

February 27, 2023



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROVINCE ANNEXES 1,500 ACRES FROM CENTRAL ELGIN MAYOR ASKS, "HOW WILL CENTRAL ELGIN BE COMPENSATED?"

CENTRAL ELGIN- On February 22, 2023, the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing, introduced **Bill 63, St. Thomas - Central Elgin Boundary Adjustment Act, 2023**, to annex 1,500 acres from the Municipality of Central Elgin into the City of St. Thomas to consolidate an investment-ready mega site in Southwestern Ontario.

The lands contemplated within Bill 63 are exponentially greater than the lands contemplated by the June 8, 2022, City of St. Thomas and City of St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation issued joint press release entitled '**City of St. Thomas Assembles Land for Mega Site Development.**'

Mayor Andrew Sloan remarked, "Up until our discussion with Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade (MEDJCT) officials on Tuesday, the discussion had been around the original parcel of land. I was taken completely off guard when I learned for the first time that this Bill was actually going to be 1,500 acres. 75 percent of this land is in Central Elgin."

The Municipality of Central Elgin has been working in partnership with the province to establish the **Municipality of Central Elgin employment lands**. The Municipality now faces a loss of these lands and additional agricultural lands into the City of St. Thomas. "We are facing elevated costs of living, including increases in taxes and utility rates, and our employment lands were potential revenue for us to help lower these rates." said Sloan.

The Municipality is disappointed that the existing provisions of the **Municipal Act, 2001** that provide for municipally developed, mutually agreeable boundary adjustment have not been utilized. The amount of land to be annexed into the City of St. Thomas, from the Municipality of Central Elgin, raises critical questions of why this investment-ready mega site was not simply placed wholly within the Municipality of Central Elgin, where the majority of land exists.

"Our employment lands were our best hope to reduce the water and taxation levels for our residents. We have worked with MPP Flack and the Province to make them aware of the challenges we are facing but want a firm commitment."

Mayor Andrew Sloan has requested a meeting with the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation & Trade and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to immediately discuss the annexation. "I support growth and investment for our region, but at what cost to the Central Elgin ratepayer?"

Contact

Andrew Sloan
Mayor of the Municipality of Central Elgin
519-868-8355

The Council of the Municipality of Central Elgin
Andrew Sloan, Mayor
Todd Noble, Deputy Mayor
Michelle Graham, Ward 1 Councillor
Morgaine Halpin, Ward 2 Councillor
Norman Watson, Ward 3 Councillor
Dave Conners, Ward 4 Councillor
David Baughman, Ward 5 Councillor