

September 11, 2024

Committee of the Whole

RE: Preliminary Design Concept for Grey Road 19 Housing Development (PDS.24.087)

Correspondence for the Committee's Consideration

Dear Madame Chair and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed development at 796058 Grey Road 19 and the recommendation in Staff Report PDS.24.087 to consider this project through a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO). I am respectfully asking Council to deny the proposal to use an MZO to fast-track this development. MZOs bypass essential local planning processes and severely limit the ability of residents and stakeholders to meaningfully participate in decisions that directly impact their community.

This project is proposing 1,228 residential units and 21,288 square feet of commercial space—this is a massive development that requires a carefully considered approach. The lands designated for this development fall under the Town of The Blue Mountains' Future Secondary Plan (FSP) area. According to the Town's Official Plan, significant developments in these areas should only proceed after a comprehensive review and the creation of a detailed Secondary Plan for the entire FSP area. This project, however, seeks to circumvent these official procedures and risk piecemeal, haphazard growth, all of which begs an important question: **What is the justification for rushing this process?** The Staff Report offers no concrete reasoning to answer this question. Even the County of Grey Planning has requested further rationale on why a MZO is necessary over the traditional planning process. The need to fast-track this project has not been made clear, and it raises questions about whether all possible impacts have been thoroughly considered.

Without a Secondary Plan, we lose the opportunity to thoughtfully consider how this development fits within the broader needs of the community, infrastructure, and environment. Secondary Plans provide a holistic framework that involves all stakeholders—residents, ministries, and other agencies—in guiding development in a way that respects the character of our town and prepares it for future growth. Proceeding without this vital tool undermines the integrity of local planning and sets a dangerous precedent for future developments.

The recent experience with the Campus of Care, where a MZO was used in a Future Secondary Plan area without a Secondary Plan, should serve as a clear warning to us all. Local neighborhoods are being fundamentally altered in ways that compromise the Town's

character and residents' quality of life. Even more concerning, the traffic management strategies put forward have raised safety concerns, putting the well-being of pedestrians and motorists at risk. Additionally, we are becoming increasingly concerned about water allocation. By approving a project as large as the Campus of Care, which is projected to consume a significant portion of the Town's water resources, we now face the possibility of being unable to allocate sufficient water to new developments. This is what happens when projects are rushed without sufficient planning or consultation.

This proposed development on Grey Road 19 raises similar alarms. One of the most pressing concerns is the severe limitations of the existing water supply in the area. The current infrastructure simply cannot support a development of this size, and significant water modeling and monitoring are required to understand the implications. Additionally, the sewage collection system is not designed to handle the expected load from the proposed 1,228 residential units, which would require substantial upgrades to the entire system.

The report also highlights that traffic remains a significant issue. The proposed development would generate a volume of traffic that exceeds what the surrounding road network, including the Grey Road 19/Crosswinds Boulevard intersection, was designed to handle.

Furthermore, the development's impact on the broader Future Secondary Plan area has not been fully addressed. The report explicitly notes that more comprehensive planning is needed to ensure that adjacent lands and future growth are not negatively impacted by this project. Without this proper planning, the community risks facing unintended consequences similar to those we are now experiencing with the Campus of Care.

It would be irresponsible to repeat these mistakes by using a MZO for this proposed development. Instead of fast-tracking the project, we need to carefully assess these significant concerns and ensure that the Town's long-term interests are protected through comprehensive planning and public consultation.

While the Staff Report suggests holding a public meeting before the council recommends the MZO, I am concerned that this is a formality rather than a meaningful opportunity for public input. In the current climate of rapid, unbridled development in Ontario, municipal councils are often under immense pressure to approve projects recommended by planning staff. Even significant public opposition is unlikely to influence a council's decision when faced with the real possibility that the developer could appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) and win the case.

I urge Committee Members to deny the use of a MZO for this proposed development. Instead, I strongly recommend that the Committee adhere to the established planning procedures and develop a comprehensive Secondary Plan for the Future Secondary Plan area. This would ensure that any development is consistent with the Town's long-term goals and is undertaken with full public engagement and stakeholder input.

We cannot afford to sacrifice proper planning and community consultation in the name of expediency. The lessons we are learning from the Campus of Care project should guide us toward more responsible, transparent, and sustainable development practices.

Regards,

Paul Reale