

Bill 23: More Homes Faster Act

Implications for the Parks and Recreation Sector, a Preliminary Analysis



Introduction



With the intent of increasing the supply of housing in the province, the Ontario government has introduced Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022. This Bill aims to minimize barriers to housing development by proposing significant changes to several pieces of provincial legislation.

The Bill has passed second reading and has been referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure, and Cultural Policy. PRO has requested to present at Committee and will submit written comments.



Definitions

Key terms from Bill 23 sourced from the [Government of Ontario website](#).

Development Charges

Fees on a new development that help pay for the capital costs needed to support new growth.

Community Benefit Charges

Charges to fund the capital costs of any public service associated with new growth, if those costs are not already recovered from development charges and parkland provisions.

Parkland Dedication

These are provisions that allow municipalities to acquire green spaces on land proposed for development.

The Details



As proposed, Bill 23 threatens to have serious economic, environmental, and social implications for the province. PRO will focus its work primarily on the following schedules:

**Schedule 2:
Conservation
Authorities Act,
1990**

**Schedule 3:
Development
Charges Act,
1997**

**Schedule 9:
Planning Act,
1990**

Conservation Authorities Act, 1990

Bill 23 and the proposed amendments to the Greenbelt Plan and the Ontario Wetland Evaluation system threaten to prioritize development over environmental and conservation concerns.

Changes include:

- Setting fees for programs through regulations and authorizing the Minister to direct an authority not to change fees.
- Placing restrictions on the content of programs and services.
- Limiting the ability of conservation authorities to review and comment on a development proposal or application.
- Provisions that will require a conservation authority to issue a permission or permit where an order has been made by the Minister under the Planning Act.
- Removing the consideration of pollution mitigation or land conservation and instead focusing on factors such as flooding and erosion.
- Giving the Minister the authority to make regulations limiting the types of conditions that may be attached to a permission or permit.
- Streamline a conservation authorities' ability to sell or lease lands they own.
- Temporarily freeze conservation authority fees for development permits.

Development Charges Act, 1997

This piece of legislation moves away from the longstanding idea that growth should pay for growth and brings changes that would alter how local governments are able to raise revenue to provide critical services.

Changes include:

- Excluding affordable housing, non-profit housing, and inclusionary zoning units from development charges, parkland dedication fees, and community benefit charges.
- Introducing reductions to development charges of up to 25% for rental construction based on the number of bedrooms.
- Changes to how development charges are structured. This includes removing the costs of certain studies from the set of capital costs that can be covered by development charges.
- Requiring a municipality to spend or allocate 60% of reserve funds annually.
- Introducing a cap on development charges for some developments.
- Requiring municipalities to spend at least 60% of development charge reserves on hard service such as water and roads versus soft services such as parks and recreation.

Planning Act, 1990

The changes that Bill 23 made to the Planning Act, 1990 undermine the development of healthy, equitable, sustainable communities.

Changes include:

- Overriding zoning bylaws to increase “gentle density” without corresponding development or community benefit charges, placing additional burden on municipal services.
- Restricting third party appeals and limiting conservation authority appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal for residential and commercial developments.
- Reducing parkland dedication requirement for high density residential developments by 50%.
- Excluding affordable and attainable housing developments from all parkland dedication requirements.
- Restricting site plan control for local governments.
- Cash in lieu for parkland dedication is capped for medium and high-density developments.
- Encumbered land and privately owned publicly accessible spaces meet the requirements for parkland quota.

Implications for Parks and Recreation

Bill 23 removes key oversight provisions and fee structures that ensure the sustainable and equitable development of communities. The impact of this on parks and recreation services will be significant.

The Bill will have a significant impact on how municipalities are able to recover the costs associated with growth.

The proposed changes run counter to the work done previously by the provincial government to preserve Ontario's environment.

If passed, Bill 23 will create deeply divided communities that provide inequitable access to services and amenities.



What You Can Do



Write to your MPP

Find [your MPP here](#) and use our letter/email template to express your concerns on Bill 23.

Develop a written submission

Make a written submission to the [Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy](#) by November 17.

Mobilize your community

Share this explainer and our toolkit with your network and encourage them to contribute their thoughts.