

# Urban Boundary Expansion Framework – Consultation & Engagement Plan



## Background

The Province of Ontario approved the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) on August 16, 2024, which comes into effect on October 20, 2024, replacing both the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The new PPS removes the requirement for a Municipal Comprehensive Review before a municipality or landowner can expand the urban boundary. These policy changes were accompanied with changes to the *Planning Act* (Bill 185). The impact to the City of Hamilton is that after October 20, 2024 a landowner able to apply to expand the urban boundary at any time and without a limitation on expansion size. Additional changes through provincial legislation, through Bill 185, *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* (Bill 185), that impact urban boundary expansions include:

- allowing landowners to appeal Council's decision on urban boundary expansion applications to the Ontario Land Tribunal; and,
- removing the requirement for applicants to consult with the municipality (previously referred to as Formal Consultation) which would determine application submission requirements.

These Provincial changes undermine Council's position of maintaining a firm urban boundary. In anticipation of the Provincial Planning Statement being approved by the Province and the City receiving private urban boundary expansion applications in the near future, staff developed the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion applications which was approved by Council on August 16, 2024, and will soon be open to public engagement.



## Context

The City of Hamilton has adopted a growth management strategy based on the principle of a firm urban boundary. Recent Provincial planning changes have undermined Hamilton's position to maintain this stance by allowing for new privately initiated urban boundary expansion applications and the City is proactively developing a strategy to respond to the potential scenario where one or more Official Plan amendment applications are proposed to expand the urban area.

To effectively plan for engagement on the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications, it is important to consider the broader context in which this work is occurring.

- 2018-2021: The city undertakes extensive public engagement as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review and Growth-Related Integrated Development Strategy workplan to allocate forecasted population and employment growth to 2051. This included a city-wide survey that received 18,387 responses. 90.4% of residents supported a no urban boundary expansion growth strategy.
- November 2021: Council votes to adopt a no urban boundary expansion growth strategy. The Official Plan Amendments are adopted by Council.
- November 2022: The province modifies the City's Official Plan Amendments, as part of its approval to remove Council's approval of a no urban boundary expansion growth strategy. Approximately 2,200 hectares of land are added to Hamilton's urban boundary. At the same time the province removes lands from the Greenbelt Plan area.
- 2023: In response to the Provincial decision to add lands to the urban boundary, Council approves Secondary Planning Guidelines for Urban Expansion Areas.
- September 2023: The city undertakes public engagement and holds a Special Meeting of Planning Committee to discuss lands removed from the Greenbelt Plan area. There is significant public interest/participation in this engagement. Majority of residents express opposition to the Greenbelt Plan area changes. Shortly after this meeting, the province reverses its changes to the Greenbelt Plan through Bill 136.
- Challenges to meaningful engagement experienced during the public consultation phase included: location of the meeting, size of venue (too small), transportation (requiring HSR shuttle bus), planning for safety and security of staff at the meeting, date, and time of meeting.

- October 2023: The province announces its intent to reverse the November 2022 decision to revise municipal Official Plans, including modifications expanding Hamilton’s urban boundary. City Council supports the reversal.
- December 2023: Bill 150 is passed and removed 2,200 hectares of land from Hamilton’s Urban Boundary.
- August 2023: The province approves the new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS). The PPS and Bill 185 (2024) opens the door for new privately initiated urban boundary expansion applications to be submitted. Local decisions can be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal for final decision. Council submits multiple comments to the province not supporting these changes.
- August 2024: In anticipation of receiving new privately initiated urban boundary expansion applications, Council approves the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications.

These facts will be used to inform the Consultation and Engagement Plan for the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications.



## Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to outline the City’s strategy for soliciting community input on specific aspects of the Draft Framework and to better inform the community and interested participants on both the recent provincial planning decisions and their impacts to local decision-making authority.

Goals	Objectives
<p>INFORM the community about recent provincial changes that impact Hamilton.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly outline recent <a href="#">Provincial changes</a> that impact planning decisions in Hamilton.</li> <li>• Clearly outline decision making powers/authority at the municipal and provincial levels.</li> <li>• Using the INFORM process (outlined in <a href="#">Hamilton’s Public Engagement Policy</a>), ensure the community has the appropriate information and knowledge in order to provide meaningful input into the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly outline the process for an application, including timelines and reinforcing that third party appeal processes are not permitted by Provincial legislation.</li> </ul>
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Goals	Objectives
<p>CONSULT with the community on specific aspects of the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications.</p> <hr/> <p>Consult Level: staff will get your feedback on a project or initiative.</p> <p>We promise to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>keep you informed, including decisions by Council or the Ontario Land Tribunal on an application;</li> <li>listen to and acknowledge your concerns or hopes for the project;</li> <li>provide feedback to you on how the input received was used to inform the project.</li> <li>Document and report back on what we heard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly outline what the Draft Framework is, how it will be used and why it is important.</li> <li>Using the <a href="#">CONSULT level</a>, seek input from the community on three main aspects in the Framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How and when the community wants to be notified when an application for urban boundary expansion is made and determined complete;</li> <li>How and when the community will provide their input on urban boundary expansion applications once received; and,</li> <li>Identify submission requirements (studies) required as part of the urban boundary expansion applications and reason for applications.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# Scope

The Consultation and Engagement Plan is focused on gathering input on three specific components of the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications. A separate engagement plan will be developed for specialized engagement with the Indigenous Community, supported by Hamilton's Indigenous Relations Team.

## IN SCOPE

Input on the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications related to:

- **Notice:** how and when the community will be notified when an application for urban boundary expansion is made;
- **Public Notice Signs:** Identify what information should be included on any [public notice signs and/or application webpage](#) posted on the proposed UBE lands and/or application webpage in addition to the legislative requirements under the *Planning Act*;
- **Public Engagement:** how and when the community will provide their input on urban boundary expansion applications once deemed complete;
- **Required Studies/Other Information**
  - General Community: In addition to the proposed study requirements, what other studies or information should a proponent be required to submit as part of the application process;
  - External Review Agencies: Identification of the minimum submission requirements for urban boundary expansion applications and what is in scope/out of scope as part of required technical plans and studies.

## OUT OF SCOPE

- **Requests to outright prohibit applications for urban boundary expansions.**
  - This would involve a reversal of Provincial decision relative to the Provincial Policy Statement and Bill 185. Comments related to decisions made by the Provincial Government can be directed to: City Council, Mayor, Member of Provincial Parliament, and/or Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- **Requirement for the City to review, assess and make a decision on complete applications within 120 days, after which an appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal can be made.**

- Amending the legislative requirements under the *Planning Act* with respect to giving notice of development applications (note the city may exceed these requirements).

# Engagement Methods & Audiences

**Note: Indigenous Engagement** will be defined and planned as a separate engagement plan and may consider a level of engagement that differs from those outlined below.

## Consult Level Engagement: Audiences and Tools

Decision: What will the community influence through participation?	Target Audience: Who will influence the decision?	Engagement Level	Engagement Method(s) and Tool(s)
How and when the community wants to be <b>notified</b> when an application for urban boundary expansion is made.	<b>General Public:</b> Landowners within and near lands that may be subject to Urban Boundary Expansions.  Individuals on the enhanced GRIDS2 email list.  Individuals who are interested in advocacy related to Urban Boundary	Consult	<b>Engage Hamilton IDEAS tool:</b> Allows the community to post their ideas in a creative way.  <b>In-person open house:</b> Set-up will allow community to:  Understand the background.  Rotate to the areas within the Draft Framework that the public can provide input to (e.g. when, how the public is notified).
How and when the community will provide their <b>input</b> on urban boundary expansion applications once received.		Consult	

Decision: What will the community influence through participation?	Target Audience: Who will influence the decision?	Engagement Level	Engagement Method(s) and Tool(s)
	<p>Expansion and urban intensification.</p> <p><b>Specialized Committees:</b></p> <p>Agricultural and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee</p>		<p><b>Focus Discussions:</b> Scoped to specialized committees.</p> <p><b>Individual Agency Outreach:</b> Input requested through direct contact.</p>
<p>Identify what <b>information</b> or additional studies should be required as part of the urban boundary expansion applications.</p>	<p>Community Climate Change Advisory Committee</p> <p>Development Industry Liaison Group</p> <p><b>External Review Agencies and Government Agencies:</b></p> <p>Niagara Escarpment Commission</p> <p>Conservation Authorities</p> <p>School Boards</p> <p>Hamilton International Airport</p> <p>Provincial Ministries</p> <p>Public Utilities</p> <p><b>Community Groups and Non-Government Organizations:</b></p>	<p>Consult</p>	<p><b>Engage Hamilton FORUM tool</b> - Engage on controversial issues through (moderated) open discussion. Invites two-way communication (public shares input and staff offer visible comment).</p> <p><b>In-person open house:</b> Set-up will allow community to:</p> <p>Understand the background.</p> <p>Rotate to the areas within the Draft Framework that the public can provide input to (e.g. when, how the public is notified).</p> <p><b>Focus Discussions:</b> scoped to specialized committees.</p> <p><b>Individual Agency Outreach:</b> input requested through direct contact</p>

Decision: What will the community influence through participation?	Target Audience: Who will influence the decision?	Engagement Level	Engagement Method(s) and Tool(s)
	Environment Hamilton Ontario Federation of Agriculture Other organizations that have an expressed interest in urban expansions		

**Inform Activity: Audiences and Tools**

Decision: What will the community influence through participation?	Target Audience: Who will influence the decision?	Engagement Method(s) and Tool(s)
INFORM the community about recent provincial changes that impact Hamilton	<p><b>General Public:</b> Same as audience identified above.</p> <p><b>Specialized Committees:</b> Same as audience identified above.</p> <p><b>External Review Agencies and Government Agencies:</b> Same as audience identified above.</p>	<p><b>Engage Hamilton QUESTIONS tool:</b> offers space for the public to ask questions and get answers publicly. Project lead can provide answers and provide additional resources in a moderated process. Contributes to project FAQ page.</p> <p><b>Engage Hamilton FAQ</b> Ensures the public has the right information to be able to participate in a meaningful way to the engagement.</p> <p><b>In-person open house:</b> Set-up will allow the community to understand the background and scope of engagement.</p>



## Public Engagement Deliverables

- Promotion of public engagement opportunities via direct and indirect communication channels.
- Improved understanding and awareness of recent provincial changes that impact Hamilton’s firm urban boundary position and other local planning decisions.
- Implementation of multiple engagement methods that supports meaningful engagement opportunities:
  - Engage Hamilton project page, incorporating multiple EngagementHQ Tools;
  - In-person open house-style public meetings.
- Reduced barriers to community participation, supporting an engagement process that incorporates the principles of IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) and results in meaningful engagement on the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications.
- Engagement of the Indigenous Community that is specifically designed to better meet the needs of the Indigenous Community in contributing to the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications and to foster and build improved relationships for ongoing and future projects.
- Report back to the community by developing and sharing a “What We Heard Summary Report” that outlines the engagement process, the input received and how the engagement contributed to an updated Draft Framework.
- Updated Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications that has been informed by meaningful public engagement.
- Meaningful engagement results that will inform City-initiated amendments to the Urban and Rural Hamilton Official Plans.



# Risks and Alternatives

Risks	Alternatives
<p>Participants wanting to express their opposition to decisions that are made by the province.</p>	<p>Provide clear and proactive communications in advance of the planned engagement.</p> <p>Retain a consultant to support and facilitate the in-person engagement activities.</p> <p>Provide community members with a list of contacts with whom to direct their concerns about the impacts from recent provincial decisions.</p> <p>Leverage Engage Hamilton tools that allow for interactive questions and answers prior to attending in-person engagement event(s).</p>
<p>Lack of trust by the community related to urban boundary decisions.</p>	<p>Increase transparency and accessibility by:</p> <p>Establishing a Communication Strategy using a variety of communications channels / methods, dedicated staff who can respond to inquiries in a timely manner, information that is clear and easy to understand, sustained communication, multiple methods to communicate and inform the community.</p> <p>Ensuring adequate staff are available to support in-person engagement.</p> <p>Ensuring City of Hamilton' Corporate Security team is involved in the planning of any events.</p> <p>Closing the loop and reporting back on how participation and input informed the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications.</p>

Risks	Alternatives
<p>Community perception that their participation will not be used to inform the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications.</p>	<p>Report back on how input was used to inform the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications and why specific input was not/ could not be incorporated.</p> <p>Outlining the scope in a clear manner through proactive communication and timely communication throughout the project.</p>



## Timeline

Action	Status	Timeline
Present Public Engagement Plan to Planning Committee	<b>On track</b>	October 14, 2024
Activate the Engage Hamilton Page and allow for on-line engagement	<b>In progress</b>	October 15 - November 15 2024
Host in-person open houses (minimum 2)	<b>In progress</b>	November 2024
Revise the Draft Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications, based on input received through the public participation process		December 2024
Report Back to community through a “What We Heard Summary Report” on the engagement findings and next steps		February 2025
Bring Recommendation Report to Planning Committee		February 2025



## Engagement Resourcing

Cost Description	Cost Estimate
Venue A and Venue B Rental	\$6,000
Rental Items for in-person open houses	\$500
Staff Costs: Planning	\$6,000
Staff Costs: Security	\$3,000
Costs to support reducing barriers to meaningful participation	\$1,000
Newspaper notices and social media advertising	\$1,000
Direct mail notices	\$2,000
Additional printing and incidentals	\$1,000
Dillon Consulting and open house facilitation	\$78,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$98,500</b>



## Who's Listening

### Planning and Economic Development Staff

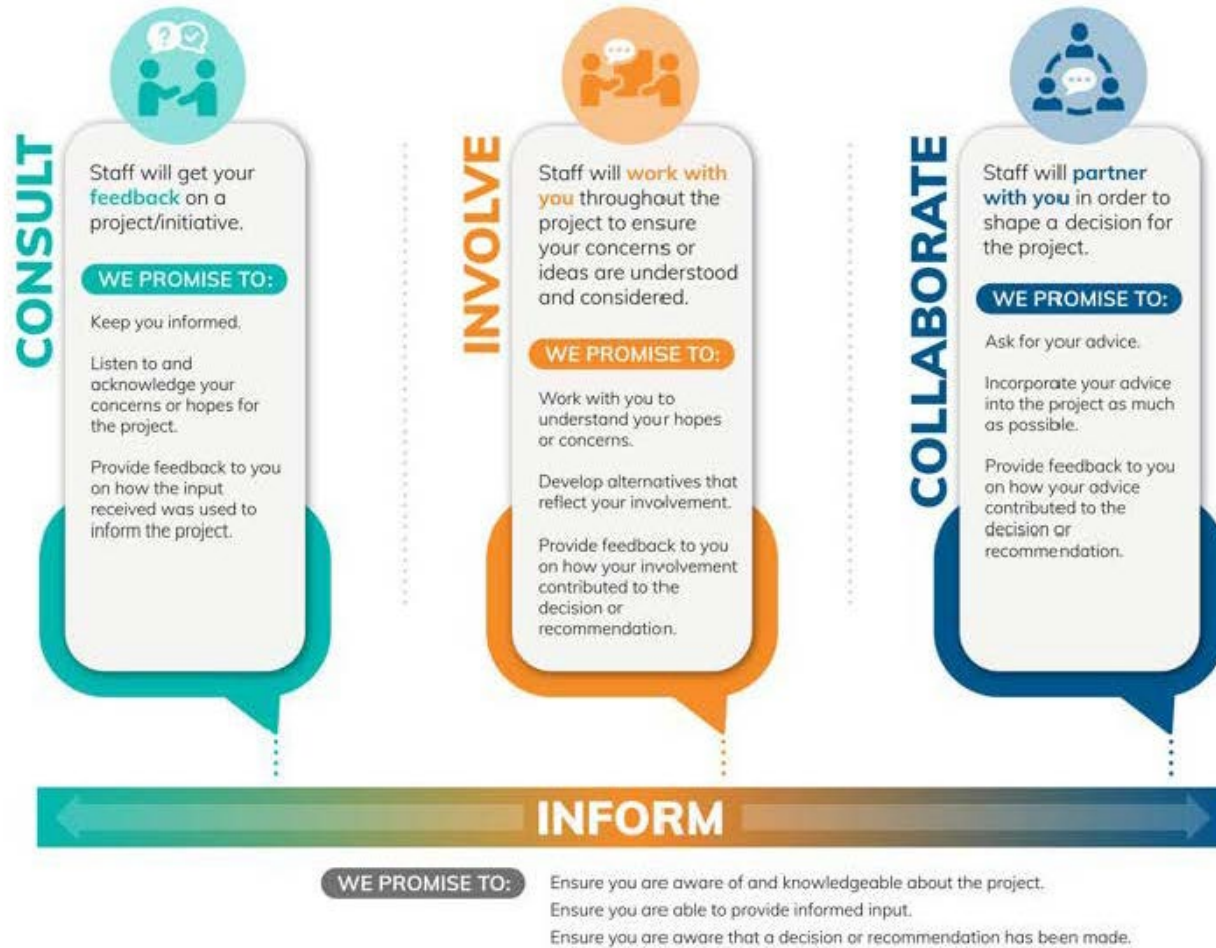
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# Attachments

- City of Hamilton Public Engagement Levels
- City of Hamilton Public Engagement Principles

# HAMILTON'S PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LEVELS



Adapted from IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. Used with permission from IAP2.

# HAMILTON'S PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The City of Hamilton's strategic approach to public engagement will align with the following principles:

