

June 11, 2025

Submitted online and via email to Chetan.kania@guelph.ca

Chetan Kania
Ministry of Infrastructure
Transit Oriented Communities and Agency Oversight Division
777 Bay St., 5th Floor
Toronto, ON, M7A 2J3

**RE: Bill 17- Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 -
Accelerating Delivery of Transit-Oriented Communities**

The City of Guelph (the "City" or "Guelph") appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the amendments to the *Transit Oriented Communities Act*, 2020. Recognizing that these amendments have received Royal Assent, the following are the general comments and feedback from the City of Guelph regarding these changes for future consideration.

Overview:

Currently, the *Transit Oriented Communities Act*, 2020 (BTFA) authorizes the province to designate land around certain transit projects as transit-oriented community land, and enter into agreements to develop transit-oriented community projects. The *Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act*, 2025 expands the ability to designate transit-oriented community land around all provincial transit projects – which would include the GO rail corridor and Guelph Central Station in Guelph, and removes the requirement for Order in Council approval for select agreements.

Changing the definition of Transit-Oriented Community Projects:

The amendments to the *Transit Oriented Communities Act* allow the development of Transit-Oriented Community Projects around all provincial transit projects.

The City of Guelph acknowledges the important role that transit-oriented communities (TOCs) play in a well-designed urban structure. As such, the City of Guelph is supportive of the Provincial government working with municipalities to deliver transit-oriented community projects as we work towards two-way all-day GO transit service.

As the province explores new opportunities to develop TOCs around provincial transit projects, the City wants to stress the importance of working with municipalities to ensure that any new development conforms to municipal plans. Guelph's Downtown Secondary Plan, which prescribes land use within the possible location of a future TOC in Guelph, reflects a carefully balanced vision for the intensification that

City Hall
1 Carden St
Guelph, ON
Canada
N1H 3A1

T 519-822-1260
TTY 519-826-9771

guelph.ca

respects local heritage and mobility priorities. We would like to request that any initiative driven by the *Transit Oriented Communities Act* conform to municipal secondary plans or be reviewed in direct collaboration with municipal staff. These plans were thoughtfully developed through active community engagement and guided by a grassroots planning approach, ensuring alignment with local and provincial priorities.

Faster development in eligible areas under the *Transit Oriented Communities* may also stress local services such as water and wastewater, schools, etc. Water servicing capacity, in particular, is limited by the fact that the City of Guelph sources its water supply from groundwater. The City asks that the province work closely with municipalities to ensure that municipalities have the resources and infrastructure to appropriately service any new TOC projects.

Streamlined expropriation process:

The *Transit Oriented Communities Act* suspends the ability for landowners to request hearings into the justification for expropriation notices related to transit-oriented community projects, and instead allows for an alternative expropriation dispute mechanism. Any future transit-oriented community project developed around provincial transit under this act would be subject to this accelerated expropriation process.

The City of Guelph urges for any future expropriation process to be transparent, fair and reasonable to the landowner to at least the standard set by the current system. This should include some form of mediation process through the alternative expropriation dispute mechanism.

The City requests that they be invited as an optional party for any alternative expropriation dispute mechanisms developed so municipal interests can be protected, as necessary. The City also requests that any decisions made through the alternative expropriation dispute mechanism be made public for transparency and to communicate outcomes to the public.

Closure:

We appreciate this opportunity to provide input on these changes, and look forward to continued collaboration on shared housing priorities. Should you have any questions about the feedback provided, or require additional details please do not hesitate to contact the City at intergovernmental.relations@guelph.ca.

Sincerely,

Krista Walkey, MCIP, RPP

General Manager, Planning and Building Services
Infrastructure, Development, and Environment
City of Guelph

T 519-822-1260 extension (2395)

TTY 519-826-9771

E krista.walkey@guelph.ca