

June 19, 2003

EBR Coordinator  
Provincial and Environmental Planning Office  
301 St. Paul Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7R4

**RE: Ontario Professional Planners Institute Submission**  
**EBR Registry Number: AE03E4512**  
**Bill 25 – An Act to Enhance Public Transit and Provide for a Smart Transportation System in Ontario**

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are very pleased to provide this submission on the proposed Bill 25 – An Act to Enhance Public Transit and Provide for a Smart Transportation System in Ontario. The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) represents Ontario's professional planning community, and is the only organization that brings all Ontario planners together. OPPI currently has some 2600 members. Our members include both public and private sector municipal, land use and environmental planners who are active in formulating the land use and environmental policies and decisions which shape the land use fabric in Ontario.

An objective of OPPI is to improve the quality of the Ontario environment and communities by the application of sound planning principles. Many of our members are involved in the planning and assessment of infrastructure projects in Ontario.

Bill 25 proposes changes to the Ontario Planning and Development Act (OPDA), the Highway Traffic Act, the Planning Act and the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act. These proposed changes would have broad and major implications to the way that community and infrastructure planning is currently undertaken in Ontario.

Bill 25 proposes to amend the OPDA by providing for the identification and protection of transportation and economic corridors to support future infrastructure needs. Under the provisions of the proposed revised OPDA, infrastructure corridor plans would be prepared for the infrastructure corridor planning area.

In addition, Bill 25 notes that for greater certainty “the establishment of a development planning area or an infrastructure corridor planning area and the preparation of a development plan or infrastructure plan” would no longer be considered as undertakings subject to the EA Act. The EA Act would continue to apply to the “a proposal for a particular development” within the infrastructure corridor.

OPPI is not in support of the proposed Bill 25 for the following reasons:

- the creation of infrastructure corridor planning areas by the Minister of Transportation would interfere with municipal planning policy and decision-making since municipalities would no longer be in a position to make sound land use planning and management decisions but rather would be dictated by the overriding decisions of the Minister of Transportation;
- the elimination of EA Act requirements for the development and implementation of infrastructure corridors is not in the best interest of environmental protection and is at odds with the current planning regime for major infrastructure projects, which has been established from some 25-years of experience;
- the elimination of EA Act requirements for the development and implementation of infrastructure corridors would remove the opportunity for public and agency review and input, a key cornerstone of environmental assessment in Ontario and one which is upheld by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment as a cornerstone of sound environmental planning;
- once approved by the Minister of Transportation, there would be no opportunity for appeals before the Ontario Municipal Board and, thus, no mechanism by which municipalities or members of the public can challenge decisions that may be contrary to sound land use planning;
- the proposed provisions would remove the ability of municipalities and the public to participate in an open and transparent planning process, one in which transportation corridor planning is undertaken in concert with municipal planning policies and environmental protection;
- there would be no public examination of the need for new infrastructure corridors, nor would there be a public examination of alternatives to these corridors;
- with the current proposal, there is no assurance that environmental, social and cultural impacts associated with infrastructure corridors would be considered in their identification and no assurance that key natural areas would be protected;
- the provision of opportunities for public comment and review in the identification and evaluation of alternative routes within the infrastructure corridors is not adequate – these opportunities must be provided throughout the planning process.

We feel that the continued application of the EA Act for the planning of infrastructure corridors is essential in assuring continued environmental protection and sound land use planning and decision-making. We respectfully submit that the proposed Bill 25 would remove the integration of key transportation corridor planning with municipal land use planning and environmental policies.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide comment on this critical issue which has the potential for significant changes to the way planning is currently undertaken in Ontario. OPPI extends the offer to meet with MTO representatives to discuss our submission.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact the undersigned at (705) 474-0626, extension 401.

Yours truly,

Jeff Celantano, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Policy Development

cc. Ms. Mary Ann Rangam - Executive Director, OPPI  
Ms. Dianne Damman – Environmental Working Group, OPPI  
Mr. Dennis Jacobs – President, OPPI