

April 10, 2026



A statement from Councillor Craig Cassar regarding the development application for 392-412 Wilson St E and 15 Lorne Ave

On Tuesday, April 14th, the statutory public meeting for the development application at 392-412 Wilson Street East & 15 Lorne Avenue will take place during the Planning Committee meeting at Hamilton City Hall.

This proposal has, in various forms, been part of the public discourse since 2021. There has been overwhelming opposition from the community related to the size and massing, and the lack of fit with the Ancaster Village Core. Over the past week, I have met with representatives from the community to review this proposal and discuss the Council decision required at the upcoming meeting. We shared our opinions and concerns, and reviewed the history of the file, specifically as it relates to Provincial interference in local decision-making and how that has had a profound effect on this file. The following is a summary of the key themes where we aligned:

- New businesses and homes in the Ancaster Village Core are welcome. There is support for mixed-use development that provides new amenities in our Village Core and creates homes for new residents that will enhance the vitality of our community.
- Ancaster is a historic community, and its residents take pride in its heritage. Development decisions can and should be made by municipal representatives informed by professional City Staff and public input. The 'Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan' was created for this area to guide new development, but despite this, decisions made by the Province over the past several years have removed the

ability of the City of Hamilton and its residents to determine how development proceeds.

- The size and massing of the proposal – a single large building across multiple lots at a height of eight storeys - is too great of a departure from the 'Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan'.
- The Province's intervention on policy and the 'Urban Hamilton Official Plan' affecting this proposal have essentially removed Hamilton City Council from the decision-making process. Considering this stark reality, efforts by the Community and City Council should be focused on areas where we have influence.

A Brief History of the Development Proposal for 392 - 412 Wilson St E and 15 Lorne Ave.

- 2021 – Original application for *Official Plan amendment (OPA)* and *Zoning by-law amendment (ZBA)* were denied by Hamilton City Councillors at the time; it did not fit with the secondary plan. Council's decision was appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) by the proponent.
- October 2022 – While the application was still under appeal, the Province changed the Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP) without consulting the City. Provincial amendments to the UHOP unilaterally expanded the urban boundary by ~5,400 acres and changed specific details for 392 - 412 Wilson St and 15 Lorne Ave., matching the proponent's proposal. This was a highly unusual action. Council was stripped of their decision-making authority, and 'Ancaster Wilson Street Secondary Plan' was ignored.
- 2023 – The OLT approved a settlement that granted the zoning change request since the Province had already changed the Official Plan to match the development proposal.
- Fall 2023 – The Province repealed the UHOP changes they made, but the OLT had already approved the zoning for this site which allows mixed-use up to 8 storeys and increased density up to 150 people/jobs per hectare. This zoning was not repealed by the Province and remains in place.
- Dec 2024 – A new, identical application was submitted that matched zoning already in place.
- Throughout 2025 - City of Hamilton Staff worked with the developer to modify the application where they revised the front of the building to allow for more green space on the streetscape, added a vegetation buffer at the back, and other minor

adjustments. However, since the zoning is a legally binding permission that was granted by the Ontario Land Tribunal and is already in place, Staff can only negotiate around the edges. Note that Staff are obligated to make recommendations that comply with Provincial policy and decisions.

The CBC wrote [a very informative article](#) in 2023 about the Province's role in this file.

Furthermore, Bill 23 eliminated the opportunity for anyone but the proponent and the municipality to appeal. Neighbours or community groups can no longer make a third-party appeal to the OLT.

What is the impact of Provincial decisions on this development proposal?

With the necessary zoning already in place and the Province's actions already telegraphing approval for this proposal, the decision-making ability for Council has essentially been removed. Denying the application and instigating another appeal to the OLT would be highly unlikely to achieve a different outcome. In fact, there is risk if this application is appealed to the OLT that the elements that Staff have successfully negotiated could be lost, or the application could be modified further without any input from the City of Hamilton or its residents. Investing taxpayer money for legal fees to pursue an appeal towards such a low-probability outcome would be unwise.

The wisest approach is for Planning Committee to accept the Staff recommendation for approval and focus efforts on areas where we can have influence. The community representatives and I landed on the following calls to action:

Calls to Action

1. Ensure that the holding provisions are sufficient and fulfilled prior to construction. There is a holding provision on the existing zoning to ensure that sanitary sewers and water supply are sufficient to support the increased density.
2. Ask for commitment from the developer to incorporate community feedback during the Site Plan process regarding the appearance of the building (i.e. incorporate elements that respect Ancaster's heritage and fit in with existing buildings in the village core). The Site Plan is not a public process, but the Ward 12 Office can advocate for the opportunity to provide input and participation.

3. Ensure that the Marr-Philippo house is preserved and is located on the streetscape within the Village Core rather than being tucked away behind the new building. I have already received support on a motion directing Staff to pursue this objective with the developer.

4. Hold the proponent accountable for timely and transparent public updates throughout the subsequent steps of the application and construction process. Examples included site plan, building permit, construction management plans, and traffic management.

5. Encourage community members to contact Hamilton MPPs, Donna Skelly, Monica Ciriello, Neil Lumsden, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Rob Flack, and Premier Doug Ford demanding that they restore local decision-making to the City of Hamilton and all municipalities across the Province.

In closing, the City of Hamilton is serious about building the homes we need. The City (Councillors & Staff) and the community are in the best position to guide the building of those homes to ensure that they contribute to vibrant, safe and prosperous communities. Local decisions should be made locally.

You access more information about this development application on my website [here](#)