



Development Approval Roundtable

Action Plan

November 2017

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Context

Ontario's housing market has seen very dynamic growth in recent years, with prices in the Greater Toronto Area and the Greater Golden Horseshoe rising significantly. Housing demand is being fueled by a robust Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) economy, growth in population, employment and incomes, combined with low interest rates. While these factors are indicative of the attractiveness of the region to both new residents and investors, it has raised concerns regarding housing affordability.

Ensuring residents can access housing that meets their needs is necessary to the sustained strength of the region. Housing is more than just where people live; it is social infrastructure that forms the building blocks of our communities and our economy.

The housing industry is also a critical economic driver in the region, contributing over \$14 billion to Ontario's economy. The construction of housing has significant economic spin-off effects and employs almost 200,000 people in the province. In addition, housing options that are both affordable and accessible are crucial to attracting and retaining the skilled workforce that our region needs to grow.

Recognizing the social and economic importance of a good supply of housing, Ontario introduced a 16 point plan¹ to make housing more affordable for homebuyers and renters. This Plan will help more people find an affordable place to call home, while bringing stability to the real estate market and protecting the investment of homeowners.

As part of the plan, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA), in partnership with other ministries involved in the residential development approval process, convened a Development Approvals Roundtable chaired by the Secretary of Cabinet, and vice-chaired by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Housing. The Roundtable includes provincial Deputy Ministers, senior municipal officials, and representatives from the development, construction and real estate industries. The objective of the Roundtable is to identify opportunities to streamline the development approval process to ensure there are not undue delays in bringing new housing supply to market, while maintaining the intent of policy and legislative requirements.

The work of the Roundtable is building on the ongoing efforts at both the provincial and municipal levels to streamline and improve the development approval process.

¹ Ontario's Fair Housing Plan: <https://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2017/04/ontarios-fair-housing-plan.html>

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Many municipalities within the GTHA have either already completed, or are in the process of undertaking, in-depth reviews of their approvals processes to identify opportunities for improvement. Members of the Roundtable recognize the importance of this work, and have sought to identify opportunities to build on it to further improve the approval process and bring more housing supply to market.

Recognizing the importance of ensuring housing can get to market efficiently, the Roundtable meetings have provided a unique opportunity to take stock of the existing processes and to have the relevant people around the table to look at whether we can do it better.

A dynamic and sustainable economy depends critically on efficient processes that ensure public safety, compliance with legislation and land use plans, and protection of our important environmental and natural assets. These processes need to recognize and take full advantage of our public infrastructure, now and well into the future. Also, they need to support appropriate development and not inadvertently delay or obstruct bringing product to market, especially housing that is affordable for low and middle income Ontarians.

The action items that have been identified focus on leveraging information technology, streamlining and modernizing approval processes, and providing additional support for applicants through the development of new guidance materials. The members of the Roundtable agree that these action items have the potential to move the yardsticks forward on improving the approval process and bring housing more quickly to market.

The Roundtable members believe these action items are appropriate to streamline the development approvals process, bring housing to market, and support provincial and municipal priorities for land use and infrastructure planning.

The Roundtable members are pleased to deliver these fourteen action items to the Ontario Government for consideration, and would ask that the government consider taking action on these items at the soonest opportunity.

ACTION ITEMS

Environment and Resources

1. Stormwater Management

- a) The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) will establish a Conservation Authorities (CAs) Service Delivery Review Committee by Fall 2017.
 - i. The Committee will, among other things, examine ways to streamline and improve the timelines for the approval of CA permits and the role of CAs in reviewing the local use of regional flood control facilities. This will include looking at opportunities to better integrate CA approvals with municipal approvals, or to undertake simultaneous review, as well as consider options of introducing timeframes for CA approvals.
 - ii. MNRF will distribute the Terms of Reference for the CA Service Delivery Review Committee in October 2017 to the members of the Roundtable, and will circulate the priorities identified by the Committee in late November, 2017.

2. Environmental Assessments and Modernization of Approvals

- a) The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) will report back in Fall 2017 on a timeline to address concerns on delays in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process related to Part II Order Requests.
 - i. The ministry committed to posting the Part II Order Guidance on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) Registry in Fall 2017 as a commitment to the Auditor General.
 - ii. In response to the EBR Review by the Municipal Engineers Association (MEA) and Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO), MOECC committed to review requests made regarding the Part II Order process and municipal class EA schedules (risk based approach for requirements) by December 2018.
 - iii. MOECC will identify opportunities to deliver on components of the review in the short term, and will report back on the timelines for component deliverables by December 2017.
- b) Municipalities are encouraged to continue to undertake integrated planning to align the EA process with municipal planning and approvals.
- c) MOECC committed to the following actions and will report back on timing to address:

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- i. Adding more environmental compliance processes to the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry (EASR) (e.g. permits by rule).
 - To ensure a common understanding of low-risk activities, MOECC will distribute the criteria used for determining low-risk activities in October 2017.
- ii. Reducing the Ministry's review time for the Transfer of Review Process, as well as expanding the number of municipalities that are participating and updating the program, subject to municipal consent.
- iii. Exploring whether the government review team process could be expanded to support applicants for Class EAs used in individual EAs such as municipal, transit and waterpower.
- iv. Providing guidance documents on Indigenous consultation for EAs.
- v. Reducing Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) review timelines, in particular the approvals process for stormwater management works, and developing service standards.

3. Species at Risk

- a) MNRF will support proponent-led assessments of species at risk requirements early in the EA process to facilitate timely approvals.
- b) MNRF will continue to enhance the tools available on species at risk by developing guidance materials on best management practices and habitat identification on an ongoing basis.
- c) MNRF will investigate the use of the "Safe Harbour" tool, which is enabled under Endangered Species Act and encourages property owners to create or enhance species at risk habitat for a set period of time while having legal assurance that they can alter the land use at a later date.
- d) MNRF will continue to identify opportunities for using a risk-based approach to the implementation of the Endangered Species Act.

Planning

4. Certainty and Transition

- a) MMA will produce guidance on the implementation of the Growth Plan, 2017, including the application of new targets and transition provisions. The province will share a draft of this guidance with representatives of the development industry and municipal sector, prior to finalizing by the end of 2017.
- b) To support the implementation of the Growth Plan 2017 and Greenbelt Plan 2017, MMA, MNRF, OMAFRA and MOECC, with support from appropriate ministries, will produce the following implementation support material:
 - i. Guidance on Agricultural Impact Assessments by the end of 2017 (OMAFRA lead);

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- ii. Mapping and guidance for identifying and supporting the Agriculture System by the end of 2017 (OMAFRA lead);
- iii. Mapping of the Natural Heritage System by Fall 2017 (MNRF lead);
- iv. Land-needs assessment methodology by the end of 2017 (MMA lead);
- v. Guidance on carrying out planning at the watershed level by the end of 2017 (MOECC and MNRF lead); and,
- vi. Guidance for developing Greenhouse Gas inventories, targets and emission-reduction strategies by the end of 2017 (MOECC lead).

5. Zoning

- a) MMA will enhance engagement with municipalities and develop new educational tools to support up-to-date and forward-looking zoning by-laws and/or community planning permit systems.
 - i. MMA to proactively engage with municipalities to support the implementation of up-to-date zoning by-laws, including promoting the objectives and benefits of the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS), to promote zoning (or CPPS) provisions and standards that align with provincial plans and policies, and municipal official plans.
 - ii. MMA to develop a guidebook of case studies and best practices that identify progressive zoning approaches, including the objectives and benefits of the CPPS. This will include looking at best practices for supporting forward-looking planning in major transit station areas in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
 - iii. MMA will work with municipalities and the development sector to explore opportunities to advance forward-looking zoning.

6. Infrastructure Alignment to Incent Updated Zoning with Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and Other Capital Ministries

- a) The province will leverage infrastructure investments to support updated municipal planning documents and forward-looking zoning.
 - i. The Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) will work with MMA and capital and planning ministries through the Long Term Infrastructure Plan and Plan Alignment process to continue to strengthen the alignment of provincial infrastructure investments with provincial and municipal plans and policies to support integrated infrastructure and land use planning. This will help provide for broader public service facilities, such as hospitals, long-term care facilities, libraries and schools, being located in such a way as to support the achievement of complete communities and protect employment areas, as articulated in the Growth Plan, 2017 and Provincial Policy Statement.

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- ii. Where infrastructure investments are made or funded by the province, MTO and other capital ministries will work with MMA and MOI to include provisions in infrastructure project agreements (Transfer Payment Agreements for municipally-owned or Master Agreements for provincially-owned projects) to require that municipal planning documents (official plans and zoning by-laws) be updated to align with provincial plans and policies, and to support forward-looking zoning.

7. Cultural Heritage Landscapes

- a) The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) will produce guidance on cultural heritage resources in the land use planning process by Fall 2017. A Guide to Cultural Heritage Resources in the Land Use Planning Process is intended to help those involved in the land use planning process in Ontario to understand the cultural heritage policies in the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. A draft will be shared with representatives of the development industry and municipal sector, prior to broader public consultation in early Fall.
- b) MTCS will produce guidance on the identification, evaluation and management of cultural heritage landscapes by May 2018. A draft will be shared with representatives of the development industry and municipal sector, prior to finalizing.
- c) MTCS, MMA and municipalities will explore opportunities to integrate consideration of cultural heritage landscapes into the municipal comprehensive review (MCR) process or subsequent major official plan amendments, enabling municipalities to consider and seek public input into heritage properties and landscapes in a broader context and across the entire municipality.

8. One Window

- a) MMA will work with its one-window land use planning partners to increase accountability and transparency of decisions, particularly in light of the proposed Planning Act amendments that would make some provincial decisions sheltered from appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board/Tribunal. Any process changes would be in place in time for the implementation of the new Tribunal, should Bill 139 be passed in its current form.

9. Service Standards

- a) MMA will work with other ministries that issue permits and approvals related to residential land development to make existing service standards, and the results in meeting those standards, publicly transparent. The province will report back to the Roundtable on progress made and next steps in Spring 2018.

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10. Approvals Concierge

- a) MMA to lead a “concierge” model of service delivery, leveraging the work of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator and the Housing Delivery Group who are focused on removing barriers to housing projects that meet the needs of local communities. This will supplement the work of the existing one-window planning process connections across ministries to enhance provincial coordination of site-specific local approvals on high profile projects that would provide housing.

Data and Evidence

11. Data and Evidence

- a) With the collaboration of the federal government and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the province will engage an external consultant in Fall 2017 to support the Data and Evidence Working Group to:
 - i. Establish common definitions and complementary approaches for collecting data on housing and land supply in the Greater Golden Horseshoe in order to allow for the development of a regional database. This will include recommending an approach for regular and frequent collection and assembly of housing and land supply data from municipalities and private sector sources as appropriate.
 - ii. Provide a recommendation on integrating resale housing data and new housing supply data, and a recommendation on key variables that need to be considered when undertaking housing need analysis.
 - iii. Recommend an approach, including addressing governance and funding requirements, for regular public reporting on housing supply and demand.
 - iv. Complete a report by early 2018.
 - v. The Terms of Reference for the Request for Proposals for the external consultant will be developed by the Data and Evidence Working Group and confirmed by the Roundtable.

Infrastructure

12. Transportation Corridor Planning

- a) MTO will proceed with the Highway Access Management Plan pilot project “QEW Prosperity Corridor” involving Burlington, Halton Region and other development stakeholders.
- b) MTO will start a dialogue with other municipalities on undertaking similar “pilot” projects elsewhere across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- c) When undertaking “pilot” projects MTO will develop a rural and urban lens to

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highway access issues to ensure that varying contexts and priorities are considered.

- d) MTO will proceed with further development of its electronic permitting system to include a planning component to allow municipalities to submit, track and access ministry comments on a range of planning and development submissions. System requirements to be defined in 2018.
- e) MTO will announce next steps regarding the future of the GTA West Corridor as soon as possible.
- f) MTO will work with MMA and Metrolinx to assess whether and how new tools and policies (e.g. a Transportation Planning Policy Statement) could be used to support planning for transit-supportive development in major transit station areas.

Innovation and Technology

13. E-Permitting

- a) The province will establish a Task Force, with appropriate representation from stakeholders and experts, to undertake an assessment and examine the feasibility of developing an e-permitting and tracking system for municipal and provincial land use and development approvals, including the identification of potential municipal pilot opportunities. The work of the Task Force will build on existing work done by provincial ministries and municipalities to move towards e-permitting systems, and link with the federal government and its support for Smart Cities Initiatives.

Monitoring and Evaluation

14. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a) The province, in partnership with municipalities and the development sector, will monitor the progress of action items and report back regularly to the Roundtable members. The first report back will be prepared in Spring 2018.

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ROUNDTABLE MEMBERS

Organization	Name	Position
Cabinet Office	Steve Orsini (Chair)	Secretary of Cabinet
Ministry of Municipal Affairs	Laurie LeBlanc (Vice-Chair)	Deputy Minister
Ministry of Transportation	Stephen Rhodes	Deputy Minister
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change	Paul Evans	Deputy Minister
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	Bill Thornton	Deputy Minister
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Greg Meredith	Deputy Minister
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport	Maureen Adamson	Deputy Minister
Ministry of Economic Development and Growth	Giles Gherson	Deputy Minister
Ministry of Municipal Affairs – Ontario Growth Secretariat	Larry Clay	Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Economic Development and Growth	Kevin Perry	Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Finance	Allan Doheny	Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Infrastructure	Adam Redish	Assistant Deputy Minister
Durham Region	Brian Bridgeman	Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development
Halton Region	Ron Glenn	Chief Planning Official and Chair, Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario
Peel Region	Arvin Prasad	Director of Planning Policy & Research

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Organization	Name	Position
York Region	Valerie Shuttleworth	Chief Planner
City of Hamilton	Jason Thorne	General Manager of Planning and Economic Development
City of Toronto	Jennifer Keesmaat Kerri Voumvakis	Chief Planner Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis
Building Industry and Land Development Association	Darren Steedman Bryan Tuckey	Chair President and Chief Executive Officer
Ontario Home Builders' Association	Neil Rodgers Joe Vaccaro Susan Mammel	President Chief Executive Officer Executive Officer, Hamilton Halton Home Builders' Association
Residential Construction Council of Ontario	Richard Lyall	President
Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA)	Tim Hudak	Chief Executive Officer
Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB)	John DiMichele	Chief Executive Officer