

STRATEGY IN ACTION

Early in Premier Doug Ford's Progressive Conservative government, Ford touted how "Ontario's Government for the People" was opening up the province for business, growing the economy and helping to create good jobs. Flash forward four years, and his supporters, advocates and the rest of the province are now witnessing that fateful strategy.

In the wake of the province approving Bill 23 and the More Homes Built Faster Plan, the implications and impact the legislation will have on the province's economic, social and environment will be incalculable.

The deal to remove 7,400 acres from the Greenbelt, the government has claimed, would allow private developers to construct at least 50,000 new homes in line with the province's aim to build 1.5 million homes by 2031.

At the basic level, Ford and his party have demonstrated yet again their contempt for municipalities. On the fig leaf of attempting to build 1.5 million new homes over the next decade, it will exempt developers who build affordable, inclusionary zoning and select attainment housing units from paying development charges, parkland dedication fees and community benefit charges.

And while these significant changes will financially impact municipalities, including Hamilton, the unintended consequence could be having local planning disconnected from the servicing requirements that many municipalities are responsible for managing and funding.

For instance, there will be no public meetings required for applications for approval of a draft plan of subdivision; developments of up to 10 residential units will be exempted from site plan control; architectural details and landscape design esthetics will be removed from the scope of the site plan control.

The Ontario Land Tribunal will have increased powers to dismiss appeals for undue delay and can impose costs against a party that loses a hearing.

There will also be less control available to municipalities for heritage properties.

Bill 23 is a troubling move away from environmental protection and stewardship, especially at a time when climate change is impacting communities in a significant way. The decision to limit conservation associations' responsibilities will essentially leave vast swaths of Ontario's most important environmental and habitable lands unprotected.

These monumental changes have nothing to do with accelerating the construction of affordable housing.

Hamilton strongly opposed the provincial government's legislation to open up the Greenbelt lands.

According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, cities could be on the hook for about \$5 billion that will be lost to developments in fee reductions.

It is also concerning that Ford and his government have been accused of breaking ethics rules by opening up the Greenbelt lands after promising the environmental lands would be protected. The larger issue is Ontario has not adequately used the land it has efficiently.

While opposition to the province's decision has been prevalent, it is time for municipalities to take a more strident approach to voice its displeasure, but also try and make the province's planning policy work.

It is also time that municipalities and residents, who will be impacted by the change in provincial planning policies, consider how to hold the province accountable in the 2025 provincial election.

TO LEARN HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN CONTENT VISIT HAMILTONNEWS.COM



LETTERS & COMMENTARY

HELD TO A HIGHER STANDARD

Re: Rookie mistakes by new council members, Gordon Cameron Column, Nov. 24.

While it would take a mean-spirited person indeed to criticize and publicize a mistake made by a new-on-the-job, minimum wage cashier, the same lenience is not so easily applied to newly-elected city councillors. When you are reaping almost \$100,000 annually in taxpayers' hard-earned money and you are comfortably so employed for the next four years, then you should be held to a higher standard. And that should start from day one on the job.

DOUG FOLEY
HAMILTON

OUTSIDE-THE-BOX SOLUTION TO SPEEDING

Re: Excessive speeding akin to gun play, Nov. 24.

The question is not,

"Why are so many drivers on Ontario's highways cruising well over the posted speed limit?" It should be "Why are these drivers getting away with it?"

Not enough police officers to patrol our highways? Has enforcement been downgraded to a lower priority? Afraid of a political backlash if too many speeding infractions are issued? What if infractions to the Highway Traffic Act were taken more seriously by the authorities? What if a completely new outside-the-box less expensive approach was put in place to enforce the act?

A few years back, police officers were the only persons issuing parking infractions. It was expensive and not cost effective. This approach changed with time; today, most parking infractions are dealt with in a more efficient, less expensive way. While police officers can still legally issue parking infractions, most of

tickets are issued by personnel other than police officers. Why not apply the same strategy to enforce the Highway Traffic Act? Legislative changes might be necessary, but are well within the scope of government. While police officers would still be legally allowed to patrol our highways, most supervision would be in the hands of qualified non-police officers to enforce sections of the act.

Let's push the envelope a little more and transfer the responsibility to the private sector, a company in the security business, fully responsible for all expenses related to enforcing the act: training, equipment, administrative/legal costs, with a shared revenue agreement with government. This would allow the province and municipalities to assign police officers to more serious infractions and criminal activities.

PIERRE DROUIN
ANCASTER

ABOUT US

This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 70 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981. Web: www.mediacouncil.ca

nnc National NewsMedia Council **ocna**

mpearson@hamiltonnews.com
facebook.com/HamiltonCommunityNewsOfficial
@StoneyCreekNews

WHO WE ARE

Publisher and Chief Executive Officer
Neil Oliver
Vice President, Content, Community and Operations

Dana Robbins
Director of Content
Lee Ann Waterman
GM of Advertising
Len Offless
Group Managing Editor
Gordon Cameron
Stoney Creek News Editor
Mike Pearson
Director Creative Services
Paul Gostlin

CONTACT US

Stoney Creek News
211 Pritchard Rd., Unit 4
Hamilton, ON L8J 0G5
Phone: 905-523-5800
Web: stoneycreeknews.com

Letters to the editor

All letters must be fewer than 200 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters. Published letters will appear in print and/or online at hamiltonnews.com

Delivery

For all delivery inquiries, e-mail customerservice@metroland.com or call 1-866-838-8960.

Accrédité **FDSA** Accredited