



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

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June 26, 2025

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Good day,

At its meeting held on June 26, 2025 Wellington County Council approved the following recommendation from the Planning Committee:

**That the report Bill 17 –Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 be received for information.**

**That this report be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on behalf of the County of Wellington and circulated to member municipalities for their consideration.**

Please find enclosed the Bill 17 – Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025.

Should you have any questions, please contact Jameson Pickard, Senior Policy Planner, at [jamesonp@wellington.ca](mailto:jamesonp@wellington.ca).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Courts", with a horizontal line underneath.

Kim Courts  
Deputy Clerk



# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

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## COUNCIL REPORT

**To:** Warden and Members of the Planning Committee  
**From:** Jameson Pickard, Senior Policy Planner  
**Date:** Thursday, June 12, 2025  
**Subject:** **Bill 17 – Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025**

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### 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of [Bill 17 - Protecting Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025](#) that was recently introduced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Government's stated goal with this legislation is to streamline approval timelines and reduce financial barriers to the construction of new homes and infrastructure.

This report reviews changes related to the *Planning Act* and the development approvals process but also highlights other legislative changes that may impact on the County and our Member Municipalities.

### 2.0 Background:

On May 12, 2025, the Province introduced Bill 17 into the Legislature. This Bill proposes changes to eight different pieces of legislation, including the *Planning Act*, the *Development Charges Act* and the *Building Code Act*. The suite of changes proposed by Bill 17 can be grouped into the following themes:

- Accelerating transit and Provincial infrastructure development
- Accelerating Transit-Oriented Community projects
- Enabling authorities to speed up transportation permitting
- Streamlining/standardizing municipal development processes and development charges framework.

At the time of preparing this report, Bill 17 was ordered for second reading. Together with the legislation, the Province also released a technical briefing, which further describes the Province's intent behind its legislative changes and highlights additional initiatives it will be pursuing to support the legislation's objectives. The technical briefing is available [here](#).

A series of Environmental Registry of Ontario and Regulatory Registry postings have been released seeking feedback on some of the legislative and regulatory changes with comment deadlines of June 11, 2025, and June 26, 2025. These postings are listed in Appendix A of this report.

It is also noted that the proposed legislation was accompanied by an additional funding announcement by Minister Flack, adding \$400 million to the [Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund](#) and the [Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program](#) to support the delivery of critical infrastructure across Ontario.

### 3.0 Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025

Below is a review of the *Planning Act* changes and some of the additional planning-related initiatives the Province will be pursuing. Further a summary of changes to the *Development Charges Act* and the *Building Code Act* are provided for information.

#### 3.1 Planning Act Changes

Schedule 3 of Bill 17 amends the *Planning Act* and propose the following changes:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Permit certain Minor Variances as-of-right</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to the Planning Act would give the Minister regulation-making authority to allow “as-of-right” variations to municipal setback distances, on urban residential lands, for buildings and structures up to a certain threshold (outside of the Greenbelt).</li><li>• A proposed regulation sets the variation threshold at 10% of the municipal setback, (I.e. a 5 m front yard setback could be varied to 4.5 m as-of-right).</li></ul>   |
| <b>Standardize Complete Application Requirements</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to the Planning Act would limit complete application (study/ report) requirements to what is currently identified in an Official Plan for most planning applications.</li><li>• Give the Minister regulation-making authority to regulate:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ which studies cannot be required as part of a complete application;</li><li>○ Studies that could be required as part of a complete application; and</li><li>○ professionals from whom municipalities would be required to accept studies as final submission.</li></ul></li><li>• A proposed regulation would limit the following studies from being required as part of a complete application: sun/shadow, wind, urban design, and lighting.</li></ul> |
| <b>Streamline Planning Approvals for Elementary and Secondary Schools and Associated Childcare Facilities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to the Planning Act would make it so no Official Plan or zoning by-law could prohibit the use of a parcel of urban residential land for an elementary school or secondary school or ancillary uses.</li><li>• Additional changes would broaden the exemption from site plan control for the placement of portable classrooms to all existing district school board school sites rather than just those sites existing as of January 1, 2007 (as previously allowed).</li></ul>   |
| <b>Minister’s Zoning Order Conditions</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to the Planning Act would provide the Minister with the ability to impose conditions on Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZO) prior to the uses in the MZO being permitted.</li><li>• These conditions can be enforced by way of agreement with the Minister or municipality that can be registered on title.</li></ul>  |

**3.2 Additional Planning Initiatives (Technical Briefing)**

As noted above, the Province released a [Technical Briefing](#) which detailed additional planning initiatives the Province would be pursuing to support the objectives of Bill 17 including:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Provincial Policy Tests                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consult on opportunities for making the provincial policy tests inapplicable with respect to all Minister decisions under the Planning Act. (e.g. approval of municipal Official Plans).</li></ul>   |
| Streamlining Official Plans                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consult on proposed legislative and regulatory changes needed to simplify and standardize land use designations in Municipal Official Plans.</li></ul>   |
| Official Plan Population Updates                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Undertake targeted outreach to municipalities where the Ministry of Finance (M.O.F) population projections are projected to surpass previous estimates in current Official Plans. These municipalities may be required to update their current Official Plan projections with M.O.F projections.</li></ul> |
| Streamline the Development of Communal Water/Sewage Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consult on potential approaches to streamline municipal consent for communal water/sewage systems and modular off grid water treatment facilities to support greater adoption in underserved rural communities.</li></ul>  |
| Planning, Data, and Building Code IT Solutions              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>MMAH would explore the standardization of municipal data tracking in land use planning, building code and permit applications spaces and leverage technology to better automate processes and improve transparency.</li></ul>  |

Currently, there is limited information available on these additional planning initiatives. County Planning Staff are very interested in these proposals given their potential to impact already completed and on-going Official Plan policy development. Should any of these matters move forward, Planning Staff will report back to the Planning Committee with additional details.

**3.3 Development Charges Act Changes**

Schedule 4 of Bill 17 amends the *Development Charges Act*. The proposed changes include:

- Exemption for Long-Term Care Homes
- Regulation-Making Authority to Impose Limits on Eligible Capital Costs
- Simplified Development Charge By-Law Amendment Process
- Deferral of Development Charges for Residential Developments to Occupancy
- Removal of Interest on Instalments
- Permit Early Payment for Institutional, Rental Housing and Residential Developments
- Mandate Lowest Development Charge Rate for Lock-In Developments
- Regulation-Making Authority to Combine Development Charge Services for Credit Purposes
- Regulation-Making Authority to Determine What Constitutes a Local Service

The Province has highlighted that many of the proposed changes to the *Development Charges Act* will require implementing regulations and has indicated that additional consultations will be forthcoming if the legislation is passed. The Treasury Department has advised that they are aware of these changes and are monitoring the Bill as it moves through the legislative process.

### **3.4 Building Code Act Changes**

Schedule 1 of Bill 17 amends the *Building Code Act* to include a new subsection to clarify that the Municipal Act does not authorize a municipality to pass by-laws respecting the construction or demolition of buildings as municipalities do not have the authority to require their own unique standards beyond the Building Code. The changes also include eliminating the need for a secondary provincial approval and fees for innovative construction materials.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

The County appreciates that the Province is attempting to create an environment that delivers housing in a more efficient manner and is generally supportive of some of the proposed measures that aim at improving timelines and reducing the cost of housing.

However, Bill 17 introduces some legislative and regulatory changes that continue to erode local autonomy in land use planning. While well intentioned, there is a concern that these changes will weaken the long-standing practice of community-based planning and limit the municipal ability to plan for and protect the quality of life for its residents.

There is also concern about the lack of time and outstanding regulatory details related to some of the proposals, making it challenging for staff to complete a full review of the changes and provide meaningful input. Due to the short comment window Planning Staff have submitted comments to the Province seeking clarification and raising concerns about the proposed “as-of-right” variation framework and Complete Application changes being considered through the Bill.

### **5.0 Next Steps**

At the time of writing this report, Bill 17 was in its second reading in the Legislature. Staff will continue to monitor the proposed legislation as it moves through the legislative process. Staff will report at a later date when the legislation comes into effect and/or additional policies and regulations are made available.

#### **Strategic Action Plan:**

This report relates to the following objectives and priorities in the County's Strategic Action Plan:

Making the best decisions for the betterment of the Community.

#### **Recommendation:**

That the report “Bill 17 –Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025” be received for information.

That this report be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on behalf of the County of Wellington and circulated to member municipalities for their consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Jameson Pickard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jameson Pickard B. URPL, MCIP, RPP  
Senior Policy Planner

**In consultation with/approved by:**

Aldo Salis, Director of Planning and Development  
Scott Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A Provincial Postings for Comment

## APPENDIX A Provincial Postings for Comment

Below are direct links to the related Environmental Registry and Regulatory Registry postings resulting from Bill 17 Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025.

### Environmental Registry of Ontario Postings (ERO)

| Proposal  | ERO Number | Notice Type | Comment Deadline |
|---|------------|-------------|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">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)</a></li> </ul> | 025-0461   | Act         | June 11, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Proposed Regulations– Complete Application</a></li> </ul>  | 025-0462   | Regulation  | June 26, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Proposed Regulation– As-of-right Variations from Setback Requirements</a></li> </ul>   | 025-0463   | Regulation  | June 26, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Bill 17: Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 – Amendment to the Building Transit Faster Act, 2020</a></li> </ul>                                | 025-0450   | Act         | June 11, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Bill 17- Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 - Accelerating Delivery of Transit-Oriented Communities</a></li> </ul>                             | 025-0504   | Act         | June 11, 2025    |

### Ontario Regulatory Registry Postings (ORR)

| Proposal  | ORR Proposal Number | Instrument Type | Comment Deadline |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Changes to the Development Charges Act, 1997 to Simplify and Standardize the Development Charge (DC) Framework.</a></li> </ul>                         | 25-MMAH003          | Act             | June 11, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Eliminate Secondary Approvals for Innovative Construction Materials.</a></li> </ul>  | 25-MMAH004          | Act             | June 11, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Amending the Building Transit Faster Act, 2020 to expand the definition of Priority Transit Projects to all Provincial Transit Projects</a></li> </ul> | 25-MTO005           | Act             | June 11, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Amending the Metrolinx Act, 2006</a></li> </ul>  | 25-MTO006           | Act             | June 11, 2025    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 amendments to the Ministry of Infrastructure Act, 2011</a></li> </ul>                         | 25-MOI003           | Act             | June 11, 2025    |