



## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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To: Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

From: Meghan Tydd-Hrynyk, Planner

Date: June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

Re: **Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 – Proposed Changes**

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### RECOMMENDATION

That the Council of the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh receive the report by Meghan Tydd-Hrynyk, Planner, dated June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 for information.

The report has been circulated to the local municipalities and County Council for information.

### Background

The Province has introduced Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025, with the intent to make it easier and faster to build new homes and infrastructure. The proposed legislation received first reading on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and includes changes to the Building Code Act, Development Charges Act, and the Planning Act. The commenting period for the corresponding Regulations for the changes to the Planning Act is open until June 26, 2025 on the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

### COMMENTS

This report focuses on the proposed changes to the *Planning Act* under Schedule 7 and the corresponding Regulation and provides an overview of the changes most relevant in Huron County.

### Complete Application Requirements

The legislation proposes to include regulation making authority to enable the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to limit the reports or studies that can be required as part of a complete application. A proposed regulation could limit the scope of permitted studies, and proposes to exclude Sun/Shadow, Wind, Urban Design and Lighting reports. Municipalities will require written approval from the Minister before adopting an Official Plan Amendment to change or add study requirements for a complete application.

### Certified Professionals

It is proposed that if a report submitted in support of an application is prepared by a certified professional, it is deemed to meet the requirements of a complete application. The list of “prescribed professions” that will satisfy this requirement has not yet been provided by the Province and is proposed to be set out through a new Regulation.

### Conditional Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs)

The Minister will be given the jurisdiction to impose conditions prior to uses in an MZO being permitted. Where a condition is imposed, it can be enforced by way of an agreement that can be registered on title.

## **Streamline Planning Approvals for Schools**

The proposed legislation would exempt the placement of all portable classrooms at public school sites from site plan approval and will allow Kindergarten to Grade 12 public schools and accessory uses such as associated childcare to be permitted 'as of right' on urban lands with municipal services zoned for residential uses.

## **Variations to Minor Variances**

The legislation proposes to reduce the number of Minor Variances required by including regulation making authority for variances to Zoning By-law setbacks to be permitted 'as of right' if a development proposal is within a certain percentage of the required setback. This would apply to urban residential lands on full municipal services and exclude areas such as hazard lands, lands near shorelines and railways.

The Province is considering permitting variations to be permitted "as-of-right" if a proposal is within 10% of setback requirements applicable to those lands. For example, if a zoning by-law requires a 5 metre front yard setback from the property line, this would effectively reduce the setback to 4.5 metres and the building would be permitted 0.5 metres into that 5 metre setback as-of-right, without a minor variance or zoning by-law amendment.

This would mean that there would be fewer applications submitted and fewer hearings for minor variances before a municipal committee of adjustment for these proposals.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Further information will be provided when Bill 17 receives third reading and is ultimately passed including direction on transition.

The Planning and Development Department will continue to monitor for additional regulations relating to Bill 17 and provide information back to Council.

Sincerely,



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Meghan Tydd-Hrynyk  
Planner