

Dear Mayor of Hamilton & City Councillors,

Expanding Hamilton's Urban Boundary (GIC-March 29th, 2021)

The Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion is joining Environment Hamilton, Hamilton 350, Stop Sprawl Hamilton, and Hamilton's residents to raise concerns about expanding Hamilton's urban boundary. They are as follows:

1. Environmental Concerns
2. Future costs to the taxpayer through Infrastructure Costs
3. Lack of community & civic engagement

Environmental Concerns

In 2019, Environment Hamilton, along with other community organizations and residents, urged the City of Hamilton to declare a **CLIMATE EMERGENCY**. City Council stepped up and unanimously declared the emergency. Last week Chief Justice Richard Wagner stated, "the threat of climate change is so great that it demands a coordinated national approach; climate change is a pressing matter of national concern." He went on to say climate change is real and it is caused by greenhouse gas emission resulting from human activities, and it poses a grave threat to humanity's future."¹ Environmental groups in Hamilton have made it known that expanding the urban boundary will increase Hamilton's greenhouse gas emissions. Suppose we replace prime agricultural lands with single-family houses. In that case, we increase car dependency, increase water runoff into rivers and lakes, encroach on eco-habitats, increase air pollution, increase traffic fatalities, increase harmful effects on human health (high rates of obesity, high blood pressure, chronic diseases) and increase potential flooding incidents.

Future Costs to the taxpayer through Infrastructure Costs

When we expand the urban boundary, we use current taxpayers' money to subsidize developers' profits. As homes and businesses spread out from the existing urban boundary, the cost of providing community services increase, forcing local governments to increase taxes or look to upper levels of government for funding. All these options increase taxes for the residents of Hamilton. Some will state that building more homes on expanded urban boundaries will generate more revenue for the City. But as the City of Kelowna witnessed recently, the future capital costs, operational costs, maintenance costs and replacement costs of sprawl outweigh the property taxes generated in the short term. Is this fiscally responsible for Hamilton taxpayers?²

Lack of community & civic engagement

The decision to expand Hamilton's urban boundary will have a seismic effect on the City for generations. As such, the City should be consulting as many residents as possible. We support Councillor Clark's motion calling for the province to give municipalities like Hamilton more time to assess growth and land needs until all residents of Hamilton are consulted.

The number of residents and organizations delegating today is a testament to the work environmental groups are doing in Hamilton to build a sustainable, climate resilient, inclusive future for Hamilton.

Kojo Dampsey
Executive Director
Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion

¹ Supreme Courts Rules Ottawa's Carbo Tax is Constitutional <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/supreme-court-federal-carbon-tax-constitutional-case-1.5962687>

² Kelowna has learned the iceberg lesion of sprawling development <https://infotel.ca/inhome/kelowna-has-learned-the-iceberg-lesson-of-sprawling-development/it81272>

Stop The Sprawl - In Solidarity with Environment Hamilton	
Hamilton Council	Letters from Residents
Mayor's Office	76
Ward 1 Office	20
Ward 2 Office	15
Ward 3 Office	8
Ward 4 Office	5
Ward 5 Office	1
Ward 6 Office	
Ward 7 Office	7
Ward 8 Office	6
Ward 9 Office	
Ward 10 Office	1
Ward 11 Office	
Ward 12 Office	4
Ward 13 Office	4
Ward 14 Office	4
Ward 15 Office	1
Total Letters	152

Stop The Sprawl - In Solidarity with Environment Hamilton	
Provincial Parliament	Letters from Residents
MPP (Flamborough - Glanbrook)	5
MPP (Hamilton Centre)	37
MPP (Hamilton East - Stoney Creek)	4
MPP (Hamilton Mountain)	11
MPP (Hamilton West Ancaster Dundas)	28
Total Letters	85