



Report to County Council

From: Lindsay King, Policy Planner

Date: April 14, 2026

Subject: PLN 26-04 Proposed Provincial Planning Reforms under Bill 98 and the Build Communities Strong Fund

Recommendation(s):

RESOLVED THAT staff be directed to prepare comments on the proposed reforms under Bill 98 and the Build Communities Strong Fund, in accordance with Council direction; and

THAT staff be directed to submit these comments to the Province during the consultation period for open Environmental Registry of Ontario postings, as detailed in the report titled “PLN 26-04 Proposed Provincial Planning Reforms under Bill 98 and the Build Communities Strong Fund.”

Introduction:

This report provides an overview of recent Provincial and Federal initiatives related to housing supply and infrastructure delivery, including proposed legislative changes under Bill 98: *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026* and associated postings on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO), as well as the announcement of the Build Communities Strong Fund.

Bill 98 proposes a series of legislative amendments intended to accelerate housing development and streamline infrastructure approvals in Ontario. The proposed changes are supported by multiple ERO postings, which outline potential regulatory tools such as standardized development permissions and reduced approval barriers.

Separately, the Federal and Provincial governments have announced the Build Communities Strong Fund, a joint infrastructure funding program intended to support the delivery of housing-enabling infrastructure, including water, wastewater, transportation, and transit systems.

While both initiatives are aligned in their objective of increasing housing supply, they operate through distinct mechanisms. The proposed legislative changes under Bill 98 would establish new planning and development frameworks, whereas the *Build*

Communities Strong Fund represents a discretionary funding opportunity to support infrastructure investment. This report outlines the key components of these initiatives and identifies potential implications for Elgin County, including impacts to planning policy, infrastructure planning, and coordination with its Local Municipal Partners.

Background and Discussion:

Bill 98 – Provincial Legislative Context

The province of Ontario has introduced *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026* as part of its broader strategy to increase housing supply and support economic growth. The proposed legislation includes a range of amendments intended to streamline planning approvals, reduce regulatory barriers, and improve coordination between land use planning and infrastructure delivery. These changes are consistent with recent Provincial efforts to accelerate housing development and standardize planning processes across municipalities. If enacted, Bill 98 would enable the Province to introduce new or amended regulations under the *Planning Act*, the *Municipal Act*, and related legislation. These proposed regulatory changes have been released for public consultation through postings on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) and will be open for comment until April 29, 2026 – May 14, 2026, depending on the specific ERO.

Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) Postings

In support of Bill 98, the Province has released multiple ERO postings outlining proposed regulatory changes intended to facilitate housing development and infrastructure delivery. Key themes emerging from these postings include:

- Establishing standardized development permissions (e.g. minimum lot size, non-municipal servicing criteria);
- Streamlining planning approvals and reducing administrative barriers;
- Enhancing coordination between land use planning and infrastructure systems; and,
- Supporting digital modernization and data-driven planning processes.

Since these postings are currently subject to public consultation, they may be revised prior to implementation.

Federal-Provincial Funding Announcement

In addition to the proposed legislative changes, the Federal and Provincial governments have jointly announced the Build Communities Strong Fund. The funding program, announced by Prime Minister Carney and Premier Ford, represents an \$8.8 billion investment over 10 years, with contributions shared between the Federal and Provincial

governments. The Build Communities Strong Fund is intended to support the delivery of infrastructure required to enable housing development including:

- Water and wastewater servicing,
- Transportation infrastructure; and
- Transit and related systems.

To access the Build Communities Strong Fund, municipalities must reduce their Development Charges by up to 50%. While further details regarding program eligibility, intake processes, and funding criteria have not yet been released, the program is expected to be application-based and focused on projects that facilitate housing growth. The Build Communities Strong Fund is not part of the ERO process and is not contingent on the passage of Bill 98. It does, however, align with the Province's broader objectives of accelerating housing supply by supporting the infrastructure necessary to enable development.

Financial Implications:

From a financial perspective, the impact of the proposed Development Charges (DC) reductions and proposed planning policy changes may introduce both opportunities and risks to Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners.

Opportunities:

- Potential funding to support infrastructure and reduce upfront development costs
- May help accelerate growth and expand the tax base

Uncertainties:

- Funding details, timing, and eligibility are still unclear
- Uncertain if funding will fully replace lost Development Charge revenue
- Legislative and regulatory changes will require updates to policies and procedures, with unknown staff resource implications
- DC reductions could create short-term revenue gaps
- Non-municipal servicing could lead to long-term financial liabilities

Collectively, these changes may alter how growth-related infrastructure is financed, requiring careful coordination between Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners to balance development with long term financial sustainability.

Advancement of the Strategic Plan:

This review and analysis of the proposed legislative changes and federal-provincial funding initiative align with Elgin County's Strategic Plan by supporting informed, coordinated, and forward-looking decision making in the face of evolving provincial policy. This work advances Strategy 1 (Collaborative Engagement and Communication) through ongoing coordination with Local Municipal Partners and monitoring of provincial initiatives, while also supporting Strategy 3 (Service Excellence and Efficiency) by identifying opportunities to improve infrastructure planning and service delivery through new funding mechanisms. The assessment of financial implications, infrastructure needs, and growth management impacts further align with Strategy 4 (Sustainable Community

Growth), ensuring that development is planned in a way that balances housing supply objectives with long-term financial and infrastructure sustainability.

Policy Analysis:

The following sections outline the proposed legislative changes as per Bill 98: *Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026*, followed by an analysis of the implications for Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners.

1.1 Proposed Standardized Official Plans

The Province is proposing significant structural reforms to Ontario's land use planning system through ERO postings 026-0300 and 026-0315, both released on March 30, 2026, with a commenting deadline of April 29, 2026. These proposals represent a shift toward a more centralized and standardized Official Plan framework, with implications for both local and upper-tier municipalities.

Under ERO 026-0300, the Province is proposing to require municipalities to adopt a prescribed Official Plan structure and standardized land use designations. This would fundamentally change how municipalities prepare and organize their Official Plans, moving away from locally tailored policy frameworks, and towards a uniform, province-directed format. ERO 026-0315 proposes to redefine the role of upper-tier Official Plans by limiting their scope to broad, regional-scale policy matters, and reducing or eliminating site-specific and detailed land use policies. Specifically, the Province proposes simplifying land use designations, such as consolidating multiple designations (e.g. Neighbourhoods, Commercial, Mixed Use) into broader categories like "Community Areas". This ERO would also clarify and expand the use of secondary plans, which would no longer require Ministerial approval and would not constitute Official Plan Amendments. Lastly, this ERO proposes to restrict the ability of municipalities to impose requirements for green building standards, sustainable design elements, or enhanced development standards through Official Plan and Zoning By-laws, including requirements for electric vehicle charging stations. These changes are intended to streamline planning processes and reduce duplication between upper-tier and local planning documents.

1.2 Implications of Proposed Standardized Official Plans for Elgin County

The proposed changes have several key implications for Elgin County in its role as an upper-tier municipality;

- **Reduced Upper-Tier Planning Authority**
 - Greater focus on regional-level policy
 - May limit the County's ability to influence site-specific land use decisions
 - Existing detailed or prescriptive policies may need to be reviewed, removed, or restructured
- **Standardized Official Plans:**
 - Will require updates to the Elgin County Official Plan
 - May involve restricting the Plan and renaming or consolidating land use designations
 - Will require additional staff time and resources once details are finalized

- Changes to Secondary Plans:
 - Removal of Ministerial approval may allow for more flexible and timely local planning
 - May reduce the role of secondary plans as integrated policy tools
 - Increases reliance on Local Municipal Partners' Official Plans
 - May limit County oversight of secondary planning frameworks
- Expand Ministerial Powers:
 - Increased use of Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs) and exemption authority
 - May reduce municipal certainty and increase provincial intervention in planning decisions

Overall, these changes reinforce the need for strong, clear regional policies, close coordination with Local Municipal Partners, and ongoing monitoring of provincial decisions that may impact local planning authority.

2.1 Proposed Parkland Policy Changes

The Province is proposing changes to Parkland Requirements through ERO 026-0312 (posted on March 30, 2026, with a comment period ending May 14, 2026) introducing a more standardized and provincially guided approach to parkland dedication under the *Planning Act*. The proposal would allow developers to identify and propose parkland as part of a development application, rather than municipalities selecting the lands, with municipalities required to evaluate these proposals based on provincially prescribed criteria. It would also expand the types of eligible parkland to include certain encumbered lands (excluding financially encumbered lands) and privately owned publicly accessible spaces (POPs).

The regulation would establish clear criteria for ineligible lands, including contaminated lands, hazardous lands such as floodplains, lands that cannot function as parks, financially encumbered lands, and lands that are not publicly accessible. It would also identify conditionally acceptable lands, such as those adjacent to natural heritage features where no negative impacts would occur, as well as lands within the Greenbelt Plan Area, Oak Ridges Moraine, and Niagara Escarpment Plan areas, subject to applicable constraints. The proposed process would require municipalities to accept or refuse proposed parkland within 20 days, with any refusal requiring written reasons and notice of appeal rights. Where a decision is appealed, municipalities would be required to forward the complete record to the Ontario Land Tribunal within 15 days, including all submission materials, the staff report, and the notice of refusal.

2.2 Implications of Proposed Parkland Policy Changes for Elgin County

The proposed changes may have several implications for Elgin County and Local Municipal Partners responsible for parkland dedication:

- New Parkland Dedication Options:
 - Introduction of privately owned publicly accessible spaces and other non-traditional parkland forms
 - May require more complex legal agreements
- Increased Administrative Demands:

- Greater staff resources needed to review, negotiate, and administer new dedication arrangements
- Potential Increase in Parkland Supply:
 - Broader dedication options may result in more parkland secured in urban areas
- Impacts on Funding Models
 - Reduced reliance on cash-in-lieu contributions
 - May affect how municipalities fund and plan for parkland dedication in the long term

Overall, these changes may increase flexibility in parkland provision but will require additional administrative capacity and adjustments to existing funding and planning approaches.

3.1 Proposed Reforms to Site Plan Control

ERO 026-0310, posted on March 30, 2026, with a comment period ending May 14, 2026, proposes significant reforms to Site Plan Control under the *Planning Act*. The Province is seeking feedback on a range of potential changes intended to streamline the development approval process and reduce timelines. The proposal outlines both a more extreme option and several moderate reform options. The most significant option under consideration would be the elimination of Site Plan Control entirely, representing a fundamental shift in how site-level development is regulated in Ontario.

Alternatively, the Province is considering a series of more targeted changes to streamline the process while retaining Site Plan Control in a modified form. These include limiting applications to a maximum of three circulation rounds, after which a mandatory meeting would be required to resolve all outstanding issues. The Province is also proposing to define and standardize the scope of Site Plan Control by prescribing what matters municipalities may review.

Additional proposed changes include the introduction of mandatory timelines, with applications potentially proceeding to arbitration if those timelines are not met. The Province is also considering a tiered approach to Site Plan Control, whereby full review would be limited to more complex developments, while simpler applications would be streamlined or potentially exempt from the process altogether.

3.2 Implications of Proposed Reforms to Site Plan Control for Elgin County

The proposed reforms have significant implications for Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners:

- Reduced Municipal Control:
 - Elimination of Site Plan Control would limit oversight of site-level design
 - Impacts ability to address building placement, landscaping, grading, servicing, and urban design
- Standardized Submission Requirements:
 - Provincially prescribed requirements may limit scope of municipal review
 - Reduces ability to respond to site-specific conditions and local priorities

- Administrative and Process Changes:
 - Local Municipal Partners may need to update Site Plan Control By-laws
 - Revisions may include application requirements, circulation processes, and internal review procedures
- Potential Efficiency Gains:
 - Intended to streamline approvals and accelerate development timelines
 - May reduce staff time per application and increase predictability for applicants
- Trade-Offs:
 - Efficiencies may come at the cost of flexibility
 - Reduced ability to address complex or site-specific issues.

While the changes may improve approval timelines, they could significantly limit municipal oversight and the ability to ensure site-specific planning outcomes.

4.1 Proposed Changes to Complete Application Requirements

The Province is proposing a series of reforms to complete application requirements through ERO postings 026-0305, 026-0313, and 026-0314, all released on March 30, 2026, with comment periods ending May 14, 2026. Collectively these proposals are intended to standardize and streamline how planning applications are submitted, reviewed, and deemed complete across Ontario.

ERO 026-0305 proposes to fully enable electronic submission of planning applications and notices. Under this proposal, original or certified hard copies would no longer be required, and notices related to public meetings, open houses, and complete applications could be provided electronically to the Province.

ERO 026-0313 proposes standardizing the information and materials that municipalities may require as part of a complete application. This would be achieved through a provincially prescribed “master list” of submission requirements consisting of:

- Core Studies which would generally be permitted to all applications; and
- Contingent studies which could only be required where specific criteria or triggers are met (e.g., archaeology or environmental studies).

ERO 026-0314 proposes to expand the list of “prescribed professionals” whose technical studies must be accepted as part of a complete application. In addition to engineers (currently the only “prescribed professionals”), this list would include professions such as landscape architects, environmental professionals, hydrogeologists, and transportation planners. Municipalities would effectively be prohibited from deeming an application incomplete based on concerns with studies prepared by these prescribed professionals.

4.2 Implications Proposed Changes to Complete Application Requirements for Elgin County

The proposed changes represent a significant shift towards greater provincial standardization and reduced municipal discretion at the application staged:

- Reduced Municipal Discretion

- Provincially prescribed list of permitted studies may limit ability to request additional or site-specific information
- May constrain ability to address rural, agricultural, or environmentally sensitive contexts
- Risk to Application Quality:
 - Requirement to accept studies upfront may limit early resolution of technical issues
 - Technical issues may be deferred to later stages, including appeals
- Digital Submission Requirements:
 - Full transition to electronic submission may improve efficiency
 - Minimal impact for Elgin County, which already accepts digital applications
- Policy and Process Updates:
 - May require updates to County and local Official Plans (application requirement sections)
 - Coordination with Local Municipal Partners will be needed to ensure consistency

Overall, these changes may streamline application intake but could shift complexity and risk further into the review process, reducing opportunities for early issue resolution.

5.1 Proposed Projection Methodology Guidelines

The Province has proposed a Projection Methodology Guidelines (PMG) document through ERO 026-0304 that introduces a more structured and standardized approach to growth forecasting and land needs assessments across Ontario. Municipalities would be required to base their forecasts on Ontario Population Projections prepared by the Ministry of Finance, with the potential ability to modify these projections were deemed appropriate.

The proposed guidance is organized around four key components: establishing municipal population projections, developing housing needs forecasts, developing employment forecasts, and undertaking land needs assessments. Together, these steps are intended to support planning for a 20- to 30-year horizon, ensuring sufficient land is available to accommodate anticipated growth. The PMG is intended to improve consistency across municipalities and the province, to incorporate current data, and to better plan for growth.

5.2 Implications of Projection Methodology Guidelines for Elgin County

The proposed updates to growth forecasting methodologies introduce a more standardized and data-driven approach for Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners.

- Alignment with Provincial Methodology:
 - Existing forecasts remain valid until future Official Plan updates
 - Future updates must align with Ministry of Finance projections and provincial guidance
 - Increased focus on tenure, type, affordability, and suppressed demand
- Reduced Local Flexibility
 - Limits ability to apply locally derived assumptions or alternative growth scenarios
 - Shifts toward a more provincially driven approach to growth modeling

- May necessitate future updates to County and local Official Plans
- Enhanced Housing Needs Assessment:
 - Requires more detailed, data-driven analysis
 - Greater emphasis on intensification assumptions
 - May require additional staff capacity, data collection and consultant support

Overall, these changes strengthen consistency and analytical rigor but will require additional resources and may limit flexibility in local growth planning.

6.1 Proposed Minimum Lot Sizes

ERO 026-0311 proposes a regulatory approach to establish a minimum residential lot size of 175 square metres (approximately 1,900 square feet) for fully serviced lands within settlement areas and outside of the Greenbelt. The proposed regulation would apply specifically to zoning by-laws. While zoning provisions would be overridden where they conflict with minimum lot size requirements, the subdivision approval process would continue to apply. Applicants would retain the ability to propose larger lots, as well as smaller lots.

6.2 Implications of Proposed Minimum Lot Sizes for Elgin County

The proposed minimum lot size regulation introduces several implications for Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners:

- Reduced Zoning Authority:
 - Limits ability to establish minimum lot sizes above the provincial standard (175 m²)
 - Conflicting zoning provisions (i.e. for minimum lot frontage and lot depth) would become unenforceable
 - Will require updates to local Zoning By-laws
 - Potential impacts on other zoning standards (i.e. parking and setbacks) remain unclear and require further review
- Increased Development Intensity:
 - Enables smaller lots, supporting infill and intensification in serviced areas
 - May improve land use efficiency and infrastructure utilization
 - Could introduce development pressure in areas not historically planned for higher density
- Community and Policy Alignment:
 - Smaller lot sizes may not align with existing community expectations or Council direction
 - May represent a shift from traditional development patterns

Overall, the regulation may support housing supply and efficiency objectives but will require zoning updates, infrastructure planning, and careful consideration of local context and community expectations.

7.1 Proposed Reforms to Water and Wastewater Servicing

The province is proposing significant changes to the governance and delivery of water and wastewater services through ERO postings 026-0301 and 026-0302, both released

March 30, 2026, with a comment period ending April 29, 2026. ERO 026-0301 proposes amendments to the *Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2002* to enable municipalities to deliver water and wastewater services through publicly owned corporate entities. These corporations would be separate legal entities, fully publicly owned, and responsible for the provision of water and wastewater services.

The proposed framework includes several measures to ensure continuity and public control. New corporations would be required to remain 100% publicly owned, with no private equity participation permitted. Where a municipality transfers services to such a corporation, existing employment contracts, collective agreements, and insurance arrangements would remain in place, and employee rights, including successor rights and pay equity protections, would be preserved. Municipal debt related to water and wastewater services would not be transferred to the new entity. Despite the governance shift, these systems would continue to be regulated as municipal drinking water systems and remain subject to existing legislative and compliance requirements. This proposal would effectively formalize a public utility model, whereby water and wastewater services are delivered by a municipally owned corporation operating at arm's length from Council and governed by a board of directors.

ERO 026-0302 proposes changes to facilitate the use of private or communal water and wastewater systems, particularly in situations where municipal servicing is unavailable. The Province has identified a key barrier to development is the lack of municipal servicing and municipal reluctance to approve alternative systems.

Under this proposal, municipalities would be required to grant consent for private or communal systems where prescribed provincial criteria are met. The Province would establish standardized requirements related to technical design, financial capacity, and submission materials, while municipalities would retain a role in verifying compliance and issuing decisions. Applicants would be required to demonstrate financial capacity, including reserve funds for long-term system maintenance. Municipalities would be able to impose conditions; however, these would be limited to prescribed areas related to safety and sustainability. In addition, amendments to the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* are proposed to ensure that municipal consent provided under the *Municipal Act* would automatically satisfy approval requirements under drinking water legislation.

7.2 Implications of Proposed Reforms to Water and Wastewater Servicing on Elgin County

The proposed changes represent a significant shift in the governance and delivery water and wastewater services for Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners:

- New Service Delivery Models:
 - Introduction of municipally owned service corporations
 - May improve flexibility and efficiency
 - May reduce direct municipal oversight and alignment with land use planning
- Reduced Municipal Control Over Servicing:
 - Requirement to permit private or communal systems where criteria met
 - Limits ability to use servicing as a tool to manage growth
 - May increase development pressure in un-serviced or rural areas

- Financial Risks:
 - Risk of system failure or insufficient long-term maintenance funding
 - Potential for municipalities to assume responsibility, creating financial liabilities
 - May require more complex agreements for ownership, operation, monitoring, and contingency planning
 - Increased administrative burden for review and oversight

Overall, while the changes may introduce more flexible servicing options, they also present significant risks related to growth management, financial liability, and long-term infrastructure oversight.

Federal-Provincial Partnership to Build Homes, Transit and Communities:

On March 30, 2026, the federal and provincial governments announced a joint funding initiative titled the Canada-Ontario Partnership to Build Homes, Transit and Communities. The partnership commits approximately \$8.8 billion in cost-sharing federal and provincial funding over 10 years to support housing-enabling infrastructure, with a primary focus on increasing housing supply and improving affordability across Ontario.

8.1 Details of Joint Funding Initiative

The central component of the initiative is the provision of funding to offset reductions in municipal development charges (DCs) with participating municipalities expected to reduce DCs by up to 50% for a period of three years. This measure is intended to lower upfront development costs and accelerate housing construction. Municipal participation is required to access funding and expected to contribute to reducing barriers to development.

In addition to infrastructure funding, the initiative includes significant tax relief measures aimed at homebuyers, including the temporary removal of the provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on new homes within specified price thresholds. This is anticipated to reduce purchase costs and stimulate housing demand and supply.

8.2 Analysis of Joint Funding Initiative

While the Canada-Ontario Partnership to Build Homes, Transit and Communities represent a significant investment in housing-enabling infrastructure and development charge relief, key program details remain undefined. As identified by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, uncertainties include the extent and implementation of DC reductions, the timing of funding relative to revenue impacts, eligibility criteria, and the treatment of municipalities without development charges. From a land use planning perspective, the initiative signals a shift toward accelerated housing delivery through reduced upfront costs and targeted infrastructure investment.

For Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners, this may reduce reliance on development charges as a growth management tool, increase pressure to advance development approvals and require more strategic coordination of infrastructure planning. At the same time, potential financial risks and uneven impacts across municipalities

highlight the need for continued monitoring and intergovernmental coordination as program details are finalized.

Potential financial risks include the possibility that the development charge reductions may be implemented in advance of funding being received, creating short-term revenue gaps, as well as the risk that provincial and federal funding may not fully offset lost revenues or may be conditional on project eligibility or timing. Uneven impacts may also arise across municipalities, as those with higher growth and development charge revenues may experience greater financial exposure but be better positioned to access funding, while smaller or rural municipalities may have limited ability to benefit from the program.

Proposed Legislative Changes:

The proposed changes under Bill 98 would amend the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, *Municipal Act, 2001*, and *Planning Act, 1990*, the *Building Code Act, 1992*, the *Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025*, and the *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002*. Collectively these changes intend to reduce the development costs, streamline approvals, and increase provincial control over planning and infrastructure.

Key changes include:

- Development Charges Act, 1997:
 - Exempts non-profit retirement home developments from development charges
- Municipal Act, 2001:
 - Establishes a framework for non-municipal communal water and wastewater systems
 - Requires municipalities to approve applications where prescribed criteria are met, limiting discretion
- Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act, 2025:
 - Introduces municipally owned service corporations
 - Allows transfer of services, staff, and agreements without disruption
 - Preserves existing rights and restricts transfer of long-term municipal debt
- Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002:
 - Ensures these corporations are regulated as municipal systems
 - Streamlines approvals by aligning consent requirements with the Municipal Act
- Planning Act, 1990:
 - Introduces standardized Official Plan structures and land use designations
 - Removes requirement for climate change policies
 - Expands Ministerial authority, including exemption from upper-tier conformity
 - Reduces notice requirements for Minister's Zoning Orders
 - Limits municipal authority on enhanced development standards
- Building Code Act, 1992:
 - Clarifies municipal authority to regulate environmental protection and conservation through by-laws

Overall, Bill 98 represents a broad restructuring of Ontario's planning and infrastructure framework, with increased provincial direction and reduced municipal discretion.

Local Municipal Partner Impact:

The proposed legislative changes and funding initiatives are expected to have a direct and operational impact on Elgin County's Local Municipal Partners, as they retain primary responsibility for site plan approvals, zoning approvals, servicing, and development charge implementation. Collectively, these changes may reduce local discretion in key areas such as application submission requirements, site plan control, parkland dedication, and servicing decisions, while increasing pressure to accelerate development approvals and align with provincially prescribed processes. Local Municipal Partners may also need to update their Official Plans, Zoning By-laws and internal procedures to reflect standardized provincial requirements. Financially, potential reductions in development charges and reliance on conditional funding may introduce infrastructure financing challenges, while servicing reforms could increase exposure to long-term operational and financial risks.

Communication Requirements:

As these proposed legislative and regulatory changes are currently in the consultation phase through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO), Elgin County's formal opportunity to provide input is limited to the prescribed comment period, which is currently slated for the next two to four weeks, depending on the ERO, prior to the second reading of the legislation. Currently, staff are seeking Council direction on the County's position to inform the preparation and submission of formal comments to the Province on the proposed changes.

Conclusion:

The proposed reforms under Bill 98, associated Environmental Registry postings, and the Canada-Ontario Partnership to Build Homes, Transit and Communities collectively represent a significant shift in Ontario's land use planning and infrastructure framework. These changes are intended to accelerate housing delivery, streamline approval processes, and align infrastructure investment with growth objectives; however, they also introduce new considerations related to municipal autonomy, financial sustainability, and the coordination of planning and servicing. For Elgin County and its Local Municipal Partners, the proposal highlights the need for continued collaboration, proactive policy alignment, and collaboration. As many elements of these initiatives remain under development, it is important for the County to actively participate in the consultation process and advocate for approaches that reflect local priorities and support long-term community outcomes.

All of which is Respectfully

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