



August 11th, 2022

Dear Councillors,

Firstly I would like to commend the Planning Committee for approving the staff recommendations to give property owners the right to convert pre-existing houses to accommodate more units. As I outlined in my delegation on behalf of Environment Hamilton at the August 3rd Planning Committee meeting, this is a good decision that the city must continue to build on to facilitate the gentle density we need to accommodate population growth within a firm urban boundary. While this step alone is certainly not a silver bullet that will solve all our housing and density problems, it is an important tool that is taking us in the right direction.

I am writing to you to encourage you to not weaken this tool. A number of Ancaster residents have raised concerns that the amendment to the decision that excludes a sizable number of homes in their neighbourhoods in Ancaster was not only unnecessary, but unwanted.

Environment Hamilton for many years now has been pushing for the City of Hamilton to take the growing threat of stormwater more seriously - and to discourage the type of development and land use that exacerbates stormwater management problems. In our view, the exclusion of the homes in Ancaster from this planning decision is not the type of action we need to take to resolve our stormwater management woes.

As has been suggested by Ancaster residents, many alternatives could be pursued that would still enable all Ancaster property owners to enjoy the same rights the city is now granting to other homeowners across the city. For instance, those wanting to establish a fourplex in an existing residence could be required to use permeable surfaces for any mandatory new parking pads. While certainly not as preferable to allowing these houses to be converted to fourplexes - would it not be a more reasonable compromise to limit these conversions to unit numbers that do not require additional parking to be provided at least instead of eliminating them from eligibility all together?

In conclusion, we urge you to adopt the original recommendations of staff and if any challenges with stormwater management emerge, creative alternatives to the new rules could be applied in Ancaster that still allow property owners to create gentle density in one of the areas of the city where it is needed most.

- Ian Borsuk, Climate Campaign Coordinator  
Environment Hamilton