December 15, 2008

Mayor Fred Eisenberger
City of Hamilton
77 James Street North, Suite 230
Hamilton, ON L8R 2K3

Re: 2008 Assessment Update

Dear Mayor Fred Eisenberger:

I am writing to provide you with an update on the 2008 Property Assessment Notice mailing to property taxpayers and the delivery of Assessment Rolls to municipalities across Ontario. With Assessment Notices mailed to nearly 4.7 million property taxpayers, I am very pleased to report that this Assessment Update has been by far, better than any in the past.

We made a commitment to improve communications with stakeholders including municipalities, the media and property taxpayers. Some of MPAC’s communications initiatives in support of this Assessment Update included:

- a province-wide print advertising campaign explaining some of the key changes to the assessment system;
- the redesign of the 2008 Property Assessment Notice which contains more information and is easier to read;
- an interactive Property Assessment Notice available in ten (10) languages and a number of videos online at www.mpac.ca;
- an online searchable map which makes finding properties of interest easier through AboutMyProperty™;
- extended hours at MPAC’s Customer Contact Centre; and
- extended hours clearly visible on the Property Assessment Notice for local MPAC offices during the mailout period.

I believe that we have started to see the results of this commitment. While there has been a great deal of media coverage, it has been much more balanced than in the past. Property taxpayers are showing a greater understanding of the process and the link between assessment values and sales of similar properties. Although it is still early in the process at this point in time, the number of calls to our Customer Contact Centre, field offices and Requests for Reconsideration of assessed
values are trending at a lower level than the volumes we experienced at this point during the 2005 Assessment Update.

We have also fulfilled the commitments we made in response to the Ombudsman’s Report of March 2006, “Getting it Right.” All 20 of the recommendations made by the Ombudsman, with the exception of Recommendation #2, which is planned for implementation in mid-2009, that fell within our jurisdiction have been implemented for the delivery of this Assessment Update. We believe that the changes we have made, together with our efforts on improving our communications, have resulted in greater transparency, improved accuracy and a better public understanding of the assessment process and MPAC’s role in property taxation.

Since early September, we have met with or made presentations to more than 180 Municipal Councils and taxpayer groups to answer questions about the process. Our local Municipal Relations Representatives are available to answer any questions you might have or make a more formal presentation to Council. Please contact your local MPAC Municipal Relations Representative or Greg Martino, Acting Director, Municipal Relations at 905-837-6243.

We have been faced with many challenges as a result of the legislative changes made to the property assessment and taxation system over the last few years. However, our team of almost 1,600 employees has fully embraced the new customer-centered strategy. Their hard work and commitment to customer service to support the delivery of accurate and timely assessment values has contributed positively to the successful delivery of this Assessment Update.

I would greatly appreciate if you would share a copy of this letter with your Council. If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact me at 905-688-0990 ext. 225 or Carl Isenburg, our President and Chief Administrative Officer at 905-837-6150.

Yours truly,

Debbie Zimmerman
Chair, MPAC Board of Directors

Copy MPAC Board of Directors
Carl Isenburg
Executive Management Group
Greg Martino