

**RESPONSE TO MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING’S LETTER DATED NOVEMBER 2, 2023**

WHEREAS the Region commenced a municipal comprehensive review of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) in August 2018,

AND WHEREAS City of Waterloo staff participated in the ROP Review process through the Area Municipality Working Group and provided input, with Waterloo City Council’s direction, on technical assessments and other components of the ROP,

AND WHEREAS Regional Council approved the ROP — which projects growth to the year 2051 and ensures sufficient land for local municipalities within the Region of Waterloo to reach and exceed provincial housing targets — on August 18, 2022, with all heads of council voting in favour of the ROP Amendment,

AND WHEREAS the Region is required to complete a municipal comprehensive review of the ROP every five (5) years, and it is anticipated that the next review will be completed by the Region in approximately 3.5 years, at which time further amendments can be approved following a thorough, transparent, and participatory public consultation process,

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approved the ROP on April 11, 2023 with significant amendments to the urban growth areas and the Countryside Line growth boundary that are unnecessary to achieve growth targets, that were not requested nor recommended by local and regional planning staff, that encroach on important water re-charge areas and that promote expensive urban sprawl,

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced on October 23, 2023 that the April 11, 2023 decision regarding the ROP failed to meet the test of supporting the Province’s goal of building at least 1.5 million homes in a manner that maintains and reinforces public trust and that the Minister will introduce legislation to reverse the Province’s April 11, 2023 ROP decision, including the changes to the Countryside Line,

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing sent a letter — dated November 2, 2023 and titled “Announcement Impacting Provincial Decisions on Municipal Official Plans/Official Plan Amendments” — to Mayor McCabe and other mayors of single and lower-tier municipalities impacted by the April 11, 2023 decision,

AND WHEREAS the Minister’s November 2, 2023 letter provided mayors with 35 days to identify — without public consultation, without consultation with First Nations, and without the input of elected members of Council nor professional staff — changes that each mayor would like to see made to the ROP, based on the modifications that the Province had previously made,

AND WHEREAS local and regional Councillors represent residents and building a successful community is best done with the input of all elected officials not solely the heads of council,

AND WHEREAS Mayor McCabe and other mayors have stated that they will not use the Strong Mayor powers, and Mayor McCabe has stated that she believes utilizing Strong Mayor powers

will undermine the work of Council and staff, reduce the input of residents and community partners, and is a disservice to local democracy and effective community representation,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Waterloo City Council directs Mayor McCabe to submit the following feedback to the Ministry by December 7, 2023:

- (1) Waterloo City Council reaffirms its commitment to smart growth, intensification, and to maintaining the Countryside Line,
- (2) Waterloo City Council reaffirms its pledge to build 16,000 housing units by 2031,
- (3) Questions relating to the Regional Official Plan should be addressed to the Region,
- (4) Matters relating to official plans and other major decisions impacting the City of Waterloo are to be made by all of Council with public input as appropriate and,
- (5) The City of Waterloo asks that the Minister bring into effect the ROP amendment as approved by Regional Council on August 18, 2022 without any changes or modifications.

Sources:

- [Regional Planning and Works Committee approval of ROPA \(Aug 2018\)](#)
- [City of Waterloo staff report and Council approval \(June 2022\)](#)
- [Regional Council approval of ROPA \(August 2022\)](#)
- [Minister's statement: Ontario Winding Back Changes to Official Plans \(October 23, 2023\)](#)
- [City of Waterloo Housing Target of 16,000 new houses by 2031](#)