

Written Delegation re Urban Boundary Expansion

Planning Committee items 8.1 and 8.2

June 24, 2025

The needs of residents must outweigh the special interest of land speculators and developers who want to expand into protected Greenbelt/agricultural lands. Beyond the direct policy aspects to deny an expansion detailed in the “City of Hamilton Report for Consideration” on today’s agenda - (well supported by residents - evidenced through previous attempts by land speculators to encroach on the Greenbelt) – I suggest the urgency of our present moment further highlights the need to oppose expansion. Due to tariffs and trade-wars, any decrease in available prime agricultural lands will negatively impact our ability to source enough healthy, local food, and will cost us our food security, while raising prices.

We have the City’s own **Our Future Hamilton**, a community-shared vision, to guide us in these decisions. There is support for under the six community priorities in Our Future Hamilton that can be applied to this decision. Starting with **Community Engagement**: residents want to be consulted and involved in decisions, and we have already provided an overwhelming response in favour of protecting prime agricultural land in a firm urban boundary (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/boundaries-1.6241833>). This response is related and supports **Economic Prosperity and Growth**, which points to the need to support more people living downtown, where “quality, well-paying local jobs” should be situated. All the evidence supports the reality that vibrant, dense downtowns are an economic engine, whereas sprawl is a net drain on our taxes and the environment. Yes, we want **Healthy and Safe Communities**, but car dependence makes us less safe, especially children and seniors who are more at risk of injury and death with increased traffic generated by sprawl and low-density. Sprawl does not “make it easy for people to be physically active by providing safe routes for walking and biking around the city.” As mentioned, our health and safety is dependent upon “access to healthy, locally sourced and nutritious food for residents” not to mention the major contribution to our economy farmers provide. To be **Clean and Green** we must take focused action to “Re-purpose past industrial or commercial locations (brownfields) as a preferred alternative to using undeveloped or rural spaces (greenfields).” Our **Built environment and Infrastructure** is supposed to “create a well-connected transportation network that allows people to get around conveniently without a car.” – sprawl does not accomplish this. If we only take one thing away from Our Future Hamilton, it’s this: we must “consider the impact of urban

sprawl in planning decisions” and “Develop mixed-use neighbourhoods where it is easy to walk to everyday destinations.” Sprawl leads to demand for surface parking lots and makes every trip car-dependent. Culture and Diversity is impacted if we divert resources away from the core, especially if we truly want “All of our downtown areas” to be “bustling centres of economic and community activity” and to “Ensure Hamilton’s downtown areas are vibrant and inviting to businesses, residents and visitors.” We can’t “support and grow our diverse food scene” if we keep removing productive farmland for housing, since we will have no more local food supply to support. In Hamilton, agriculture is central to our identity and our economy, and is necessary for our survival in an uncertain time.

Losing more of the highest quality farmland in the country to fill the coffers of developers is short-sighted, and dangerous. I hope you will stick to the plan and the vision we have collectively and collaboratively set for Hamilton.

(all quotes from [Our Future Hamilton](#), except where indicated)

Randy Kay