

Municipal Motion to Deal with Provincial Sprawl Plans: Taking the First Step

Introduction

This document provides a tool for Municipal Leaders and Community Leaders who have serious concerns with the Province's sprawl plans and want to use municipal powers to protect their communities.

Below is a draft motion that creatively uses existing municipal powers to lay the groundwork for developing real, affordable housing solutions for local residents and putting the brakes on provincial actions that promote sprawl. This draft motion is a first step and is designed to impact the 2023 budget process and is therefore time sensitive.

Why Do This?

Municipal leaders want to improve housing affordability and create housing for all incomes and stages in life. They also take seriously their responsibility as elected officials to represent their constituents. And it's clear an increasing number of Ontarians **do not** accept that eliminating environmental protections, democratic rights and destroying farmland to allow for more sprawl development is the solution to housing affordability and choice. The draft motion below provides Municipal leaders with a tool they can use to show their constituents that they care and are listening.

How To Use this Motion

For Elected Officials: This sample motion is generic. Please adapt it to fit your local circumstances and try to introduce it into the 2023 budget process.

For Community Leaders: The likelihood of this motion being considered (and adopted) will be significantly increased if Council knows there is widespread community support for the motion. Work with Council allies to determine how to build this support and when to deploy it most effectively during meetings of Council committees and Council.

Stay Tuned

This is the first in a series of sample motions designed to help municipalities challenge the Ontario Government's misguided sprawl plans and instead promote real, affordable solutions that solve local housing issues while maintaining important protection of farmland and natural areas. Look for more motions in the coming weeks.

DRAFT MOTION [adapt as required]:

WHEREAS there is an unacceptable shortage of affordable housing and housing types for all stages of life in Ontario.

WHEREAS municipal governments need to work with all levels of government, stakeholder groups and members of the public to develop policies and help fund programs that will create additional housing units to meet the demand for affordable housing and housing for all incomes and stages in life.

WHEREAS the construction of new housing provides the opportunity to build communities that offer alternative forms of transportation, increase climate resilience, and improve the lives of all residents, with priority given to accommodating the most vulnerable.

WHEREAS Bill 23 makes it more difficult for municipalities to create the overall conditions necessary for the construction of affordable housing and housing types for all incomes and stages in life.

WHEREAS Bill 23 undermines municipal planning and public consultation processes that are key to building the housing we need.

WHEREAS Bill 23 undermines important environmental policies and will increase environmental degradation.

WHEREAS Bill 23 will lead to the destruction of prime agricultural land necessary to insure long term food security.

WHEREAS Bill 39 sets a dangerous precedent by giving new powers to municipal Mayors that may be used to undermine the democratic will of duly elected municipal Councils.

WHEREAS Bill 39 and recent provincial regulatory changes have resulted in the removal of 7,400 acres of land from the Greenbelt for housing construction despite there being more than enough land already designated for development within existing urban areas to meet future growth projections.

WHEREAS Bills 23 and 39 were rushed through the Ontario Legislature thereby ignoring calls from municipalities to first hold proper public consultation.

WHEREAS the combined impact of Bill 23 and 39 and the removal of lands from the Greenbelt will harm municipalities financially, remove important environmental protection, destroy important agricultural land while doing little to support construction of affordable housing and housing types for all incomes and stages in life

WHEREAS [insert name of municipality] is committed to facilitating construction of affordable housing and housing types for all incomes and stages of life to accommodate projected growth in our municipality and the needs of our residents.

WHEREAS [insert name of municipality] is willing to invest in the programs and infrastructure for meeting housing needs.

WHEREAS [insert name of municipality] wants to ensure decisions relating to the need for new housing is based on accurate data showing what land is available and already approved for new housing within the urban boundary, including within the Built-up Area.

WHEREAS [insert name of municipality] wants to ensure any future decisions relating to the location of new housing construction is based on accurate data that shows the true cost of providing municipal infrastructure based on where development occurs (ie. greenfields, Built-up Area).

WHEREAS [insert name of municipality] wants to ensure the 2023 budget minimises unnecessary costs to residents that might arise out of Bill 23 until such a time as the proper analysis of land availability, existing approvals and the costs of providing municipal infrastructure based on where development occurs is available.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. Council request the Province to immediately:
 - repeal Bill 23
 - repeal Bill 39
 - reverse the decision made on December 15, 2022 to remove the 7,400 acres from the Greenbelt

2. Council direct staff report back as soon as possible on:
 - the number of housing units already approved for development within the existing urban boundary, highlighting the units available within the Built-up Area
 - the number of housing units that would be built within the existing urban boundary and built up area if density was increased to **x** people per hectare [Note: **x** is the density of an existing neighbourhood in your municipality or a community close by where it's convenient to get by without a car].
 - any actions the municipality can take to increase the rate of construction of housing units that have already been approved

3. Council as part of the 2023 budget process:
 - not allocate funds for infrastructure on lands not anticipated to be designated for urban development through the Municipal Comprehensive Reviews as adopted by Council
 - not reallocate funds otherwise required to support other municipally funded programs to make up for any development charge revenue shortfalls resulting from the implementation of Bill 23.

4. Council direct staff to investigate and report back on:
 - capital and long term operating costs associated with various forms of residential growth within greenfield areas versus residential growth within the Built-up Area
 - the merits of establishing area specific development charges separately for greenfield and Built-up Areas so as to better reflect the actual costs associated with each type of development
 - the projected annual financial impacts on tax-payers associated with various forms of residential growth within greenfield areas versus residential growth within the Built-up Area