

**Pilon, Janet**

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**From:** Naomi Anne Miller

**Sent:** March 26, 2021 12:06 PM

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**Subject:**

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing as a physician with family who live in Hamilton, and with several family members who went to University in Hamilton to urge you to freeze the urban boundary and direct new development and in particular new spending into the current urban boundary rather than allowing or encouraging urban sprawl. In my opinion this course of action is best for the health and wellbeing of citizens of Hamilton, would allow an improved quality of life for residents of Hamilton, and is the best course for the environment.

Lack of affordable housing, crumbling infrastructure, lack of basic services like sidewalk snow clearing, safe bike lanes for those who don't own a car, and reliable public transit are existing problems that are much more acute for those living in poverty. Building more subdivisions beyond the current City boundaries will direct new funding outside the city core rather than in the area where it is currently needed.

We are in a climate emergency. The prestigious medical journal The Lancet has stated that "climate change is the biggest global health threat of the 21st century and tackling it could be our greatest health opportunity". In her 2017 Report on the State of Public Health in Canada<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, says, "Our communities are changing and often expanding through urban sprawl rather than by building compact and complete communities."

Expanding urban boundaries with urban sprawl:

- moves people further from mass transit, requiring more use of cars and generating more greenhouse gas emissions and fine particulate air pollution, which we know kills over 8,000 Canadians annually.
- has been linked to sedentary lifestyles, easy access to unhealthy food, less physical activity and higher rates of obesity.

Dr Theresa Tam advocates for the "development of new communities located within urban containment boundaries that support active transportation and physical activity by including higher density and land use mix, a range of housing options and affordability, easy access to recreational facilities and parks and good links to frequent public transit." Similarly, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, recommends that municipal governments, community planners and developers work together to "establish urban containment policies to manage the outward growth of cities to promote increased development density and opportunities for active travel." The most popular forms of active travel include walking and cycling. We should be making planning decisions that reduce this number, not put more citizens at risk of illness and death from poor air quality.

This is an enormous opportunity to discourage urban sprawl. Doing so would be one of the best tools for fighting climate change and improving peoples' health and improve quality of life.

We should look to other countries and areas such as Europe for examples of walkable neighbourhoods.

Hamilton is a growing city. This is a very good time to direct the manner of future growth and development. Private industry and developers are the engine necessary to move the city forward. But private industry and developers must not be allowed to determine the type and manner of development. Such vital issues must be determined by municipal legislation and guidelines developed based on fiscal issues in concert with concerns for health and the environment.

I recognize that as a resident of Toronto I have absolutely no right to express a view on the development of Hamilton – except that of a resident of a city that is NOT doing the right thing. In Toronto we currently have unrestrained and totally uncoordinated growth driven by developers to the detriment of local citizens. I urge you not to follow our path.

I urge you to vote to freeze the urban boundary and direct new development and spending into the current urban boundary.

Respectfully submitted

Naomi Miller MD  
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