



PROVINCE RECOMMENDS GROWING THE GREENBELT IN HAMILTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Ontario Government has released a series of recommendations as part of the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review. The recommendations, released today, propose growing the area of the Greenbelt within Hamilton's boundaries. The province is supporting the addition of the two parcels of land that Hamilton City Council recommended for inclusion in the Greenbelt. At the same time, it appears that the province has determined NOT to remove much of the land that a majority of city councillors recommended for removal. Instead, a limited proposal for removals is being considered in lower Stoney Creek (see www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=14927). This latter decision is a huge victory for Environment Hamilton and all of the organization's local Greenbelt supporters who raised concerns about the extensive areas of the Greenbelt proposed by the city for removal. "We are generally pleased with this outcome" said Environment Hamilton Executive Director Dr. Lynda Lukasik. "EH has worked long and hard to inform and engage Hamiltonians on this issue. And Hamiltonians responded by attending public meetings and contacting their provincial representatives to make their concerns known. While this recommendation means some agricultural lands may ultimately be lost to urban development, our efforts have helped to ensure the continued protection of important specialty crop and other prime agricultural lands in our community!"

But today's Greenbelt-related recommendations were not without disappointment. While the province is proposing to add a whopping 21 urban river valleys to the Greenbelt – including Toronto's Don River Valley – Hamilton's urban river valleys were ignored. For instance, east Hamilton's Red Hill Valley is not on that list for inclusion in the Greenbelt. The only gain made in Hamilton was the addition of the final stretch of Fifty Creek in the far east end of the municipality. According to Lukasik, "(T)his is a disappointing and unfortunate decision and it means our work is not done when it comes to growing and protecting the Greenbelt in Hamilton. Our Red Hill Valley is just as important as any of the other urban river valleys across the GTHA and its omission from the recommendations is a glaring one!". She added "(B)ut it's not too late to push for this addition. The province will be consulting with Ontarians over the coming months regarding these recommendations. A Public Open House is scheduled to take place in Hamilton on Tuesday, June 21st from 5pm to 8pm at the Hamilton Convention Centre.'

Other notable recommendations emerging out of the Co-ordinated Land Use Plan Review include a provincial recommendation to increase the intensification target in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to a minimum of 60% of all new residential development occurring annually in the existing built-up area – an increase from the current 40% target.

For more information contact: Lynda Lukasik at (905) 549-0900