



April 16, 2018

Planning Committee
City of Hamilton

To Whom It May Concern:

Since its founding in 1972, the Durand Neighbourhood Association has been dedicated to protecting the diversity, vibrancy, and historic character of the Durand. The DNA's efforts have thus, necessarily aimed at preventing unrestrained development and unfocused real estate speculation. The result of our early effort was the first Neighbourhood Plan 1977. More recently the DNA has, over the past 5 years, continued with this tradition through our engagement with the City in the Downtown Secondary Plan Review process.

The DNA has met on 2 separate occasions with City Staff to present our concerns, as well as submitting our concerns to the October draft of the Downtown Secondary Plan. We have also taken part in the relevant public consultation processes over the past 5 years. The DNA appreciated the responsiveness the City and its Planning Department has displayed throughout this process and, generally, we are pleased with the resulting Downtown Secondary Plan before us today.

The Durand is already one of most densely populated neighbourhoods in Hamilton, with 14,797 people per square kilometer, according to the 2016 Canadian Census. However, the DNA still respects need for urban intensification, as outlined in the Province's Places to Grow / Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. We also support the idea that intensification in the downtown, including along major thoroughfares and on vacant parking lot sites, is integral to the development of complete communities. This said, the DNA's historic dedication to protecting the diversity, vibrancy, and historic character of our neighbourhood remains, now with a focus on the effective implementation of the Downtown Secondary Plan. An effective implementation is one that respects the need for a diverse range of housing for residents of all income levels in the Durand, one that continues to protect the historic character of our neighbourhood, and one that realizes an increased vibrancy in the commercial portions of the Durand, both along Main Street and along James Street South. The DNA does not believe proposals, like the current proposal for Television City, are effective in achieving any of these goals – undisciplined intensification does not necessarily lead to affordable housing stock, the mindful preservation of historic character, or improved commercial outcome for anyone other than developers.

Additionally, as Section 37 funds become part of the development discussion in Hamilton, the DNA encourages the City to ensure that we do not fall into the trap of accepting substandard development for the sake of these funds. Section 37 funds can be used in the provision of housing, in particular rental and affordable housing; community facilities and services; new child care facilities; cultural facilities; protection of cultural heritage resources; and, transit station improvements. Certainly Hamilton could benefit to additional funds in any of these areas; however, Section 37 alone will not solely resolve any of these individual needs in the City, let alone all of them. As such, the DNA views Section 37 in much the same way we view zoning for 30 storey maximum heights in the Durand – while not inherently opposed, both should be used sparingly and only in situations where their use has been thoroughly studied and appropriately justified by City staff. To that end, the DNA supports the idea that Section 37 be utilized where an already exceptional development proposal could benefit from the additional flexibility Section 37 provides the developer, while also providing additional community benefits to the local residents.

The Durand Neighbourhood Association thanks the Committee and staff for their work in developing the Downtown Secondary Plan. We appreciate the efforts that have been made to communicate and engage with the DNA and local residents throughout the process. We support the Downtown Secondary Plan in its current form. That said, we encourage the City to be mindful in the finalization and implementation of the Plan, and to continue to engage the community to ensure that the Plan respects the needs and expectations of those it impacts.

Sincerely,

Christopher Redmond
President, Durand Neighbourhood Association

On behalf of the Board of Directors, DNA

With files and input by: Paul Nichols, Chair – DNA Planning Committee; Janice Brown, Past President; Frances Murray, Past President

CC: Jason Farr, City Councillor, Ward 2