

# CITY OF HAMILTON MOTION

Council: October 25, 2023

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. WILSON**.....

**SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR** .....

**Request for the RCMP Investigation to Include the Decision to Expand the City of Hamilton’s Urban Boundary by 2200 Hectares**

WHEREAS the Auditor General of Ontario has stated that public trust and confidence relies on governments being able to demonstrate transparency in decision-making;

WHEREAS the Auditor General of Ontario determined that the decision-making process used by the Government of Ontario in the removal of lands from the Greenbelt in 2022 was not transparent, fair, objective or fully informed;

WHEREAS on late Friday afternoon, November 4, 2022, the same day the Government of Ontario announced that it would remove 2994 hectares in 15 different areas of the Greenbelt including the hectares from Hamilton, it also made public its decision to extend Hamilton’s urban boundary by 2200 hectares

WHEREAS the unilateral decision by the Government of Ontario to extend Hamilton’s urban boundary by 2200 hectares will result in the permanent loss of 1,630 to 2,190 hectares of largely prime agricultural areas, as well as impacts to natural heritage and water systems;

WHEREAS in July 2021, the City of Hamilton completed a city-wide survey of potential growth scenarios to accommodate forecasted population and employment growth and over 90% of approximately 18,000 survey responded supported a firm urban boundary;

WHEREAS in November 2021, Hamilton City Council directed staff to implement the firm Urban Boundary scenario through official plan amendments which resulted in Official Plan Amendment No.167 to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan (“OPA 167”) and Official Plan Amendment No. 34 to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan (“OPA 34”);

WHEREAS J. David Wake, K.C. Integrity Commissioner of Ontario (Re: The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Member of Provincial Parliament for Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes Toronto, Ontario August 30, 2023) described the Government of Ontario’s decision to open up Greenbelt lands to development as a “rushed and flawed process” that “paints a picture of a process marked by misinterpretation, unnecessary hastiness and deception”;

WHEREAS the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's decision which consisted of 77 modifications to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan, and 25 modifications to the Rural Hamilton Official Plan is final and not subject to appeal;

WHEREAS Integrity Commissioner Wake's report details how a select group of lawyers and land development consultants were invited to a private meeting in Toronto and given the opportunity to sign off on the amendments to OPA 167 (and ROPA 34) but that Hamilton City staff were not consulted on the changes nor were city staff given an opportunity to review and respond to the proposed amendments;

WHEREAS the Provincial amendments to OPA 167 are not limited to OPA 167 but extend to changes never contemplated or considered by Hamilton City Council in approving OPA 167 and ROPA 34; and

WHEREAS on October 10, 2023, the public was notified that the RCMP has launched an investigation into the Greenbelt land swap;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That Hamilton City Council request that our Head of Council communicate with the Commissioner of the RCMP and any other necessary or appropriate body to request that the scope of the RCMP investigation into the Government of Ontario's decision to open up the Greenbelt lands for development be extended to include the Government of Ontario's decision to expand the City of Hamilton's urban boundary by 2200 hectares.