

Christina Bouchinha
Executive Director
Ontario Land Tribunal
1500-655 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5G 1E5

August 14, 2026

RE: OPPI feedback regarding Consultation on the Development of Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) Interpretation Guidelines

Dear Ms. Bouchinha,

Thank you for connecting with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) on this matter. We are pleased to provide the following input on OLT's exploration of interpretation guidelines recommended by the Auditor General's findings.

In context of the OLT's work, we appreciate the driving intent to consider formal guidance for terms like "good planning" and "in the public interest".

This letter outlines three key points in response:

1. As the Province's authority on planning, we do not recommend the development of static definitions for such contextually defined concepts.
2. Ontario should have confidence that professionally designated RPPs produce high-quality work that should be trusted.
3. Written guidance, rather than rigid definitions, could help increase transparency and consistency, and OPPI would be pleased to play a role in supporting you here.

About OPPI and Ontario's professional planners

OPPI is the recognized voice of the planning profession in Ontario. With more than 6,200 members, OPPI serves as both the Professional Institute and regulator of Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) in the province. Our members work across the planning spectrum for developers, consulting firms, municipal governments and within the Ontario Public Service, other community agencies, and academic institutions. They work across a geographically diverse cross-section of Ontario in communities of all sizes.

RPPs are the professionals that help deliver great communities, helping inform local decision-makers all across Ontario. Planners in both the private and public sectors act in the best interest of the public, aligning their work with local long-term planning goals, delivering on immediate needs of the community, and informing local legislation/regulations to guide this work.

OPPI response

Planning is highly contextual and localized

There is no one single formula that defines good planning or the public interest. Rather, these concepts unfold contextually in many ways and across complex local contexts.

RPPs act as facilitators between residents, the local municipality, the local developer, and related professional fields like engineers, architects, and conservation agencies. Our members consider a range of local issues including population growth, economic development goals, the priorities of interested parties, environmental impacts, and healthcare resources when planning communities.

Discretion to implement planning based on local context is vital. For instance: What makes sense for Barrie may not make sense for Kingston. The needs of local residents in Huron County are distinct from those living in Kenora District. Good planning manifests in Clarington differently than in Bracebridge, and certainly differently in Toronto.

The work of RPPs can be trusted

Planners are trained to understand and integrate these contexts, and the interests of multiple parties. This is a skilled endeavour.

RPPs are experienced, educated, and certified professionals, armed with substantial, specialized post-secondary degrees (under-graduate or graduate), generally in accredited planning programs that are continually vetted by our profession's [Professional Standards Board for the Planning Profession in Canada](#) (PSB). Before becoming RPPs, Candidate Members work through a rigorous certification process, which includes mentorship with other RPPs, logging of work experience, completion of an ethics and professionalism course, and culminating with a final examination. After certification, all members must maintain continuous professional learning requirements every year.

Like other professions – engineering, ecology, architecture, law, etc. – planners utilize objective facts and data that require interpretation, predictive modeling, risk management, and balancing competing public interests. And like those peer professions, RPPs may reasonably reach different conclusions on the same project. The important role of the OLT is to consider all of the evidence together with the various professional opinions provided by the parties.

Planning is guided by a Professional Code of Practice

All working RPPs must adhere to a strict Professional Code of Practice, which can be found here: <https://ontarioplanners.ca/about-planning/in-the-public-interest/professional-code-of-practice/>. It notes that RPP's "have a primary responsibility to define and serve the interests of the public". Planning that adheres to this Code should be trusted.

We are currently updating the Code of Practice, with a fresh version to be approved September 2026, effective January 2027. We would be happy to share the new Code with OLT once approved.

Written guidance could address your identified issues

While rigid definitions would not serve Ontario communities or the OLT's interests here, appropriately framed written guidance could be considered to help improve consistency, transparency and predictability of OLT decision-making. Effective guidance here would:

- Directly reference OPPI's Professional Code of Practice
- Identify the key factors and considerations that adjudicators may consider and explain how those considerations generally inform the Tribunal's analysis
- Identify the role and appropriate consideration to be given to the municipal planning process and the professional planning evidence before the OLT (i.e.: analysis and recommendations of municipal planning staff; decision or direction of municipal Council; planning rationale supporting that decision; expert planning opinion presented)
- Recognize the important role of professional planning judgment and the weight to be afforded to expert opinion provided by RPPs

As the Province's experts in planning for Ontario, OPPI can be a valuable partner here!

We defer to the Ontario Bar Association (OBA) on other, more minor language

Other terms (e.g. "shall be consistent with"; "shall conform with/to"; etc.) may be deserving of clearer definition, though these may have legal ramifications and may already have been tested at OLT. OPPI defers to the OBA to opine here if needed.

Thank you again for including us in this review. We hope that you consider our input into this important matter. However OLT decides to proceed, we would welcome staying involved in the process moving forward. If you are interested in connecting to discuss our feedback or recommendations in further detail, please do not hesitate to reach out at d.carey@ontarioplanners.ca or 416 483 1873.

With warm thanks,



Andria Leigh, MCIP, RPP, Dipl.M.M.
Chair, OPPI



David Carey
Chief Executive Officer, OPPI