

March 18, 2021

To Mayor Eisenberger and Hamilton City councillors. I am writing to you on behalf of the Eco churches of West Hamilton, EcoWHam, to express our concerns over the proposed growth plan.

### **Climate Change**

Notwithstanding nuclear war, our greatest existential threat is climate change. Given that the City has formally declared a Climate Emergency, we are deeply concerned that the urban growth plan will only facilitate sprawl, at a time when urban boundaries should be frozen to protect the Greenbelt, and development intensified within existing boundaries. This is in keeping with the City's stated principle of intensification. Sprawl perpetuates the car culture, increases greenhouse gases, pollution, the potential for flooding, and is unsustainable. Conversely, intensification will support efficient public transit and hasten the shift from private vehicles.

### **Development**

Development should not be market driven, as it leads to inappropriate development and sprawl, with the loss of irreplaceable agricultural land. All possible avenues should be explored to contain development within existing urban boundaries.

### **Greenbelt/Whitebelt**

It is imperative that we maintain current Greenbelt boundaries and incorporate, if at all possible, existing Whitebelt lands as these are often prime agricultural properties which act as a carbon sink and reduce run-off and flooding.

### **Infrastructure**

Sprawl requires expensive new infrastructure. Instead, the priority should be to rehabilitate/replace the city's existing sewer infrastructure, especially as the aging storm/sanitary system is incapable of handling greater stormwater volumes as we experience more frequent "one hundred year" storms.

### **Timelines**

We are puzzled by the Province's thirty year planning timeline and question the rationale for such a timeline. We ask that Hamilton Council approach the Province to suspend the timetable for municipal conformity to the Growth Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement.

### **Public Consultation**

The public should have every opportunity to weigh in on the growth plan. Important as it is, any decision on growth should not be rushed. Given the current situation with COVID, WE ask that adoption of the proposed plan be delayed until the public has had sufficient time to provide input.

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Respectfully,

Wayne Poole, Chair

Eco churches of West Hamilton

(St. Mark's United, St. James Anglican, St. Paul's United, Knox Presbyterian, Westdale United,  
Quaker Meeting House)