To Mayor Fred Eisenberger and Hamilton City Councilors,

The city of Hamilton has recently received a Notice of Decision from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing concerning Hamilton’s Official Rural Plan. This Notice of Decision was dated January 7th, 2009, almost two and a half years after the city of Hamilton submitted the Official Rural Plan to the Province of Ontario. The Province has approved Hamilton’s Official Rural Plan with one notable exception, Special Policy Area B, the city of Hamilton’s Future Urban Growth Node of Elfrida was deleted in its entirety. I only mention this to emphasize that the Province of Ontario has the final oversight on the approval of not only Hamilton’s Official Rural Plan but, also the city of Hamilton’s Official Urban Plan. The city of Hamilton has recently introduced the Draft Urban Structure Plan and has invited the general public to attend Public Information Meetings to provide input on the future direction of Hamilton’s urban areas. It is important that the city of Hamilton’s Planning and Economic Development Department listen to and assess all of the comments by the public to ensure that Hamilton’s new Official Urban Plan will be accurate and realistic and identify all of the city’s important areas and structures.

The Urban Structure Plan states that Nodes are core areas which are economically, socially, and culturally diverse, drawing people and capital together from all over the city. They are connected by transit lines to each other and other important destinations, like the city’s Business Parks, Industrial areas, and major institutional facilities such as McMaster University and Mohawk College. The Upper James and Rymal Road East area of the city has all of these attributes and characteristics and much more. Yet, the Urban Structure Plan does not identify this area as an important community Node of the city of Hamilton. As mentioned earlier, I believe that the Province of Ontario has final oversight and approval of Official Plans by the Municipalities. I also believe that the city’s Planning and Economic Department has not assessed the importance of the Upper James/Rymal Road East area (Ryckman’s Corners) properly. The Urban Structure Plan is still in the draft stages yet, the Province of Ontario has already commented on the Nodes and Corridors Structure Plan. The November 5th, 2008 letter to the city of Hamilton from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing states on page #4 “We would encourage the city to continue to examine and plan for the correlation between existing proposed transit routes and proposed nodes and corridors, and identify ADDITIONAL nodes and corridors to examine the benefits of FUTURE TRANSIT INVESTMENTS and movement of people”. The Upper James Primary Corridor and area, and the proposed Light Rail Transit System (A-LINE) is the only corridor “seeking benefits of future transit investments” that has not been designated with Community Node Status. The city of Hamilton is seeking 1.1 billion dollars from the Province of Ontario (Metrolinx) for full funding to construct light rail transit on Upper James (North/South) and Main/King (East/West), yet, the Upper James Primary Corridor does not have Community Node Status. The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be making the final decisions on the approval or rejection of Hamilton’s New
Official Urban Plan shouldn’t the city of Hamilton be taking their comments “identify additional Nodes” seriously? Isn’t this the proper time to make changes to the Urban Structure Plan?

The Upper James/Rymal Road East area has all of the characteristics of a Community Node and already operates with all of the functions attributed to a Community Node. The Upper James Primary Corridor has been identified for decades as the “Golden Mile” of the city of Hamilton. This area is the centre of large scale retail, numerous restaurants, all of the major banks, three hotels, service commercial, and the centre of the city of Hamilton’s automotive sales and service industry. Upper James/Rymal Road East area is already a major centre of employment, residential, and recreational uses. It is also connected to the city of Hamilton’s future employment lands centred around Hamilton International Airport the Upper James / Rymal Road area already has Compact Urban Form plus a great potential for further growth and intensification. The Ryckman’s Corners area of the city is strategically located with existing strong public transit and highly connected to all of the city of Hamilton’s main infrastructures. Upper James was identified both in GRIDS and the Transportation Master Plan as a Primary Corridor. I strongly feel that the city of Hamilton’s Planning and Economic Development Department did not assess this area appropriately and further analysis for Community Node Status is necessary. I will list some of the other reasons:

1. Upper James is identified in the Urban Structure Plan as a Primary Corridor, the Urban Structure Plan states that “Primary Corridors are intended to serve as a link between two or more nodes”. If the connection of two or more nodes is the function of a Primary Corridor then why is the downtown Primary Node not connected to any other nodes by the Upper James Primary Corridor?

2. Upper James Street / Rymal Road East Street is the convergence of a Primary and a Secondary Corridor, this is the highest order of transit for the city of Hamilton. This high order of transit of the Upper James / Rymal Road area is equal to the East / West Primary Corridor and Centennial Parkway Secondary Corridor intersecting at the sub-regional service node at Eastgate Square. If the Urban Structure Plan is based on a Nodes and Corridors Structure then why isn’t the highest order transit intersection and area identified as a Community Node in the Urban Structure Plan? The Urban Structure Plan states on page 38 of it’s report “the most successful Nodes are the one’s that exhibit a wide variety of land uses; including higher density residential and employment uses, and have access to “Higher Order Transit”. The Upper James Road East area of the city has the “Highest Order Transit Designation” in the Urban Structure Plan and yet this area is not designated a Community Node in this same Urban Structure Plan.

3. The Urban Structure Plan states that “it is also intended that intensification be directed to Urban Corridors and that the city’s Node and Corridor Structure is to be the foundation for accommodating long term growth.” What is the purpose of the Urban Structure Plan when the City of Hamilton’s Planning and Economic Development Department ignores all of it’s guidelines and concepts? If the Upper James Street Primary Corridor and the Rymal Road East Secondary Corridor is significant enough to
the City of Hamilton and to the Province of Ontario to invest hundreds of millions of dollars on mass transit (A-line and S-line) does it not seem logical that the juncture of these transit systems be identified as an important Community Node in the Urban Structure Plan? The City of Hamilton is in the process of completing a Rapid Transit Feasibility Study for the purpose of applying for Provincial funding from Metrolinx for a L.R.T. System on the A-line (Upper James Street) and LRT or Rapid Bus Transit on the S-line (Rymal Road East). The Chair of Metrolinx Rob MacIsaac recently stated that L.R.T. for Hamilton will depend on a “Detailed Cost Analysis”. He further states “For the cost benefit analysis to make sense for L.R.T. the City must demonstrate it is committed to significantly higher densities along the route.” The designation of the area intersecting the proposed A-line and the proposed S-line as a Community Node of the city of Hamilton would demonstrate to Metrolinx that this area is significant to the Urban Structure of the city. This will also demonstrate to Metrolinx that the Upper James and Rymal Road East area will be the focus of intensification, growth and adequate ridership to justify Provincial funding for L.R.T. Isn’t the definition of “Transit Supportive Design”, development, intensification and growth areas having easy access for transit whether it be good roads such as Primary and Secondary Corridors or good public transport such as L.R.T. or Rapid Bus Transit? The City of Hamilton’s Urban Structure Plan is supposed to promote compact urban form along a series of nodes and corridors. The Upper James/Rymal Road Area is the logical location for a Community Node. It is abundantly clear that transportation planning must be co-ordinated with land use planning, the financial and environmental success or failure of public transport especially an expensive L.R.T. System depends on maximizing it’s usage, the more people that live in it’s proximity the greater the ridership.

4. There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. To demonstrate this I am including the Appendix A-RTP Hamilton Corridors Map. There are four corners to the convergence of the City of Hamilton’s Primary and Secondary Corridors on this map. The East/West Primary Corridor connects the Downtown Primary Node to the Eastgate Square Sub-regional Service Node. The Upper and Lower Centennial Secondary Corridor connects the Eastgate Square Sub-regional Service Node to the Elfride Community Node. The Rymal Road East Secondary Corridor does not connect the Elfride Community Node to any other Community Nodes along this Corridor. The Downtown Primary Node is not connected by the Upper James Primary Corridor to any other Community Nodes along this Corridor. The city of Hamilton’s Urban Structure Plan is based on the Nodes and Corridors concept of development yet as the Appendix A-RTP Map demonstrates there is a missing Node at the intersection of the Upper James Primary Corridor and the Rymal East Secondary Corridor. The South/West area of the city of Hamilton does not have a Community Node in the Urban Structure Plan. The city of Hamilton’s Planning and Economic Development Department has included other areas of the city as Community Nodes that are far less significant and important to the Urban Structure of the city than the Upper James/Rymal Road East area. The Appendix B Community Nodes Infrastructure Constraints and Opportunities section of the Urban Structure Plan list’s the many drawbacks, challenges and serious constraints
for development and intensification of these other nodes. These other Nodes are the Meadowlands, Heritage Green area of the east mountain, the Centre Mall area and the Community Node of Elfrida. I will list some of the advantages of the Upper James / Rymal Road East area. The readers of this report can draw their own conclusions as to what possible valid reason the City’s Planning Staff has not designated this area as an important Community Node in the Urban Structure Plan.

5. The city of Hamilton’s Urban Structure Plan promotes Compact Urban Form along a series of Nodes and Corridors. The Upper James / Rymal Road East (RYCKMAN’S CORNERS) intersection and area is the logical location for a Community Node. This area is highly connected to all of the city of Hamilton’s infrastructures.

- Directly connected to Hamilton International Airport and future Mobility Hub
- Directly connected to the city of Hamilton’s future employment lands (49,000 new future jobs) centred around the Airport.
- The Airport employment lands will be the driving force for the city of Hamilton’s future economy.
- The Rymal Road East Secondary Corridor connects this area directly to the Ancaster Business Park.
- Twenty Road East and Dickenson Road East connects the Upper James area directly to the North Glenbrook Industrial Business Park.
- The Upper James Primary Corridor connects this area directly to the Lincoln Alexander Expressway, the new Mohawk Road West Secondary Corridor extends from Upper James Street to the Meadowlands, the Upper James Primary Corridor is also connected to the new Highway # 6 extension.
- The Upper James Primary Corridor will also be connected to the future Niagara G.T.A. CORRIDOR HIGHWAY which will be connected to Hamilton International Airport.

The Urban Structure Plan states “an essential element for establishing successful Nodes and Corridors is the presence of higher transit service running along Corridors linking Nodes and Corridors together. The Upper James area is the most highly connected area of the city of Hamilton.

- The new Mohawk Road West Secondary Corridor connects the Upper James area directly to the Meadowlands Community Node and the Ancaster Community Node.
- The Lincoln Alexander Expressway connects the Upper James area directly to the Heritage Green Community Node of the East Mountain.
- The Lincoln Alexander Expressway and the Redhill extension of the Linc connects the Upper James area to the Eastgate Square Sub-regional Service Node.
- The Rymal Road East Secondary Corridor connects the Upper James area directly to the Elfrida Community Node.
- The Lincoln Alexander Expressway connects the Upper James area to the Limeridge Mall Sub-regional Service Node.
- The Upper James Primary Corridor connects the Upper James area to the most important Node of all the city of Hamilton’s Downtown Primary Node.

The Rapid Transit Feasibility Study recommends that an L.R.T. Rapid Transportation System (A-line) be built on the Upper James Primary Corridor connecting the city of Hamilton’s Urban Mountain Development to the Downtown Primary Node. The James / Upper James Street proposed L.R.T. route would directly connect the Upper James area to the Mohawk College Campus and future Mobility Hub, Saint Joseph’s Health Care on the Mohawk College Campus and Saint Joseph’s Hospital on Charlton Avenue. This proposed L.R.T. Line would also connect the Upper James area directly to the Hunter Street Go-Station, the heart of the city of Hamilton’s Primary Node King / Main / James Street, the Regional Transportation Plan’s proposed new L.I.U.N.A. Go-Station and the city of Hamilton’s West Harbour Development Zone.

The Upper James Street / Rymal Road East area is in close proximity to existing and new infrastructures. These infrastructures are located on Rymal Road East, the new Hamilton Mountain Police Station, new Public Library, new YMCA, the city of Hamilton’s Public Works Yard, the Turner Park Sports Complex, the Chippewa Rail Trail and the H.S.R. Bus Terminal and Depot located on Upper James Street.

The city of Hamilton’s Urban Structure Plan promotes Compact Urban Form along a series of Nodes and Corridors. The Upper James / Rymal Road East area of the south-west mountain (Ryckman’s Corners) is the logical location for a Community Node. Community Node status for this important area of the city would focus growth and intensification maximizing the benefits of the investments that have been made and future investments that are being proposed:

- Airport Employment Land Development
- L.R.T. on the Upper James Primary Corridor A-line
- L.R.T. or R.B.T. on Rymal Road East
- NIAGARA G.T.A. CORRIDOR HIGHWAY

The city of Hamilton’s Planning and Development Department has already stated in their November 2008 staff report that “Node location’s were evaluated through Grids; no changes to the Urban Structure are needed at this time, Node location’s will be re-evaluated at the 5 YEAR official review. It is my opinion that now is the right time to re-evaluate the Node location’s in the Urban Structure Plan. The city of Hamilton will have to justify it’s planning decisions to the Province of Ontario. The Province has already indicated in their November 5, 2008 letter to the city of Hamilton that the city “identify additional Nodes”. The city of Hamilton’s Official Urban Plan can also be challenged by individuals or groups. Other Community Node designations such as the Meadowlands, Heritage Green, Centre Mall and Elfrida can also be challenged. The Urban Structure report lists many disadvantages, challenges and serious constraints for development and intensification for some of these other Node location’s. I have not heard one
valid reason why the Upper James / Rymal Road East area was excluded from the Urban Structure Plan.

It is my opinion that the city of Hamilton should get it right NOW not in five, ten or twenty years down the road. The city of Hamilton’s Planning Department has had a one track mind as far as GRIDS and the significance of GRIDS to the Urban Structure Plan. The city of Hamilton’s public official’s should make their own assessments and should question the motives and reasoning the city’s Planning Department has not identified the Ryckman’s Corners as an important Community Node. This same Planning Department is now asking for public input on the future direction of Hamilton’s Urban areas. What is the purpose of having these OPEN HOUSES and asking for community input and suggestions when the only response to these suggestions from Planning staff is that “NO CHANGES WILL BE CONSIDERED”.

I believe that the Urban Structure Plan and eventually the New Official Urban Plan is very important to the city of Hamilton. This plan should be accurate and realistic and should identify all of the areas that are important to the city of Hamilton. The Nodes and Corridors concept of the Urban Structure Plan will have very little significance if the principles and guidelines that it contains are not adhered to. The Upper James / Rymal Road East area has the “highest order transit” of the city and is not identified as a Community Node in the Urban Structure Plan. Other Nodes have been identified that are not located on Corridors either Primary or Secondary. City council should direct Planning staff to re-assess this important area of the city and prepare a detailed report to council and the public stating the specific reasons why the Ryckman’s Corners area of the city should or should not be designated a Community Node. The same response that we have heard from the city of Hamilton’s Planning Department for the last 3 years “NO CHANGES TO GRIDS” is no longer valid.

Yours Truly,

Dr. Tom Nugent
9 Grandview Avenue
Stoney Creek, Ontario L8E 5A5
(905) 643-9036

C.C.; The city of Hamilton’s Planning Economic Development Department
Attention: Tim McCabe (General Manager)
Steve Robichaud (Manager of Development Planning)
Sorensen Gravelly Lowes
Dillon Consulting Limited
The Province of Ontario’s Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Honourable Jim Bradley (MPP) Ministry of Transportation
Rob MacIsaac (Metrolinx)
Michael Fenn (CEO Metrolinx)
Nodes and Corridors

The City has identified a nodes and corridors urban structure as a framework to guide future development patterns with use of the City and appropriate to their size and locations. We are also supportive of the concept of minimum densities the City has set for its nodes and corridors. We would encourage the City to continue to examine and plan for the correlation between existing proposed transit routes and the proposed nodes and corridors, and identify additional nodes and corridors to maximize the benefits of future transit investments and movement of people.

The Urban Structure Plan is an opportunity for the City to identify and implement major transit station areas (Section 3.12 of the Open Plan). The City should also encourage other local plans for nodes and corridors to incorporate major transit station areas and policies for nodes and corridors, especially as they apply to related employment and policies on major office buildings.

Other comments on the Draft USP

Major Open Space System

A Major Open Space System is identified on Figure 3.1 which includes the Niagara Estuary and associated environmentally significant areas, the Red Hill Valley, Cootes Paradise, and areas west of Niagara. However, the next step in the Major Open Space System is not the Urban Area Natural Heritage System. Some features of the Major Open Space System have been incorporated into the Urban Area Natural Heritage System. We understand that the Urban Area Natural Heritage System has been developed as another component of the Open Plan Program and will be added to the new Open Plan through an amendment. It's important that the Natural Heritage System be more considered and utilized as a systems approach for the identification and protection of these features linked by a system.

We request that early pre-consultation occur with the Province on the development of the Urban Area Natural Heritage System similar to development of the Rural Area Natural Heritage System in the Rural OP.

Draft Regional Transportation Plan

Metrolinx recently released its Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTIP) entitled "The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and Draft Investment Strategy. A first step in transforming our transportation system. We understand that the City is preparing the USP document it is aligned with the new RTIP to incorporate how transportation infrastructure and improvements to transit service are proposed for Hamilton and adjacent areas.

MAH pre-consultation report: Hamilton Draft USP and new OP Policies for Employment Areas