

## Executive Summary

Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs) are a provincial tool that bypasses the formal planning process to expedite priorities of the provincial government. The Fallis West property is a 49.2 hectare site, municipally known as 787 and 825 Fallis Line, in the Cavan Monaghan Township and is within the recharge and discharge area of the Baxter Creek watershed. The site is in proximity to the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) that contains ecological and hydrological assets such as significant mature woodlands, pine vegetation, springs, seeps, recharge areas, valley lands, cold headwater streams, open grasslands, and meadows. The property is currently subject to a Plan of Subdivision application with 696 residential units, consisting of 371 single detached dwellings, 125 townhouse dwellings, and 200 residential apartments through 14 proposed internal streets. O. Reg 250/22 is the MZO for the site which includes a range of residential, open space, and commercial zones as well as relief of various minimum setbacks and side yards.

This report investigates the powers of MZOs and is intended to make recommendations for more effective implementation of MZOs in consultation with local municipal governments and communities. The report was guided by the following four research objectives:

1. How does the current provincial planning process identify and protect significant ecological and hydrological features, such as woodlands, habitat, and waterways on the Fallis West lands and surrounding area?
2. What are the development application requirements in the Town of Cavan Monaghan and how do these relate to the natural environment?
3. How has the emergence of MZO processes influenced the current planning processes in Ontario and the Town of Cavan Monaghan?
4. Set out recommendations for best practices future research regarding the delivery of MZOs and local conservation planning.

Qualitative methods including a literature review and thematic analysis of provincial legislation, policies, and plans were used to answer the research questions. The literature review identified common themes related to environmental land use planning, environmentally

sensitive lands, planning theory, and information on MZOs. The thematic analysis model formulated key themes to interpret within the datasets. Based on the analysis, three theme groups and six study themes were formed to develop best practice recommendations related to the use of MZOs. The theme groups included policymaking, technical, and social. The study themes included long-range planning, environmental planning, environmental resources, environmental monitoring, public consultation, and community impacts.

Significant ecological and hydrological features on the Fallis West lands and surrounding area are protected by a range of provincial legislation and plans. This includes policy direction under the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act*. Development in the Town of Cavan Monaghan is regulated by the County of Peterborough and Town of Cavan Monaghan Official Plan, as well as Town of Cavan Monaghan Zoning By-law. Land use designations and zoning are key tools for development control. The emergence of MZOs have impacted Ontario planning processes by limiting the powers of conservation authorities (CAs) and input from other key stakeholders that reduce the necessary time to evaluate development applications.

Four recommendations were provided to set out best practices for the delivery of MZOs in southern Ontario with respect to local conservation planning:

1. Identify alternatives to MZOs;
2. Engage and collaborate with the local community;
3. Establish provincial-municipal partnerships; and
4. Formalize the MZO process.

Moving forward, conducting interviews, assessing additional MZO case studies, and comparing evaluations completed by CAs on MZO properties vs non-MZO properties should be carried out to further identify the impacts of the use of MZOs on environmental land use planning in southern Ontario.