



Kagan | Shastri  
DeMelo | Winer | Park  
LAWYERS | LLP

**PAUL M DeMELO**  
General: 416.368.2100 Ext. 228  
Direct: 437-780-3435  
[pdemelo@ksllp.ca](mailto:pdemelo@ksllp.ca)

File No. 18014

February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

The Honourable Minister Steve Clark  
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Municipal Services Office – Central Ontario  
777 Bay Street, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, On M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Clark:

**RE: Approval of Municipality's Official Plan  
County of Simcoe  
Ministry Reference No. 43-OP-221936  
ERO Numbers 019-6113**

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We are counsel to 903287 Ontario Limited ("Client"), the owners of 1460 7<sup>th</sup> Line in the Town of Innisfil ("Town"). KLM Planning Partners Inc. is the land use planning consultant for our Client and has been engaged in the advancement of applications for these lands dating back to OPA 1 when these lands were first identified for inclusion by the Town and County as part of the Town's urban settlement area boundary.

On April 29, 2021, the County of Simcoe ("County") issued a Notice of Statutory Special Meeting in relation to the County Municipal Comprehensive Review ("MCR"). The purpose of the MCR process was to assist the County in determining updates that may be required to the County OP under Section 26 of the Planning Act to bring it into conformity with A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 ("Growth Plan"). This process resulted in the adoption of OPA No. 7 by the County of Simcoe on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022 which is now before the Minister for consideration.

Our client has been directly involved in this MCR process from the outset and while there are many aspects of OPA No. 7 which our client is supportive of, the adoption of OPA No.7 is lacking in at least one critical area from our review, that being the population growth projections

Yorkville Office:  
188 Avenue Road,  
Toronto, ON., M5R 2J1  
P. 416.368.2100 | F. 416.368.8206 | [ksllp.ca](http://ksllp.ca)

Downtown Office:  
250 Yonge Street, Ste 2302  
P.O. Box 65,  
Toronto, ON., M5B 2L7  
P. 416.368.2100 | F. 416.368.8206 | [ksllp.ca](http://ksllp.ca)

and associated land needs assessment for the Town of Innisfil and in particular for the Alcona Primary Settlement Area. This area, as the Ministry will no doubt be aware is the planned location for the future Orbit Transit Hub and was the subject a Minister Zoning Order request by the Town and County in 2020. A Minister's Zoning Order was ultimately adopted in August of 2021 for a portion of this area ("MZO"). Our client has submitted throughout the MCR process that given the importance of the Orbit Transit Hub and the surrounding Alcona Primary Settlement Area to the success of this transit community that sufficient population and land should be allocated to Innisfil through the MCR so as to ensure that those lands which have long been identified for inclusion into the settlement area can be brought in to help advance the development that the County, Town and Province have all envisioned and are directing for this area.

### **Background**

While we appreciate that the intent and purpose of the MCR exercise was not necessarily to identify parcels of lands that may be included by the local municipalities are part of their local updates, we believe that OPA No. 7 as currently drafted does not provide sufficient allocation to Innisfil and Alcona in order to achieve the stated objectives in other parts of OPA No. 7, including but not limited to those polices related to Major Transit Station Areas (3.2.12 and 3.2.14).

Our client's lands are approximately 16.9 hectares (42 acres) in size and are bounded by the 20<sup>th</sup> Sideroad to the west, the Metrolinx rail line to the east that will service the Orbit Transit Hub and 7<sup>th</sup> Line to the south ("Lands"). The Lands are immediately adjacent to the current settlement area boundary and for numerous reasons in our view represent a logical expansion area that should have been identified through the ongoing MCR process as lands that along with other lands in the Alcona Primary Settlement Area should have been prioritized for inclusion by the Town.

The Lands currently are serviced by municipal watermains along the 20<sup>th</sup> Sideroad frontage and municipal sanitary sewer services can be easily extended from the draft approved plan of subdivision located immediately east of the Metrolinx rail line, to the subject parcel. Given the dual frontage, access to the subject lands can be obtained either via the 7<sup>th</sup> Line, the 20<sup>th</sup> Sideroad without significant expansion of municipal services, including the extension of roads.

The Subject Lands are currently designated “Rural” on Schedule 5.1 to the County of Simcoe Official Plan, 2016 (“County OP”) and “Rural Area” and KNHF and KNF” on Schedule ‘B’ to the Town Official Plan, 2018 (“Town OP”). The Subject Lands are also not identified as being “Agricultural” or “Rural” on Schedule BB – Agricultural Land Base within the Town OP. The lands are not prime agricultural lands and do not contain any environmental features that would represent a barrier to any future development.

Pursuant to Policy 3.2.25 of OPA No. 7, Innisfil is identified as being part of the southern regional market area. OPA No.7 recommends that the County be divided into two separate regional market areas for the purpose of conducting a land needs assessment given the vast geographic area of the County and the distinctively different growth forecasts and expected population and employment growth that will occur in these two different areas in the future. The southern regional market area is expected not only to accommodate the growth in future population and employment growth, but this growth is also envisioned under OPA No.7 to be focused largely around the development of two major transit station areas (GO Stations) that are being planned. One is a future GO Station proposed in the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury (Bradford Major Transit Station Area) and the second as we have noted is the Orbit Transit Hub. As between these two areas, the Orbit Transit Hub has been the subject of extensive planning and studies to ensure that the area around it develops fully as a complete community in a manner that recognizes the significant investment which the Province, Metrolinx, the County and the Town will all be making in terms of infrastructure to advance the vision of the Orbit Transit Hub. In our view this vision can only be supported and brought to fruition through the planning for the area that surrounds the site which has been long identified as an area where the settlement area boundary should be expanded.

### **OPA No. 1 and MZO for The Orbit Vision Plan**

In 2009, the Town and the County adopted what was then OPA No.1 to the Town’s Official Plan. As part of OPA No.1, our Client’s lands were identified as being lands delineated as Urban Settlement Expansion. The effect of OPA No.1 would have been to complete the boundaries of the Alcona Settlement to 20th Sideroad as the western boundary of this planned area. This would have resulted in lands on both sides of the Metrolinx Rail Corridor being included in the settlement areas. OPA No.1 was eventually modified at the request of the Provincial Government at the time to remove a large portion of the proposed settlement area

including the area now identified as part of the Orbit Transit Hub. While the completion of the Alcona Primary Settlement Area did not proceed through OPA No. 1, the Town and the County continued to identify the importance of these lands for inclusion as part of any future settlement area boundary expansion.

That decision to remove lands from the areas identified in OPA No. 1 was made at a time when the extent of the growth proposed for Innisfil and Alcona in particular, was significantly less than what is now envisioned. Not only was the expectation for growth much less, but the plans for a major transit station area had not yet evolved. For several reasons, since 2009 Provincial planning has changed significantly in response to ever increasing growth pressures which we note have increased even since the adoption of the MZO in August of 2021 which at that time only dealt with a portion of the requested lands required for the Orbit Vision Plans.

Beginning in July of 2020, Town staff prepared a series of recommendation reports related to the Orbit Station Concept Design which identified that the lands to 20<sup>th</sup> Sideroad and beyond that south of 7<sup>th</sup> Line were integral to the development of the Orbit Transit Hub. The diagram below was taken from the Town's letter to Minister Clark from October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 outlining the Orbit Vision Plan. The land area encompassed by this vision is approximately 190 Ha for all associated community uses. As you will note the plan envisions a community that encompasses both sides of the rail corridor that will be the focus for major transit into not only Innisfil but the rest of the County as well. The use of 20<sup>th</sup> Sideroad as the general boundary for the area is consistent with the long-held vision from OPA No. 1.



The Alcona Settlement Area is identified in both the Growth Plan and the County OP as a Primary Settlement Area and as such a key area of focus for growth and future planning. Pursuant to the Growth Plan, Municipalities with primary settlement areas will, in their official plans and other supporting documents:

- i. identify primary settlement areas;
- ii. identify and plan for strategic growth areas within primary settlement areas;
- iii. plan to support the achievement of complete communities within primary settlement areas; and,
- iv. ensure the development of high-quality urban form and public open spaces within primary settlement areas through site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places that support walking and cycling for everyday activities and are transit-supportive.

Section 6.3.4 of the Growth Plan further states that the Town will direct a significant portion of population and employment growth forecasted to the applicable primary settlement areas. One would have fully expected that any expansion of the settlement area boundaries for the Town arising from the MCR would support these key policy objectives by consideration of lands such as that of our client that can easily and efficiently provide for lands that can address these objectives. In order for the Town to achieve the objectives of the Growth Plan as it relates to primary settlement areas noted herein, a significant amount of the County's overall growth to 2051 beyond that which has been identified should have been directed to the Town to accommodate this vision.

**OPA No. 7 Does Not Address the Full Need for Population and Lands that are Required for Orbit and Alcona**

While we recognize that the County through its MCR process has allocated additional population and lands to Innisfil we believe that those numbers are not enough to advance the Orbit Vision and secure the necessary investment in infrastructure that will be required by both the public and private sector to see that vision come to its successful conclusion.

As part of Table B, OPA No. 7 calls for a population increase for Innisfil from the current 44,710 to 84,450 by the year 2051. While this represents an increase of 39,740 over this 30 year period it does not properly take into account the true potential for the lands around Orbit. Orbit represents one of the largest and most significant investments in transit that the Province and Metrolinx will be undertaking outside of the GTHA and the gateway to a new complete community that will be the model for future communities around major transit stations outside of the GTA. Given its significance and given the significant costs that will be incurred to bring this to light, a greater population should be allocated to ensure that the infrastructure, including the station itself and the rail corridor, are used to their fullest potential. In our view a greater population forecast is appropriate for this reason and while part of that increased population can and should also be accommodated in higher densities, the need for additional lands will be required so as to provide the full range of community services and uses, as well as full range of housing, required to complete this vision.

Table F of OPA No. 7 has identified the need for an additional 104.2 Gross Hectares of Community Use Lands within Innisfil. We note that this does not include 37 Hectares of land that are already covered by the MZO. Even with the addition of these two areas this represents only about 140 Gross Hectares for Community Use Lands which is roughly about twelve percent (12%) of the total settlement area boundary expansion recommended by OPA No.7 for the entirety of the County. This despite the fact that Innisfil is predicted to accommodate over twenty percent (20%) of the population growth and twenty-five percent (25%) of the employment growth for the County as a whole.<sup>1</sup> While Innisfil has been identified as the local municipality with the largest anticipated growth by population, both in terms of number of future residents but also even more significantly in term of employment growth, Table F of OPA No.7 only subscribes a total lands needs of 104.2 Ha. Bradford West Gwillimbury and New Tecumseth, which have similar projected growth projections on the residential side but less on the employment sides both have a land needs ascribed to them of close to 450 Ha each. Not only is Innisfil envisioned to accommodate the significant shares of both population and employment growth, this growth is to be centered around the Orbit Station in Alcona which land area as identified by the Town in its prior submissions to the Minister was approximately 197Ha

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<sup>1</sup> Population increase for Innisfil as identified in Table B equates to 39,740 whereas total population increase for the entire Country over the same period 194,320. Employment growth for Innisfil as per Table C equates to 20,290 whereas the employment growth for the County over the same period is 81,410.

or approximately 57Ha beyond that which the County has already identified through the MCR.<sup>2</sup> Without the addition of greater population numbers and lands for community uses it is feared that the expectations for the Orbit Vision will not be possible and accordingly we would ask that the Minister when considering OPA No.7 consider the need for additional population and land to be allocated to Innisfil and to Alcona specifically to bring this vision to light. In our view not only should additional population be ascribed to Innisfil and in particular the Alcona Settlement Area but sufficient lands should be designated to Alcona through this process to complete the Orbit Vision.

### **Alcona Primary Settlement Area as Area Where Growth Should be Directed**

Alcona is identified as the Towns' only Primary Settlement Area (PSA). As Town Municipal staff have noted in their comments to the County on the MCR, Overall, the Provincial and County land use policies provide key directions that will determine and guide how Innisfil will allocate its population and employment growth to 2051:

- Significant growth will be directed to Primary Settlement Areas (PSAs) in the County, as designated by the Provincial Growth Plan;
- PSAs to develop as complete communities with high rates of intensification and density targets for Strategic Growth Areas and Major Transit Station Areas;
- Major employment growth directed to Strategic Settlement Employment Areas in County;
- Other fully serviced settlements, particularly those with a delineated built boundary, may also accommodate limited growth;
- Develop a compact urban form that promotes the efficient use of land and provision of water, sewer, transportation and other services;
- Develop mixed use settlements as strong and vibrant central places and to create healthy settlements and communities that are sustainable;
- Promote development forms and patterns which minimize land consumption and servicing costs;

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<sup>2</sup> A portion of these lands as identified by the Town for inclusion in the MZO already lie with the Town's Settlement Area.

- Plan for a range of housing options, including affordable housing; and
- Recognize, preserve and protect natural heritage, rural character and agricultural lands.

Based on the above Provincial and County policy directions, the overwhelming majority of Innisfil's population growth will therefore be directed to Alcona, which is the Town's sole designated PSA in the Growth Plan. Furthermore, the majority of Alcona's growth will be directed to the Orbit/Innisfil GO Station (Major Transit Station Area) as well as intensification of the Downtown Commercial Area along Innisfil Beach Road. Outside of Alcona, only a limited amount of growth may be considered for the Town's other fully serviced settlements of Sandy Cove and Lefroy, and only to Cookstown and Stroud if the current servicing restrictions are planned to be resolved.

Consistent with our submissions, Municipal staff also note that Alcona has been identified in the Town's planning documents as a focus for Innisfil's growth dating back to the Official Plan Amendment No. 1 (OPA1) to the 2006 Official Plan. This was adopted by the Town and approved by the County in 2009 after a comprehensive assessment of growth management options and community consultation exercise. The Town's new Our Place Official Plan also includes policies in Section 9 – 'Settlements and Growth Management' focusing the Town's future growth to Alcona, including the areas comprising the [Alcona North and South Secondary Plans](#) and the Orbit/Major Transit Station Area (Policy 9.8.3). This growth vision was also supported by comments from Council during the Strategic Planning Session held on September 6, 2019 during the preparation of the Innovative Innisfil 2030 Strategic Plan.<sup>3</sup>

While the staff comments regarding the MCR have been focused on the importance of the Alcona Primary Settlement Area and Orbit Station, we note that when the assessment is to be conducted by the Town as to where boundary expansions should take place that our client's Lands address each of the criteria that has been established by the Town in its Criteria for Settlement Area Boundary Expansion.<sup>4</sup> A detailed review of these criteria identify how the Lands which our client is seeking to ensure can be considered as part of a future settlement area expansion respond positively to each criteria that the Town has outlined, included focusing

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<sup>3</sup> Staff Report – Executive Summary & Recommendation – Town of Innisfil (Staff Report DSR-139-21)

<sup>4</sup> <https://innisfil.ca/en/building-and-development/resources/Documents/Criteria-for-Settlement-Area-Boundary-Expansions.pdf>


growth in the Alcona Primary Settlement Area and where there is priority to the area around the GO Station, in an area that is readily serviced by water and waste-water; adjacent/contiguous to and existing settlement area; avoids prime agricultural areas, as well as specialty crop and other environmentally sensitive areas; and, is capable of supporting a full range of housing and will provide for a compact, walkable, sustainable and healthy community.

**Submission on Modifications to be Made**

We respectfully submit that given the importance of the Alcona Settlement Area and the Orbit Station to the future growth within Simcoe, we would request that the Ministry as part of its approval of OPA No.7 consider a modification to Schedule 5.1 that would identify the Alcona Settlement Boundary as extending to the 20<sup>th</sup> Sideroad in line with OPA No.1 and the Municipalities prior request regarding the MZO. We have attached a modified Schedule 5.1 which identifies the lands which we believe should be identified at this time. Additionally a modification should be made to Table F to identify a land needs for Innisfil of 200Ha, inclusive of the lands already addressed as part of the MZO. This area that has been identified in our amended Schedule 5.1, has long been recognized by the County and Town as the area where expansion should properly proceed as it has been demonstrated that this area already meets the expectations for where expansion should occur and has only been heightened in terms of its importance by the advancement of the Orbit Vision in partnership with the Province and Metrolinx.

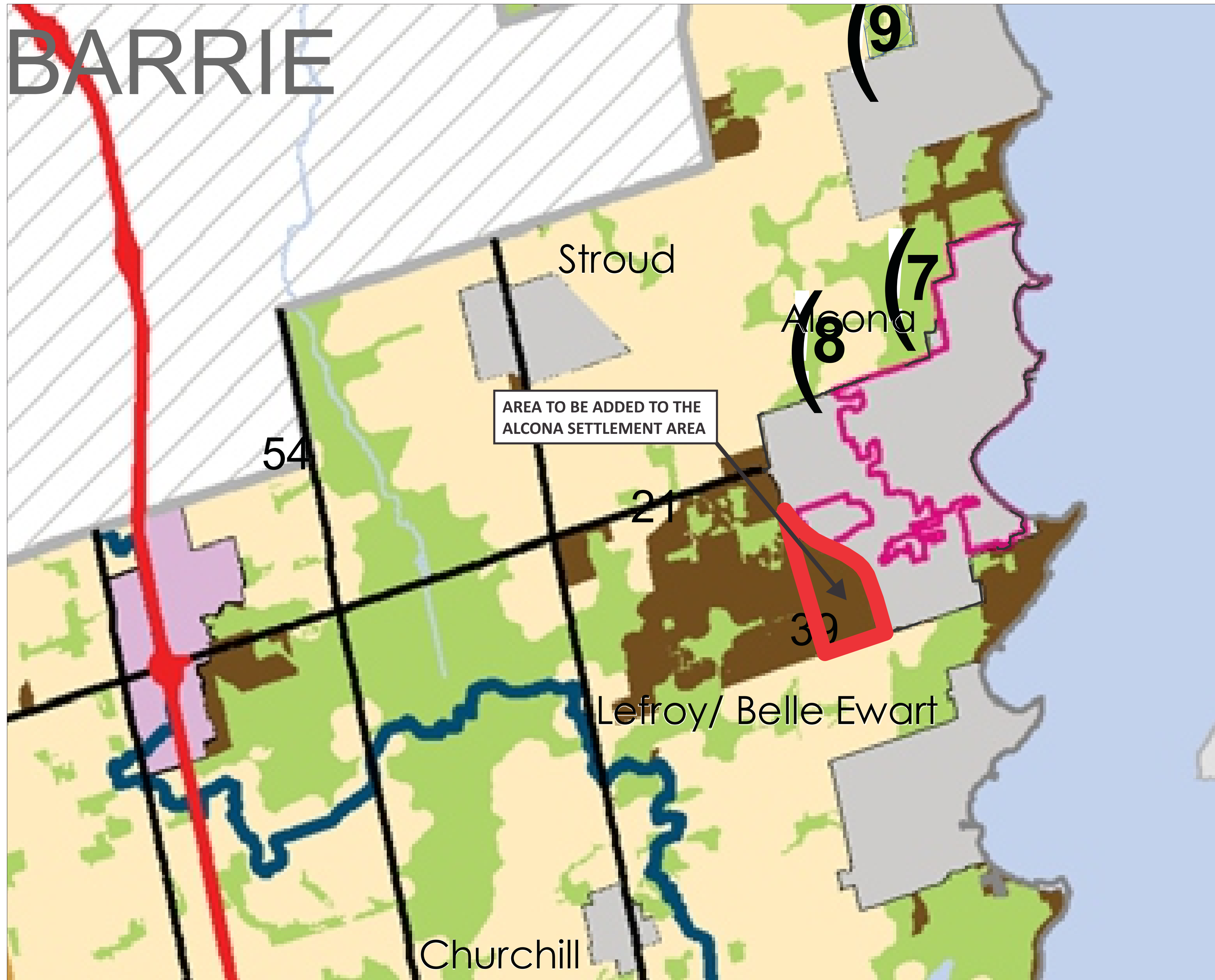
Should there be any questions with regards to our submission or request for any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours truly,  
**KAGAN SHASTRI DeMELO WINER PARK LLP**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul DeMelo', is written over a horizontal line.

Paul; DeMelo  
PMD  
CC. Client  
KLM Planning Partners Inc.

# BARRIE



AREA TO BE ADDED TO THE ALCONA SETTLEMENT AREA



## SCHEDULE 5.1

### To the County of Simcoe Official Plan

### LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Designations	Reference Data
Settlements	Settlement Area Boundary
Greenlands	Built Boundaries
Agricultural	Special Development Area: Big Bay Point
Rural	Greenbelt Plan - Protected Countryside
Strategic Settlement Employment Areas and Economic Employment Districts	(Refer to Schedule 5.3.3 For Details)
Lands not subject to this plan	Niagara Escarpment Plan Area
Settlement Area Boundary Under Appeal	(Refer to Schedule 5.3.1 For Details)
Portion of Settlement Boundary Area Under Appeal	Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area
General Location of Site-Specific Appeals	(Refer to Schedule 5.3.2 For Details)
Lands Subject to Non-Decision	Provincial Highway
	County Road
	Trans Canada Pipeline
	Lake Simcoe Protection Plan - Watershed Boundary

\* Greenbelt Plan – Protected Countryside, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area and Niagara Escarpment Plan Area are included within the Greenbelt Plan Area

This schedule must be referred to in conjunction with the text of the County of Simcoe Official Plan. - Revised November 25, 2008

Approved by OMB Order dated December 29, 2016

Printed: 2017/01/03

AREA TO BE ADDED TO THE ALCONA SETTLEMENT AREA