

The Hamilton Spectator News, Thursday, July 18, 2002, p. A08 **Highway session short on specifics: residents** Carmela Fragomeni The Hamilton Spectator Stoney Creek - Residents say they are no more enlightened about the proposed **mid-peninsula highway** than they were before a Ministry of Transportation public information session. Many of the 160 at the session yesterday were skeptic about the effort Ontario will put into saving certain ecologically sensitive areas the highway could pave over. They also had a foreboding that the province will botch the building of this highway, to their detriment. "We're talking about quality of life and health," said Jack Santa-Barbara of Lynden. He said a number of deaths are already attributed to bad air from congested highways, and this one "would lead to considerably more deaths." He urged the ministry to look first at "some very creative transportation options in other parts of the world." Even those who supported the highway were apprehensive about the government protecting environmentally sensitive lands. Many residents expected to learn details about how close the highway could come to their homes and community. Instead, they found the information to be vague. MTO manager Fred Leech said giving details is not the purpose of the sessions. Rather, they are to get public opinion on how the MTO should study the proposed highway lands between the Canadian border in Niagara and the 407 toll highway in Burlington. Still, several residents said the government and its bureaucrats don't listen anyway. "There's such a lack of detail," said Karen Parker of Warner. "They (ministry staff) are asking us to trust them. But they haven't shown us the study and who they got input from (in determining the corridor for the route). It's all very, very vague." Chuck Hostovsky, of Winona, said "I'd like to see more of an emphasis on ecology in routing the highway." He said too much emphasis is being put on building another highway to solve traffic congestion on the QEW, and suggested the ministry should instead, promote and improve public transit. Those who favour the highway said Hamilton is a dying city because governments spend too much time studying proposed roads, such as the Red Hill Creek Expressway, instead of building them. One man shouted that environmentalists are holding back Hamilton's opportunity for prosperity by delaying desperately needed roads. Tonight, the ministry is holding another public forum in Burlington, from 3 to 8 p.m. at the Holiday Inn. The highway proposal ran into earlier criticism in Burlington at a public meeting on July 9. The city's mayor, councillors, staff and conservation groups attacked the MTO for proposing a single "corridor" through Burlington and parts of Hamilton within which the new highway would run. That meeting drew an overflow crowd and organizers were forced to scrounge for a bullhorn from the Burlington Fire Department to make themselves heard above the gathering. You can contact Carmela Fragomeni at cfragomeni@hamiltonspectator.com or at 905-526-3392. **Category:** News **Uniform subject(s):** National politics and governments **Story type(s):** News **Edition:** Final **Length:** Medium, 396 words © **2002 The Hamilton Spectator. All rights reserved.** Doc.: 20020718HS593648

