



I N V I Z I J

March 26, 2021

To members of Hamilton City Council and planning staff,

I have lived in Wards One and Two for nearly the past two decades and am a principal of the Hamilton-based architectural practice Invizij Architects. I have led the design of hundreds of new residential dwellings within Hamilton's urban boundary, all of which take into account our professional responsibility to design towards a low-carbon future. This housing has included the adaptive reuse of existing buildings into housing to the redevelopment of sites that contained unusable buildings or parking lots to single family homes in backyards. By developing the spaces we already have within our urban boundaries, we know that we make our city safer, cleaner, and more sustainable places for people to live and work.

I understand a proposed urban boundary expansion is being suggested to Council to meet the revised growth targets from the Province. As a community-engaged architect and Hamiltonian, I wanted to let you know that I was not aware of this proposed boundary expansion until a week ago when I was contacted by some of the members of Environment Hamilton. Being that I was unaware of this massive proposed change, I expect most Hamiltonians are unaware also and as a result I respectfully request that the city delay delivering their final land use plan to the Province until in-person public consultation has occurred. In this time of Covid people are distracted and not focusing on urban planning but it is an important issue that will affect all of us for decades.

Rather than building more new construction further away from our downtown, we know that a better goal is for a more compact, livable city, which is walkable, has higher order transit, and includes infill housing. You were a part of Hamilton's declaration of a Climate Emergency, and know that Urban Sprawl is a huge contributor to GHG emissions. I understand that the report by Lorus did not include an analysis (or even a mention) of climate change in their recommendations which makes me concerned. How can that be possible in this era of knowing that designing in a better way to reduce climate change is necessary for us as decision-makers and professionals. Most of the housing projects I have designed in the past decade have been designed to the Passive House standard which allows for development that is Net Zero Ready (NZR) or Low Carbon in order to help meet Federal Climate Change targets. Due to their infill locations, these households all have well lower car ownership than a typical development as people can rely on walking, cycling, and public transit to get everywhere they need. Alternatively, sprawl development is guaranteed to only be designed to meet the minimum energy standards of the Ontario Building Code and at the same time creating increased gas consumption and traffic due to the need for more cars on the road. It is the opposite of the direction we need to be taking.

In 2019, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (of which I am a member), the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, the Canadian Institute of Planners, the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association and ICLEI Canada wrote a joint statement that we have taken to hear in our architectural practice.

Canadian professionals have both the opportunity and responsibility to respond to this challenge and address both emissions reduction and adaptation. Our national professional associations have a crucial role to play in advancing ethics, awareness, practices and policies that support this integrated Low

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Carbon Resilience approach to action on climate change, due to their prominent roles in many aspects of the development and management of resources, ecosystems and communities.

I believe major decisions like whether to expand the urban boundary need to take into account this Low Carbon Resilience approach, which is why I am writing to you today.

Rather than expand our urban boundary for future growth, I think we can do a much better job providing the zoning and framework for growth-positive infill housing. For example, one policy that I have been closely engaged with is for the zoning to allow laneway housing and secondary dwelling units (SDU) within our urban boundary. The report on making this SDU zoning city-wide is being presented by Staff to the Planning Committee next week – April 6th. I expect that the recommended zoning provisions in this type of infill alone could allow for thousands of infill units over time – many for smaller families and households that are ground oriented and in walkable neighbourhoods. In addition, this type of housing is often intended for family members which will help build healthier communities - either aging parents that want to downsize and live close to family, or adult children that want to live in an affordable home close to their parents. So far, those two demographics have made up all the SDU projects I have designed, which are currently awaiting this new zoning.

In order to show the potential for infill development, I wanted to share a summary table of the hundreds of homes we (as Invizij Architects) have designed to be built within Hamilton’s urban boundary. These projects use the existing infrastructure that we already have and allow for more affordable, compact, and livable cities for people to call home. There are thousands of other homes that have been designed just like these within our existing urban boundaries. Rather than pushing the boundary further out, I suggest we take more time and look at how to make this type of development more feasible for developers. This way, we would be improving the built environment we already have, filling in the gaps and holes, rather than ignoring what we already have and putting pressure outwards.

I respectfully request that these suggestions for smart growth be considered and that the city delay delivering their final land use plan to the Province until in-person public consultation has occurred which takes into account development that aligns with the Climate Emergency we live in. Thank you for considering my request.

Respectfully,

Emma Cubitt, MArch, OAA, MRAIC, LEED®AP

Principal Invizij Architects



Table 1: Recent Infill Housing Projects by Invizij Architects in Hamilton

Year Constructed / Planned Construction completion	Project Name	Hamilton Ward	Type of project / construction	# New Homes	Energy standard designed to meet
2011	Perkins Centre	Ward 4	Adaptive reuse of former banquet hall and rooming house	46	Low Energy
2016	Rudy Hulst Commons	Ward 4	New Construction on former underused storefront/ parking lot	47	Low Energy
2016	Strathearne Suites	Ward 4	Renovation of existing uninhabitable apartment building	38	
2018	Parkdale Landing	Ward 4	Adaptive reuse of former banquet hall and rooming house	57	Passive House
2020	North End Landing	Ward 2	New Construction on former commercial plaza, includes a new church	45	Passive House
2020	McQuesten Lofts	Ward 4	New Construction on unused lot, includes a new branch library	50	Passive House
2021	Royal Oak Dairy – Phase 1	Ward 3	New Construction on former site of a former dairy (which was beyond repair)	95	Passive House
2022	Royal Oak Stables	Ward 3	Adaptive reuse of former stables and carriage storage building	13	Low Energy
2021	Modern Coach House	Ward 1	SDU (awaiting new zoning)	1	Passive House
2021	Dundurn St. Laneway House	Ward 1	Laneway House (awaiting MV)	1	Passive House
2021	Ottawa/ Cannon apartments	Ward 4	Renovation of existing uninhabitable apartments above commercial space	12	Low Energy
2021	Hamilton Place Seniors Apartments	Ward 2	Adaptive reuse of former commercial space into apartments	15	-



2021	Beulah St. Laneway House	Ward 1	Laneway House	1	Passive House
2022	383 Hughson	Ward 2	Adaptive reuse of a church and new construction	18	Low Energy
2023	55 Queenston	Ward 4	New Construction on former City Motor Hotel site	40	Passive House
2023?	Royal Oak Walkups	Ward 3	New Construction on vacant site	31	Passive House
2023?	Jamesville redevelopment	Ward 2	New Construction on the former Jamesville townhouse site	100-120	Passive House
2023?	Macassa Seniors Apartments (feasibility study)	Ward 7	New Construction on unused green space	65	Passive House