

# CITY OF HAMILTON

## MOTION

Planning Committee: March 24, 2026

**MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. TADESON .....**

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

### **Investigation of Renewable Energy Generation as a Secondary Use Associated with Agricultural Operations**

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton Zoning By-law regulates permitted uses within agricultural zones in order to protect agricultural lands, support active farm operations, and ensure appropriate land use compatibility;

WHEREAS, the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 protects agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas and permits agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses where they are compatible with surrounding agricultural operations and where the agricultural use of the property remains the principal use;

WHEREAS, protecting agricultural primacy is a key planning objective, and any additional use on agricultural land must ensure that the principal use of the property remains agricultural and that the land base available for agricultural production is not materially reduced;

WHEREAS, supporting farm viability is also a recognized planning objective, and farms may rely on diversified revenue streams to sustain agricultural operations, particularly where production is seasonal, crop-specific, or subject to fluctuating market conditions;

WHEREAS, diversified on-farm revenue opportunities, including renewable energy generation as a value-added economic contribution to the local grid, may support the long-term financial sustainability of farms where agriculture remains the principal use of the land;

WHEREAS, emerging agricultural practices such as agrivoltaics allow solar panel installations to operate in conjunction with agricultural production, providing a dual-benefit of renewable energy generation and crop protection;

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to the Hamilton Community Climate Action Strategy and achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050;

WHEREAS, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) renewable energy procurement rules require that all other eligible resource types may only locate on lands which constitute Prime Agricultural Areas if they have received municipal council

support and completed an Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) to the satisfaction of the municipality;

WHEREAS, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) renewable energy procurement rules prohibit ground-mounted solar projects from prime agricultural areas as defined by the municipality's Official Plan.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That Planning and Economic Development Department staff BE DIRECTED to investigate policy and zoning options for permitting renewable energy generation facilities associated with an active agricultural operation as an on-farm diversified secondary use that remains clearly subordinate to the principal agricultural use of the property within agricultural zones in Zoning By-law No. 05-200, provided that:
  - (i) the principal use of the property remains agricultural and agricultural production remains the dominant land use on the property; and
  - (ii) the secondary use does not materially reduce the land base available for agricultural production and does not limit the continued operation of the agricultural use as the principal use of the property;
- (b) That staff REPORT BACK to the Planning Committee by May 26, 2026 with recommendations respecting:
  - (i) appropriate zoning definitions and permissions that support both on-site use and contribution to the energy grid;
  - (ii) regulatory controls including setbacks, height, lot coverage, and other performance standards;
  - (iii) mechanisms to ensure agricultural use remains the principal use of the property;
  - (iv) how such permissions support the City's Net Zero targets and the long-term economic viability of local agricultural operations; and
  - (v) consistency with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, the City of Hamilton Official Plan, and any other applicable policy framework;
- (c) That staff CONSIDER whether any recommended changes could be brought forward through a future Zoning By-law housekeeping amendment, if deemed appropriate.