

June 16, 2026

MTO ERO
Environmental Policy Office
438 University Ave, 12th Floor
Toronto, ON
M7A 1N3

Submitted online and via email to mto.ero@ontario.ca

To the MTO ERO, Environmental Policy Office,

Re: ERO # 019-9438, Updates to the Ontario Transit-Supportive Guidelines

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, proudly representing more than 38,000 farm family members. OFA has a strong voice for our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations administered by all levels of government. We are dedicated to ensuring that the agri-food sector and rural communities are considered and consulted with for any new or changing legislation that would impact the sustainability and growth of our farm businesses.

OFA appreciates this opportunity to provide input on the proposed updates to the *Transit-Supportive Guidelines*. Our topline feedback is summarized below:

- OFA supports the intensification and densification of urban areas to reduce farmland loss, land value speculation, and development pressure on farmers;
- OFA encourages the guidelines to go further by recommending that municipalities surpass density minimums and plan to grow into *transit-oriented communities*;
- As Ontario's farmers age, access to social and healthcare services becomes increasingly important; and
- On-demand transit services in *rural areas* should be a part of Ontario's solution to ensuring rural residents have access to public services.

OFA supports the intensification and densification of Ontario's urban *settlement areas*. The *Proposed Transit-Supportive Guidelines* appropriately encourage municipalities to plan *mixed-use zones* for *major transit station areas* and suggest capitalizing on existing underutilized lots for redevelopment, while discouraging "low-intensity, land-consumptive uses related to light or heavy industry" inside *major transit station areas*. OFA encourages the Ministry of Transportation to maintain this momentum and go further. For farmers, strategically planning for intensification and

densification in urban areas can limit farmland loss and reduce land value speculation and development pressure in *rural areas*.

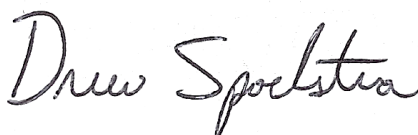
The Ministry should encourage municipalities to adopt density targets high enough to absorb projected growth in existing *settlement areas*, beyond the minimums in the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS, 2024), rather than allow development to sprawl beyond existing urban areas. Effective transit services are important to achieve that outcome, as they reduce traffic congestion and enable tax-efficient, complete, walkable neighbourhoods. The province's attention to *transit-oriented communities* in the Greater Toronto Area is an example of this kind of growth planning. OFA recommends that other increasingly metropolitan cities also be encouraged to adopt *transit-oriented communities* as a planning goal.

The *Proposed Transit-Supportive Guidelines* also discuss transit solutions in Ontario's *rural areas*. While vehicle ownership rates are high in the countryside, private vehicles are not a viable transit option for all rural residents. As the average age of farm owners and operators continue to rise it is important that Ontario consider implementing effective and efficient solutions to rural transit needs to support this rural demographic. Adequate distribution of economic development funding across rural Ontario supports a future where farmers can have needed access to social, healthcare and other services without burdening an already taxed urban system. Strong support of these services in rural Ontario will also support effective transit systems in urban Ontario.

Rural transit options would also connect urban residents to rural areas. Urban drivers licence and vehicle ownership rates, alongside associated costs, can manifest as barriers to farm access. Among urban youth, these barriers may be even more acute. Rural transit services thus may boost connections to agricultural heritage, direct-to-consumer sales, and pride in local food.

OFA appreciates the opportunity to provide our feedback and perspectives on growth and transit planning. We look forward to working with the provincial government and our municipal partners to find policy solutions that support the agri-food sector.

Sincerely,



Drew Spoelstra
President

cc: Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation
Hon. Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure
Hon. Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs
OFA Board of Directors

This submission has been approved by OFA Board of Directors and will be posted to OFA's website: <https://ofa.on.ca/resources>.