



**THE COUNCIL
OF CANADIANS**
HAMILTON CHAPTER

78 East 14 St.
Hamilton ON
L9A 4B5

February 24, 2021

City of Hamilton
Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, 71 Main St. West
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Mr. Mayor and City Councillors,

The Hamilton Chapter of the Council of Canadians requests that you receive this letter concerning the province's revised municipal planning guidelines as official correspondence during your next Council meeting. We are the largest social justice organization in the country, with over 45 chapters. We are an independent, non-partisan non-profit organization that advocates for clean water, fair trade, green energy, public health care, and a vibrant democracy.

There are, of course, many issues related to increasing urban boundaries: in this case, the danger to watersheds and the species that live in them, and the heightened emissions that increased low density residential development (suburbs) would lock in till 2050 are of great concern to us, as would be the effect on public health and safety of losing more green space and prime agricultural land. However, today, we want to focus on our commitment as the Council of Canadians to pursuing a vibrant democracy. At this time when people cannot meet in person to give you their views in full, we strongly urge you to hold off on any decisions concerning the urban boundary and the revised Ontario planning guidelines until we can meet in person again.

Several of our members have watched a number of your online Council meetings, and while we appreciate all the efforts you and City staff have made to conduct them as well as possible, we are sure you would agree that they are far from satisfactory when it comes to fulfilling your pledge that “Citizens are consulted and involved in making the decisions that impact them.” I note that several people who were on the speakers’ list the other day for the budget delegation day gave up because the internet problems encountered made the meeting longer than it would have been in person. Some people even have to “turn their face off” in order to be heard. This takes away greatly from the impact of their words!

The heavy government, media and wider society’s absorption with COVID makes it impossible for the general citizenry to be aware of much that is going on, including this important legislation that would lock in boundary changes till a fair number of us, both in our chapter and in your Council will not even be alive anymore. People not aware of something can’t even begin to learn about it and form an opinion, let alone go through the extra steps now needed to take part in public life. What will they say to their grandchildren if these changes go through? “I am so sorry I’ve made it impossible for you to eat good local food! I was concerned about your great grand parents’ health in long term care and didn’t notice what was being proposed by the Ontario government.”?

One of the inequities in this country that the Council of Canadians is very aware of because we have chapters from coast to coast to coast, is access to a reliable internet connection. Those who can’t afford even a spotty rural connection would have no chance to participate in consultations on the urban boundary question and its short and long term implications for our community.

In closing, Mr. Mayor and Councillors, the Hamilton Chapter of the Council of Canadians respectfully requests that Hamilton City Council pass a similar “Delay” resolution to the one the Town of Halton Hills

unanimously passed on February 1st. On February 17, the Halton Regional Council also voted unanimously to delay deliberating on the province of Ontario's revised municipal planning guidelines until in-person public consultation can begin again. Ultimately, we hope that you will listen to those calling on you to freeze our city's urban boundary and direct new development to take place within the existing built-up areas. This will give us the space and spur we need to continue to develop smart intensification plans that are good for people and planet for the long term, which is the only term that matters what it comes to the survival and well-being of future generations and of the lands and waters around the Great Lakes that have been so well cared for by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial, and which we settlers need to learn to protect much better.

Thank you for considering our request. We hope you will receive our letter as official correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Love". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Mary Love,

Secretary, Hamilton Chapter of the Council of Canadians