How Ontario's Planning Rules Have Changed

This document was prepared in response to a City Council motion passed in December 2025 directing the City Planning Division and Development Review Division to develop a resource explaining how recent provincial legislative and regulatory changes affect the City's planning tools and its development review process.

This document is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of all recent provincial changes nor is it intended to provide professional advice of any nature. For a full description of the changes, please consult the text of the actual regulations, policies or legislation. The City's comments on the various pieces of legislation can be found on the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

The information is presented in four sections, summarizing recent provincial changes that affect:

1. the development review process
2. housing delivery
3. jobs and employment lands
4. the delivery of infrastructure and services to support growth

1. Provincial changes that affect the development review process

Theme	What Has Changed?	Reference
Appeal Rights	Neighbours and community groups can no longer appeal a planning decision made by the City or by the Committee of Adjustment to the Ontario Land Tribunal or Toronto Local Appeal Body. Only impacted property owners, public bodies (e.g. a utility, railway or school board), the Minister and development proponents are allowed to appeal a local planning decision.	Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024
Approval Timelines	The Provincial Planning Act sets out timelines for how long municipalities have to review development applications. Legislative changes have shortened most of these timelines. For Official Plan Amendments, review timelines have been shortened from 180 days to 120 days; for Zoning By-law Amendments from 120 days to 90 days; and for combined OPA/ZBAs from 210 days to 120 days. For Site Plan applications, timelines were lengthened from 30 days to 60 days.	Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 Bill 197, COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022
As-Of-Right Variances	Bill 60 enables the Province to adopt regulations that treat developments as complying with the Zoning By-law, even if they do not fully meet certain zoning standards. As a result, some deviations from zoning standards are automatically permitted without an application. The Province passed a regulation that allows property owners to reduce required building setbacks from property lines by up to 10% without requiring planning approval.	Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025

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	Under the legislation, the Province may introduce additional regulations that automatically permit deviations from other zoning standards, such as building height, density, or landscaped open space requirements.	
Environmental Performance	In place since 2010, the City of Toronto's Green Standard (TGS) is a set of environmental performance and sustainability requirements for new buildings. It has helped to limit greenhouse gas emissions and reduce long-term operating costs of buildings. It has also supported the development of local industries that supply innovative building materials and technologies. Provincial legislative changes have resulted in some of these requirements now being removed from the TGS, including greenhouse gas intensity limits and building energy performance targets; and others being converted from "mandatory" to "voluntary."	Bill 98, Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026
Green Roofs	Toronto adopted a Green Roof Bylaw in 2009. It required certain types of new, larger-scale developments to install green roofs. Over 15 years, this by-law resulted in over 1,200 green rooftops being installed on new buildings and helped support an estimated $50 million in investment in locally based green industries. As of November 3, 2025, the Province has removed the City's authority to require green roofs on new development and the Green Roof Bylaw is therefore no longer in effect.	Order in Council 1374/2025
Natural Areas	The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has traditionally reviewed and regulated development in and around natural heritage features, areas and systems. Bill 23 narrowed the roles and responsibilities of all Conservation Authorities, restricting their authority to review natural heritage criteria while issuing permits or while providing technical review in the development review process.	Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022
Required Studies	The City requires that development proponents provide various studies to support their applications. The Province introduced legislation to limit the kinds of studies that municipalities can require, and municipalities now need provincial approval to add any new study requirements as part of a development application.	Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025
Site Plan Review	Site Plan Control is a planning tool that allows municipalities to review and approve the detailed design of development before construction proceeds. The scope of what municipalities can consider through Site Plan Control has been narrowed through various provincial legislative changes. Bill 109 required that site plan approval authority be delegated to City staff, instead of City Council. Bill 23 limited the scope of site plan approval to residential projects of 11 or more units and	Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 Bill 98, Building Homes and Improving

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	limited the ability of municipalities to use this process to regulate building appearance and landscaping details. Bill 98 further limited the scope to preclude municipalities from considering matters related to “sustainable design” as part of the Site Plan process. In April and May 2026, the Province consulted on potential additional reforms to the Site Plan Control process.	Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026 Proposal to reform site plan control under the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act, 2006

2. Provincial changes that affect housing delivery

Theme	What Has Changed?	Reference
Affordable Housing	Inclusionary Zoning is a provincially-regulated planning tool that allows municipalities to require that new residential development in 95 major transit station areas include a minimum percentage of affordable housing units. In May 2025, the Province made two changes to the scope of Inclusionary Zoning: • The number of affordable units that can be required in a development was capped at 5% of the total residential units or residential gross floor area. Previously there was no cap, and the City had adopted an inclusionary zoning policy that required between 0% and 22% of residential gross floor area in a new development to be provided as affordable units (with the rate based on a project’s location, tenure, and timing). • The length of time that the units must remain affordable was capped at 25 years. The inclusionary zoning policy previously adopted by City Council required a 99-year affordability period. In Toronto there are currently 95 major transit station areas that could be eligible for Inclusionary Zoning. However, in January 2026 the Province paused the implementation of Inclusionary Zoning until July 1, 2027.	Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 O. Reg 54.25: Inclusionary Zoning O. Reg 15/26: Inclusionary Zoning
Density Near Transit	The Province requires municipalities to delineate the areas within 500-800 metres of subway, GO and LRT stations as Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). In August 2025, the Province approved the boundaries for 120 station areas in Toronto, and increased height and density permissions within them. The City is now required to implement these policies through updated zoning, which is currently underway. Municipalities are not permitted to require that developments in station areas provide parking, including visitor parking.	Provincial Planning Statement 2024 Major Transit Station Areas – Minister’s Decision, 2025

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Heritage Properties	The City's authority to designate and protect heritage properties is set out in the Ontario Heritage Act. Recent changes to that legislation set time limits and other conditions on the City's ability to list properties on its Heritage Register and revise the process to designate them under the Ontario Heritage Act. Properties on the City's Heritage Register must now be designated within two years. If that timeline is not met, the property must be removed from the Heritage Register, and it cannot be re-listed for five years. A new provision also requires the City to designate a property within 90 days of a planning application being deemed complete.	Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

3. Provincial changes that affect jobs and employment lands

Theme	What Has Changed?	Reference
Jobs and Employment Lands	The City has identified areas across Toronto as employment areas. While employment areas represent only about 11% of the City's land area, they provide nearly 25% of the jobs in Toronto. To protect these areas for job creation, the City does not permit residential uses in them. Previously, employment areas could only be converted to other uses through a Municipal Comprehensive Review, which would be led by the municipality and occur approximately every 5 years. This approach allowed the City to review all conversion requests comprehensively (there were 150 requests in 2020) while carefully balancing the City's economic and housing priorities. In 2024, the Province changed the rules to allow individual developers to submit applications for conversions from employment to residential uses at any time. The Province also changed the definition of "area of employment" to narrow the scope of uses that are permitted in these areas to manufacturing, warehousing, and research and development in connection with manufacturing, and to exclude permissions for stand-alone commercial and institutional uses. Since the changes took effect in October 2024, the City has received 47 employment area removal requests with 9 applications being appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal.	Provincial Planning Statement 2024 Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023

4. Provincial changes that affect infrastructure and services to support growth

Theme	What Has Changed?	Reference
Community Benefits	"Density Bonusing" through Section 37 of the Planning Act was a planning tool that allowed the provision of funds for public benefit, such as community space, recreation centres, libraries, affordable housing, public art, etc. in exchange for additional height or density permissions on a site. The Planning Act no longer permits this type of Density Bonusing. It was replaced by Community Benefits Charges, which are capped at 4% of the development land's value, reducing the funds that come to the City to pay for public benefits.	Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 Bill 197, COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020
Infrastructure	Development Charges (DCs) are fees that developers pay to help fund infrastructure such as sewers, transit, recreation centres, and other infrastructure that is needed to accommodate growth. Several provincial legislative changes have been made, including: • removing the ability to fund shelters and affordable housing through DCs • freezing DC rates earlier in the application process • allowing for interest-free payment deferrals for residential and institutional development On June 23, 2026, the City secured $1.5 billion through the DC Reduction Program announced by the federal and provincial governments and committed to reducing residential development charges by 40% to 60% for a three-year period.	Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 Bill 17, Protect Ontario by Building Faster and Smarter Act, 2025 Development Charge Reduction Program
Parks	Developers are required to either convey a portion of their site to be used as new parkland or pay the cash-equivalent to the City to be used for creating new parks. The maximum amount of parkland that the City can receive from a development has been reduced, particularly for development sites larger than 1 hectare. Recent provincial legislative changes also allow landowners to propose lands for parkland that have not been traditionally accepted by the City as full parkland dedication, such as encumbered lands and stratified lands (e.g., over a parking garage), and partial interests in land other than full public ownership (e.g., a privately owned publicly accessible space). If the City does not agree with the lands being proposed for parkland, the landowner is now able to appeal the decision at the Ontario Land Tribunal. On July 1, 2026, a new regulation came into force on the identification and criteria for whether land is eligible or ineligible to be dedicated as parkland, as well as the appeal process.	Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 Bill 98, Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act, 2026 O. Reg. 207/26 Community Benefits Charges and Parkland