

From: Warren Caldwell

Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 11:53 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: GRIDS2/MCR and 17 May Statutory Public Meeting - Urban Boundary

Dear Clerk,

Would you kindly include this email in the materials distributed to Hamilton Councillors for the 17 May Statutory Public Meeting on GRIDS2/MCR and the Urban Boundary issue.

I urge Hamilton Council to keep the City's present Urban Boundary where it is and NOT expand the urban area at all.

The first reason is that expansion is certain to destroy the habitats of many wildlife forms. That is simply immoral, especially when, as Hamilton staff studies have shown, there is room for tens of thousands more new homes inside Hamilton's present urban area.

The second reason is that climate change has made the preservation of Ontario agricultural lands vital. As any grocery shopper can tell you, the prices of most foodstuffs are soaring. Some price increases are caused by lingering covid effects and by the interruption of grain exports from Ukraine and Russia, but most of the increases come from now regular overheating and years long drought in Mexico and the south western USA where so much of our fruit, vegetables and cereals are produced. Crop yields in those areas are falling which pushes up the price of what production remains. We must retain our own agricultural lands in hope they can once more feed our own people when US and Mexican sources literally dry up. Hamilton has declared a climate emergency: think of maintaining agricultural lands as a form of required resiliency in the face of climate change.

The third reason concerns the municipal costs of building suburban, low density homes on rural lands brought within the urban boundary. The key point is that no Ontario municipality has ever managed to cover from development fees and charges anything like the actual cost of providing hard municipal services to new subdivisions. This fact is so well-known that even Hamilton's most conventionally minded planners will admit it. The cumulative effect of this cash shortfall over the years is plain to see in Hamilton. Here are just two of many examples: Now, for lack of funds, Hamilton is already unable to maintain its present roads, bridges and other hard assets. City Housing cannot maintain its assets either so it has actually sold off buildings it could not afford to repair. Incredible, but true. In this ongoing financial weakness it is folly to spend any money on suburban bridges, roads, drinking water and sewer lines and much more that subdivisions need today when developers and buyers of the new suburban homes will not pay enough in fees and charges or annual taxes to cover the costs. The costs they will not pay must be made up by taxation on the rest of the city. In other words, Hamilton urban boundary expansion means a few suburban landowners will be massively subsidized for years by other ratepayers. There is no justification for such a subsidy. And, please, consider what this means for another point over which Hamilton people are bitterly

divided: area rating. After rural districts have so long objected to, in effect, paying municipal taxes for services they do not get, is Council willing to create a new area in which ratepayers pay a premium on their taxes to make up for development costs they failed to pay when the subdivisions were built? My bet would be that staff would oppose that form of area rating and Council would agree. But refusing to make the new subdivision owners somehow pay for built in services means that urban boundary expansion will force the rest of Hamilton to subsidize every new subdivision for years.

Please, for all these reasons, keep the urban boundary as it is.

Respectfully,

Warren Caldwell