

**Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing**

Office of the Provincial Land and
Development Facilitator

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**Ministère des Affaires
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June 2, 2025

Jennifer Coughlin
Mayor of the Township of Springwater
2231 Nursery Road
Minesing, ON
L9X 1A8

Dear Mayor Coughlin,

We are writing to provide an update on the facilitation process that was initiated in June of 2024. As you know, at that time, Councils of each of the City of Barrie, the Township of Springwater, the Township of Oro-Medonte and Simcoe County agreed upon terms of reference for discussions concerning a boundary expansion proposed by Barrie.

The parties agreed these discussions will be without prejudice and confidential with the ability to publicly share information on the progress of discussions through the Council meeting process within each municipality.

In the first stage of the process, Hemson Consulting (“Hemson”) was retained by the County in August of 2024, on a cost-share basis, to conduct a needs assessment based upon criteria established by all parties. This initial stage of the process entailed numerous bilateral meetings and culminated in a meeting of all heads of Council followed by public release of a comprehensive needs assessment report. This report was informed by the input of all parties and determined the following:

Employment Area Supply: Barrie, Oro-Medonte, and Springwater have sufficient Employment Area to meet long-term demand to 2051. However, Barrie faces a short-term gap in shovel-ready parcels, and accelerated growth in Springwater’s Midhurst Secondary Plan area may necessitate expedited designation of additional Employment Areas.

Community Area Land Supply: Oro-Medonte and Springwater have sufficient Community Area land to meet their respective growth forecasts to 2051. In contrast, Barrie’s Community Area lands are insufficient to meet its 2051 population forecast.

Future Municipal Boundary Expansion: If necessary, future expansion of Barrie’s municipal boundary should address both Community and Employment Area needs, encompassing up to 930 hectares of developable land

(approximately 630 hectares for Community Areas and 300 hectares for Employment Areas).

Given these findings, the next phase of the facilitation process will aim to explore viable options for accommodating growth along the respective existing borders of Barrie and the Township of Springwater/ Barrie and the Township of Oro-Medonte. This work is already underway and will require a robust technical and planning analysis that will occur over the coming months.

In particular, this work will include:

- An evaluation of the suitability of different land locations and configurations for commercial, employment and residential development;
- The delineation of both undevelopable lands and natural heritage areas;
- An evaluation of the serviceability of lands (e.g. municipal water and wastewater, as well as transportation, electricity, and natural gas); and
- Consideration of local impacts and regional real estate market conditions.

In addition, the work will consider options for the long-term environmental preservation and conservancy of lands in the vicinity of Little Lake owned by the City of Barrie.

To undertake this work, Hemson will continue to be engaged through an agreement with the City of Barrie and will report to the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator. Hemson is supported by a roster of professional engineers, archaeologists, and ecologists. This team has a proven track record of working on municipal growth management assignments, including the initial needs assessment report. Their collective experience will enable the participating municipalities and the Province to make informed decisions based on sound evidence-based analysis and expert insights.

Minister Flack has been, and will continue to be, apprised of these ongoing discussions. His expectation is that a framework agreement will be achieved to address the need for additional community and employment area land supply, as identified in the needs assessment report, by September 30th. Such a framework agreement could inform the form and content of a restructuring proposal as contemplated in section 173 of the *Municipal Act*. This framework agreement would also be accompanied by a comprehensive plan for public engagement within each municipality, with Indigenous communities and with other important stakeholders.

To be most effective, the facilitation process must have engagement of all municipalities with the overarching goal of seeking the best method of achieving local and provincial priorities, such as the creation of housing and opportunities for employment, for the broader region. We believe full participation in the process is the best opportunity for the Township to advocate for its own interests and optimize outcomes for its own constituents.

We look forward to your continued participation and would be pleased to attend, in-person, at one of your Council meetings to address questions you may have about the process and, most importantly, the path forward.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Schelling
Deputy Facilitator, Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator



Daniel Mathieson
Chair, Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator

C: Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Mayor Randy Greenlaw, Township of Oro-Medonte
Shawn Binns, CAO, Township of Oro-Medonte
Mayor Alex Nuttall, City of Barrie
Michael Prowse, CAO, City of Barrie
Warden Basil Clarke, County of Simcoe
Mark Aitken, CAO, County of Simcoe
Chris Russell, Director of Planning, Township of Springwater