To Mayor Fred Eisenberger and Hamilton City Council,

I writing this letter as an average Hamilton taxpayer. I am very concerned that our flawed political process at the provincial level is working against the will of the local electorate.

Recently on November 28, 2008 I was a speaker at a public meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Committee entitled “Opportunity To Help Shape Our City’s Future”. At that time I was encouraged when so many Councillors, Independent Planners, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and others spoke up to support the inclusion of the TWENTY ROAD EAST AREA into Hamiltons’ 25 year Growth Plan (GRIDS) as the logical and right thing to do. At this point I would like to clarify that my property is in the Greenbelt, so I have No Land Rights and nothing personally to gain by GRIDS.

However over the last 30 years of being involved in this area and during my last 3 years of intense research I have come to the following conclusion: That in any logical thought process that did not have political constraints on it the Twenty Road Area should be in GRIDS. This is an approximately 1000 acre area between the Hamilton Airport and Business Park. Hamiltons’ Lear Study shows it is sub prime agriculture land. It has many city services already paid for, as well as many other services close by. It is at the hub of 2 major transit corridors. It would provide Intensification of Ridership for the proposed 1 Billion Dollar LRT System, which would reduce Green House Gas and have a minimal environmental impact.

Hamilton Councillors can vote Yes which will allow the Twenty Road East area to become a Live/Work/Lifestyle Community contributing to the economy and quality of life in Hamilton. If the Councillors vote No,1000 acres of fully serviced land will remain vacant for at least the next 25 years as a burden on Hamiltons’ already over burdened taxpayers. It will also continue to be seen as a black space on the map of Hamilton where City Hall missed recognizing the obvious.

In contrast the Elfrida Area according to the Lear Study contains Prime agriculture land. This area also contains the soon to become famous Karst and Sink Hold Creek System. This is an unique ecological and scientific natural area of caves, tunnels, fissures, subterranean streams and creeks. The McGinty Provincial Government is contributing to the demise of the Karst Tropography by continuing to allow the Ontario Realty Corporation to sell their Land Holdings in Elfrida to Developers who are paving up to and sometimes over the Karst. This has the potential to creat a major adverse impact on the ecology and environment in that region. It should be noted that the City has put in place a Rural Special Policy for Preferred Growth in Elfrida. This is seen as a Policy of Entitlement for the developers in that area.
One of the shocking findings during the meeting of Nov. 27, 2008 was the apparent interference of the McGuinty Provincial Government in the local planning process. This was obvious when numerous Hamilton Councillors questioned the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development about the possibility of including the Twenty Road East Area into GRIDS and he seemed unwilling to even consider it. When one of the Council members insisted that the Manager make a proposal to the Province to have these lands included in GRIDS, his answer was a resounding “NO”. He then stated that he had already been told that the Province would not extend the urban boundary and that the Rural Special Policy was not decided upon yet. It was even more astonishing that another Councillor warned his Colleagues that if they tried to include the Twenty Road Area into GRIDS, the Province might cut off or reduce funding to other City of Hamilton projects (Undemocratic). During the Manufacturing Boom, the Province of Ontario collected Hundreds of Millions of tax dollars from Hamilton which were spread across the Province. However, with the collapse of the Manufacturing Sector, Hamilton is now faced with the highest welfare rate in the Province and massive restoration costs. Much of the funding now coming from the Province should be considered as equalization payment.

Unfortunately there is fear that with our flawed political system this Majority McGuinty Government will misuse it’s absolute power to control the destiny of Hamiltonians for the next 25 years. I can personally understand their feelings as I have already been victimized by this same McGuinty Majority Government. They switched my property from non Greenbelt in the Draft plan into the Greenbelt without notifying me or the Hamilton Planning Department (Undemocratic), then due to their lack of due diligence my entire 68.22 acre property was put in the Greenbelt instead of the 1.38 acres they required for their intended purpose. The altered Draft Plan was presented to be processed without informing all MPP’s that a change had been made (Undemocratic). When my local Liberal M.P.P. fully supported me and approached the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on my behalf, we were bluntly told they would not even consider their mistake for 10 years(Undemocratic). That would be when the next Greenbelt Review would take place. I have been leading a Valiant Crusade for over 3 Years to seek Accountability from this Majority McGuinty Government without any success.
When Hamilton Council votes on GRIDS (HAMILTONS’ 25 YEAR GROWTH PLAN) it will be the most important vote that each Councillor will ever make regarding Hamilton. With the ongoing interference by the Province in the local Planning Process and with the fear of reduced funding, it will be difficult for Councillors to make a decision. Councillors should not have to vote on this LONG TERM PLAN for Hamilton during an atmosphere of intimidation by the Majority McGuinty Government.

Therefore I am requesting Council to bring forth a proposal to delay the final vote on GRIDS until after the next Provincial election, so that they can work with either a new or non majority Provincial Government. It is very unlikely that such a dominating issue as the “Faith Based School Fiasco” will obscure all other major issues as was allowed to happen in the last Ontario Provincial Election.

Yours Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Tom Nugent D.V.M.


Michael Fenn, CEO of Metrolinx
Rob MacIsaac, Chair of Metrolinx