



Open Letter to the Oro-Medonte Community Regarding the City of Barrie's Boundary Expansion Request

Monday, February 3, 2025

As you may be aware, Oro-Medonte is facing pressures regarding urban expansion in areas of the Township that border the City of Orillia and the City of Barrie.

Understanding and addressing the impact of potential boundary expansions on our community continues to be a priority for Oro-Medonte Council and Township staff. As Mayor, I feel it is timely and important to provide an update based on the facts as we know them today.

To assist you in understanding where we are at, the Township has prepared a detailed synopsis of the approach taken by the City of Orillia and City of Barrie, including important steps and findings of professional consultants reports and studies. Please take time to review this information available here bit.ly/40UDChi.

The City of Barrie's request for a boundary expansion was made in 2023, and includes lands east of Penetanguishene Road, south of Gore Road, west of Line 1 South, north of the Shanty Bay rural settlement area, and environmentally protected wetlands to the east. The area comprises of approximately 772 hectares (1,907 acres) of land and consists of active farmland and environmentally sensitive features (please see map below.) Additional lands were also identified for expansion into Springwater Township.

In response to the City of Barrie's requested boundary expansion, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing assigned the Deputy Provincial Land and Development Facilitator to assist with discussions between the Township of Oro-Medonte, Township of Springwater, City of Barrie, and the County of Simcoe.

A third-party study was commissioned to determine actual land needs. The results of the study were shared with area municipalities in early-December. After reflecting on findings of the study, it is reasonable to conclude that the City of Barrie has ample industrial/employment land beyond 2051. The City of Barrie's understanding and interpretation of the study does not align with this conclusion.

Oro-Medonte Council is of the view that before any further work is done to look at boundary adjustments, it is critical that the four parties participating in the facilitation process agree on the findings of the Study. It is also imperative that all parties understand the circumstances that have led up to where the facilitation process currently stands.

Our view based on the study's conclusions is that the City of Barrie does not need additional employment lands, and is challenged with meeting their housing targets by

2031, based on current approved densities. The City needs to review development approvals within its boundaries, to determine how the City is going to meet its obligations.

The focus moving forward will be on clarifying the City of Barrie's residential/community land needs identified in the Phase 1 Study. Without this information, it is extremely difficult for the Township to understand the problem that is trying to be resolved.

We will also seek confirmation that the lands in Oro-Medonte being sought for employment/industrial purposes should no longer form part of the review.

Oro-Medonte recognizes that Barrie is the economic hub of our region, with all municipalities in Simcoe County contributing in some form. We need to start thinking about what is in the best interest of all municipalities, so that we can all thrive, and make decisions that are transparent to the public we serve.

I remain committed to working with all parties to find the best solution that is beneficial to Oro-Medonte, the Simcoe County region, and the Province of Ontario. Having said that, I am mindful of the cost to the taxpayer and will strive to keep these costs to a minimum moving forward.

For additional information and background regarding the City of Barrie Boundary expansion request, please visit oro-medonte.ca/cbber.

Mayor Randy Greenlaw
Township of Oro-Medonte

City of Barrie Proposed Expansion Area

