

Proposed Changes to Minister's Zoning Orders (MZO) and the Planning Act

Comments to the Province

March 31, 2021



Background

- The Government has made frequent use of MZOs and expanded these powers as part of Bill 197.
- In January 2021, the Province sought feedback on how to use these expanded powers.
 - In response, the City provided a detailed set of comments, and the Mayor wrote directly to the Minister to further articulate some of the issues raised by Council.
- The Government is proposing to further expand MZO powers as part of Bill 257. This time to permit MZOs that are not consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

Key Comments

1. Proposed changes could result in MZOs that are inconsistent with the PPS

- The PPS is a foundational document for planning in Ontario.
- The proposed powers would allow for the issuance of MZOs that are no longer consistent with the PPS. This would apply retroactively so an MZO issued, does not have to be consistent with the PPS.
- Most lands in the province would follow one set of rules, but lands benefiting from an MZO could be subject to a lower level of social and environmental obligations.

Key Comments (cont.)

2. If the Government decides to use MZOs routinely, there should be greater transparency and clear public benefit

- As Council has indicated in past submissions, the Province could consider establishing clear criteria to guide its use of MZOs
- MZOs should only support projects that offer clear and direct public benefits (e.g. create affordable housing, support public health and result in significant job creation).

Next Steps

- Staff are seeking General Committee / Council endorsement of these comments.
- Staff also included a recommendation to authorize the Mayor to engage the Province directly on this matter, if it is consider such a step is required.
- All comments are due to the Province by April 3, 2021.