

## **ACTION SHEET: Responding to the City of Hamilton's Proposed 'Evaluation Framework & Planning Criteria For Urban Expansion Into Hamilton's Whitebelt and Greenbelt Areas'**

This Action Sheet summarizes key information you need to prepare and submit comments to City of Hamilton planning staff regarding the 'Evaluation Framework & Planning Criteria' they are proposing to use to assess any expansions of the urban boundary into Hamilton's rural 'whitebelt lands' (the rural land wedged between Hamilton's urban area and the provincial Greenbelt), and to assess potential expansions of urban Waterdown and Binbrook into the provincial Greenbelt.

### **Some Background:**

City planning staff were hoping to secure approval at the March 29<sup>th</sup> General Issues Committee (GIC) for their recommended land budget for urban growth management to 2051 – a land budget that would have required expanding urban Hamilton by a whopping 3,300 acres into mostly prime agricultural land. The community mobilized, writing and emailing councilors and showing up in large numbers to delegate at that GIC meeting. This resulted in the GIC delaying any decision on the land budget and committing to send a mail-out survey to every Hamilton household that will ask for input on whether Hamiltonians want to see more urban expansion onto rural farm fields or a firm urban boundary that would protect our farmland. That survey will arrive in mailboxes during the month of June.

Staff were also seeking approval at that meeting to consult on a proposed 'Evaluation Framework & Planning Criteria for Urban Expansion Into Hamilton's Whitebelt & Greenbelt Areas'. Despite not securing approval of the proposed land budget, planning staff were given the greenlight to consult with the public on the evaluation framework and planning criteria. This outcome puts the cart before the horse. The public is being asked to comment on criteria designed to assess urban expansion into rural Hamilton – **before we have even had the opportunity to let the city know how we feel about urban expansion into rural Hamilton!** The city will not get that feedback from us until we receive, complete, and return the survey scheduled for June.

### **Points to Raise When Commenting on the Draft Evaluation Framework & Planning Criteria:**

City planning staff are seeking input on an evaluation framework and planning criteria to guide two scenarios – urban expansion into rural whitebelt lands, and expansion of urban Waterdown and Binbrook into the provincially protected Greenbelt. Here are some key points to raise when preparing your response to the city:

**-Demand that a rigorous Evaluation Framework & Planning Criteria be applied FROM THE START** – City planning staff are asking for input on an evaluation framework and planning criteria that should have been applied in a rigorous assessment of whether we should be expanding the urban boundary at all! Instead, staff are recommending the urban expansion and the application of their evaluation framework and planning criteria to the expansion area! This is all backwards! Tell the city that **you want to see a rigorous evaluation framework and planning criteria applied from the start – so that we are assessing the implications of urban sprawl on the climate emergency, municipal finances, our local agricultural system, natural heritage and water resources**, to name a few.

**-Tell the city they are putting the cart before the horse** – It is more than a bit disingenuous to be proceeding with a public consultation that assumes urban boundary expansion is going to happen when you are just about to send out a survey asking people which urban growth management scenario – including a no boundary expansion option - they support. Tell city planners that you think it is inappropriate that they are consulting on this framework and associated criteria now, given that public input is pending regarding what community members prefer and support where urban growth management in our city is concerned.

- **Say NO to urban expansions into the Greenbelt!** The city is under no obligation to even consider urban expansion into protected Greenbelt lands. While the provincial Greenbelt Plan does, under very specific circumstances, allow for 10ha expansions of towns & villages into the Greenbelt, we do not need to be contemplating such expansions in Hamilton! **Tell the city you are strongly opposed to any urban expansion into the Greenbelt.**

-**Let the city know how you feel about the framework and criteria** – Despite our assertion that city planning staff are developing a framework and criteria that should be applied to the fundamental first step of determining whether we need to expand urban Hamilton at all, you should let planning staff know how you feel about the framework and criteria they are proposing. A rigorous process will be beneficial even if that process ends up being applied to expansion areas. Take the time to reflect on the list of criteria being proposed by staff and share your feedback regarding that list, what might be missing from that list, etc.

### **How to submit your comments on-line:**

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the webpage on the Engage Hamilton website with details about this public consultation.

[CLICK HERE](#) to submit your comments on the city's proposed criteria related to urban expansion into Hamilton's rural whitebelt lands.

[CLICK HERE](#) to submit comments on the city's proposed criteria related to assessing expansion of urban Waterdown and Binbrook into provincial Greenbelt lands.

**\*NOTE that the deadline to submit your comments is May 31<sup>st</sup>!**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SPRAWL ISSUE IN HAMILTON**

#### **Past EH SPRAWL Workshops:**

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the slide deck from the **January Will Sprawl Take It All?** workshop.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the video recording of this workshop.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the video recording of the **February Don't Let Sprawl Take It All** workshop.

#### **STOP SPRAWL 101 WEBINARS**

Contact Nancy & Michelle at [holdthelinehamont@hotmail.com](mailto:holdthelinehamont@hotmail.com) to register for a STOP SPRAWL 101 webinar and to learn more about Stop Sprawl Hamilton.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA SOURCES**

Follow EH on Facebook, Twitter (@EnvHamilton) & Instagram (EnvironmentHamilton)

Follow STOP Sprawl Ontario!, StopSprawlHamOnt on Facebook & Instagram (stop\_sprawl\_hamilton)

#### **TAKE ACTION!**

[CLICK HERE](#) to access & sign Environment Hamilton's **FREEZE the Urban Boundary petition.**

[CLICK HERE](#) to visit the 'Urban Sprawl' section on Environment Hamilton's website.

#### **HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP PREPARING YOUR COMMENTS?**

Feel free to contact us with your questions and concerns. You can reach EH's Lynda Lukasik at [llukasik@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:llukasik@environmenthamilton.org).

