July 9, 2008

City of Hamilton

Attention: City Clerk

Re: Urban Structure Plan

Dear City Clerk,

We have attended the public meetings regarding the Urban Structure Plan and have a number of serious concerns regarding the direction that the City of Hamilton is taking. We are also deeply concerned with the process and methodology that the City has used in its implementation.

We have expressed our concerns on numerous occasions and they have never been satisfactorily addressed.

Therefore, we are enclosing a copy of our response to the Public Meetings regarding the Urban Structure Plan.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Regards,

Twenty Road East Group

Signed by 12 citizens
Original signatures in the custody of the Clerk due to FOI legislation
June 17, 2008

To: City of Hamilton

From: Twenty Road East Group

Re: Public Information Meeting – Hamilton Convention Center, June 16, 2008

In response to the Public meeting that we attended on June 16, 2008, and the questions raised on your comment sheet we would like to make the following comments.

1) We believe that there should be an additional node. As Upper James is a primary corridor and Hwy 53 is a secondary corridor, the Twenty Road area should also be identified as a community node, especially in light of the fact that it is near the Airport Employment area and the Glanbrook Industrial Park. This area also has easy access to the Sub Regional service node near Limeridge Mall. The node in Elfrida is the least accessible node; the furthest away from any services; and the least supportive of any other node, especially the downtown node.

2) The type of design elements that are most important to a node is that it:
   - provide a mixture of commercial and residential uses
   - be near primary and secondary corridors for easy accessibility
   - be accessible to public transit
   - be serviced or easily serviceable by municipal infrastructure
   - be near to employment areas (so that people can walk or ride to work)
   - be near parks and community centers and schools and other city-wide social service infrastructure.

3) The Twenty Road area has all of the above attributes, and yet is not identified as a node.

We believe that the Twenty Road area is the ideal location for a node for a number of reasons. Services are readily available to support this area as a node and support the employment lands to the east. Upper James has been identified as a primary corridor. There are plans for an A-line, light rail transit or rapid transit along this primary corridor. The transportation for the area is in place and would support urban expansion. The underground municipal services needed for a node are in place. The Upper Ottawa sewer trunk has existing gravity flow services that could service this area now. In addition, the future sewer along Dickenson Road will accommodate this area as set out in a motion by City Council. It is near Turner Park, the YWCA, and the police station, the new library, public works department, as well as a number of schools. It is near shopping and a bus ride away from Limeridge Mall and medical facilities.
The Twenty Road area is sandwiched between the future Airport Employment area (50,000 new jobs) and the Glenbrook Industrial Park (10,000 new jobs). Given the recent policy thrusts of the province in the Places to Grow Plan, the new Planning Act, and the Provincial Policy Statement, the ease of access to employment areas should be considered a significant factor in identifying nodes. With the rising cost of gasoline, and emissions concerns, the last thing the City should want to do is to place population nodes furthest away from employment areas. Why should new transportation and bus routes have to be planned and constructed, at City expense, to get people to work from a remote area such as Elfrida.

We question why the Twenty Road area would not be identified as a neighborhood or Community node. We question why the Elfrida area is identified as a node.

4) We believe that through the Urban Structure Review process, the City needs to re-examine the Twenty Road area and past decisions that have been made in respect to it.

5) We do not view it as appropriate or that it constitutes good planning for the proposed Urban Structure Plan to be presented as defining development within the existing urban boundary, but then make numerous references to an Urban boundary expansion in the Elfrida area. This raises significant problems with the integrity of the Plan and is inherently contradictory. It does not constitute clear and comprehensible planning.

6) We have submitted numerous letters and reports, outlining what we believe to be the serious flaws in the GRIDS process. Our comments and concerns have not been satisfactorily answered. We feel that the City’s 25 year growth plan is a significant step in the process to defining the future of Hamilton. We were therefore surprised when Ms. Joanne Hickey-Evans stated during the question and answer period that GRIDS has been adopted and will NOT be changed.

GRIDS has not been incorporated into a final approved Official Plan document and has not yet been approved by the Ministry of Affairs and Housing or brought before the Ontario Municipal Board. The conclusions of GRIDS have therefore not been tested by way of that process and if the City is relying on those conclusions and refuses to consider other alternatives, they are doing so at their peril. We believe that there is every possibility that the conclusions arising from GRIDS may not be approved in an Official Plan. We suggest therefore, that the City should keep an open mind to the comments coming from members of the public on this issue, including the landowners in the Twenty Road East area.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We await your reply to our concerns.