

## Staff Report

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**Report To:** Community Services Committee  
**Report From:** Sabine Robart, Manager of Planning & Heritage  
**Meeting Date:** November 19, 2025  
**Report Code:** CS-25-118  
**Subject:** Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 Update

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### Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-25-118 Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025 Update, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to:

1. Send this report to the Province of Ontario as the City's comments on Bill 60 and the Environmental Registry of Ontario posting 025-1097, 025-1099 and 025-1100; and
2. Forward this report to Paul Vickers, MPP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

### Highlights:

- On October 23, 2025, the province introduced [Bill 60, the Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025](#), which is an omnibus bill that seeks to amend 18 different Acts, including the Planning Act.
- The [technical briefing](#) provided by the province is attached as Schedule A.
- The province is currently seeking feedback through the Environmental Registry of Ontario for a number of proposals, including standardized Official Plan parameters and minimum lot sizes.
- The proposed changes will necessitate additional staff education and training to ensure successful implementation. As well, updating

- local policy documents in response to the provincial changes requires significant financial investments.
- These constant changes create an environment of uncertainty and disruption, which does not serve the province's stated goal of getting housing built.

### **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

### **Climate and Environmental Implications:**

This supports the objectives of the City's Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Plan by considering climate adaptation in the development of the City's strategies, plans and policies.

### **Previous Report/Authority:**

[CS-22-013](#)

Bill 276, the Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act, 2021

Bill 13, The Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021

[CS-22-084](#)

Bill 109 More Homes for Everyone Act

[CS-22-149](#) and [CS-23-078](#)

Bill 23 – More Homes Built Faster Act

[CS-23-053](#)

Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023

[CS-23-012](#) and [CS-23-080](#)

Proposed Provincial Policy Statement 2023

[CS-23-122](#)

Bill 139 Proposed Less Red Tape, More Common Sense Act, 2023

[CS-24-038](#)

Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2023

[CS-24-078](#)

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

[CM-25-016](#)

Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025

## **Background:**

### **Bill 60 Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act 2025**

On October 23, 2025, the province introduced [Bill 60, the \*Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025\*](#), which is an omnibus bill that seeks to amend 18 different Acts, including the Planning Act. The [technical briefing](#) provided by the province is attached as Schedule A.

The bill includes three core themes:

- Building Homes and Communities.
- Fighting Delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board.
- Keeping People Moving.

The following amendments fall under the “Building Homes and Communities” theme:

- **Building Code** - Review of the Building Code to reduce regulatory burdens and costs.
- **Municipal application processes** - provincially led feasibility study to explore mechanisms that will streamline municipal land use planning and building code processes through automation and municipal data tracking IT solutions to improve efficiency and transparency.
- **Official Plans** - MMAH will work with municipalities and key stakeholders and the public to establish simplified and standardized official plans that are more predictable and streamlined.
- **Green Roofs** - Changes to the City of Toronto Act and Site Plan regulations to prohibit requirements for green roofs or green development standards at the lot level during site plan control.
- **Minor Variances** - Amending the Planning Act to enable “as-of-right” minor variances through the creation of an Ontario Regulation (O-Reg) to certain standards in Zoning By-laws (like building height and setbacks).
- **Minster’s Zoning Orders** -

- Amending the Planning Act to make Provincial Planning Statements (PPS) inapplicable with respect to all Minister’s decisions, including past decisions, under the Planning Act outside of the Greenbelt Area. This would provide the Minister with the same flexibility for all planning decisions as area already provide with respect to MZO’s.
- Making MZO’s no longer be implemented as an O-Reg. Decisions would continue to be posted on a government website.
- **Record of Site Condition** - Proposed amendments to the regulation would remove the need for a Record of Site Condition (RSC) where there is low risk of contamination, determined by an expert, and for conversion of higher office/commercial buildings to mixed-use developments with residential or other sensitive uses.
- **Communal water & wastewater systems** - The province would consult on how to further expand the use of communal water and wastewater systems to spur new development in rural communities that are not serviced by municipalities.
- **On-farm septic systems** - The Province is proposing to allow more small-sized septic systems for on-farm housing for agricultural workers (regulated through the Building Code). Changes to the Ontario Water Resources Act to allow more small systems (under 10,000 litres/day) up to 50,000l/d on an agricultural lot would be allowed under the Building Code. The Province is also proposing to allow proponents to self-register on the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry (EASR).
- **Community Improvement Plans** - Changes to the Planning Act would enable the flexible use of Community Improvement Plans (CIPs), including allowing upper-tier municipalities to adopt CIPs without being prescribed by regulation.
- **Construction Act** - Changes to the Construction Act to refine and clarify the new annual release of holdback requirements.

The following amendments fall under the “Keeping People Moving” theme:

- **Road construction standards** - Undertake amendments to the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act (PTHIA) to allow the minister to require input from technical experts and municipalities on the standards for road construction/design to harmonize standards across the Province. Proposed amendments would also allow the minister to make regulations on all road

contracts (including contracts between municipalities and third-party contractors), establishing an exemption process for non-application of a standard and reporting requirements on the application and use of road construction standards.

- **Bike Lanes** - Fully prohibiting all municipalities from reducing the number of motor vehicle lanes when installing new bicycle lanes. Regulation-making authority will also enable the Minister of Transportation to prescribe additional activities and provide exemptions.

## **Analysis:**

With all new legislation, understanding of the proposed changes will increase with time. Staff are committed to continuing to monitor legislative updates and provide regular updates to Committee and Council.

The province is currently seeking feedback through the ERO via the following comment opportunities until November 22, 2025:

ERO Number [025-1097](#) – Proposed Changes to the Planning Act (Schedule 10 of Bill 60 – the Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025) (comments close November 22, 2025).

## **Minor Variances (As-of-right Variations from Performance Standards)**

Bill 17 established a framework for variances to setback requirements, but a regulation implementing this change is not yet in force.

New subsections are proposed to be added to the zoning by-law provisions of the Act to provide rules with respect to reducing minimum standards and increasing maximum standards that are found in zoning by-laws “as-of-right”, for example, maximum building height.

This change would apply to buildings and structures located on parcels of urban residential land, but not on those lands located within 120 metres of a conservation authority-regulated area.

- The potential effect of this proposal is to ‘adjust’ zoning by-law provisions for parcels of urban residential lands by the percentage (i.e., 10%) decreed by the province, without any regard for the local context.
- The incremental, global (provincial) alterations to municipal zoning provisions will impact the ability of the Committee of Adjustment to

evaluate the site-specific context and character of the proposed development and the surrounding neighbourhood and may result in developments that have unintended negative impacts.

- Owen Sound is defined by the ravines and slopes of the Niagara Escarpment and the shoreline of Georgian Bay. Much of the City includes regulated lands and adding a 120 m setback will cover a significant area. These features are regulated by the Conservation Authority and do not generally follow lot lines. The administrative burden on municipal staff of establishing which lots are eligible for the 'as-of-right' exemption under the Planning Act will be challenging. Future O-Regs will need to provide clear guidance on this matter. This change will consequently have a significant administrative burden and be limited in its application.
  - The rationale for applying this restriction to regulated areas is not understood by staff. Development is not permitted in hazard zones, and the province should confirm that these as-of-right variances should not be interpreted to mean that development would be permitted in hazard areas. The hazard zone and the regulated area do not align and the additional 120 m buffer will create significant areas where this right will not apply.
  - Additionally, these variances may create setback issues between dwellings where additional fire protection is required, which will add costs. As well, these changes may negatively impact the ability to access rear yards through side yards.

### **Policy Statements and Ministers' Decisions**

Decisions by Council and Committee of Adjustment affecting land use planning matters must be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS). Minister's decisions on ministerial zoning orders are currently exempt from this requirement. The proposed change will exempt all ministerial decisions from the PPS consistency requirements. This change is intended to grant the Minister with increased flexibility in their decision-making.

The Provincial Planning Statement provides overall policy directions on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development in Ontario, and applies province-wide, except where this Provincial Planning Statement or another provincial plan provides otherwise.

[Section 2 of the Planning Act](#) outlines matters of provincial interest and requires that the Minister, the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board and the Tribunal, in carrying out their responsibilities under this Act, shall have regard to, among other matters, matters of provincial interest such as,

- a. the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;
- b. the protection of the agricultural resources of the Province;
- c. the conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base;
- d. the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;
- e. the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water;
- f. the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems;
- g. the minimization of waste;
- h. the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- h.1 the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies;
- i. the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;
- j. the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;
- k. the adequate provision of employment opportunities;
- l. the protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities;
- m. the co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies;
- n. the resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private interests;
- o. the protection of public health and safety;
- p. the appropriate location of growth and development;
- q. the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians;

- r. the promotion of built form that,
  - i. is well-designed,
  - ii. encourages a sense of place, and
  - iii. provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant;
- s. the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate.

All decisions made in the province, regardless of the level, should have regard to these parameters. The proposal to exempt Minister's decisions from considering these matters, such as accessibility, public health and safety, is counter to these items being listed as having provincial importance if they can be set aside so easily.

### **Community Improvement Plans**

A [Community Improvement Plan](#) (CIP) is a tool that allows municipal planners and economic developers to work together to create policies and provide incentives targeting specific types of growth and investment. Proposed changes would allow all upper-tier municipalities to offer community improvement plans. Additional resources and perspectives from upper-tier municipal government are likely to enhance economic development activities and is seen as a positive change.

[ERO Number 025-1099](#) – Consultation on simplifying and standardizing official plans (comments close November 22, 2025).

The province is proposing a set of parameters for municipal official plans that may include:

- Mandatory standard chapters
- Standardized schedules, overlays and data
- Limiting the length of official plans
- Standardized land use designations

Standardization has the potential to provide consistency for developers across the province. Official Plans are one of the tools used to implement the Provincial Planning Statement, and so this change has some logic.

However, it is essential that the proposed changes allow for the recognition of local and unique community features and that facilitate adaptive and nuanced local policies.

It appears that there may be restrictions on the use of secondary plans. Secondary plans are important for areas that are experiencing new growth, such as, for example, the Sydenham Heights Planning Area of the City. Secondary plans enable the creation of neighbourhood-level policies for areas that benefit from specific policies to plan for the growth and development in terms of density, type, form, timing, scheduling, and servicing of future development.

The implementation of standardized Official Plans should be supported by funding to municipalities. The City is currently updating its Official Plan in response to the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement. These conformity exercises come at a significant cost to the taxpayers. If every Official Plan will need to be brought into compliance with the standardized format, the province is strongly encouraged to provide financial support. Additionally, there is a staff time requirement to undertake these updates that takes away from the time staff have to process development applications.

ERO Number [025-1100](#) – Consultation on Minimum Lot Sizes  
(comments close November 22, 2025)

Minimum lot sizes as established through the zoning by-law vary from municipality to municipality across the province.

The province is seeking feedback on the linkage between minimum lot sizes on parcels of urban residential land and increased housing options and affordability.

In order to be a developable lot, a parcel of urban residential needs to provide for:

- stormwater management,
- outdoor amenity space,
- snow storage,
- parking,
- tree planting and preservation, and
- the actual building envelope.

Owen Sound receives a higher average annual snowfall amount than other municipalities in southern Ontario. A range of lot sizes across the province may be required to address such regional differences.

Removing lot size requirements altogether may have unintended impacts, such as reducing the supply of larger parcels of land that can support multi-

unit buildings, which generally allow for the most efficient use of municipal infrastructure.

Smaller lot sizes may also be unable to support Additional Residential Units (ARUs), especially in urban municipalities that lack frequent transit (public transit service that runs at least every 15 minutes in both directions) and consequently rely more heavily on car transportation.

Smaller lots may create additional pressure on City parks and recreational amenities, as they provide less on-site amenity space.

Smaller lot sizes may also have consequences on urban servicing capacity in the linear infrastructure based on the ultimate density that is created.

It is essential that provincial changes enable local municipalities to develop policies that reflect their local characteristics and continue to meet provincial requirements.

### **Overall Comments**

These are only a fraction of at least 16 ERO postings relating to various legislative changes that would impact municipalities posted since mid-September.

The ongoing changes to legislation and related regulations, as demonstrated in the "Previous Report" section of this report, are making it challenging for municipalities and municipal planners to keep pace with these changes.

Municipal staff must review and understand policy changes so that they can be implemented appropriately. In municipalities that do not have dedicated policy departments, this diverts time and attention away from processing development applications, which consequently may slow down the process of development approvals.

Efficiency is often a function of predictability. The rate of changes to the Planning Act over the last five years does not allow sufficient time for the changes to be implemented, let alone for their impact to be evaluated, before the next set of changes is announced. These constant changes create an environment of uncertainty and disruption, which does not serve the province's stated goal of getting housing built.

The cumulative impact of these ongoing changes also does not allow for monitoring and evaluation to understand what is working and what is not, thereby hindering efforts to encourage housing.

The province can support housing development, particularly affordable housing starts, by providing funding to developers and non-profits through a streamlined and simple application process.

### **Financial Implications:**

The proposed changes will necessitate additional staff education and training to ensure successful implementation. As noted, updating local policy documents in response to the provincial changes requires significant financial investments.

### **Communication Strategy:**

This report will be provided to the province through the Environmental Registry, and a copy will be sent to Paul Vickers, MPP.

### **Consultation:**

Staff regularly consult a range of professional sources to inform their analysis and recommendations, including publications from associations such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), and other legal, financial, and business consultancies.

The local planners in Grey County met recently to discuss the impacts of Bill 60.

### **Attachments:**

Schedule A – Technical Briefing – Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act 2025 (Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, October 23, 2025)

### **Recommended by:**

Sabine Robart, M.SC. (PL), MCIP, RPP, Manager of Planning & Heritage

Pamela Coulter, BA, RPP, Director of Community Services

### **Submission approved by:**

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

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