

## 5.2(i)

### Winona density result of previous bad decisions

The density target of 70 residents per hectare in Winona is the result of a series of bad decisions. They start with decades of approving lucrative estate-style houses on much of Hamilton's former foodlands. The enormous cost of servicing this developer-driven sprawl eventually led the provincial government to require that new greenfield development achieve at least 50 jobs or residents per hectare. That happened just as the city was unnecessarily locking the Winona fruitlands into the Stoney Creek Urban Boundary Expansion (SCUBE).

Since then Hamilton planners have continued to make matters worse. An even larger boundary expansion – the aerotropolis – is the main reason why the target has gone from 50 to 70. The aerotropolis is being planned at just 37 jobs per hectare because 70 percent of the land is expected to be occupied by warehouses, trucking companies and wholesale trade. To meet the provincial density requirements, the city must make up the shortfall on the aerotropolis lands in places like Winona.

But it gets worse. In order to “justify” the biggest aerotropolis possible, the city has also applied the 37 jobs per hectare target to all other business parks across Hamilton. And to further increase its alleged “need” for more farmland, it has rezoned existing industrial lands to big box complexes.

Winona residents will be familiar with one of these rezonings that paved the way for the Walmart-centred complex now being built on Fifty Road. They will also recall that councillor Johnson led the fight against that reclassification of industrial land to commercial uses.

Johnson is also one of just three members of council who opposes the aerotropolis, and the SCUBE deal was approved four years before she got on council, so it's unfair to blame the current situation on her.

Winona residents have been sealed into the high density box by a whole string of city decisions, and even if councillors now try to change course, those decisions will come back to haunt them as developers simply appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board and argue that their plans conform with previous and existing policies – like *DiCenzo is doing already on the Foothills of Winona project*.

Were Winona residents told that their community's fate was being decided by the aerotropolis plans, or the cave-ins to Walmart? This is how the planning game is played. Make sure residents don't find out until it's too late to matter.

The OMB appeals of the aerotropolis by Environment Hamilton and Hamiltonians for Progressive Development might still affect this calculus. The two citizen groups are still waiting for a decision from the hearings that ended on January 26.

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