

Chair T. Hwang and  
Members of Planning Committee

Re: COMMENTS, PED 25179

Official Plan Amendment to Expand the Urban Boundary to Include Elfrida Lands

The following represents my comments on this report as your former General Manager of Planning and Economic Development and now a citizen of the City of Hamilton.

When I retired as your GM in 2013, the City was in a state of growth and prosperity. There was successive years of \$1 Million plus Building Permit revenues; major economic development wins with Canada Bread and Maple Leaf Foods large plants and new employment gains; approval of the Airport Business Park; new growth in Waterdown and approval of the Stoney Creek (Winona) urban boundary expansion and Secondary Plan.

GRIDS approved by Council in 2006 identified Elfrida as the next needed growth area/urban boundary expansion. Elfrida was identified as the preferred location to accommodate new growth to 2031 based on the Triple Bottom Line Sustainability Tool.

When Council adopted the new Rural Official Plan in September 2006, the Elfrida Lands were not designated Rural but were included as a Special Policy Area which required studies (Land Needs Assessment) to then incorporate the lands into the urban boundary. The Department recommended this approach and Council approved it.

In July 2009, the City's New (Urban) Official Plan was approved by Council and again, the Elfrida Area had a policy reference as the next growth area. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs did not approve the Elfrida reference as it needed a clear justification in a Land Needs Assessment to reach population growth targets set by the Province for the 2031-2051 planning horizons.

A meeting I attended in 2010-11 with the Senior Director of Municipal Affairs with guidance from the Deputy Minister actually confirmed the Province would support the Elfrida growth reference and place the Elfrida lands in the urban boundary if the Land Needs Assessment conclusively determined the need.

I feel somewhat puzzled that the Department , after multiple years of support for Elfrida growth, would now say in PED 25179 that the subject OPA-25-007 is "not consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement." As stated in the November 9, 2021 PED 17010 (n), the Land Needs Assessment to 2051 prepared by Lorus & Associates and the Peer Review prepared by Watson and Associates both confirmed the need for urban boundary expansion to meet mandated population targets.

In September 2021, the Province prepared a Letter to the City as part of PED 17010 (n) which, in part, stated;

"Ministry staff acknowledge that the No Urban Boundary Expansion scenario is likely to bring about a shortage in land available to accommodate forecasted growth in ground - related housing and...

Based on Ministry Staff review and analysis of the City's Land Needs Assessment, it appears that the No Urban Boundary Expansion scenario poses a risk that the City would not conform with provincial requirements.

So, again I am of the opinion with a great level of certainty that the Elfrida application would be consistent with Provincial policies and would be supported by the Province and should be supported by the City of Hamilton.

In March 2021, as part of the Department's presentation to the GIC Committee, the City's same Chief Planner, the same PED Department, recommended endorsement of the "Ambitious Density Growth" scenario. And this recommendation would be consistent with all the past years of studies, reports and recommendations supporting Elfrida as a preferred growth area, and consistent with the positions of your former General Manager and Chief Planner.

In summary, I feel the City has to grow and must provide for housing needs and housing choice to achieve financial sustainability and be a healthy, prosperous City. A City cannot just rely on intensification. Intensification takes many, many years to achieve what the desired expectations and outcomes are wanted to be. Intensification does not provide the complete spectrum of choice in housing that the market needs.

As your former General Manager of Planning and Economic Development, growth in Elfrida was recommended several times over the years because it represents good planning.

Now, as a citizen of Hamilton, I want to see this growth so my grandchildren will have a choice on where to live.

Respectfully,

Tim McCabe