May 26, 2008

Mr. Mayor and Members of Council
City of Hamilton
77 James Street North
Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2K3

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of Council:

Re: GORE PARK PEDESTRIAN PLAZA AND RAPID TRANSIT PROPOSALS FOR HAMILTON

The City of Hamilton is currently reviewing its Downtown Transportation Master Plan. The conversion of parts of King Street to 2-way traffic from Wellington to Queen is being addressed for possible implementation. In conjunction with this a project to redevelop Gore Park area along King Street into a “PEDESTRIAN PLAZA” (an open-air, on-street shopping mall with space for outdoor patios and locale for special street events) has been added to this proposal with several options to extend the closed plaza concept to Wellington. Also further changes to King Street have been proposed as part of a BRT/LRT transit development.

These projects will have a profound impact on the downtown business community in general and upon certain BIA members in particular.

IMPACT OF PEDESTRIAN PLAZA or SHARED SPACE CONCEPT ON BIA MEMBERS LOCATED IN THE GORE PARK AREA:

- King Street closure in any of the recommended versions could provide opportunities to be used by those businesses facing Gore Park in conjunction with outdoor patio activities and more on-street displays however would have a very detrimental effect on business levels and access to businesses such as the former Connaught site and Crowne Plaza Hotel. It would also remove some on street parking spaces on King Street which is not supported by the merchants on King.
- Programming on the south leg of King Street could attract more people to the area on a regular basis
Commercial vehicles servicing BIA members within the Gore Park Area and along King Street will be limited to a certain window of access which would have a detrimental effect on supply vehicle movements, banking services, restaurant delivery services

A reconfiguration of Hughson Street North and South would be necessary to facilitate a street closure at King and would make access to this area very difficult

Bus laybys around Gore Park will be relocated to either MacNab Street or Hunter Street locations however keeping bus stops on the north side

Public vehicle restrictions in the impacted area will restrict access to those businesses inside the closed area

Creation of a rapid transit route from the Waterfront to the Airport through downtown will bring more people to the core however there are concerns for the narrowness of James Street North to accommodate two way rapid transit

Creation of a rapid transit route from Eastgate Mall to Dundas through downtown will facilitate more use of public transit than is currently experienced however members are concerned about the King Street location for a two way rapid transit corridor

The type of technology (BRT or LRT) the city will support in the wake of a $300 million investment by the Province of Ontario will still not be enough to complete the proposed system and will have a significant impact on the tax levels in Downtown Hamilton that are currently still too high.

The Downtown Hamilton BIA surveyed it membership, and also held a special membership meeting to explain the issues and receive comments and concerns from BIA members.

Recommendations:

The Downtown Hamilton BIA offers the following comments regarding the proposed changes to the Downtown Transportation Master Plan:

1. That only the south leg of King Street be closed to traffic (with restricted access for service and supply vehicles). We do not agree with the complete closure of King Street on the north side.
2. That the 8 bus stops on the south leg of King be relocated to a seamless transit centre at MacNab Street
3. That Hughson Street remain open to northbound traffic
4. That King Street be converted to 2 way traffic
5. That Gore Park and the south leg of King be redeveloped with streetscape improvements and more landscape changes necessary to ensure the reforestation and replanting of the park for more pedestrian use
6. That the City of Hamilton support a complete conversion to a LRT (Streetcar) transit system similar to Portland
7. That the recommended LRT route (East/West) be Main Street not King Street
8. That the recommended LRT route (North/South) be James and John Streets

We thank the City of Hamilton for the opportunity to provide input to the overall Downtown Hamilton Transportation Master Plan and hope that we can continue to provide feedback and input into a master plan that will be a positive influence on the Downtown Hamilton business community.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Tim Bullock
Chairman

c.c. N. D'Souza, Project Manager, Downtown Transportation Master Plan
Jill Stephen, Manager, Strategic Planning, Rapid Transit Feasibility Study
J. Dolbec, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
D. Hull, General Manager, HSR