

MOTION



North Bay, ON

April 6, 2021

Subject: Ontario Real Estate Association

File No.

Res. 2021-

Moved by Councillor: Bain

Seconded by Councillor: Brousseau

Whereas the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) released a report titled Small Towns, Big Opportunities - Unlocking Growth in Ontario’s Rural and Northern Communities; ([OREA WhitePaper Small-Towns-Big-Opportunities](#));

And Whereas the economic and demographic realities faced by communities outside of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) are rarely the focus of mainstream media attention or political actors;

And Whereas over the past few years, many non-GTHA towns and cities have been faced with the challenges caused by losing talented youth to larger centres and a move away from more traditional goods-producing economies;

And Whereas in the midst of these socioeconomic challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic brought new obstacles; however, also created renewed opportunities for many communities;

And Whereas thousands of Ontarians no longer need to live near their workplace, while thousands more have used the pandemic as a platform to accelerate plans to move to smaller locales;

And Whereas if the provincial government can capitalize on this momentum to help rural and northern small towns turn this short-term rebound into long-term growth, thereby raising the quality of life, average incomes, and future prospects of the millions of Ontarians who reside outside of the GTHA.

Therefore be it resolved that the Council for the City of North Bay hereby supports the Ontario Real Estate Association’s 15 recommendations attached hereto and contained within the Small Towns, Big Opportunities - Unlocking Growth in Ontario’s Rural and Northern Communities Report, that aim to create and attract jobs, reverse the out-migration of young talent, close the infrastructure gap, and foster more housing starts.

Further that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure; the Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines; the Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance; the Honourable Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs; the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA); the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM); and Minister Vic Fedeli, MPP for Nipissing.

Carried Carried as amended Lost

Conflict _____ Endorsement of Chair _____

Yeas _____ Nays _____

Record of Vote (*Upon Request of Councillor* _____)

Signature of Clerk _____

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RECOMMENDATION #1

The Ontario Government should embrace the policy of opportunity zones by working with the Federal government towards immediate implementation. The Ontario version should contain stricter criteria for qualification as an opportunity zone and consider a longer timeline to incentivize the right type of investment.

RECOMMENDATION #2

If the Ontario Government does not pursue Opportunity Zones with the Federal Government, it should consider a similar provincial-only model combining tax holidays and tax deferrals to qualifying investors in rural and Northern areas to help attract and retain businesses.

RECOMMENDATION #3

The Ontario Government should create a tiered graduation from the Small Business Tax rate to the full Corporate Income Tax rate to encourage and incentivize Ontario's small businesses to grow in the wake of COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATION #4

The Government of Ontario should create an office relocation strategy to review eligible bureaucracies and agencies that can be moved outside of the urban core to rural and Northern Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION #5

The Government of Ontario should review the funding formula for municipal funding programs, such as the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, to ensure that rural and northern municipalities are not unfairly short-changed when it comes to infrastructure funding.

RECOMMENDATION #6

The Ontario Government should continue with its ambitious natural gas expansion policies by increasing the number of expansion projects funded in order to lower the cost of business and the cost of living in rural and Northern Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION #7

The Ontario Government should eliminate barriers to broadband installation in rural areas, including reviewing provincial easement rules and utility pole access, while also encouraging the Federal Government to pursue regulatory reforms that accelerate broadband funding.

RECOMMENDATION #8

The Ontario Government should undertake reforms to accelerate the conversion of commercial properties into mixed-use residential sites. These reforms should be respectful of municipal authority but feature expedited timelines for decisions from local councils.

RECOMMENDATION #9

The Ontario government should embrace and enable microcredential program offerings at Ontario's post-secondary institutions, specifically those that have satellite campuses in rural and Northern Ontario

RECOMMENDATION #10

All three levels of government should work together to encourage new Canadians to settle in Ontario's rural and Northern municipalities. This work could include an expansion of the current five year Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot to cover more municipalities, the creation of local immigrant support services, and the creation of a dedicated Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) stream for immigrants wishing to settle in rural and Northern locales.

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RECOMMENDATION #11

The Ontario government should design a made-in-Ontario program to financially incentivize recent graduates to move to rural and Northern Ontario in order to reverse the rural brain-drain.

RECOMMENDATION #12

The Ontario Government should take steps to promote jurisdictional clarity over development approvals and quicken the overall timeline for new builds. This work should aim to streamline the process and set uniform processes for things such as the definitions of woodlands or the requirements for a draft plan of subdivision.

RECOMMENDATION #13

The Ontario Government should explore ways to accelerate approvals for activities related to the construction, operation, and maintenance of community-based living facilities for the elderly and those who require regular professional care.

RECOMMENDATION #14

The Ontario government should eliminate the existing Rural Growth Plan Targets in light of their true impact on housing supply and affordability, as well as evolving demographic and economic trends in rural Ontario.

RECOMMENDATION #15

The Ontario government should develop a rent-to-own program for affordable units in the non-GTHA to promote greater accessibility to housing, encourage worker retention, and provide an affordable alternative for would-be home buyers.