



WELCOME TO THE CITY OF HAMILTON

PLANNING COMMITTEE

January 13, 2026

PED26021 – City of Hamilton Response to Environmental Registry of Ontario Posting 025-1099 - Consultation on Simplifying and Standardizing Official Plans

Presented by: Charlie Toman, Program Lead – Policy Planning & Municipal Comprehensive Review, Sustainable Communities Section, Planning Division

Background – Bill 60 & Related Environmental Registry of Ontario Postings

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On October 23, 2025 the Province introduced Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 and made 12 separate Environmental Registry of Ontario postings requesting feedback on several land use planning matters including:

- Bill 60 - *Planning Act* amendments
- Bill 60 – Prohibition of land reductions for bicycle lanes and harmonization of municipal road construction standards
- Consultation on minimum lot sizes
- Consultation on enhanced development standards – lot level (outside of buildings)
- Legislative and regulatory changes impacting on-site specific systems for on-farm worker housing
- **Consultation on Simplifying and Standardizing Official Plans**

Staff submitted comments on all ERO postings that impact the City of Hamilton before the deadline of November 22, 2025.

Bill 60 received Royal Assent on November 27, 2025.

Background – Simplifying and Standardizing Official Plans

- The Province requested input on a framework that would impose province-wide parameters on what can and cannot be included in municipal Official Plans.
- The framework is in response to feedback received by the Province that official plans have become lengthy, complicated and highly restrictive planning documents that take years to prepare and update.
- The objective of a province-wide framework is to increase consistency across municipalities while also reducing the burden of developing these plans.
- Currently no legislation or regulations have been released that would implement this framework.

Land use planning in Ontario is a policy-led system.



- Staff support provincial efforts to simplify Ontario's complex land use planning system to make it easier for everyone to understand and participate in planning matters.
- Staff recommend the use of Provincial guidelines instead of prescriptive legislative or regulatory requirements to achieve this objective which would provide:
 - **Flexibility** to municipalities to develop new and innovative policy solutions to address land use planning issues – including the testing of new housing forms;
 - **Clarity** to municipalities on what should and should not be included in an Official Plan; and,
 - **Recognition** that Ontario municipalities are diverse in size, geography, and population, and provides flexibility beyond a 'one size fits all' approach.

Question	Staff Response
<p>Input on removing or limiting the ability of Official Plans to include specific development standards (e.g. building heights, densities, floor areas and lot coverages)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support guidance that specific development standards should be used sparingly to avoid unnecessary site-specific OPA's. • Do not support outright removal as some standards are necessary for infrastructure planning and zoning by-law implementation
<p>Input on establishing a standardized table of contents and land use schedules?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support guidance on minimum Official Plan contents and schedules. • Recommend maintaining the ability to have sub-schedules to improve the readability and clarity of complex land use maps (e.g. Natural Heritage System).
<p>Input on limiting the length of Official Plans (e.g. page and word limits)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support guidance on where and how the length of Official Plans may be reduced. • Do not support establishing maximum page numbers or word counts which would not take into account different types, sizes and geographies of municipalities across Ontario.

Question	Staff Response																																		
<p>Input on removing Secondary Plans and Site-Specific Policies Areas from Official Plans?</p>	<p>Strongly oppose as secondary planning is the most effective planning tool to deliver residential intensification and complete greenfield communities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing certainty to both development industry and residents on where intensification is planned. • Coordinating with infrastructure master plans to ensure sufficient hard and soft services are available to enable intensification. • Operating at a scale where land use, connectivity, infrastructure, mobility, built form, and community services can be fully integrated into a cohesive and livable whole. <div data-bbox="803 753 1479 1252" data-label="Figure"> <p>New Dwellings Approved through Building Permits in the Downtown Secondary Plan 2010-2025</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>New Dwellings Approved</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2010</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>2015</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>2016</td><td>400</td></tr> <tr><td>2017</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>2018</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>150</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>600</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>1300</td></tr> <tr><td>2022</td><td>600</td></tr> <tr><td>2023</td><td>1800</td></tr> <tr><td>2024</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>2025 (Oct)</td><td>700</td></tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Year	New Dwellings Approved	2010	0	2011	0	2012	0	2013	0	2014	500	2015	50	2016	400	2017	50	2018	500	2019	150	2020	600	2021	1300	2022	600	2023	1800	2024	500	2025 (Oct)	700
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Input on standardizing the number and type of land use designations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support guidance on land use designation types and uses to support municipalities when creating or updating its Official Plans. • Do not support stringent standardization which removes flexibility to address community specific geographies, social conditions and community needs. • Limits the ability for municipalities to pilot new, innovative land use designations that achieve both local and Provincial policy objectives.
Input on land use designation terminology or descriptions that would be easier to understand?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support any terminology in the framework being consistent with Provincial Planning Statement. • Recommend where new terminology is proposed in the framework, the Province create clear guidance document explaining the purpose and intent of the terminology.
Input on submitting Official Plans to MMAH for approval through an Online Portal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support making it easier for municipalities to share information with MMAH as well as making the Official Plan review process transparent and accessible.

Specific Changes Considered and Staff Response

Transitioning to a New Framework

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Consideration	Staff Response
Perspective on transitioning to a standardized Official Plan framework?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize that municipalities break up their Official Plan reviews into phases (e.g. MTSA's, Employment Areas etc.). In these situations, it would not be possible to completely rebuild an Official Plan to be consistent with a new framework.• Just introducing a potential standardized framework immediately creates uncertainty for ongoing Official Plan review work.
Input on what is a realistic timeline to comply with a standardized framework?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize that most municipalities are currently actively undertaking updates to its Official Plan to be consistent with the PPS. Immediately instituting a framework would require municipalities to redo existing work – adding both time and expense.• Recommend that any framework be applied to the following Official Plan review. This will allow municipalities to consider whether to amend their existing Official Plan to be consistent or to create a new Official Plan.
Input on how can the Province support this transition?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable MMAH staff to collaborate with and share constructive feedback (in writing) to municipalities throughout the Official Plan review process – not just when the work has been completed.



Hamilton

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

THE CITY OF HAMILTON PLANNING COMMITTEE