



ontario greenbelt alliance

# Member Resource

## Meeting with your Local Council

### Why Do This?

You can influence how the Mayor and Council members understand an issue and how they will vote.

Successful politicians know that constituents who request meetings often have deep community ties and can influence how community members see local issues (and local elected officials).



Your Mayor and Council members know that what you tell them likely represents the opinions of many people who vote. And they know that how they respond to you will influence how you describe your meeting to your community contacts.

*Bottom line:* A meeting will change how the Mayor and Council members see the issue and may be important in getting them on our side.

### Ways to Meet

1. Speak to Council directly and/or to a Committee of Council. In most municipalities, there is a mechanism for residents to speak about an issue that is being considered by the Council. For many local planning issues, provincial law requires a committee of Council to publicly discuss the issue and allow residents a chance to speak prior to the committee making a decision. To find out how this works in your municipality, check your municipality's website or call the Clerk's Office.
2. Meet the Mayor and/or Council Member "virtually/in person". While individual meetings are acceptable, it's usually better to get 3-5 community members at a meeting with the Mayor and/or Council Member. Having a number of people there sends a signal that the community is serious about this meeting. During COVID restrictions, these meetings will likely be held virtually.

# Preparing for a Virtual/In Person Meeting with Council Members and/or the Mayor

- 1. Pull together the team** of people who will be attending, ideally between 3-5 people. If you are meeting with one Council member, try to get people on the team who live in the Council Member's ward. If you are meeting with the Mayor and a Council Member, try to get people from across the community. Most importantly, make sure you have team members who are articulate and concise.
- 2. Figure out who is going to call the Mayor/Council Member** and decide what they will say the meeting is about. Remember, keep things short and concise.
- 3. Set up the meeting.** Find out exactly how much time you have for the meeting. Preparing for a 15 minute meeting will be much different than a 60 minute meeting both in content and tone. If you have the choice, request a 45 minute meeting.
- 4. Bring the team together before the meeting**, preferably a few days before, to prepare. Create an agenda based on the length of the meeting. Remember, leave time for the Mayor/Council Members to talk and for discussion. Finalize exactly what you want to say and who will say it. Prepare key talking points for the time you have available.
- 5. Be early.** If it's a virtual meeting, get your team to log in a few minutes before the meeting start time so there is time to deal with any technical glitches. If it's in-person, show up a few minutes early.
- 6. Leave behind** (or email right after the meeting) a short 1-page "briefing note" that outlines your key points and, most importantly, the actions you want them to take.



**Draft Agenda**  
(30 minute meeting)

- **Introductions (2 min.)** Each person says their name, where they live.
- **Short summary (1 min.)** Describe the purpose of the meeting and what you want from the Mayor/Council Member.
- **Presentation by your team (5-10 min.)** Start by identifying common values that you think all in the room share and then connect your comments and your "ask" to these values. Focus on why stopping local sprawl is important to you, what local lands need to be protected, and why MZOs are bad. Finish with a very clear set of actions you want them to take.
- **Responses from Mayor/Council Member (5 min.)**
- **Discussions (10 min.)**
- **Next Steps (2 min.)** Agree to specific next steps.



