

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Settlement Boundary Expansion Would Mean Fewer Family-Sized Homes

From: Phil Pothen

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Councillors,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. I'm writing to underline the strong alignment between what my colleague Mike Moffatt said in his primary presentation - and what Environmental Defence (along with vast numbers of Hamiltonians) are telling Council - and want council to do.

Firstly, Mike has been very clear, in multiple settings, that opening up more greenfield land would not be NECESSARY to meet demand for 3+ bedroom (i.e., family sized) ownership homes, even if it WERE possible to meet demand using that approach. Even if it were possible, meeting demand through **outward expansion would only be NECESSARY if municipalities refuse to unlock low-cost-per-square-foot family-sized ownership APARTMENT development inside of existing neighbourhoods**. Moffatt expressly identifies Environmental Defence's own [Mid-Rise Manual \(legalizemidrise.ca\)](#) as the package of reforms that are needed to unlock family-sized homes inside existing neighbourhoods. Those are precisely the kinds of reforms that Hamilton is working to implement, despite the delays caused by the government's refusal to approve the 80% intensification official plan, and now as a result of the uncertainty caused by this appeal.

Second, the "option" of meeting demand for family-sized housing through lowrise greenfield development on the outskirts (rather than through infill within neighbourhoods) is really just a fantasy. Hamilton's real choice is between aggressively removing barriers to mid-rise and multiplex apartments inside existing residential neighbourhoods, or else failing to deliver enough family-sized homes at all. Greenfield development is simply, inherently, too inefficient (absent use of under the table undocumented labour, etc., as occurs in Texas, etc.) in this era to deliver enough homes, fast enough. While the kinds of infill development that are currently permitted in Hamilton are also not sufficiently efficient *yet*, [the reforms in the Midrise Manual](#) - which Hamilton is already working to implement through its Residential Zones Project and related projects (e.g., allowing mid-rise apartment buildings on many lots inside residential neighbourhoods) will fix that, if they aren't derailed, through the approval of these boundary expansion. Again, the speaker Mike Moffatt has made it clear that adopting these reforms is - even in places where it is viable to build enough greenfield sprawl - a perfectly valid alternative to it.

Third, regarding the prospect of controls on sprawl WITHIN Hamilton leading to "sprawl on steroids" in other, further-flung parts of the region (aka. leapfrog sprawl) - it's important to note that this is the problem the Greenbelt - and Greenbelt reviews - are designed to solve. A core purpose of the Greenbelt is to provide iron-clad protection for farmland and natural heritage areas that are close enough to Hamilton and other existing GTHA employment to be under development pressure. **If Councillors are of the opinion that there are new areas with that some areas without Greenbelt protection are vulnerable to leapfrog sprawl from Hamilton, it is the job of this year's Greenbelt Review to include them in the Greenbelt - and the appropriate response from Hamilton to concerns about leapfrog sprawl is to**

officially request their inclusion.. Even if Council is sceptical of this government's willingness to expand Greenbelt protection to those areas in the current Greenbelt Review it is important to remember that not even the proponents' speakers were asserting that demand for additional greenfield land would arise prior to even the next Greenbelt Review.

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