



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**Planning Division**

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>TO:</b>                | Chair and Members<br>Planning Committee   |
| <b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>    | April 6, 2021   |
| <b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b> | Growing the Greenbelt – ERO Posting 019-3136 - City of Hamilton Comments (PED21235) (City Wide)         |
| <b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>  | City Wide   |
| <b>PREPARED BY:</b>       | Joanne Hickey-Evans (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1282  |
| <b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>      | Steve Robichaud<br>Director, Planning and Chief Planner<br>Planning and Economic Development Department |
| <b>SIGNATURE:</b>         |   |

## RECOMMENDATION

That City Council, in response to ERO posting 019-3136 – Consultation of Growing the Greenbelt, authorize staff to reiterate to the Province the City of Hamilton’s previous request from December, 2015 and May, 2016, to request the Province to add Coldwater Creek (Dundas) to the Greenbelt Plan as an urban river valley as part of the Provincial “Growing the Greenbelt” consultations.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 17, 2021, the Province released ERO posting 019-3136 – Consultation of Growing the Greenbelt. The Province is seeking feedback on ways to grow the size and further enhance the quality of the Greenbelt. The main focuses are:

1. Identifying a study area of lands focussed on the Paris Galt Moraine; and,
2. Generating Ideas for adding, expanding and further protecting Urban River Valleys.

In addition to the above, a broader question has been posed in the ERO posting “Do you have suggestions for other potential areas to grow the Greenbelt?”

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Comments on the above posting are due to the Provincial government by April 19, 2021.

Over the past six years, the City has provided comments to the Province on any requests for Greenbelt boundary changes. The 2017 Greenbelt Plan added approximately 780 ha of land to the Plan area, along with Fifty Creek as an urban river valley.

Based on the extensive review in 2015, which included a focus on the urban river valleys, staff recommend that no additional urban river valleys be added to the Greenbelt Plan (other than to reiterate two previous Council requests to add Coldwater Creek in Dundas) The urban river valleys have an extensive amount of existing natural heritage system protection based on a combination of public ownership, inclusion within the Niagara Escarpment Plan, being regulated by the Conservation Authorities, designated Open Space in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and zoned as Open space. An additional layer of planning policy would not enhance the existing protection.

Further consideration of adding lands to the Greenbelt Plan can occur in the future. At the conclusion of the current GRIDS2 / MCR process and the implementation and approval of the related Official Plan Amendments, the quantum and location of urban boundary expansion lands to accommodate the population and employment forecasts until 2051 will be known. At this time, there may be an opportunity to identify lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the Greenbelt because of the extent of the NEF contours, potential infrastructure challenges or other matters.

The Paris Galt moraine is outside the City of Hamilton municipal boundary; it is located within Brant and Wellington Counties, the Region of Waterloo and is adjacent to the City of Guelph. Only a small portion of this proposed study area is contiguous to Hamilton. Staff have no comments on this study area.

**Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 7**

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: N/A

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Greenbelt Plan policies and boundaries have been reviewed several times over the past seven years. The most fulsome review was the 2015 Coordinated Provincial Plan

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review. One of the components of the Review was the evaluation of the Greenbelt Plan boundaries.

Throughout the course of the review, the City of Hamilton has provided specific comments on potential Greenbelt Plan boundary changes, including both additions and deletions. Several Reports have been considered by Planning Committee and City Council on the issue of Greenbelt Plan boundaries (see Appendix “A” to Report PED21235).

A summary of specific boundary changes requests and results are described below. Appendix “B” to Report PED21235 identifies the specific areas referenced in the chart below.

| <b>Reports</b>  | <b>Additions to Greenbelt Plan</b>   | <b>Deletions to Greenbelt Plan</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| City Council Requests –<br><br>December 2015<br>(PED15078(a)) | Lands south of Twenty Mile Creek, east of Miles Road, north of Airport Road, and west of Trinity Church Road (approximately 430 ha);<br><br>Area A-2 on Appendix “B” to Report PED21235 as well as a westerly extension to Miles Road. Extension added at December 9, Council meeting) | Lands in Lower Stoney Creek (104 ha) –<br><br>Area R-1 on Appendix “B” to Report PED21235  |
|   | Coldwater Creek (added at December 9, Council Meeting)   | lands north of Parkside Drive, east of Centre Road in Waterdown (28 ha) from the Greenbelt Plan<br><br>Area R-5 on Appendix “B” to Report PED21235 |
| Draft Greenbelt Plan released – May 2016                      | Book Road lands (450 ha)<br><br>Area A-1 on Appendix “B” to Report PED21235  | a few parcels of land in Lower Stoney Creek (30 ha) that were already in the urban boundary.<br><br>Area R-1b on Appendix “B” to Report PED21235   |
|   | a portion of the Miles road area (330 ha), not the full 430 ha which had been requested  |  |

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| <b>Reports</b>   | <b>Additions to Greenbelt Plan</b>   | <b>Deletions to Greenbelt Plan</b>   |
|--|--|--|
|  | Area A-2 on Appendix “B” to Report PED21235  |  |
|  | Fifty Creek as an urban river valley<br><br>Not identified on any map  |  |
| City Council Comments on Draft Greenbelt Plan boundaries –<br><br>September 2015 (PED15078(B)) | Confirmed Support for Book Road lands and Fifty Creek<br><br>Reiterated request for the remainder of the Miles Road and Coldwater creek be added to the Greenbelt Plan | Reiterated request for lands on lower Stoney Creek and Parkside Drive to be removed based on December 2015 request |
| Final 2017 Greenbelt Plan  | No changes from the draft Greenbelt Plan   | No changes from the draft Greenbelt Plan   |

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

Section 6 of the Greenbelt Plan describes urban river valleys:

Key river valleys in urban areas adjacent to the Greenbelt provide opportunities for additional connections to help expand and integrate the Greenbelt and its systems into the broader southern Ontario landscape. The Urban River Valley designation provides direction to those areas where the Greenbelt occupies river valleys in an urban context. These urban river valleys may be the setting for a network of uses and facilities, including recreational, cultural and tourist amenities and *infrastructure*, which are needed to support urban areas.

### **6.1 Description**

The Urban River Valley designation as shown on Schedule 1 applies to lands within the main corridors of river valleys connecting the rest of the Greenbelt to the Great Lakes and inland lakes. The lands in this designation comprise river valleys and associated lands and are generally characterized by being:

- lands containing natural and hydrologic features, including coastal *wetlands*
- lands designated in official plans for uses such as parks, open space, recreation, conservation and environmental protection

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## **6.2 Policies**

For lands falling within the Urban River Valley, the following policies shall apply:

1. Only publicly owned lands are subject to the policies of the Urban River Valley designation. Any privately owned lands within the boundary of the Urban River Valley area are not subject to the policies of this designation. For the purposes of this section, publicly owned lands means lands in the ownership of the Province, a municipality or a local board, including a conservation authority.
2. The lands are governed by the applicable official plan policies provided they have regard to the objectives of the Greenbelt Plan.
3. All existing, expanded or new *infrastructure* which is subject to and approved under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, or which receives a similar approval, is permitted provided it supports the needs of adjacent *settlement areas* or serves the significant growth and economic development expected in southern Ontario and supports the goals and objectives of the Greenbelt Plan.
4. The Protected Countryside policies do not apply except for:
  - a. The policies of section 3.2.6 (External Connections); and,
  - b. The policies of section 3.3 (Parkland, Open Space and Trails).

From time to time, individual municipalities or the Province, propose to add lands to the Greenbelt Plan.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

- Hamilton Conservation Authority

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

On February 17, 2021, the Province released ERO posting 019-3136 – Consultation of Growing the Greenbelt. The Province is seeking feedback on ways to grow the size and further enhance the quality of the Greenbelt. The main focuses are:

1. Identifying a study area of lands focussed on the Paris Galt Moraine, which is home to critical groundwater resources;
2. Generating Ideas for adding, expanding and further protecting Urban River Valleys

In addition to the above, a broader question has been posed in the ERO posting “Do you have suggestions for other potential areas to grow the Greenbelt?”

Comments on the above posting are due to the Provincial government by April 19, 2021.

### **1.0 Urban River Valleys**

In 2015, as part of the Coordinated Provincial Plan Review, valleys to the Greenbelt Plan were evaluated to determine if they should be added to the Greenbelt Plan. The staff recommendation from PED10078(a) was to exclude urban river valleys from the Greenbelt Plan since these areas were protected by a combination of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, regulated by the Conservation Authorities, designated Open Space in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and zoned as Open space. Additional planning layers would not increase the protection of these areas. Further, the largest urban river valleys (i.e. Red Hill) are in public ownership.

The Greenbelt Plan policies requires urban river valleys to be in public ownership. Some of the urban river valleys may not qualify because they have some degree of private ownership (i.e. Stoney Creek).

Council, through a motion, requested that Coldwater Creek in Dundas be included as an urban river valley. The Provincial government did not add this creek to the 2017 Greenbelt Plan but instead added Fifty Creek (Stoney Creek) to the Plan.

Based on previous requests in December 2015 and May 2016, that Council reiterate that Coldwater Creek (Dundas) should be added to the Greenbelt Plan as an urban river valley.

### **2.0 Adding Other Lands within Hamilton to the Greenbelt Plan**

As noted in the Historical Background section of this Report, the only lands that were not added to the Greenbelt Plan that were requested by the City of Hamilton in 2015, are approximately 100 ha from Miles Road eastward to the existing boundary of the Greenbelt Plan.

At the conclusion of the current GRIDS2 / MCR process and the implementation and approval of the related Official Plan Amendments, the quantum and location of urban boundary expansion lands to accommodate the population and employment forecasts until 2051 will be known. At this time, there may be an opportunity to identify lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the Greenbelt because of the extent of the NEF contours, potential infrastructure challenges or other matters.

### **3.0. Paris Galt Moraine Study Area**

As shown on Appendix “C” attached to Report PED21235, the proposed Paris Galt moraine study area is located within Wellington County, Brant County and the Region of

Waterloo. Only a very small part of the study area touches on the City's northern border.

At the time of writing this Report, no decision has been made by these municipal Councils as to whether they support the study area or adding these lands to the Greenbelt Plan for this area.

The addition of these lands to the Greenbelt Plan does not affect land use planning or other city programs/initiatives of the City.

### **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Council could refrain from providing comments on ERO posting 019-3136.

Council could request the Province to add urban river valleys to the Greenbelt Plan.

Council could support the potential study area of the Paris Galt Moraine with a view to a future addition to the Greenbelt Plan area.

### **ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **Clean and Green**

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

- Appendix "A" - History of Greenbelt Plan Boundary requests to the Province by the City of Hamilton
- Appendix "B" - Map of areas proposed for addition or deletion to the Greenbelt Plan (2015)
- Appendix "C" - Excerpt of staff report PED15078a respecting Urban River Valleys
- Appendix "D" - Map of Paris Galt Moraine