




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	October 18, 2023
SUBJECT:	Introduction of Bill 136, <i>Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023</i> – Reinstatement of 15 Sites Back into the Greenbelt Plan Area
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Anita Fabac Acting Director, Planning and Chief Planner Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

The purpose of this Communication Update is to provide Council with an update on legislation introduced by the Government of Ontario, the *Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023*, to reinstate the 15 sites back into the Greenbelt Plan Area which had been removed in December 2022. The Premiere of Ontario had announced the Province's intention to reinstate these lands on September 22, 2023.

In the Environmental Registry of Ontario posting (www.ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-7739) the Government of Ontario acknowledges that the process for the 2022 Greenbelt Plan removals was too fast and not sufficiently transparent, stating that the legislation is in response to feedback from Indigenous communities, the public, municipalities and stakeholders.

Background

In December 2022 the Government of Ontario made amendments to the Greenbelt Plan which included the removal of three sites within the City of Hamilton totalling 795 hectares of land. The Government of Ontario had stated the lands they removed from the Greenbelt Plan were intended for residential use to support the goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. City Council passed a motion in February 2023 opposing the removal.

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

The Government of Ontario had directed the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator to engage with the City of Hamilton and advised that the City would have an opportunity to provide input on how these lands are developed and to negotiate certain “community benefits” above and beyond the standard *Planning Act* requirements. It had been staff’s understanding that this input would be considered prior to a Minister’s Zoning Order being issued by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for these lands.

The City’s Greenbelt Plan Engagement Initiatives

On July 17, 2023 City Council provided direction that staff be directed to provide input, under protest, and that a special meeting of Planning Committee be scheduled to receive public input respecting these lands, to be provided to the Province, which was held on September 14, 2023. The City also held an Open House on September 6, 2023 and provided an online survey for public input.

The City’s consultation respecting these lands received significant public interest and input with over 1,000 residents attending the City’s Open House and special meeting of Planning Committee together with hundreds of written submissions and survey responses. Staff will report in greater detail on the engagement results through a separate report to Planning Committee scheduled for October 31, 2023.

Proposed Legislation

On October 16, 2023, the Government of Ontario introduced Bill 136, *Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023* on its Environment Registry of Ontario website, requesting public comments by November 30, 2023. The legislation received First Reading in the Legislature on October 16, 2023. If passed, the legislation would add all 15 sites back to the Greenbelt Plan Area that were removed in December 2022 by incorporating the description of the Greenbelt Area and Oak Ridges Moraine Area boundaries directly into the proposed legislation. This includes the three sites removed from the Greenbelt Area in Hamilton.

The legislation would eliminate Provincial authority to remove lands from the Greenbelt Area and Oak Ridges Moraine Area by regulation, meaning that the Government of Ontario would have to pass new legislation to make future amendments to boundaries. Note that the legislation would maintain the 3,804 hectares of land added to the Greenbelt Plan Area in 2022 in Wellington County.

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The commenting period on the proposed legislation will be open for 45 days, from October 16, 2023 to November 30, 2023. A report on the proposed legislation and staff comments is scheduled for the November 14, 2023 Planning Committee meeting with Council ratification on November 22, 2023. This will ensure Council comments can be included as part of the City's submission to the Province.

If you require any further information on the above matter, please contact Anita Fabac, Acting Director of Planning and Chief Planner by email at Anita.Fabac@hamilton.ca or at (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1258, or, Charlie Toman, Program Lead – Policy Planning & Municipal Comprehensive Review by e-mail at Charlie.Toman@Hamilton.ca or at (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5863.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.