

General Issues Committee February 1, 2023 Report 23-006 (Council - February 8, 2023)

Urban Boundary Expansion and Greenbelt Plan (Item 11.2)

WHEREAS, on June 8, 2022, City Council adopted Urban Official Plan Amendment 167 and Rural Official Plan Amendment 34 to implement Councils preferred growth scenario of “no urban boundary expansion” as Hamilton’s strategy to accommodate future growth to 2051;

WHEREAS, Hamilton City Council’s decision on the preferred growth scenario was made in December 2021 after an extensive process of analysis and community consultation through the GRIDS2/Municipal Comprehensive Review project;

WHEREAS, on November 4, 2022 the City of Hamilton received a decision from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 167 to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and OPA 34 to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan (GRIDS 2 / MCR); **WHEREAS**, the Minister’s decision unilaterally expanded the City’s urban boundary by 2,200 hectares including all future developable land in the City of Hamilton (Twenty Road West, Twenty Road East, Elfrida and White Church lands);

WHEREAS, on December 16, 2022 the City of Hamilton received a decision from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on proposed changes to the Greenbelt Plan and to the Greenbelt Area Boundary Regulation;

WHEREAS, the Minister’s decision unilaterally removed 795 hectares of land from Greenbelt Plan in Hamilton for the purpose of residential development;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton is committed to reducing the cost of housing, and building more homes that are attainable for our growing population;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton understands that prime agricultural areas are finite and non-renewable and form the foundation of local food production, agrifood exports and make a significant contribution to Hamilton’s jobs and economic prosperity;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton has declared a Climate Emergency and adopted a Climate Change Action Strategy, and unchecked urban sprawl will exacerbate the climate crisis;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton is moving forward with several initiatives to preserve agricultural land and support higher rates of infill and intensification including permitting secondary dwelling units city-wide, permitting the conversion of existing low density residential properties City wide into higher density forms of housing, updating the City’s zoning by-laws to permit additional density within the existing urban area, a review of parking standards, and new planning policies to support higher density development at Major Transit Station Areas;

WHEREAS, Hamilton already has lands designated and in many cases approved to accommodate approximately 37,000 units of new development, , which is approximately 10.5 years of housing supply, not including abundant opportunities for infill and intensification; and,

WHEREAS, on October 14th, 2022 the City of Hamilton released an updated analysis of Hamilton’s 2006 Growth Plan Land Needs Assessment (LNA) for growth to 2031 using actual 2021 Census information showing that actual development densities have been higher than were projected in 2006, resulting in a surplus of 329 hectares of land to 2031.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

(a) That the Minister’s decision to expand Hamilton’s urban boundary to include 2,200 hectares of agricultural, rural and natural heritage lands for residential development is unnecessary and is not supported by the City of Hamilton; and,

(b) That the Minister’s decision to remove 795 hectares of land from the Greenbelt Plan is unnecessary and is not supported by the City of Hamilton.