

## **Update from the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator**

### **Re: Facilitated Process for Joint Land Needs Analysis and Study in and around the City of Barrie**

**September 24, 2025**

**Overview of Facilitation Process** - The City of Barrie (“Barrie”), the Township of Oro-Medonte (“Oro-Medonte”), the Township of Springwater (“Springwater”) and the County of Simcoe (“the County”) have been engaged in without prejudice and confidential facilitated discussions. The intent of these discussions has been to develop mutually acceptable growth management solutions across their jurisdictions.

To support this effort, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing tasked the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator to assist with discussions, to ensure alignment with Provincial priorities, including the creation of housing and employment opportunities. At the outset, each municipality tasked the head of Council and deputy head of Council, supported by Chief Administrative Officers and municipal staff, to engage in these discussions. A consulting team was retained to provide supporting technical analysis to the participating municipalities.

The first stage of facilitated discussions between all parties began in mid-2024 and concluded with the completion of a high-level land needs assessment, as described below.

At the commencement of the next stage of the discussions, earlier this year, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing advised of his expectation that the parties achieve a framework agreement by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Since then, the Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator has:

- Met regularly with each municipal negotiating team;
- Conducted a series of bi-lateral meetings with Barrie and each of the Townships, and the County; and
- Chaired a half-day plenary session on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and a full-day plenary session on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 with all negotiating teams and the consultant team.

Facilitated discussions have now concluded.

The matters discussed during the process will now inform a draft restructuring proposal that will be the topic of a Public Meeting at a Barrie General Committee meeting on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Details of the proposal will be made available on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (<https://www.barrie.ca/planning-building-infrastructure/boundary-expansion-discussions>).

The proposal will be considered for approval at the October 1, 2025 Barrie General Committee and Council meetings, after considering comments received as part of the Public Meeting and engagement process.

This Public Meeting, and similar Public Meetings to be scheduled by both Townships and County in October, are opportunities for the public to consider the restructuring proposal which will be considered Barrie's final proposal to its neighboring municipalities following sixteen months of facilitated discussions. Each of Springwater, Oro-Medonte and the

County will consider the restructuring proposal for approval in accordance with section 173 of the Municipal Act. If approved by all municipalities, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing may implement the restructuring through issuance of an order.

#### **A. Initial Study released December, 2024: Are Additional Urban Lands Required to Accommodate Growth in Barrie?**

In December 2024, Hemson Consulting (“Hemson”), the lead consultant on the consulting team, delivered an assessment of the long-term need for additional residential and employment lands in Barrie, Springwater, and Oro-Medonte. This assessment was cost-shared by all four municipalities and all parties were provided opportunities to engage with Hemson on the form and content of its assessment.

Key findings from the needs assessment produced by Hemson in December, 2024 include:

##### **Employment Area**

- Barrie, Oro-Medonte, and Springwater collectively have sufficient designated Employment Area to 2051.
- However, Barrie faces a short-term shortage of “shovel-ready” employment parcels and a shortage of employment land by 2061.
- Additional Employment Area may be needed in Springwater at full build out of the Midhurst Secondary Plan.

##### **Community Area**

- Oro-Medonte and Springwater have sufficient Community Area land to accommodate growth to 2051.
- Barrie does not have enough Community Area land to meet its 2051 population forecast based on expected densities.

##### **Future Expansion of Barrie Boundaries**

- Future municipal boundary expansions, if required, should integrate both Community and Employment Areas. Future growth projected for Barrie may require up to 930 hectares of developable land (630 hectares for Community Areas, 300 hectares for Employment Areas).
- The full report produced by Hemson may be viewed at (<https://www.barrie.ca/media/13242>).

## **B. Next step: Identifying Locations and Servicing Needs for Additional Urban Lands**

In March 2025, Hemson began further analysis of options to accommodate future growth projected within Barrie. This work was supported by RV Anderson, North-South Environmental, and Orland Conservation. Building on the initial findings, this phase addressed two key questions:

### **1. Where can additional urban land be accommodated?**

- Appropriate greenfield lands
- Existing lands designated for urban uses in Springwater and/or Oro-Medonte
- A combination of both

### **2. What are the infrastructure needs and environmental constraints?**

- Evaluation of servicing needs (water, wastewater, stormwater, transportation, electricity, and natural gas)
- Identification of environmental features and constraints

It is important to note that as land supply in Barrie diminishes, growth in Barrie will slow, while growth in the Townships and the County will exceed current forecasts and ability to support/service growth.

## **C. Initial Findings regarding Location and Servicing Needs of Additional Urban Lands released in July, 2025**

Initial findings of the consultant team, released at the end of July, may be viewed at <https://barrie.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7507088&GUID=124E4CBA-C002-4E00-9DEF-8E6C9C158FBC&Options=&Search=>). The key findings of this work included:

- The land need identified in Hemson's December 2024 report was refined. Current estimates suggest Barrie requires approximately **500 developable hectares for Community Area** and at **least 300 developable hectares for Employment Area**—totalling approximately 800 hectares. This is slightly lower than the upper range identified in Hemson's December 2024 report.
- The **preferred location for future Employment Area expansion was identified as being lands along both sides of Highway 400**, starting at the Highway 400/Highway 11 interchange and extending north toward Forbes Road. This area could accommodate Barrie's 300-hectare Employment Area land need through to 2061, contribute to County needs for its Northern Regional Market Area, and address longer-term needs in Springwater.
- Three (3) options were identified for accommodated future Community Area (Residential) expansion of approximately 500 hectares. These options included accommodating this growth within the Midhurst Secondary Plan area, along the Barrie boundary with Springwater, or along the Barrie boundary with Oro-Medonte; and
- The **Barrie servicing system has sufficient capacity to meet future water demands and wastewater flows to accommodate the additional land need** identified in the Hemson December, 2024 study, as refined in July 2025.

## **D. Analysis of Servicing Needs and Environmental Mapping of Additional Urban Lands**

The last stage of the consulting team's technical analysis is summarized in three presentations attached to this memorandum. These presentations were shared with the parties engaged in the facilitation process at a full-day Plenary Session held on September 16, 2025.

**Environmental mapping and constraint analysis** for potential Community and Employment Area expansion lands was completed by North-South Environmental. This analysis informed the delineation of "non-developable" lands.

**Servicing requirements and costing**, including water, wastewater, transportation, stormwater, as well as electrical, and natural gas were assessed by RV Anderson. This work also considered the options for servicing proposed development along Bayfield Street immediately north of the current Barrie/Springwater boundary ("Block 5"). Impacts on sensitive receiving waterbodies (e.g. Lake Simcoe and Willow Creek) were also assessed.

## **E. The Elements of a "Framework Agreement"**

In parallel to the work undertaken by the consultant team, confidential and without prejudice discussions have been ongoing throughout the summer continuing at the September 16th Plenary Session. These discussions centered around the following themes and will inform a draft restructuring proposal that will be advanced by Barrie at the end of September:

- i. **Fairness for Affected Property Owners** – For example, the framework contemplates that any property tax impacts occurring as a result of restructuring be phased over a lengthy period – up to twenty (20) years for agricultural landowners.

- ii. **Environmental Stewardship and Protection** – The framework includes a plan for the long-term preservation and public use of lands in the vicinity of Little Lake. The City of Barrie currently owns approximately 650 acres of land in this area. Consideration has also been given to the creation of a buffer area along the proposed Barrie-Springwater boundary to appropriately scale future development. This area could also serve as a linear community space and promote active transportation as well as provide ecological and natural heritage feature linkages. Existing natural buffer areas between Oro-Medonte and Barrie were also considered.
- iii. **Maintaining Adequate Supply of Land for Community/Residential uses** – In considering the location and configuration of parcels for community (ie. residential uses) consideration was given to surrounding uses, location of natural heritage and environmental features and availability and cost of servicing. The restructuring proposal will include a quantity of lands within both Springwater and Oro-Medonte for the additional urban land needs of Barrie.
- iv. **The Creation of Employment Land to Support Job Creation and a Strong Local Economy** – As noted in the interim findings released earlier this summer, lands along the Highway 400 corridor south of Partridge Road were identified for potential new employment lands, including 300 hectares for the City of Barrie. The Township of Springwater has also identified, through its own Growth Management Study, land south of Forbes Road at Highway 400 for possible employment uses. These lands could play an important strategic role that aligns with provincial interests in securing employment opportunities for the broader community and northern Ontario. To that end, the framework also contemplates the creation of a Joint Economic Development Strategic Working Group to co-ordinate strategy and investment in employment lands

mentioned above but also including lands around the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport and employment lands southwest of Craighurst at Horseshoe Valley Road and Highway 400. All four municipalities understand the importance of regional co-operation in maximizing the employment opportunities in this study area.

- v. **Ensuring Adequate Compensation for Loss of Tax Revenue and Opportunity** - Existing tax revenues derived from lands included in the restructuring proposal were considered. In the case of Oro-Medonte, the Township currently receives approximately \$125,000 in annual property tax revenue, inclusive of County and educational taxes. In the case of Springwater this figure has been reported to be approximately \$258,000. In determining overall compensation, the parties also considered opportunities for cross-border servicing, the value of any allocation of water supply or wastewater treatment associated with cross-border servicing and the costs of infrastructure delivery for the additional urban lands which will largely be incurred by the City of Barrie and partially recovered through imposition of development charges.
- vi. **Unlocking Near-term Opportunities for Community Development** – The lands that formed part of the study area included four (4) applications for priority zoning through issuance of a Ministerial Zoning Order, three located in Springwater and one in Oro-Medonte. The proposed restructuring proposal is intended to create certainty for the proponents of these projects. In the instance of one of these proposed developments, at 727 Bayfield Street North, for example, the proposed construction of a life lease seniors building, palliative care hospice, medical offices and long-term care facility would, once complete, result in approximately 300 jobs for the broader community.



## **F. Next Steps – Restructuring Proposal and Public Engagement**

As noted above, the City of Barrie has scheduled a public meeting on September 29<sup>th</sup>. As part of the Public Meeting package, the agreements with each of the Township of Springwater and the Township of Oro-Medonte and a commitment to the County. Details of those agreements will be made available on the City of Barrie website on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

Should the restructuring proposal be approved by Barrie Council, copies of the proposal will be sent to each Township and the County of Simcoe. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will also receive the proposal.

Section 173 of the *Municipal Act* (“the Act”) provides that the receiving municipalities must hold a public meeting and each Council of the three receiving (3) municipalities must then consider the proposal for approval.

The Township of Springwater will receive the proposal, if approved by Barrie, at a public meeting on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and both the Township of Oro-Medonte and the County of Simcoe intend to schedule meetings for mid-October, with dates to be confirmed. Further information about these meetings will become available on the websites of these municipalities.

Should the restructuring proposal receive support of all parties, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing may implement the restructuring proposal, by issuance of an order, in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

As noted above, facilitated discussions concerning a framework agreement have concluded. The Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator will, however, continue to be engaged with the

parties throughout the public meetings and, should the proposal be approved by the Minister, during the process of implementation.

The Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator would like to express its sincere thanks to Warden Clarke, Mayor Coughlin, Mayor Nuttall and Mayor Greenlaw, and their respective Council colleagues and municipal staff, for their participation and valuable contributions throughout the facilitation process.

The Office of the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator would also like to thank the members of the consultant team, led by Hemson Consulting, for their thorough analysis and support during the facilitation process.

Attachments –

Stage 3 Presentation materials prepared by:

- 1) Hemson Consulting
- 2) North-South Environmental
- 3) R.V. Anderson Consulting