

March 25, 2021

To Mayor Eisenberger and Hamilton City Councillors. I am writing to you on behalf of the Association of Dundas Churches 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.

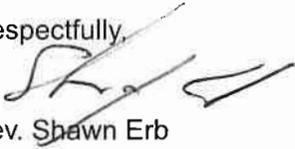
Timelines

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.

Respectfully,



Rev. Shawn Erb

Chair, Association of Dundas Churches

(Christ Church Flamborough, Christian Science Society, Dundas Baptist Church, Grace Valley Church, Knox Presbyterian Church, Life Community Church, Salvation Army Ellen Osler Home, St. James Anglican Church, St. Mark's United Church, St. Paul's United Church)