

Dear Members of PEC,

I writing to strongly support the recommendations of the staff report as they relate to expanding London's urban growth boundary.

Recent reporting suggests that single-family home construction has hit a 69-year low in Ontario. While the progress London has made in encouraging infill and density is commendable, this type of denser housing does not always meet the needs and desires of all residents, especially young families.

An excessively strict growth boundary reduces the available supply of developable land, and thus necessarily raises land prices. This is true, even if (as some point out) there remains undeveloped greenfield within the existing boundary. High land prices mean it is no longer viable to build the types of modest, affordable, lower-density neighbourhoods of the type that are well-loved in London (think Carling).

Modest neighbourhoods comprised of low-rise and detached homes are – simply put – where many families *want to live*. While new high-rise and dense housing should be available for those who want it, it is unfair to effectively require that nearly all new growth come in the same higher density form. I know, of course, that no one is proposing to literally “ban” new single-family housing – but the economics of an increasing population within an overly limited urban footprint could have close to the same effect.

I am fortunate enough to live in the established and primarily single-family neighbourhood of Orchard Park – a neighbourhood that was at the time of its construction built on greenfield land at the periphery of London's built-up area. Some would have called it “sprawl” at the time. *Every one of us*, in fact, lives on land that was at one time greenfield.

It would be hypocritical for me to say, now that I've “got mine,” that neighbourhoods like the one I love shouldn't be built anew for young adults and newcomers to London. I would like my children to be able to have a *house* – not just a small apartment – if they so desire. If that goal is to be achieved, basic math tells us that a growing city also needs a growing footprint.

Low-rise greenfield development should of course be well-planned and conscious of environmental and servicing costs (that's what development charges are for). But families' real preferences for this type of housing must be respected. The City is correct to allow more of it.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean-Marc Metrailler

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