January 30, 2008

Mayor. F. Eisenberger & Members of Council
City of Hamilton
77 James St. N.
Hamilton, Ontario

Dear Mr. Mayor & Members of Council:

The Downtown Hamilton BIA thanks you for your response of December 5, 2007 to the Downtown business community’s concerns regarding your vision of future developments in Hamilton’s downtown core.

We look forward to participating this spring in any public meetings associated with the update of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan which would include further discussions on the Gore Park Plaza concept as well as the two way conversion of downtown streets and the new HSR bus terminal location. All of these ideas have to be analyzed in the context of a modern commercially active downtown composed of blocks of office complexes which house both government/commercial tenants supported by street-level or subterranean retailers in an historic setting.

We believe that Hamilton’s downtown market is growing slowly with the advent of new residential units being developed however our downtown commercial content is not sufficient enough during the day to support both the indoor and on-the-street retailers. Our vacancy rates are still hovering around the 26% rate which is still making a significant impact on the downtown retail economy.

The first step needs to be the relocation of the buses from around the Gore Park area to a terminal preferably on MacNab Street within close proximity to the proposed location of your Plaza concept and to test a trial period of closure on the south leg of King for the summer. However a complete closure of Hughson Street at King would compromise the businesses on Hughson Street South and needs to be re-evaluated.

Our members are anxious to be involved in the process of reviewing these complex planning initiatives and would like to have their voice heard regarding any temporary or permanent closure of downtown streets.

Sincerely

Tim Bullock
Chairman