Dear Chairman and Members of the Planning Committee:

On behalf of the REALTORS® Association of Hamilton-Burlington (RAHB) and our 2,500 members we are writing to express our full support for update and expansion of Hamilton’s financial incentives programs. We applaud the City of Hamilton’s current suite of financial incentive programs. These loans and grants are an innovative tool to reduce the costs associated with development/redevelopment in the Downtowns, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and commercial corridors.

We support the implementation of the two new proposed programs. The new *Hamilton Downtown Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant* will encourage reinvestment in the downtown area and preservation of the commercial buildings. With the right incentives the streetscapes can be transformed. Treble Hall is a great example how simply cleaning up a façade can change the feel of a street.

In addition to the Façade program, the proposed *Gore Building Improvement Grant Program* will provide incentives for a key area of our city, truly the heart of the Downtown. The proposed plan seems to address a suite of issues from sign bylaw issues to property standards and accessibility requirements. The redevelopment of the Gore would significantly change the face of Downtown Hamilton, and the image of the city overall.

We also support the proposed changes to the existing incentives programs. The anticipated revision of the Hamilton Downtown Multi-Residential Property Investment Program will give property developers the flexibility to extend their loan term to 15 years, which will likely allow for the completion of larger projects. Other changes will offer the program administrators more flexibility in administering grants and loans. This will allow a variety of businesses and organizations to take advantage of the programs.

As an association, RAHB has adopted a number of guiding principles to demonstrate the commitment of the real estate profession to improve quality of life by supporting policies that encourage economic vitality, provide housing opportunities, preserve the environment, protect property owners and build community. The proposed measures will contribute to a more vibrant downtown and will help achieve many of these principles.

Sincerely,

REALTORS® Association of Hamilton-Burlington

Ann Forbes Arndt     Tim Mattioli
2011 President      2011 Government Relations Chair

Ross Godsoe     Megan Platts
CEO      Manager, Government & External Relations