



Sam Oosterhoff

Member of Provincial Parliament
Niagara West

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The Corporation of the Town of Grimsby
Office of the Town Clerk
160 Livingston Ave.
Grimsby, ON L3M 0J5

Dear Sarah,

Thank you for sharing the kind invitation of Grimsby Council to attend their upcoming meeting. Since my election in 2016, I have appreciated working closely with the Town of Grimsby to deliver on local priorities for our mutual constituents.

These have included major projects such as the new West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, funding for the Grimsby Peach King Centre, and our government's continued commitment to investing in the Niagara GO extension. The Ontario government has also worked to invest millions of dollars in local infrastructure through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, with local grants for sewers and water, bridges, and of course a doubling of the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, providing millions in direct grants to the municipality to assist with priorities, and defray costs for local taxpayers.

Many of our mutual constituents have also spoken about the need for more housing, and more housing affordability, in the Niagara Region. This is an important issue right across the province, which is why our PC Government under the leadership of Premier Ford, was elected with a strong mandate to build 1.5 million homes over the next ten years. With Ontario's population growing by an estimated 300,000 annually, it is crucial that all levels of government work together to find solutions to the housing crisis.

Yet over the last 30 years, Ontario has built fewer than 70,000 homes in an average year, which has left our province with a severe housing shortage. A lack of homes has led to dramatically higher prices across Ontario, made it harder to find a rental home, and put the dream of home ownership out of reach for far too many Ontarians.

Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, is a key part of the Ontario government's commitment to meet that goal and make the dream of home ownership a reality for every family in the province. It will help families across Ontario find homes they can afford, and which meet their individual needs.

More Homes Built Faster includes dozens of actions to address Ontario's housing supply crisis by:

- Providing "as-of-right" zoning for up to three units per lot in most residential areas
- Eliminating certain municipal fees and charges on affordable housing
- Putting in place updated inclusionary zoning rules
- Streamlining approval processes for new homes, including innovative housing models such as land lease communities
- Supporting density around major transit hubs
- Increasing consumer protections for new homebuyers
- Increasing the Non-Resident Speculation Tax rate to strengthen efforts to deter non-resident investors from speculating on the province's housing market



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- Exploring innovative approaches to building schools in urban growth communities

This plan will provide hope and opportunity for a generation of new and young Ontarians who have been unable to afford a home, while providing a better mix of housing options to families at every stage of life.

I do wish to address a couple of major misunderstandings I am hearing from constituents. First, the charge that Bill 23 will remove development charges and increase property taxes. In reality, development charges are only being eliminated for affordable and inclusionary zoning units, not-for-profit housing and select attainable housing units, with reductions of up to 25% for purpose-built rentals. For most other homes, Bill 23 simply limits the rate at which cities can raise development charges – which already add about \$116,900 to the cost of an average home in the GTA. This will help bring down the cost of housing in Ontario and make it easier and cheaper to build and purchase a home. Additionally, I believe Minister Clark has communicated the government's intention to make whole communities who achieve or exceed provincial housing targets.

The second misunderstanding I hear, is the claim that Bill 23 is ripping up the Greenbelt. Bill 23 does not alter the Greenbelt. In a separate action, the government has proposed to adjust the boundary of the 2-million-acre Greenbelt near existing urban areas, but the changes would ultimately ~~lead~~ to the overall expansion of the Greenbelt by approximately 2,000 acres, as well as the creation of at least 50,000 new homes in the near future. In Niagara, these changes account for approximately 88 acres of land which is currently abutting urban areas and is not in agricultural production. It is also important to note that the last official position of the Town of Grimsby as shared with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in April of 2015, asks for removal of additional areas of the Greenbelt (Greenbelt Plan Review PA#15-11).

I hope this helps address some of your questions. I will not be attending your upcoming Grimsby Council meeting, but I look forward to continuing to work closely with Grimsby Council and local leaders to deliver for the people of Niagara West. If there is any interest in following up with specific questions or concerns, I would be more than willing to sit down in my constituency office with staff, councillors, or constituents, to discuss these matters of importance to our mutual constituents.

Sincerely,

Sam Oosterhoff, MPP
Niagara West

Cc: Peter Todd, Manager of Legislative Services/Deputy Clerk