

ACTION SHEET : Don't Let Sprawl Take It All! A Call for Hamilton to FREEZE the Urban Boundary

Some Background

Environment Hamilton is **campaigning for Hamilton City Council to FREEZE the city's urban boundary in order to STOP SPRAWL and focus on accommodating urban growth within the urban boundary.** This is critically important for building a climate resilient Hamilton. 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. As part of our campaign to urge the city to declare a **CLIMATE EMERGENCY,** we set out a list of actions we believe the city must commit to in order to transition to a post-carbon world. A core action is the call for the city to focus new urban growth within the existing urban area - in other words, to **FREEZE** Hamilton's urban boundary.

Why FREEZE the urban boundary?

- A firm boundary stops the city from gobbling up prime agricultural land & natural areas to build houses on the outer edges that are costly to service with good transit, water/wastewater & other required amenities.
- Freezing the boundary facilitates intensification in the downtown core & other growth centers, making these areas that can support higher order transit service - like LRT - that will help people shift from cars to transit.
- Firm boundaries facilitate other forms of intensification - including gentle density (laneway homes and other second dwelling units), missing middle (3 to 6 storey residential buildings along major arterials like Upper James or along an east-west LRT system), and greyfield redevelopment (like transforming Eastgate Square - the eastern terminus of the proposed LRT route - into a high density residential/commercial complex).
- Done right, all of the above approaches will help to create a city that is capable of accommodating growth in a manner that is sustainable, climate resilient and inclusive.

What is at stake right now?

The City of Hamilton is currently undertaking a '**land needs assessment' (LNA)** to determine how much land it needs to accommodate urban growth to the year 2051. The draft LNA puts forward two scenarios for accommodating that growth - both of which gobble up substantial amounts of prime agricultural land (1300 to 1600+ hectares). Despite the call from community, and despite the **CLIMATE EMERGENCY** declaration, city planning staff and consultants **did not offer a 'no boundary expansion' option** for the public to consider; we are in danger of losing huge tracts of prime agricultural land to urban expansion. The final staff recommendation regarding the LNA will go to the city's General Issues Committee in April of this year.

Meanwhile we know from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that **climate action needs to be swift and significant over the next decade if we have any hope of averting extreme climate impacts.** This is why Environment Hamilton is calling for Hamilton City Council to **FREEZE** Hamilton's urban boundary. This action is essential if we have any hope of building a sustainable, climate resilient, inclusive future for Hamilton!

What YOU Can Do to Help!

- 1. SIGN OUR PETITION** – We have started a petition urging Hamilton City Council to FREEZE the urban boundary and focus on accommodating future growth within the existing urban area. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign!
- 2. CONTACT THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS!** Let Hamilton City Council know how you feel about sprawl! Send your own personal letter/ email or call the mayor and your councilor(s) to let them know you are concerned about the plans to expand the boundary & sprawl onto rural lands, including prime agricultural lands. [CLICK HERE](#) to access contact information for all of Hamilton City Council. If you don't have time to

prepare a personal note (the most impactful way to raise your concern) you can [CLICK HERE](#) to send a letter to the mayor and all of council through the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance's campaign to stop sprawl and grow the Greenbelt! Learn more about the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance [here](#). *Please contact Lynda if you need any support preparing your message to Mayor / Councillors – email: llukasik@environmenthamilton.org .

3. CONTACT YOUR PROVINCIAL MPP and let them know how you feel about the changes to provincial planning policies that are only serving to encourage urban sprawl! [CLICK HERE](#) to access a helpful background piece from Environmental Defence regarding these changes. [CLICK HERE](#) to access MPP contact information.

4. STAY UP TO DATE on the City of Hamilton's **Land Needs Assessment** process – which is part of the larger GRIDS 2 (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy) & Municipal Comprehensive Review. You can track the city's public consultation, access information, and contact planning staff involved in this process through the Engage Hamilton portal. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the GRIDS 2/MCR public info/engagement page. and make your voice heard where urban growth management and the climate emergency are concerned!

You can find more information about the **Land Needs Assessment process** via these links:

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the video recording of our Jan 14th 'Will Sprawl Take It All?' Webinar

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the slide deck from our Jan 14th 'Will Sprawl Take It All?' Webinar

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the video recording of our Feb 16th 'Don't Let Sprawl Take It All!' Webinar

[CLICK HERE](#) to access a great article on the draft Land Needs Assessment from Citizens At City Hall

Other Actions You Can Take!

GET INVOLVED in Environment Hamilton's **Neighbourhood-Based Climate Action Initiative**. We're looking for people who are willing to play a leadership role in an existing neighbourhood group or as part of a new effort, to help people take climate action in their homes and in their neighbourhoods. Email us at climateneighbourhoods@environmenthamilton.org to get started!

COMMENT ON THE CITY'S DRAFT URBAN FOREST STRATEGY - The City has released a draft Urban Forest Strategy & this is our chance to create a strong, bold policy & increase our urban tree canopy. [CLICK HERE](#) to view the video of our recent UFS webinar. [CLICK HERE](#) to access our urban forest strategy action sheet.

SIGN THESE IMPORTANT PETITIONS – We have two other important petitions underway that are part of our larger effort to build a sustainable, inclusive, climate resilient Hamilton! Please consider signing on!

a) Truck Route Reboot Petition - [CLICK HERE](#) to help us to keep industrial trucks out of downtown and residential areas.

b) Fair Fees For Stormwater Petition – [CLICK HERE](#) to help us to encourage the City of Hamilton to adopt a fair stormwater fee system.

JOIN ENVIRONMENT HAMILTON! By joining Environment Hamilton you help to make our collective voice louder as we work to make Hamilton a sustainable, climate resilient, inclusive city! Membership is FREE and, as a member, you will receive regular updates about EH campaigns, projects, webinars and workshops. [CLICK HERE](#) to join us today!

