place since 1981 does not include a height restriction for the downtown core area. The removal of the height restriction is in keeping with the city's current policy framework.

By providing greater flexibility to accommodate taller buildings in the downtown core increases opportunities for intensification and increased growth in central areas and provides a vibrant downtown core for people to live, work and play.