Understanding the Consent Application Process

Your Step-By-Step Guide for Consent-Granting Authorities

Section 53 of the Planning Act

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Interpretation of this Document

This manual will direct you through the consent approval process in a step-by-step format. It is intended for use as a navigational guide for consent-granting authorities pursuant to section 53 of the Planning Act. If you are uncertain whether your municipality or planning board has authority to grant consents, please contact your regional Municipal Services Office.
Table of Contents

part one  Fundamentals  Page

Land Division in Ontario  8
Activities That Require Consent  10
Public Bodies that are Consent-Granting Authorities  13
Seven Essential Documents You Should Know  18

part two  Approval Process  Page

1 Early Consultation  28
2 Complete Application  30
3 Notice of Application  32
4 Application Review  35
5 Public Meeting  39
6 Decision  40
7 Notice of Decision  43
8 Changes to Conditions (if necessary)  44
9 Appeal (if applicable)  46
10 Hearing at the Ontario Municipal Board (if applicable)  49
11 Granting of a Consent Application for Foreclosure or Exercise of a Power of Sale  52
11 Granting of a Consent Application for a Validation Certificate  54

appendices  Lists and Templates  Page

Appendices 1-5 Early Consultation  62
Appendices 6-7 Complete Application  69
Appendices 8-9 Notice of Application  73
Appendix 10 Application Review  79
Appendices 11-13 Notice of Decision  83
Appendices 14-16 Changes to Conditions (if necessary)  89
Appendix 17 Appeal (if applicable)  94
Appendix 18 Granting of a Consent  96
Appendix 19 Application for a Validation Certificate  98
Appendix 20 Land Registry Office Locations  99
part one
FUNDAMENTALS OF A CONSENT

Land Division in Ontario
Activities That Require Consent
Types of Consent-Granting Authorities
Seven Essential Documents You Should Know
LAND DIVISION IN ONTARIO  
(Planning Act, s. 50)

Section 50 of the Planning Act prevents the division of land into smaller parcels unless one of the exceptions identified in the section applies. This usually means that approval of a governmental body will be required in order for land division to occur (some exceptions to this rule are identified below). As a result, whether a greenfield is being broken up into 50 buildable lots or a single lot is being divided into two, the division of land is generally subject to a public process ensuring that provincial interests and local planning concerns (as expressed in the official plan) are both satisfied. The larger the number of lots being created, the more complex the considerations in the planning approval process will generally be.

Exceptions under the Planning Act

Some types of transactions that do not require an application for land division are (Planning Act, s. 50(3)):

- A lease for a renewable energy project for a period of between 21 and 50 years
- Acquisition for an electricity distribution line, electricity transmission line, hydrocarbon distribution line or hydrocarbon transmission line described in Part VI of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998
- Acquisition for purposes of flood control, erosion control, bank stabilization, shoreline management works or the preservation of environmentally sensitive lands approved under section 24 of the Conservation Authorities Act
- Transactions by a municipality, Her Majesty in right of Ontario or by Her Majesty in right of Canada
- The granting of an easement or covenant under the Conservation Land Act
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONSENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>PLAN OF SUBDIVISION/ CONDOMINIUM</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application requirements</td>
<td>Less information is required for an application to be deemed complete (O. Reg. 197/96, Schedule 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to make a decision before an applicant can appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board for non-decision</td>
<td>90 days [<em>Planning Act, s. 53(14)</em>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to fulfill conditions</td>
<td>If provisional consent is granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to fulfill conditions</td>
<td>1 year (no extension) [<em>Planning Act, s. 53(41)</em>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to transfer the new lots</td>
<td>If consent is given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to transfer the new lots</td>
<td>2 years (no extension) [<em>Planning Act, s. 53(43)</em>]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** If the applicant does not register a final plan within 30 days of the date of approval, the approval may be withdrawn [*Planning Act, s. 51(59)*]. Also, if a plan has been registered for 8 years or more the local municipality can deem the plan to not be registered [*s. 50(4)*].

The *Planning Act* provides 4 main ways that a planning approval authority can control land division:

1. consent
2. plan of subdivision
3. plan of condominium
4. exemption from part-lot control
ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE CONSENT

The consent approval process (described in section 53 of the *Planning Act*) is a helpful alternative for land division proposals that are relatively less complex where a plan of subdivision is not required (e.g., the creation of one or two lots or easements).

A consent is appropriate if a landowner proposes to:

- Create a limited number of new lots (lot creation)
- Add land to a neighbouring lot (lot addition)
- Create one or more rights-of-way (easements)
- Charge over a part of a property (mortgage)
- Enter into a lease over a part of a property when the term of the lease totals 21 years or more, inclusive of renewal options

Where a property is already divided by a natural feature (e.g., the bed of a stream or lake) or a publicly owned thoroughfare (e.g., a highway or a road), consent is not required to convey the land on either side of the feature or thoroughfare separately.

For complex proposals involving multiple lots, public streets and servicing, a plan of subdivision or a plan of condominium application may be more appropriate for the landowner. Refer to “Understanding the Subdivision and Condominium Application Process: A Step-by-Step Guide for Approval Authorities” for more information, or visit ontario.ca/municipallearning.
CONSENT APPLICATION TYPES

LOT CREATION: Before a landowner can sell or transfer ownership of a portion of his/her property as a standalone parcel, a new lot must be created.

LOT ADDITION: Sometimes, a landowner wishes to sell or transfer ownership of a part of his/her land to a neighbouring (abutting) lot resulting in an increase in size of the abutting landowner’s lot. This is referred to as lot addition.

The owner of Lot A wishes to sell a portion of his/her property to the owner of Lot B to allow for an addition to an existing building. A consent is required for this type of transaction.
EASEMENTS: Easements are agreements that confer on an individual, company or municipality a right to use a landowner’s property. Examples of easements include access roads, pathways and utilities (power lines, sewer/water lines, transmission lines, etc.).

MORTGAGE OR CHARGE OVER PART OF A PROPERTY: A landowner who wishes to mortgage (or charge) a part of his/her property, or a mortgagee (or chargee) who wishes to partially discharge a mortgage (or partially cease a charge) on a property must apply for consent.
PUBLIC BODIES THAT ARE CONSENT-GRANTING AUTHORITIES

[Planning Act, ss. 50(1) & 54]

A public body that has the authority to give consents is commonly referred to as the “consent-granting authority”.

Most single-tier and all upper-tier municipalities are assigned consent-granting authority by the Planning Act and Ontario Regulation 354/02. In some places, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the consent-granting authority. This includes all unincorporated areas outside of planning boards.

Delegation of Consent-Granting Authority

The Planning Act provides assigned consent-granting authorities the option of delegating all or a part of their authority. In general, these delegated authorities can be grouped into three categories:

- Lower-tier councils: Many upper-tier councils have delegated their consent-granting authority to lower-tier councils within their jurisdiction. Some single-tier councils have also been delegated consent-granting authority from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

- Planning boards: Most of the planning boards in Ontario have been delegated consent-granting authority by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. All authority to give consents must be retained with the planning board and cannot be further delegated.

- Appointed officers, committees of council and municipal planning authorities: A municipal council that has authority to grant...
consents can further delegate all or any part of this authority (as the case may be) to a municipal officer, a committee of council, a committee of adjustment, land division committee or a municipal planning authority, including:

1) the authority to determine if an application is complete pursuant to section 53 of the Planning Act (Step 2 of this Guide)

2) the authority for the giving of provisional consent for any or all types of consent applications (lot creation, lot addition, easements, mortgages or leases for 21 years or more) (Step 6 of this Guide)

3) the authority to give consent (i.e., issuing the final certificate) (Step 11 of this Guide)

4) the authority to change conditions of provisional consent (Step 8 of this Guide)

5) the authority to execute, amend or release agreements securing conditions imposed in respect of a consent to sever

Where a municipal officer is delegated authority, the by-law must identify the name or position of the officer. Conditions may also be attached to the delegation.

Note: The authority to give a Certificate of Validation or the authority to approve a foreclosure or an exercise of a power of sale can also be delegated by a municipal council who has this authority (see “Application for Foreclosure or Exercise of a Power of Sale” on page 54 or “Application for a Validation Certificate” on page 57 for more details).
Delegation of Consent-Granting Authority

Where the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the assigned approval authority for consent applications, the Minister may delegate his/her authority as follows:
Delegation of Consent-Granting Authority

Where single-tier councils are the assigned approval authorities for consent applications, they may delegate their authority as follows:

1. Committee of Council
2. Municipal Planning Authority
3. Committee of Adjustment
4. Appointed Officer (Staff)

- Committee
- Appointed Officer (Staff)
Delegation of Consent-Granting Authority

Where upper-tier councils are the assigned approval authorities for consent applications, they may delegate their authority as follows:
In Ontario, land division activities are regulated within a policy-led planning system that consists of seven interrelated types of legislation, rules and policies. Decisions made by a municipality or planning board on all land division matters are in accordance with these documents.

ONE
The Planning Act

The Planning Act provides the framework for the province’s policy-led planning system and is administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Act dictates which land use characteristics can be regulated, how they can be regulated and who can regulate them. This guide describes the key steps set out in the Planning Act for processing consent applications.

TWO
The Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land in Ontario. It provides for appropriate development while protecting public resources of provincial interest, public health and safety and the quality of the natural environment. The Provincial Policy Statement is reviewed at least every five years from the time it was issued to ensure that the policies are up-to-date to address current planning challenges. Under the Planning Act, decisions in respect of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.

THREE
The Provincial Plan(s)

Provincial plans apply to specific geographical areas...
Ontario’s policy-led planning system

1. Whole province
   - Planning Act

2. Regions of the province
   - Provincial Policy Statement, 2005

3. Upper-tier and single-tier municipalities
   - Provincial plans

4. Lower-tier municipalities and unorganized territories
   - Upper-tier official plans
   - Single-tier official plans

5. Community improvement plans
   - Lower-tier official plans

6. Development permit system
   - Zoning by-law
   - Site plan control
   - Minor variance
of Ontario and complement the Provincial Policy Statement to form the foundation of Ontario’s policy-led planning system. These plans recognize the opportunities and challenges facing Ontario’s communities and provide leadership in dealing with how our communities will change over the long-term. Provisions on a wide range of issues may be included, such as land-use planning, transportation, infrastructure planning, housing, natural heritage, and resource protection. Under the Planning Act, decisions in respect of any authority that affects a planning matter shall conform or not conflict with provincial plans. See Appendix 4 for a list of provincial plans.

FOUR
The Official Plan(s)

An official plan represents a municipality’s or planning board’s chief planning tool to provide direction to council, developers and the public on local planning matters. An official plan contains a set of locally-generated goals about land-use planning, objectives as well as policies in areas such as land use, infrastructure and servicing, transportation, the natural environment, community improvement and urban design. Certain Planning Act tools can be used to help achieve a community vision, if the official plan has been updated to contain the required provisions. Under the Planning Act, decisions that affect a planning matter must conform to the official plan(s).

FIVE
The Community Improvement Plan(s)

A community improvement plan may enable municipalities to offer grants or loans to local businesses and landowners as an
incentive to build or repair properties, including the remediation, rehabilitation and reuse of brownfields. Decisions made on planning applications should include, if applicable, considerations of how the application meets the goals, objectives and policies of the community improvement plan. Your community can use this planning tool if provisions relating to community improvement are contained in the official plan and there is a community improvement project area by-law in effect.

SIX
The Zoning By-law, Development Permit By-law or Minister’s Zoning Order

A zoning by-law is another planning tool found in the Planning Act, which enables a council or planning board to implement the vision set out in the official plan. It identifies the permitted land uses and the required standards (e.g., lot sizes, building height, setback, parking requirements) for different areas of the community.

A development permit system can also assist a municipality in implementing the vision set out in the official plan. This planning tool combines zoning, site plan and minor variance into one application and approval process. It promotes development by providing for faster timelines, eliminating potential duplication, incorporating flexibility for uses and development standards to provide a “one-stop” planning service. If your municipality uses a development permit system, you will have a development permit by-law in place. This by-law contains a list of permitted uses and standards, and may also set out variances to the uses and standards. Appeal rights are limited for a decision on a development permit, which helps to create more certainty in the process.

A Minister’s zoning order is a regulation that is issued by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It overrides local zoning provisions, where they exist. Like a zoning by-law, a Minister’s zoning order identifies the geographic
area (zoning area) to which the order applies and contains provisions for the use of land. In other instances, it is used to apply a level of development control in relation to a matter of provincial interest in a subject area(s).

Under the Planning Act, decisions that affect a planning matter must comply with the applicable zoning by-law, development permit by-law or Minister’s zoning order in the municipality or planning area.

**SEVEN**

The Site Plan Control Area By-Law

Site plan control provides a council with the added ability to control the design and the development of a site. This includes the location, design and shape (massing) of buildings, the layout of parking and service areas, public access areas, landscaping, paving materials and street furniture (e.g., bicycle facilities, benches, lampposts, recycling containers). An updated official plan that includes site plan control policies along with a site plan control area by-law allow the implementation of site plan control.