

April 11, 2025

The Honourable Doug Ford

Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Rob Flack

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Flack,

I am writing to you today not only as the Mayor of Orangeville, but as a strong advocate for democratic governance and respectful collaboration between municipalities and the Province of Ontario.

While I understand the government's initial intent in implementing *Strong Mayor Powers* — particularly to help advance the housing agenda — I must express my sincere concerns about the implications this system has for our local democracy and for the morale of municipal staff and councils.

As a recent recipient of these powers, I want to be clear: I do not see the need for them in a community like mine. In fact, I am deeply concerned about the precedent they set, the negative implications they have already had in many communities, and the potential long-term consequences they could have across the province. These powers concentrate authority in a way that undermines the role of Council, weakens local democracy, and disrupts the collaborative, team-based decision-making that is essential to good municipal governance. In Orangeville, we succeed through partnership — not power consolidation — and I believe strongly that we can achieve shared goals without sacrificing our democratic values.

Strong Mayor Powers fundamentally alter the principles of local governance by reducing the role of elected councils and concentrating decision-making in the hands of one individual. This erodes the foundation of collaboration and shared responsibility that defines effective municipal leadership. In a community like Orangeville, where we work through thoughtful consensus and a commitment to the public good, this shift feels both unnecessary and counterproductive.

I also want to highlight that the introduction of these powers has real consequences for municipal staff. When governance becomes overly centralized, staff are placed in increasingly difficult positions — navigating shifting political dynamics while trying to maintain impartiality and uphold professional standards. This creates a culture of uncertainty and diminishes morale among public servants who are otherwise deeply committed to serving their communities with integrity.

Most importantly, when it comes to housing, *Strong Mayor Powers* are simply not the solution. In Orangeville, we have consistently approved new residential developments — not because we've had to, but because we're all aligned on this as a local priority. We recognize the urgency of building homes not just for future residents, but for our current families, seniors, and young people looking to stay in the community they call home. We didn't need *Strong Mayor Powers* to act. We did it because we care — because our Council and staff are united in the belief that housing is a shared responsibility.

To date, we have over **860 residential units** that have been fully approved and are simply waiting on construction to begin — including a **541-unit subdivision** that received final approval as far back as June 2021 with no forward movement since. In addition to these, we have more than 200 additional units currently in the early stages of planning.

Yet despite these approvals, the homes are not being built — not due to municipal red tape, but because of market conditions and developer hesitancy. The issue lies not in municipal governance but in a market that lacks the incentives and stability needed to encourage the building of truly affordable units. What municipalities like mine really need are infrastructure investments to support growth and the right policy levers to stimulate and direct housing construction. *Strong Mayor Powers* do not solve those problems.

If the Province is truly committed to addressing the housing crisis, then meaningful collaboration and consultation with municipalities must be the path forward. Local leaders are ready and willing to help drive this work — not because it's a provincial directive, but because it's what our residents need.

Let us focus our efforts on real, impactful solutions — not undemocratic tools that weaken local voices and fail to address the root causes of the housing crisis. We need a full spectrum of housing solutions, including deeply affordable and supportive housing, seniors housing, and attainable market options. Just as critically, we need sustained homelessness prevention funding to help vulnerable individuals stay housed and avoid falling into homelessness or encampment living.

Thank you for your attention and continued leadership. I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these concerns and to bring forward the perspectives of smaller, yet growing municipalities like Orangeville.

Sincerely,



Lisa Post
Mayor

cc: Hon. Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier, Minister of Health, and MPP for Dufferin-Caledon
Deputy Mayor Todd Taylor
Councillor Joe Andrews
Councillor Andy Macintosh
Councillor Debbie Sherwood
Councillor Rick Stevens
Councillor Tess Prendergast