Doug Ford is Seeking to Destroy Our Visionary Planning in Waterloo Region

Between the devastating impacts of Bill 23, opening up the Greenbelt, and proposed changes that will gut Regional Planning and the GRCA, Doug Ford and Minister Steve Clark threaten to end our unique success in Waterloo Region

For decades bold, visionary planning and a collaborative barn-raising approach has made Waterloo Region unique and has led to the globally recognized success of our vibrant communities surrounded by the most productive farms in Canada.

This past summer, our next 30 year Regional Official Plan was overwhelmingly approved by area municipalities; it is the sustainable plan we need for the future with a focus on complete 15-minute communities, housing choice, affordability, improved transit, active transportation, ambitious climate targets, along with strong farmland and environmental protection.

However, Doug Ford has a different plan for Ontario. Under the guise of building more homes, he’s forcing massive amounts of unsustainable urban sprawl on municipalities that don’t want it or need it. Furthermore, he’s ordering the destruction of huge tracts of irreplaceable farmland and even parts of the Greenbelt – to the delight of many developers who had recently started to purchase large tracts of supposedly protected Greenbelt lands.

Doug Ford is not working for you or the greater public good. Against the advice of experts, he wants to end all regional planning, tearing apart the Region of Waterloo and the Grand River Conservation Authority. Already overburdened local municipalities will be left to do planning and co-ordination of shared services such water treatment, sewage, land use planning, flood control, and much more. At the same time, Doug Ford is reducing development charges for developers that will result in massive local tax increases to cover the costs of new developments.

Our focus in Waterloo Region has been on efficiency and regionalizing services such as police, paramedics, public transit, and economic development. Ford’s backwards plan threatens to undo years of efforts and compromise the shared regional initiatives that have been responsible for our globally leading successes such as iON LRT Rapid Transit, our core renewal, and our unique Countryside Line concept that protects our farms and Mennonite communities.

It will be almost impossible to meet our climate change goals and visionary community plans if Doug Ford forces thousands of acres of unsustainable urban sprawl onto Waterloo Region with his plan that according to experts, will actually build fewer homes, that are more expensive, and far less sustainable in distant car-dependent developments.

Worse yet, Ford is eliminating public notice and public meeting requirements, forbidding Conservation Authorities to speak up while forcing them to sell off protected lands to developers, and ending the ability for citizens to appeal decisions at tribunals. He is taking away your democratic rights and giving them to a distant Minister at Queen’s Park.

Our new 2021 to 2051 Waterloo Regional Official Plan already is planning to build more homes, more affordably, and more sustainably than Ford’s give away of our community and the Greenbelt to developers.

We need our visionary Regional Official Plan to continue our proven, successful future trajectory. Lets not let Doug Ford destroy our success. Speak up today for the future that you would like to see by contacting your MPP or going to [www.holdthelinewr.org](http://www.holdthelinewr.org) to learn more and automatically send a customizable e-mail from you to elected officials.