

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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234-2024-4549

November 5, 2024

Lord Mayor
Gary Bradley
Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
gary.zalepa@notl.com**Subject: Proposed Amendments to Ontario Regulation 525/97 to Exempt Certain
Official Plan Matters from Approval under the *Planning Act***

Dear Lord Mayor Gary Bradley

I am writing to advise you that subject to government decision making, January 1, 2025 is the proposed date for removal of the land use planning responsibilities for Durham and Waterloo Regions and March 31, 2025 is the proposed date for the removal of the land use planning responsibilities from Niagara Region.

Following the successful removal of upper-tier planning responsibilities in York, Halton, and Peel Region on July 1, 2024, the removal of upper-tier responsibilities for Durham and Waterloo Regions on January 1, 2025 and for Niagara Region on March 31, 2025 would help to remove duplication and support efficient land use planning decision-making.

To support this change, I am also proposing to amend Ontario Regulation 525/97 under the *Planning Act*. To help inform decision-making, there is a posting on the Regulatory Registry for public input which outlines proposed amendments to Ontario Regulation 525/97. These amendments would exempt most official plan matters of lower-tier municipalities in Durham and Waterloo Regions as of January 1, 2025 and Niagara Region as of March 31, 2025 from the need for provincial approval.

The Ministry is aware that there are many lower-tier official plan amendments, particularly ones that are site-specific in nature, that the Regions have exempted from the need for its approval. These matters would continue to be reviewed and adopted by the relevant lower-tier municipality without an additional level of approval.

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As proposed, amendments to Ontario Regulation 525/97 would mean that the only official plan matters that would require provincial approval in lower-tier municipalities in the Regions of Durham and Waterloo as of January 1, 2025 and lower-tier municipalities in the Region of Niagara as of March 31, 2025, would be:

1. New official plans;
2. Official plan amendments adopted in accordance with section 26 of the *Planning Act*; and
3. Official plan amendments establishing, amending, or revoking any policies required as part of a protected major transit station area in accordance subsections 16 (15) or (16) of the *Planning Act*.

However, the province will retain the authority under the *Planning Act* to intervene where necessary in order to ensure exempt official plan amendments are in accordance with provincial policy.

In addition, decisions on land division, including both consents and plans of subdivision, are automatically assigned to lower-tier municipalities in the Regions of Durham, Waterloo, and Niagara following removal of the upper-tier municipality's land use planning responsibilities (see subsections 50 (1) and 51 (5.1) of the *Planning Act*, as revised by Bill 23). To the extent the Regions were responsible for land division matters prior to the removal of their planning responsibilities, subsections 70.13 (8) and (9) of the *Planning Act* (also added by Bill 23) assign ongoing matters to the relevant lower-tier municipality as well.

Request for Feedback

The Ministry is currently seeking feedback on proposed amendments to Ontario Regulation 525/97 to take effect on January 1, 2025 and March 31, 2025. The proposed amendments have been posted on the Regulatory Registry for 30 days, until December 5, 2024.

Comments can be sent through the Regulatory Registry postings or by email to mmahofficialplans@ontario.ca

More information on the legislative proposal can be found on the Regulatory Registry at:

- [Proposed Amendments to Ontario Regulation 525/97 to Exempt Certain Official Plan Matters from Approval under the Planning Act](#)

I look forward to receiving your feedback on this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Calandra", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon. Paul Calandra
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

cc. CAO, Bruce Zvaniga
Regional Chair, Jim Bradley
Regional CAO, Ron Tripp
Laurie Miller, Regional Director – Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing