



**Harbour West Neighbours Inc.  
c/o Bryan Ritskes  
469 Bay Street,  
Hamilton L8L 1N2**

**May 9, 2027**

Mayor Fred Eisenberger  
City Hall,  
71 Main Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Harbour West Neighbours Inc. is a long time stakeholder in the North End Neighbourhood. The majority of our members live in the North End neighbourhood. We have been significantly involved in the planning for our neighbourhood since the start of the Setting Sail planning process many years ago.

We are currently working cooperatively with board members of North End Neighbours (NEN), the recognized North End Neighbourhood Association. We have consulted the NEN Board and have key concerns relating to City planning and development in the North End neighbourhood.

We have been asked on several recent occasions to set out exactly what we hope to obtain from the City as the City pursues its waterfront strategy in our neighbourhood.

This letter is intended to answer that question.

In simple terms, we ask the City to keep its promises to our neighbourhood.

Those promises were straightforward and clear.

The City's promises should be viewed in the context of our agreement that the North End Neighbourhood would be a child and family friendly neighbourhood.

A Child and Family Friendly neighbourhood means that parents with children will be attracted to our neighbourhood, that walking across our streets to talk to neighbours will be safe, that our streets will be friendly to a full range of users

including affordable housing and that our educational and recreational resources will be protected and well used.

The City's commitments to the North End Neighbourhood were set out in the adopted and approved Secondary Plan for our neighbourhood known as Setting Sail.

Recent City planning activity has not complied with Setting Sail.

Your commitment should be viewed in the context that every vehicle that drives to the City's lands on the waterfront has to drive through on one our neighbourhood streets. Like Webster's Falls.

We hope that Council will value having a very efficient neighbourhood in the centre of the City, an inner city neighbourhood that provides homes for a wide range of residents including the 1000 children living here who are under the age of 15, and home to persons with a wide range of ages, incomes, and occupations. In other words, that our neighbourhood is more than a corridor to travel through to get to your developments.

The broken promises are as follows.

**1. The City has not evaluated its development proposals against the criteria that Setting Sail states MUST be followed. The core Setting Sail text is as follows:**

*A.6.3.2 The planning process for Setting Sail was guided by eight core principles that emerged from extensive public consultation in the initial phase of the study, and which balance the aspirations of the City and the local community for West Harbour. The principles reflect and build upon many of the City's Vision 2020 goals for creating a healthy and sustainable city. They are the foundation for this Secondary Plan and the West Harbour Transportation Master Plan. As such, they provide important criteria against which future initiatives and proposals for the area will be evaluated to help ensure the broad public objectives for West Harbour are realized.*

The word "will" has meaning. It is not "may" or "perhaps" but definite and creates a positive obligation on the part of the City to use all eight principles in the evaluation process. NEN and HWN members took part in the public meetings where the residents developed a clear Vision Statement for Pier 8 which would have implemented Section A.6.3.2. It has disappeared.

2. From the perspective of residents, the key “core principle” was stated as follows:

*A.6.3.2.2 Strengthen existing neighbourhoods> - “Together with the waterfront, the North End and portions of Strathcona, Central and Beasley neighbourhoods are the defining elements of West Harbour. There is much diversity within the neighbourhoods, physically and socially, reflecting the area’s rich and varied history. Where once local industries attracted workers and their families, the attractions for residents now are the area’s historic character and waterfront amenities. This character and the neighbourhoods’ physical relationship to the waterfront are assets to be protected and enhanced. **As changes in West Harbour continue, both on the waterfront and in the neighbourhoods, it is important to: i) ensure new development respects and enhances the character of the neighbourhoods;***

We invite you to review all the reports prepared by the Phillips team since January 2014 to try and find one place where the enhancement of the North End neighbourhood is identified or considered. The word “ensure” has meaning. It was a commitment to us. It has not been honoured.

3. Development of the marine recreational areas is key to the future of our neighbourhood for many reasons. During the process of preparing Setting Sail, the City ran out of time to complete the details for the waterfront. **We received an unequivocal commitment from City Staff during the process and the same commitment in the text of Setting Sail. The marine recreational areas are to be governed by an official plan amendment to Setting Sail. Instead, your staff have proposed that the waterfront be governed by a Master Plan.**

The difference is significant. Neighbours have no right of OMB appeal for Master Plans which can be changed at the will of Council. The City’s promise to proceed by OPA is clear. It should be done. The text is as follows:

*A.6.3.6.1.6 -The City recognizes the special qualities of Hamilton Harbour, including its physical features and wind conditions that make it a unique, attractive and cherished environment for world class recreational boating within the Great Lakes. The City shall continue to promote and facilitate a diversity of such activity in West Harbour as it pursues other objectives for the Waterfront. Improvements to marine recreation facilities, including marina buildings, club houses, indoor and outdoor boat storage, boat ramps, parking, and docks, shall be guided by a Marine Recreation*

*Master Plan for the West Harbour waterfront, as discussed in Section 8 of this plan. Prior to development or capital improvements proceeding within Marine Recreational areas, as designated on Schedule "M-2", **City Council shall adopt the Marine Recreational Master Plan by Official Plan Amendment.***

That has not been done. We will not accept the lack of security in Master Plans on something as important to us as the future uses of Piers 1 to 7.

**4. Development of Piers 7 and 8 is not to proceed until the North End Traffic Management Plan is implemented.** That is not happening.

Again the text is clear:

*A.6.3.5.1.18 - Prior to approval of any new development on a single block or multiple blocks on Piers 7 and 8, a comprehensive traffic calming study shall be completed and implemented. The study shall include the area north of the CN railway line.*

The language is clear as is the fact that the study was not implemented. For example, the study called for a round-about at James and Strachan. It was to serve an important function of slowing traffic on James and sending a clear signal that drivers were entering a residential community. Staff simply eliminated it without discussion. The narrowing of John Street, one of the most sensitive streets in the neighbourhood, has not been carried out. Other examples exist.

**5. The character of future commercial development on Piers 7 and 8 was carefully described.** This again is important because the nature of that commercial will determine the quantity and quality of the traffic that will drive through our neighbourhood. Here's what you said:

***A.6.3.2.2 I) encourage new commercial uses that cater to the local neighbourhood;***

Somewhere along the route since Setting Sail was approved, the commercial on the waterfront has grown to become the equivalent of a district shopping centre, about the size of the commercial on Locke Street or Ottawa Street, neither of which would be considered as catering to the local neighbourhood. This is a cause for profound concern because of the parking and traffic impacts that will come from that change.

We have consistently taken the position that Setting Sail requires one urban design study for Piers 7 and 8 together. That has not been done. Pier 7 was finished before Pier 8 was started. That is not a minor technicality. The area is integrated and the planning should have been

integrated as well. Such a study would have produced a single review of all the commercial now proposed.

- 6. The City committed to a density of development.** Residents of the North End neighbourhood were clear during the Setting Sail process that intensification was welcome. More families moving into the North End neighbourhood means more children and more children mean stability for our schools and recreational resources. The density we worked on was clearly stated under oath by the City's planner during an OMB hearing. The OMB decision reads as follows:

*“Brenda Khes is a land use planner retained by the City to provide planning evidence in support of Setting Sail. Ms. Khes is the proprietor of her own planning firm but prior to July 2010, she was employed in the City’s planning staff. [109] She advised that Setting Sail was a study process that involved parallel land use and transportation studies for the West Harbour and culminated in the West Harbour Secondary Plan (OPA 198), commonly referred to as Setting Sail, and the West Harbour Transportation Master Plan. She testified that in Setting Sail, **Pier 8 is designated primarily for residential use and that Pier 7 is designated for mixed-use development, with about 750 residential units presently planned for Piers 7 and 8.***

I hope you will agree that there is something very wrong when the City tells the OMB when it is dealing with traffic that 750 units will be built and then two years after the OMB decision is released, the number changes to 1500 or more. The density of development Mr. Phillips brought to Council in 2014 and still currently proposed by the City is radically different from what was told to the OMB.

This is not a NIMBY response on our part. We invited growth and intensification but coupled that with a traffic strategy designed for the development we agreed with. That careful balance was designed to ensure that our neighbourhood remained a comfortable place for children. When you plan for 8 year olds, the rest of the population is well served.

We ask the City to value our neighbourhood as an inner core family neighbourhood. Many cities would spend millions of dollars to have children in the inner core. We believe you view us as simply a place to drive through. If you start to value a vibrant inner city family friendly neighbourhood as an important municipal asset, then we are on the same wavelength.

**Conclusions:**

Regretably, some of these concerns are now in front of the OMB. Others will inevitably end up there as long as the City continues on its present course.

Our attempts to have a neighbourhood based discussion with staff have been fruitless. The planning process for our neighbourhood was moved into a multi-neighbourhood process where residents essentially were given the role (other than in the development of the Vision criteria) of reacting to staff positions rather than participating.

Our very reasonable requests for an independent planner to assist the neighbourhood was refused, notwithstanding that the City is both developer and regulator.

Thus, in simple terms, our consistent request has been that the City should keep its promises.

We strongly urge you to start doing that.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Ritskes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bryan Ritskes  
President  
Harbour West Neighbours Inc.

cc Members of Council and City staff.