Petition to Object to Parkside Drive Expansion in NE Waterdown (Dillon Option 4)

To recommend a modified Dillon Option 1 route called Option 5 or, to find a new East West route with involvement of a new SAC composed of stakeholders who live or work along affected routes.

To: Mayor DiIanni; Margaret McCarthy, Hamilton City Council, Hamilton Public Works Dept: Andrew Head, Mary Lou Tanner

From: Parkside Dr. East Citizens Group (Signed by 100 residents who live directly along Parkside Dr. East where the Option 4: 4 lane roadway is proposed) and industrial landowners of NW Parkside Dr.)

Date Feb 1, 2006

We, the concerned residents who reside along or near the Northeastern section of Parkside Dr. in Waterdown, as well as the landowners along the Northwestern section of Parkside Dr., are objecting to the latest proposal by the City for the preferred East/West bypass route (Dillon Transportation Study Option 4).

Traffic volumes are already unacceptable in our neighbourhood.

This proposal will seriously and negatively impact the quality of life of our residential area. Approximately 35 of our homes, along Parkside Dr., would be directly affected by an expanded roadway, which is expected to more than double traffic volumes. (Double the current 500-600 vehicles per peak hour measured by the Dillon study in 2002). The proposed Parkside Dr. road expansion would increase the road size from two to four lanes. Along with the urban development, traffic volumes will triple.

We have presented an Option 5 to the Public Works Department which has less natural environmental impact.

The increased traffic volume expected on Parkside Dr., due to an ever-growing bottleneck on Dundas St., and to the residential development of Waterdown North, UpCountry Estates and Waterdown South, will bring unacceptable levels of noise, pollution, and safety risks to our peaceful neighbourhood. Other viable and less expensive options were offered in the Dillon Study. We have submitted a modified Option 1 to the City for consideration that we have renamed as Option 5. Option 5 would have significantly less effects on the environment than the previous Option 1.

Immediate improvements to Dundas St. are necessary.

Our group is also of the opinion that the existing road infrastructure has not been addressed. There are already major traffic problems in town including the bottleneck on Dundas Street
and the unsafe conditions on Hamilton Street that will only be made worse with the development of 6500 new homes; not to mention the additional traffic which will result from 2 major Big Box Retail centers and the development of existing Industrial zoned lands that will employ hundreds of people. Not only did the study not take these last two factors into consideration but also it did not study the impact of the additional traffic, which will result from commuters driving through our town from growing surrounding communities. In short, adjustments to Dundas Street and Hamilton Street need to be dealt with constructively, in conjunction with our option 5 that our group presented to the Public Works Department on December 16th, 2005.

Citizens of our neighbourhood were not included in the Stakeholders Advisory Committee.

We believe that the Dillon Option 4 study underestimated the social value of our neighbourhood and the impact a major roadway would have on our quality of life. The study’s Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) did not include any members from our neighbourhood that we know of; which suggests that the early stages and findings of the study would be biased. The stakeholder committee, which consisted of 50% of Burlington residents and associations, should not have been used in the process of determining EA factors and weightings for an East West Waterdown Transportation Route. This apparent bias has led, of course, to a roadway in which no one from our community had a chance in the early stages to represent valid issues and perspectives regarding our neighbourhood. We do not understand how elected representatives and other professionals could forget to include individuals from our community when it was clear early on to them that a roadway could go through our area. If we had been present, other Waterdown area stakeholders may have been more willing to contribute changes to their neighbourhood as well (i.e. improvements to traffic flows along Dundas St. that would reduce traffic volumes on Parkside Dr.). Presently, our neighbourhood has been selected to bare the brunt of the sacrifice in order that the future citizens of Waterdown North have easier access to the eastern side of Hwy 5.

A New Stakeholders Advisory Committee, that does not include Burlington citizens, should be formed to develop proposals and solutions for an East West Waterdown Route.

We believe that a new Stakeholder’s Committee should be formed that is represented primarily by residents and stakeholders along Parkside Dr. and Dundas St. It is obvious to us that measures can be taken on both Dundas St. and Parkside Dr. in order to improve traffic flows. Membership should consist of individuals from the respective street areas that might be considered for road expansion. All of Parkside Dr. should be represented with at least 3 people from Parkside West, 3 people from Parkside Center, and 3 people from Parkside East. No one from Burlington should be a part of this Stakeholder’s Committee. We believe that residents from our area can work out, with the Public Works Dept, a route that everyone can accommodate.

We, as citizens of Hamilton and neighbours of this Parkside Dr. Area, prefer a section of the Dillon Option 1 (now called by us as Option 5) that runs north of our community on Parkside Dr. The Dillon report determined that Option 1 is the least expensive of all route options and scored 2nd on the initial Environmental Assessment of the original four Dillon options. The City has
advised us that it will assess Option 5. Option 5 has less impact on cost and the natural environment than the original Option 1 design. It would not destroy any wetlands. Option 5 is also much farther away from Lake Medad, which was a concern of the Option 1 route.

We believe that Option 5, as well as a smaller scale Dundas St. lane adjustment, has not been given enough consideration due to the natural environment assumptions, and concern for the downtown business owners. At present, the business owners on Dundas St. have not contributed any territory or parking spaces towards a solution. It is conceivable that the permanent parking now available could be rebuilt to accommodate rush-hour traffic lanes. Rush-hour traffic lanes are an important solution in other parts of Hamilton but have not been proposed in Waterdown.

From the natural environment perspective, Flamborough already has many roads that transect or travel along the edge of natural areas including wetlands. We have not observed or heard of any serious damage or environmental disasters as a result of any of the current roads. We believe a short section of new road (Option 5) can be built that maintains the integrity of the natural environment north of Parkside Dr and that can mitigate the concerns of Halton Conservation Authority. Option 5 would have far less environmental impact than recent projects undertaken by the City such as the Red Hill Expressway or the new Hamilton Airport Roadway. Option 5 would maintain our lovely neighbourhood and even help to reduce traffic on Parkside Dr. It would also provide a desperately needed 3rd east/west transportation road for a growing Waterdown. An additional benefit of our Option 5 recommendation is that it would avoid the traffic disruptions during a major rebuild of Parkside Dr. A major disruption on Parkside Dr. for an extended period of time, perhaps 1-2 years, would cause extraordinary traffic congestion. This disruption can be largely avoided by building an all-northern east/west route.

Two previous studies in 1989 and 1998 concluded that the optimal route would be located north of Parkside Drive. These studies were commissioned by the former Town of Flamborough and relied heavily on public input and scrutiny to determine the optimal route. This optimal route was known at the time as E/W-5 modified.

Summary:

It is for the following reasons we do not support the current proposed preferred solution:

- The South Flamborough Transportation study initiated in 1989 recommend a proper bypass. The study concluded, “that this new facility is key to the provision of acceptable transportation services in the South Flamborough area.”
- The Aldershot-Waterdown Master EA transportation study in 1998 also dismissed the use of Parkside Drive as a viable option.
- Two previous studies provided a network for non-Waterdown destined traffic to bypass the town. The Dillon Option 4 is a contradiction to previous study findings in that it funnels all traffic right into Waterdown along Parkside Dr.
- Option 5, proposed by our neighbourhood, is the best solution for all residents along Parkside Dr.

2) Safety & Health Concerns:
• The proposed route cuts across a large number of driveways, which would make it even more difficult for residents to enter and exit their driveways. This road is also accessed by Barnes Environmental Industrial Waste Facility. Heavy trucks frequent this facility; in fact a condition of Barnes Environmental receiving their certificate of Approval to operate their facility was that it must move its driveway north upon completion of the bypass to improve safety and reduce dust pollution.
• Pedestrian and bicycle traffic from the Boulding neighbourhood will also be at an increased safety risk due to the increased traffic.

3) Community and Natural Environment Concerns:
• This area of Parkside Drive is bordered by the Arrowhon Natural Park (corner of Boulding Ave. and Parkside Dr.), which is used for recreational purposes, i.e. biking, hiking, walking and jogging.

4) Economic Impact:
• Closing Parkside Dr. at Hwy.6 would be highly detrimental to the continued development of the Industrially Zoned business Park at Hwy.6 and Parkside Dr.
• Utilizing the existing intersection at Hwy 6 and Parkside Dr. would reduce road construction and land acquisition costs rather than building a new road and intersection further north.

5) Lack of Representation of Parkside Dr. East residents in the Transportation Study
Stakeholder’s Advisory Committee and unnecessary representation of Burlington citizens and associations in the process to find an East West Waterdown Transportation route.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we strongly urge the Hamilton Planning Dept and City Council to reject the proposal to widen Parkside Drive to four lanes. We ask that the route return to either, an all East West route which runs north of all of Parkside Dr. and spare all residents along Parkside Dr.,(not just the residents to the west of Grindstone Creek, but also the residents to the East of Grindstone Creek), the added burden of traffic that will be associated with the development of an addition 6500 homes in Waterdown. We also recommend that this route also be tied into Parkside Dr. as it approaches Hwy 6, as recommended in the former Stantech EW5 modified route so that it maintains the orderly exit of traffic that Parkside Dr. residents and business owners prefer. Alternatively, a new East West Transportation Masterplan process should begin with the development of a new stakeholder advisory committee that more fairly represents the most affected stakeholders. The committee should only include the appropriate stakeholders of the Waterdown Area only, and those who primarily live along Parkside Dr. and Dundas St. The representation on this committee should reflect balance and fairness. It should include citizens from the eastern, central, and western sections of the routes in question.