



June 28, 2022

Hon. Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing
College Park, 17th Floor
777 Bay St
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Clark:

Congratulations on your recent re-appointment as Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing. The Brampton Board of Trade has enjoyed working with you and looks forward to continuing to find ways to advance our shared priorities in the coming mandate.

I am writing today to briefly outline our organization's near-term priorities for your Ministry. As you know, many of the files under your purview directly impact our membership and the broader success and prosperity of our city.

- 1) **Municipal Reform:** Our biggest immediate request is that you re-open the municipal reform file for the Region of Peel and City of Brampton in particular. Considerable work went into reviewing options for municipal reform at the beginning of your government's first mandate in 2018. For a variety of reasons, it is appropriate to once again look at the options available to you.

I wrote you earlier outlining dysfunction at Brampton City Hall stemming from Council's inability to meet quorum. While this is an urgent matter, it is one of several in a pattern that undermine confidence that our existing municipal arrangement adequately serves businesses and residents. Among other examples:

- (a) **Heritage Heights:** Your government has brought forward a vision for the GTA West Corridor that envisions a 400-series highway as part of the master planned community in northwest Brampton. The City, has instead, proposed an urban boulevard that the Ministry of Transportation has deemed incompatible with the vision for the GTA West Corridor. Despite your government's re-election on a commitment to fulfill the highway vision, there has been no interest on the part of the city in exploring viable alternatives to its incompatible plan. The failure of municipal leadership leaves development of this critical neighbourhood and job-creation at a standstill.

- (b) **Main St LRT Extension:** Seven years after the previous City Council rejected an offer from the then-provincial government to fund the Hurontario LRT from Port Credit to the Brampton GO in full, the project moves full steam ahead for the portion in Mississauga ending at Steeles Avenue. Brampton Council continues to study options for a Main Street Extension, which would provide the infrastructure that had originally been offered and rejected, without a target date to commence construction let alone operation. Infrastructure of this kind of regional significance cannot be delayed by the indecision of one council.
- (c) **Centre For Innovation (CFI):** The proposed Centre For Innovation in downtown Brampton is the lynchpin of Brampton’s planned Innovation District, but an absence of municipal leadership leaves a large capital portion unfunded and the project not advancing at the pace required to sustain business and institutional confidence in the vision for downtown Brampton. In particular, the completion of CFI is seen as integral to persuading the University of Guelph-Humber campus to relocate to Brampton.
- (d) **Regional Government Challenges:** Overall, there seems to be a pervasive anti-Brampton bias in business conducted at our 4th level of government, the Region of Peel. Several examples come to mind, including needing to seek provincial intervention in order to overrule Peel Public Health and implement on-site vaccination at major employers. More recently, a poorly thought out plan to open a supervised consumption site in downtown Brampton will soon be brought before Regional Council, despite staff acknowledging there are suitable alternate pilot sites including in Mississauga.

While the above list is not exhaustive, it should serve to illustrate why feedback from our members have shown that Brampton businesses do not feel well served by our existing municipal/regional governance structure. For all of these reasons combined, it is our view that your office should re-open the municipal reform file and examine available options and remedies.

- 2) **Housing & Childcare Accessibility & Supply:** We continue to hear from our member businesses that an absence of housing supply and affordable childcare are significant deterrents to attracting and retaining talented staff. This has only exacerbated the worsening labour market pressures brought on by the past two-plus years of the pandemic. The Brampton Board of Trade echos the view of other Chambers and Boards across Ontario who have called for an end to exclusionary zoning within municipal neighbourhoods. Withdrawing the power of municipalities to exclude denser housing formats will allow the ‘missing middle’ of housing supply to be built in neighbourhoods that are now exclusively single family homes.

Additionally, while we welcome the recent agreement between the provincial and federal governments to bring affordable childcare to Ontario, it is important that Brampton's unique considerations be at the forefront of implementation. For example, the on-going process of updating the city's official plan must expand zoning opportunities to locate childcare facilities and allow for operation outside of the traditional 9-5 workday in order to better meet the childcare needs of Brampton's workforce.

The Brampton Board of Trade would welcome a meeting with you in the near future to discuss these items. We look forward to continuing to work with your Ministry and Brampton's local MPPs to find appropriate solutions to these issues.

Sincerely,



Todd Letts, MBA CCE
CEO, Brampton Board of Trade

Cc: Mayor Brown & Members of Brampton City Council
Chair Nando Iannicca & Members of Peel Regional Council