June 26, 2009

To Mayor Fred Eisenberger, Hamilton City Council, City of Hamilton’s Planning & Economic Development Department

I would like to make some comments on the June 22, 2009 Planning and Economic Development meeting concerning the New Official Urban Plan. Both myself and others have spent over three years submitting reports and making verbal presentations to City Council on the serious flaws of Grids. We have also submitted numerous reports on the advantages of developing the lands of Twenty Road East. Among the many advantages of the Twenty Road East area is the fact that the City of Hamilton has spent millions of dollars on existing infrastructure in close proximity to the Twenty Road East area. The prime example is the Turner Park Sports Complex and all of the other public facilities that form part of this complex eg. Hamilton’s Public Works Yard, new Mountain Police Station, new Public Library and the new YMCA. Twenty Road East between Nebo Road and Miles Road is also the start of the Chippewa Rail Trail connecting Hamilton to Caledonia.

The Province of Ontario deleted Special Policy Area B (future urban growth area of Elfrida) from Hamilton’s Official Rural Plan. The designation of Elfrida as Hamilton’s only Future Urban Residential Expansion Area in the new OP constitutes another form of Special Policy Area (other areas not included). The conclusion of Grids was that an Urban Boundary Expansion was not warranted the Urban Plan states that an Urban Boundary Expansion is not part of this plan and the Province of Ontario mandates that an Urban Boundary Expansion can only occur when there is a need for one. The City of Hamilton’s Planning Department continuation of including the Elfrida area as an Urban Boundary Expansion Area is contrary to the Grids conclusion, Provincial Policy and the OP statement that an Urban Boundary Expansion is not part of the Plan. The City of Hamilton’s Planning Department by designating Elfrida as the only Urban Residential Expansion Area will exclude other areas from being considered for future growth. The response from planning that the Twenty Road East area will be considered equally in the five year review is not accurate. The OP proposes a Future Urban Residential Expansion exclusively in Elfrida
if approved the Twenty Road East Area would be outside the Urban Boundary and would not be given serious consideration until the Elfrida area would be fully developed. This fact was made abundantly clear to councilor Brad Clark and the other councilors present at the June 22, 2009 Planning and Economic Development meeting. Councilor Clark asked Tim McCabe wether the forty hectares of Aramosa Karst Lands, that were part of Grids but are now conservation lands could be applied for development in the Twenty Road East area. Mr. McCabe’s quick response was “NO” and that the Elfrida area would have to be expanded to accommodate these extra development lands. The Planning Department continues to state that the inclusion of the Twenty Road East area as part of a future Urban Expansion Area in the OP would be rejected by the Province of Ontario because the City of Hamilton is limited to the amount of land required for an Urban Expansion. This type of reasoning does not make any sense at all. Grids, the Urban Plan and the Province have stated that an Urban Residential Boundary Expansion in Hamilton is not warranted, the Province of Ontario will not approve or reject any land budget on an Urban Boundary Expansion that is not warranted or required at this time, this designated Elfrida Future Urban Growth area should not be in the Urban Official Plan at all.

The City of Hamilton’s Planning Department continues its Elfrida agenda only policy and has stated that the Province of Ontario has approved the inclusion of Elfrida as a Future Urban Expansion Area in the OP. **If the Planning Department has documentation from the Province of Ontario to that effect they should produce these documents before City council meets to vote on the Urban Official Plan.** Some of the councilors on the Planning and Economic Development committee have shown a reluctance to question staff about Grids they may feel that they might offend staff by questioning the Grids process and the Grids conclusions. The reality of Grids is that the City of Hamilton’s future employment lands are located in Ancaster and Mount Hope and staff is recommending future urban residential development exclusively in Elfrida and Upper Stoney Creek. The city of Hamilton’s Planning decisions will impact the economy and the environment of the city for many generations. The Planning Department is unnecessarily creating a new community of commuters, a Satellite city at a distance from existing infrastructure and at a distance from the city of Hamilton’s future employment lands. This is contrary to all of the Province of Ontario’s Green Initiatives, compact urban form and LIVE / WORK / LIFESTYLES recommendations in the PPS and Places to Grow Plan. City councilors should vote on what makes sense and not on wether they might offend city staff by questioning their planning decisions.

The Chairwoman of the June 22, 2009 Planning and Economic Development meeting Maria Pearson congratulated Tim McCabe and planning staff for doing a great job on the Urban Official Plan. Maria went as far as to state that the Urban Official Plan “was almost 100% perfect”. I would like to point out that the Urban Official Plan’s
inclusion of Second Road East and Hendershot Road as part of the city of Hamilton's future expansion area and the exclusion of the "hole in the donut" makes this plan far from perfect.

I will list some of the other facts about Grids. I would encourage city council to require the city of Hamilton's Planning and Development Department to respond to each of these facts. If they don't agree or if they feel that these facts are inaccurate they should respond. Their responses should be recorded word for word. The city of Hamilton's Planning Department has rationalized, misinformed and actually been untruthful about many facets of Grids. If city council is serious about this urban plan and does not want to shirk its responsibilities, they should ask these direct questions to the Planning Department at the special meeting on the Urban Plan of June 29, 2009. Planning Department has refused to change Grids for three years, the time is long past on wether questioning the recommendations of the Planning Department about the Urban Plan is somehow not proper.

1. The development of Prime Agricultural Lands in Elfrida (Lear Study 2005) when lower priority NONE PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS in the Twenty Road East area were available (Lear Study 2005) makes this plan far from perfect.

2. Development of lands with the largest impact on the environment and the ecology (Elfrida Triple Bottom Line Evaluation of the Grids Growth Process) makes the plan far from perfect.

3. Not to develop an area of moderate impact on the environment and the ecology (Triple Bottom Line Evaluation of the Twenty Road East Lands in the Grids Growth Process) makes this plan far from perfect.

4. Developing the Karst lands of Elfrida (the Twenty Mile Creek Watershed Plan on pg: 3 states that the Sinkhole Creek centered in Elfrida with a watershed of 17 square kilometers is an area of Karst Topography. In the same Twenty Mile Creek watershed plan on pg. 35 the plan states "Due to the location of the Karst features, further study of the area from a hazards perspective is likely not necessary ( Terra Dynamic Consulting Inc. 2005) because they will not be threatened by development". The PPS considers Karst Topography as "Hazard Lands" in section 3.1.1. the PPS states "Development shall generally be directed to areas outside of Hazardous Sites". The development of the Karst Lands of Elfrida makes this plan far from perfect.

5. After the T.B.L. Evaluation Process city staff refined the Preferred Growth Option by adding 250 acres of unevaluated lands (Area bounded by Mud Street to Highland Road and First Road East to Second Road East). These lands were not part of Grids. The inclusion of completely unevaluated lands as part of the city of Hamilton's future Urban Growth District makes this plan far from perfect.
The citizens of the city of Hamilton deserve and expect statements and issues answered by the city of Hamilton's Planning and Economic Development Department and city council should base their Urban Official Plan decisions on the answers provided by the planning department.

Hamilton city council will now be faced with one of the most important decisions affecting the direction of the city of Hamilton for the next 25 - 30 years. City council endorsed Grids on May 24th, 2006 since that time there has been a great deal of information provided to city council by myself, other citizens, lawyers and planners about these and other issues related to the fairness of the Grids Growth process. Except for a few councilors these submissions have not been debated and council has been reluctant to question city staff concerning Grids. The Rural, the Urban Structure and the Official Urban Plan process has also had many reports, submissions and letters submitted to city council concerning the fairness of these processes as it relates to the Twenty Road East Lands. City council on the whole has been silent. The reports were submitted to council and the standard response has been “received” and no changes to Grids has ever been made.

The final hour has arrived Council can either approve the new Official Plan or can modify it. The Official Plan states “The New Urban Official Plan is a culmination of a multi-year project which has resulted in a progressive, comprehensive up-to-date OP that provides land use planning directions to manage growth and change to 2031”. If the direction of future urban growth excludes developing the “Hole in the donut” then this plan is far from perfect. I am including some of the important considerations and advantages of developing the Twenty Road East Area of the city of Hamilton.

The city of Hamilton's Planning Department should state and list any Triple Bottom Line Evaluations of Grids (Community Well Being, Ecological Well Being and Economic Well Being) that they feel should exclude the Twenty Road East Area from future growth consideration.

Sincerely,

Carmen Chiaramonte
(905) 515 - 9405

C.C.; The city of Hamilton’s Planning Economic Development Department
Attention : Tim McCabe (General Manager)
The Province of Ontario’s Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Rob Maclusie ( Metrolinx ), Michael Fenn ( CEO Metrolinx)
Kevin Christenson, Hamilton city clerk
Mayor Fred Eisenberger & Hamilton City Council
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TWENTY ROAD EAST AREA

1) The Twenty Road East area is adjacent and centered beside the existing South Mountain Urban Development.

2) It is in close proximity to existing public facilities, such as, the B.A Court Operations Centre on Rymal Road East which contains the city of Hamilton’s Public Works Yard, the city’s new mountain police station, the new public library, the new YWCA, and the large Turner Park Sports Complex.

3) Twenty Road East is the starting point of the existing Chippewa Rail Trail extending 15 kilometers ending in Caledonia.

4) The Twenty Road East area has existing infrastructures such as, waterlines, hydro lines, and gas lines.

5) Upper Ottawa has been approved by the city of Hamilton to be extended to Twenty Road East. There are large existing sewer and storm water lines on Upper Ottawa at the city limits. These existing lines can easily be extended to Twenty Road East and can service approximately 600 acres of future development (all gravity fed).

6) The city of Hamilton has approved a new trunk sewer line on Dickenson Road East, this new sewer line can service the North side of Dickenson Road East between Miles Road and the North Glanbrook Industrial Business Park. This new sewer can also service all of Miles Road to the existing city limits. All of these lands drain towards Dickenson Road and the sewers will be gravity fed. All of these lands are designated Rural and not Prime Agricultural.

7) The Twenty Road East area is perfectly positioned between the city of Hamilton’s future employment lands, which are centered around the Hamilton International Airport and the North Glanbrook Industrial Business Park. This close proximity to Hamilton’s future employment lands has many advantages both economic and environmental.
   a) GREENER COMMUNITY: LIVE WORK/ LIFESTYLES people can walk or cycle to work or if they do drive the commute time is drastically reduced.
   b) Reducing commute times will reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, reduce congestion on our roads, and contribute to a healthier environment.
   c) PEAK OIL: reducing commute times will reduce the amount of gasoline that we consume and will help to reduce our dependency on this scarce commodity.

8) There are many economic benefits in utilizing existing public facilities and existing infrastructures and the city of Hamilton should be fiscally responsible and not duplicate these infrastructures unnecessarily.

9) Twenty Road East is connected directly to Upper James Street. The city of Hamilton’s new URBAN STRUCTURE PLAN identifies Upper James as a Primary Corridor. The city of Hamilton has received Provincial funding for A-LINE improvements to JAMES - UPPER JAMES CORRIDOR. Does it not make sense to fully utilize this Primary Corridor? The city of Hamilton’s Urban Structure Plan states that intensification should be directed to corridors and corridors should provide a range of higher density uses. Why wouldn’t the city of Hamilton maximize the use and
connectivity of this Primary Corridor and develop all of the lands in close proximity?

10) Reasons for the Primary corridor designation of Upper James Street:

a) Direct link to the Downtown HAMILTON URBAN GROWTH CENTRE (primary node) and MOBILITY HUB

b) Accessibility to Hamilton’s two major activity centres (McMaster University and McMaster Hospital, Mohawk college MOBILITY HUB

c) Direct access to the Hunters Street GO STATION

d) Direct access to the WEST HARBOUR DEVELOPMENT ZONE

e) Direct access to the INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT & MOBILITY HUB

f) Direct access to the emerging employment lands centered around the Hamilton International Airport (49,000 new future jobs)

g) Upper James has direct access the Lincoln Alexander Parkway, the new #6 Highway extension (Highway 403), the secondary corridor of Rymal Road and the future NIAGARA G.T.A. CORRIDOR HIGHWAY

h) Upper James is also linked to the future North Glenbrook Industrial Business Park (10,000 new future jobs around the Twenty Road East/Nebo Road area)

i) Upper James is not only a Primary Corridor but it is also a centre of commerce (The Golden Mile). IN FACT THE URBAN STRUCTURAL PLAN SHOULD HAVE IDENTIFIED THE UPPER JAMES/RYMAL ROAD AREA AS AN IMPORTANT COMMUNITY NODE FOR THE CITY OF HAMILTON.

j) Direct access to the new LIUNA GO STATION

Development of 1000 acres connected to this important Primary Corridor would greatly increase potential RIDERSHIP needed to make an LRT system economically feasible.