



Mr. Stephen Robichaud
 Director of Planning and Chief Planning Officer
 Planning and Economic Development Office
 The Corporation of the City of Hamilton
 71 Main Street East
 Hamilton, Ontario

Dear Mr. Robichaud:

As you are aware, Corbett Land Strategies (CLS) represents the Book Road West Land Owners Group (BRWLG). We have now been engaged with our client over the past 12 months to protect their land use planning interests, and to ensure that a fair, open and transparent process ensues with respect to the potential designation of their lands within the Greenbelt Plan (2016). You have observed that our client group has expended considerable effort in following and participating in the City's consultation process for the Provincial Policy Review. Through this effort we have observed that planning staff has been consistent in their position to **not recommend** that the Book Road West Lands be included in the draft Greenbelt Plan. The staff report released in December 2015 made very specific recommendations with respect to:

- Deferring key recommendations on major Greenbelt adjustments until after the upcoming Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) has been completed; and,
- Effecting two site specific adjustments of the Greenbelt boundary in other areas of the City notwithstanding the first recommendation.

In response to this staff report, a motion was tabled at the December 3rdth meeting of Planning Committee to include all five options underconsideration to be included in the Greenbelt Plan, and this was subsequently defeated by a vote of 6-2. Furthermore, at the meeting of City Council on December 9th, amendments were made to the resolution from Planning Committee. None of these amendments included the Book Road lands. Based on this history, it is clear that both staff and Council have been clear in their intent **NOT** to include the Book Road West lands in the Greenbelt Plan.

At the more recent Planning Committee meeting of September 6th, 2016 you advised Council that staff were neutral in the consideration of including the Book Road West

land in the Greenbelt Plan. We believe that this statement should be corrected prior to or at the upcoming Council meeting of Wednesday September 14th. Specifically, the staff report presented to Planning Committee specifically states on page 14 under the heading “Book Road West Landowners – ***“These lands were not recommended for inclusion by the City of Hamilton.”*** Staff’s position appears to be very clear on the status of these lands.

At the Planning Committee meeting of September 6th, 2016 you were asked by Councillor Ferguson if the Book Road West lands were ever considered for inclusion in the Urban Area of the City of Hamilton. Your response was “not before 2041”. With all due respect, this response is at best, incomplete. We are all fully aware that Amendment Number 2 to the Growth Plan prescribes a population forecast for the City of Hamilton of 780,000 people - an increase of approximately 260,000 people during the current planning horizon of the Growth Plan to 2041. In accordance with your earlier recommendation, the Municipal Comprehensive Review should determine the proper and orderly allocation of this growth forecast before major decisions on Greenbelt decision. On this basis, the Book Road Lands should remain as a candidate growth precinct until the MCR is completed in an open and transparent manner. City Council must be informed accordingly.

Furthermore, the Book Road West Greenbelt issue currently before City Council is not a Ward or area specific issue. It is a significant City Wide issue given that removing a 1400-acre land base from the City’s whitebelt will force reallocation of growth across other ward areas of the City at appreciably higher densities to meet existing and emerging Growth Plan targets. City Council must be informed accordingly.

City staff were correct and responsible in their original recommendation to compete the MCR process before any substantive boundary adjustments are recommended to ensure that the City wide consequences are fully quantified and understood with public engagement across the entire municipality.

As you know, the imposition of a Greenbelt designation on a specific precinct of the City should only be implemented within the context of comprehensive planning justification including all the scientific environmental and agricultural impacts have been carefully examined. No such comprehensive justification has been presented to Council or the public with respect to this matter. City Council must be informed of this accordingly.

In this regard, the Book Road West landowners have taken upon themselves to fund these environmental and agricultural studies. These studies have indicated that

there is no comprehensive scientific or factual basis to support the now proposed Greenbelt designation.

At this same time, Council is poised to remove a specific tract of land from the Greenbelt in east Hamilton without the same comprehensive evaluation and justification, and in absence of the recommended MCR. I would suggest that Council's actions in this regard should be fully informed and conducted with regard to due process and technical justification.

As you know, the Book Road West area is comprised largely of generational owners and the proposed Greenbelt designation will have a profound impact on their land values and property entitlements. There are also a number of longstanding business operations that will be inhibited by the Greenbelt Designation. The City will be obliged to bring its official plan and land use documents into conformity with the Greenbelt Plan once it is approved. Naturally you do not have the details of the new Official Plan and land use controls until you have completed your conformity exercise which will be informed by the upcoming MCR process. We are aware that certain residents have been given assurances with respect to their eventual land use entitlements after the Greenbelt designation is approved. I believe that there is not the necessary factual basis at this time to make these assurances and Council should be made aware of this prior to making a decision on the Greenbelt designation. We have learned that some Council members have been informed that the BRWLG lands could be eventually extracted from the Greenbelt Plan in the next 10-year review. This is highly improbable and to offer this as a compromise is untenable and Council needs to be informed accordingly.

In closing, we are gravely concerned that there have been clear inconsistencies in the decision making process with respect to the treatment of the Book Road West lands in the Provincial Policy Review Process. Council's decision this week with respect to this matter will have profound impact on the livelihoods of generational landowners within the Book Road area and on the future development of the entire City that will eventually be defined by the MCR process. We respectfully request that additional time be afforded to the residents and business owners of this area to have these questions answered on a definitive basis. We trust that you would be in a position to advise Council accordingly.

Regards,

John B. Corbett, MCIP, RPP
President

Copies: Mayor and Members of City Council
Chris Murray, City Manager
Jason Thorne, General Manager