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Date: June 4, 2025
To: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Planning Consultations)
From: Jameson Pickard, Senior Policy Planner, Wellington County
RE: **Bill 17 Protecting Ontario by Building Faster and Smart Act, 2025**
(ERO Postings 025-0461, 025-0462, 025-0463)

This submission is in response to the consultations posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) related to Bill 17- Protecting Ontario by Building Faster and Smart Act, 2025. Particularly ERO Postings:

- **0025-461**- Proposed Planning Act and City of Toronto Act, 2006 Changes (Schedules 3 and 7 of Bill 17 - Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025)
- **025-0462** - Proposed Regulations – Complete Application
- **025-0463** - Proposed Regulation – As-of-Right Variations from Setback Requirements

We note that due to the short comment period, Planning Staff are submitting these comments prior to receiving County Council endorsement. Given that many of the details related to these matters are actively being consulted on or are forthcoming through regulation, these comments should be considered preliminary. Staff comments are broken down into areas of no objection, areas of concern, and areas requiring additional clarification:

No Objection

- Planning Staff do not object to the changes, which would give the Minister the ability to impose and secure conditions on Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZOs) prior to the uses in the MZO being permitted.
- Planning Staff do not object to the streamlining changes, which would prohibit Official Plans and Zoning By-laws from containing provisions prohibiting schools and associated facilities on urban residential lands.

Areas of Concern

- Planning Staff is concerned with the proposed changes that would permit “as-of-right” variations to municipal setbacks in urban residential areas. This approach does not give any merit to the varied contexts that goes into determining if a

reduction to a setback is appropriate. Further, as is proposed now, a 10 % as-of-right variation could be applied to all setback requirements of a development proposal. If carried forward, consideration should be given to narrowing the applicability of this authority. This permission should not be used in large-scale applications or on sites where a site-specific zoning by-law amendment was publicly consulted on and approved. A potential solution could be to delegate a certain range of variations to municipal staff for review and decision.

- Planning Staff is concerned with the proposal, which would require municipalities to obtain Ministerial approval prior to updating Complete Application study requirements in the Official Plan. This approach appears to be adding red tape to the planning process and creates potential slowdowns for municipalities in adapting their Official Plans to new and evolving issues in their communities.
- Regarding the exclusion of certain studies a municipality can require as part of a Complete Application, it is unclear whether these changes remove the matters which would have been part of a study (i.e. sun/shadow/wind etc) from being considered in the review of a development proposal. There is a concern that this could impact a municipality's ability to assess planning applications fully and in a timely manner. A solution could be for the Province to consult on and develop standardized terms of reference for a range of development studies. This would provide predictability for the development community and ensure that site-specific matters can be adequately reviewed and addressed.

Areas of Clarification

- Regarding the creation of a list of certified professionals that municipalities would be required to accept studies from as "final submission" for purposes of a Complete Application. It is unclear if a municipality could request updates to a study submitted by certified professionals during the statutory review period of an application. If proponents are not required to provide additional information to address identified issues, this could impact a municipality's ability to assess planning applications fully and in a timely manner.

Thank you for your consideration.