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Office of the Mayor

December 5,2023

To Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Re: Proposed Legislation to Reverse Previous Decisions on Municipal Official Plans/Official Plan Amendments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the provincial changes to the Regional Official Plan (ROPA 6) settlement area boundaries. The Township of Woolwich settlement boundaries were extended through, the Provincial approval, beyond what was proposed in the Region of Waterloo Official Plan (ROPA 6) to what was identified as the Countryside line. This resulted in approximately 1800 hectares of additional land available for development. Since the Provincial expansion, the Township has taken significant steps to implement that decision into our Township Official plan and secondary plans.

I have listened to our local community environmentalists, residents and developers. In general, the framework provided in the Regional proposal provides a good collaborative plan for our municipalities to work together. However, it constrains our ability to comprehensively plan for our communities, especially in the higher growth area of Breslau. **Therefore, I believe the better way forward is to adopt the provincial framework to extend the urban boundaries to the Countryside Line as shown on the attachments for Breslau, St. Jacobs and Elmira**. **That said, it is very important that the Township of Woolwich retains control over the rate of growth (while maintaining expected growth targets). Without that authority, I would revert back to the Regional Official Plan as a way to ensure staged growth.**

Breslau

The addition of approximately 1500 hectares of land to Breslau in the extended area allows the Township to cohesively plan for the future of the community. We can address, not only housing and employment expansion, but also badly needed community infrastructure, a retail core, recreation facilities, trails, transportation infrastructure and other amenities. It is important that the Township be allowed to set priorities for future studies for drainage, environmental considerations, Airport lands and a future GO station.

St. Jacobs and Elmira

St. Jacobs and Elmira had approximately 300 hectares of land added. The additional land in Elmira allows for flexibility to develop land for residential or employment with opportunities for economic development. These land additions also allow a more wholistic consideration of Elmira transportation needs. Additional land in St. Jacobs allows for additional housing, including opportunities for long-term care homes.

Staged Approach

The Township is committed to supporting intensification, complete communities, protection of environmental land and ensuring viability of agricultural land. Therefore, the Township is only supportive of the development of the additional land through a planned, staged, and phased approach. The Township has a long history of managed, staged growth which protects the Township from sprawl and ensures orderly development to meet the needs of the Township. To comprehensively plan for the future, this phased plan would ensure the growth accommodates appropriate densities, transit and active transportation, servicing and infrastructure and community uses while also maintaining the protection of environmental areas and interim agricultural uses. Without the allowance for staging policies to control growth, the expansion is not recommended. The Township

supports the additional land with the ability to control growth.

As such the Township would request that the provincially expanded boundaries be approved as it applies to the Township of Woolwich as shown on the attachments to this letter with the following modifications to the Regional Official Plan:

- That development in the Township of Woolwich shall be staged in accordance with the following and considering density and population targets:

    - That the Township identify the lands to be developed in a phased and staged manner, including approximate timelines for when the lands may be developed.

    - Servicing availability and a servicing plan.

    - To achieve the density targets in settlement areas of 45 jobs and people per hectare in Township Urban areas of Elmira and St. Jacobs and 55 jobs and people per hectare in the Breslau Urban Area.

    - That lands identified in the settlement area, but not required before 2051 may be designated but identified for further study prior to development, identified as lands for longer term growth.

- That amendments to the staging shall only take place during a Township Official Plan review process where population projections have changed, servicing changes dictate a change, or growth factors have determined a need.

In conclusion, the Township is requesting that the Minister continue with the expanded settlement boundaries to the Countryside Line <u>only with</u> staging and phasing policies to cohesively plan for growth. Allowing the Township to take control of the long-term planning for the area through a controlled approach will allow this municipality to plan for the needs of Woolwich and create a cohesive community for our residents.

The Township of Woolwich with the other area Municipalities has been developing a transition plan for the transfer of planning responsibilities with the proclamation of Bill 23. This will help Woolwich implement the long term vision for growth in the Township. Through this letter we are also requesting the Province proceed with the proclamation of Bill 23 or alternatively support the transition of planning delegation to area municipalities. With the delegation of planning responsibilities we also ask the Province to support the implementation of broad infrastructure servicing plans on a region-wide basis.

Yours truly,

Mayor Sandy Shantz
Township of Woolwich

Attachment 1 – Breslau Settlement Boundary

Attachment 2 - St. Jacobs Settlement Boundary

Attachment 3 – Elmira Settlement Boundary