



FIRST HAMILTON
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

5.6

11 February, 2013

HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL
71 Main St. W.
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

RE: Proposed Casino in Downtown Hamilton

Dear Mayor Bratina and Members of Hamilton City Council,

On behalf of the Council of First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church, I am writing to express our strong opposition to any proposals to bring a casino to downtown Hamilton.

Our church is located at the intersection of Charlton and Hess, in Ward 2 near downtown. The several hundred people who attend our church on a weekly basis come from nearly every ward in the city, and many live in neighbourhoods in the downtown area. We have just completed an extensive restoration of our church building and have made a long-term commitment to serving the downtown Hamilton area. We have a strong desire to see our city – and our downtown neighbourhood in particular -- flourish and thrive.

The downtown neighbourhoods of our city face significant social, health, and economic challenges. We are excited that there has been recent progress in addressing these challenges. However, our concern is that locating a casino in this vulnerable area of the city will be a significant setback to these efforts.

We are deeply concerned that gambling exploits the poor, the vulnerable, and those prone to addiction. While gambling may simply be “entertainment” for many who may come to a casino, gambling also holds forth the enticing, yet false, promise of easy money and a quick fix to life’s problems. The lure of gambling will inevitably be strong for those who face social and economic challenges and live in close proximity to a casino. The predictable negative impacts on those who gamble, as well as on their families and friends, will further degrade the social fabric of our city. We believe that the negative social impacts of a downtown casino are not worth the cost of the presumed economic benefits.

We hope that you will consider our perspective as you make a decision on this important issue facing our city.

Sincerely,

Aaron Schat, Chair

On behalf of the Council of First Hamilton Christian Reformed Church