



Monday, May 16, 2022

City of Hamilton  
Planning Committee  
71 Main Street West, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hamilton ON L8R 2K3

**RE: PED21067(B) – Municipal Comprehensive Review / Official Plan Review – Phase 1 Amendments to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and Rural Hamilton Official Plan**

**PED17010 – GRIDS 2 and Municipal Comprehensive Review - Deferred Employment Land Conversion Requests**

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To the Chair and Members of Planning Committee:

On behalf of the Upper West Side Landowners Group (UWSLG) (formerly Twenty Road West Landowners Group), Corbett Land Strategies Inc. (CLS) wishes to submit this letter in response to items PED21067(B) and PED17010 which is recommending refusal of the employment conversion request for the lands south of Twenty Road West. The UWSLG made submissions to the City in September 2017 and March 2021, requesting the City allow the conversion of lands located within the Twenty Road West, Upper James Street, Dickenson Road and Glancaster Road block.

As set out in PED17010, at the August 2021 General Issues Committee (GIC) meeting staff recommended that the proposed request be deferred until completion of the Final Land Needs Assessment (LNA). At the November 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 GIC meeting, Planning Staff presented the results of the final LNA and peer review which advised that the City had a surplus of approximately 60 ha of employment land. Staff presented a recommendation of adopting the Ambitious Density Growth Scenario which would result in an urban boundary expansion of 1,340 ha. At the following meeting, direction was provided by the GIC that a “No Urban Boundary Expansion” growth option be advanced and approved. At the April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 GIC meeting, Staff presented final recommendations for any conversion requests which included that the UWSLG conversion request not be approved. The GIC moved to have the recommendations approved.

In accordance with Staff Reports PED21067 (A & B), Staff are presenting the proposed amendments to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and Rural Hamilton Official Plan to



Planning Committee as part of the Statutory Public Meeting. Included within these amendments are the results of the recommendations from the City's Employment Land Review.

This submission is intended to provide further information to Planning Committee in consideration of the UWSLG conversion request for approval.

### **PROPOSED CONVERSION**

The UWSLG requested that the City consider the conversion of approximately 55.2 hectares or 135.9 acres of employment lands, located within the Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD). The request was made to support the creation of a mixed-use, compact residential and employment community. A community plan has been prepared which illustrates the locations of the proposed conversion and their proposed use (See Appendix A).

The lands proposed for conversion are located south of two rural pockets (white belt areas) which are entirely surrounded by the urban area. The conversion lands are generally located to south of the white belts areas and on either side of the future Garth Street extension (to Dickenson Road).

### **JUSTIFICATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION OF DESIREABLE MIXED USE/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PROXIMITY TO THE AIRPORT:**

The proposed conversion is supportable for several reasons including (and as noted above) there is a surplus of employment lands, both on a city-wide and area-specific basis for growth to 2051. Additionally, a portion of the lands requested for conversion would be used for mixed-use purposes which would be appropriate along the future Garth Street corridor and could assist in addressing the City's 2051 intensification target within the existing urban boundary.

#### **PROVISION OF MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE AS A CATALYST FOR EMPLOYMENT:**

As part of the Upper West Side proposal, the land owners are prepared to front-end finance the extension of Garth Street from Twenty Road West to Glancaster Road which is a key component of the City's AEGD road network master plan necessary to achieve the overall employment goals. To demonstrate the land owner's intent in this regard, they have submitted a draft plan of subdivision to implement the Garth Road extension and have initiated an Integrated Environmental Assessment which is fully funded by this Group. This represents defensible planning rationale to support the



conversion in consideration of the provision of this major piece of infrastructure to stimulate and accommodate employment growth within the AEGD.

### **SUSTAINABILITY:**

The portions of the lands proposed to be converted would effectively bring residential and mixed uses in close proximity to the airport as well as to facilitate the construction of a critical transportation corridor into and out of the AEGD. If converted, the proximity to employment would reduce the length and time of vehicular trips for residents travelling to and from work. Additionally, the proposed uses would improve the overall visibility, quality and profile of the AEGD lands, thereby improving the marketability to both airside and non-airside employment uses.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POSITIVE MUNICIPAL FINANCIAL IMPACT AND DELIVERY OF COMPLETE COMMUNITIES:**

The proposed employment land strategy associated with the Twenty Road West precinct is to deliver higher quality and higher density jobs. The proposed conversion could assist with this as the current employment policies may be conducive to primarily warehousing or distribution centres which typically result in significantly lower employment densities and real estate assessment.

Additionally, several of the lands proposed for conversion are too small or are contained by the natural heritage system to be used for large land sensitive employment uses. It is also important to note, that the proposed conversion lands have been designed through the creation of a comprehensive community plan which was formed on the basis of numerous technical studies including functional servicing and stormwater assessments, transportation analysis, environmental impact studies (EIS), tree protection plans and linkage assessments all funded by the landowners in consultation with City staff.

### **POSITIVE EMPLOYMENT IMPACT:**

The proposed conversion would imply a minor numerical reduction of only 14% percent of the total area provided within the development block to be used for non-employment uses. Over the planning period to 2051, this can be considered a minor or rounding adjustment to the forecast period. This reduction may also be reduced due to increases in the number of residents permanently working from home as an outcome of the COVID pandemic trend to “work-from-home”. In addition, major employers are now experiencing a critical shortage of labour supply. The residential use of the subject lands would bring residents in close proximity to major employment opportunities within the AEGD which they could reach within easy walking or cycling distances. This presents a major opportunity for the City to be a leader in mixed-use/sustainable

development in an urban context. Further, as the AEGD permits research and office within parts of these areas, it would follow trends currently permitted within areas such as the McMaster Innovation District. Accordingly, the minor conversion request will not impact the City's overall employment land supply in any meaningful way but rather will support employment growth by increasing labour markets in close proximity to the airport.

**ACHIEVE NEEDED HOUSING SUPPLY:**

The approval of the conversion request will address the critical housing supply issue in the City of Hamilton on an immediate basis by providing additional intensification opportunities within the urban area.

**AFFORDABLE/ATTAINABLE HOUSING:**

The UWSLG have always been committed to delivering affordable housing, and will incorporate this aspect into the conversion request. The provision of affordable housing in this area which is in close proximity to major airport businesses is essential to the City's employment goals for the AEGD and the city-wide housing strategy. Particularly along the future Garth Street extension, higher density residential uses such as walk-up apartments and stacked townhouses are envisioned (in keeping with the height restrictions of airport).

**INFILL / INTENSIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT:**

As the subject lands are contained entirely within the City's urban boundary, the approval of this conversion request will represent a meaningful contribution to the City's intensification strategy arising out of the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process. On this basis, the application merits approval to assist Council in implementing its strategic direction through the MCR.

**STAFF TECHNICAL COMMENTS**

As set out in the Employment Land Review: Deferred Conversion Requests and Analysis (April 2022), staff advised Committee that as the white belt areas are no longer being considered for urban boundary expansion and therefore the conversion requests are no longer necessary. Staff further advised that the removal of the lands may result in the effect of putting the City into a deficit over the planning horizon to 2051 and that the placement of sensitive uses up to the 30 NEF airport noise contours may impact the viability of the airport.

As set out in the submitted land needs assessment, undertaken by MGP City Plan (on behalf of UWSLG), it was determined that the City possesses an oversupply of employment lands of approximately 245 hectares (greater than that determined through the City's LNA). Although the City has already recommended the conversion of approximately 52 hectares of employment lands, even the ambitious density scenario preferred by staff is very optimistic and the additional conversion request enables the use of existing urban area to fulfill the overall intensification targets..

Further, the proposed conversion lands would act as a permanent buffer between the planned employment uses of the AEGD and the existing residential communities on the north side of Twenty Road West. The envisioned buffer uses would include higher density residential and mixed uses and would be separated through the use of the Natural Heritage System, noise attenuation measures and building design.

Of critical importance to the structure of the community is the boundary between employment and residential uses. In this regard, the proposed conversion lands are located up to the 30 NEF aircraft noise contour, associated with the John C Munro International Airport. As part of the application materials submitted alongside the UWSLG request, HGC Engineering prepared a Noise Impact Study which confirmed that in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), residential and other sensitive uses are permitted up to the 30 NEF:

*"Airports shall be protected from incompatible land uses and development by:*

*(a) Prohibiting new residential development and other sensitive land use in areas near airports above 30 NEF/NEP:*

*(b) Considering redevelopment of existing residential **uses and other sensitive land uses or infilling of residential and other sensitive land uses in areas above 30 NEF/NEP** only if it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the long- term functioning of the airport; and,*

*(c) Discouraging land uses which may cause a potential aviation safety hazard."*

HGC advises that the permission of these sensitive uses occurs throughout the Greater Toronto Area and even up to the 35 NEF contour. Airports including the Lester B. Pearson International Airport, the Region of Waterloo International Airport, the Billy Bishop Airport and the Buttonville Airport all permit residential and sensitive uses within or up to the 30 NEF contours. HGC further advises that through new and improved runways, quieter aircraft and overall general reduction in noise disturbance the NEF



contours associated with the Hamilton airport are expected to shrink from 2015 to 2025. This shrinking is confirmed within the Hamilton Airport Master Plan, following the completion of the Hamilton International Airport Noise Impact & Evaluation Study (2006). Although the anticipated NEF contours have not been updated within the City's Official Plan schedules, the proposed location of the conversion lands have taken incorporated the latest delineation of the contours shared within that report.

It is also important to acknowledge, that the City ***has considered and approved residential uses within the NEF 30 contours***, since the implementation of the Hamilton Official Plans. Similar to these developments, residential uses would necessitate the completion of a detailed noise study at the time of the land use planning application and would be required to employ noise mitigation measures and appropriate warning clauses. In our submission, the City should be accepting the provincial standard as one additional mechanism by which to ensure all urban land is available to be utilized for intensification.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through the review of the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), Provincial Growth Plan (2020), the City's draft Land Needs Assessment and an independent review of residential and employment land needs, it is revealed that there is a distinct and unique opportunity to implement the City's strategic goals through the approval of the requested conversions.

The UWSLG emphasizes that the approval of the conversion request would assist in the delivery of critical infrastructure that will effectively implement and not preclude the Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD) Secondary Plan. Rather, it would set a precedent in achieving mixed - use sustainable development in close proximity to major employers. In this regard, we believe that the Planning Committee should consider request for employment conversion is appropriate and should be considered for approval.

Sincerely,

*John Corbett*

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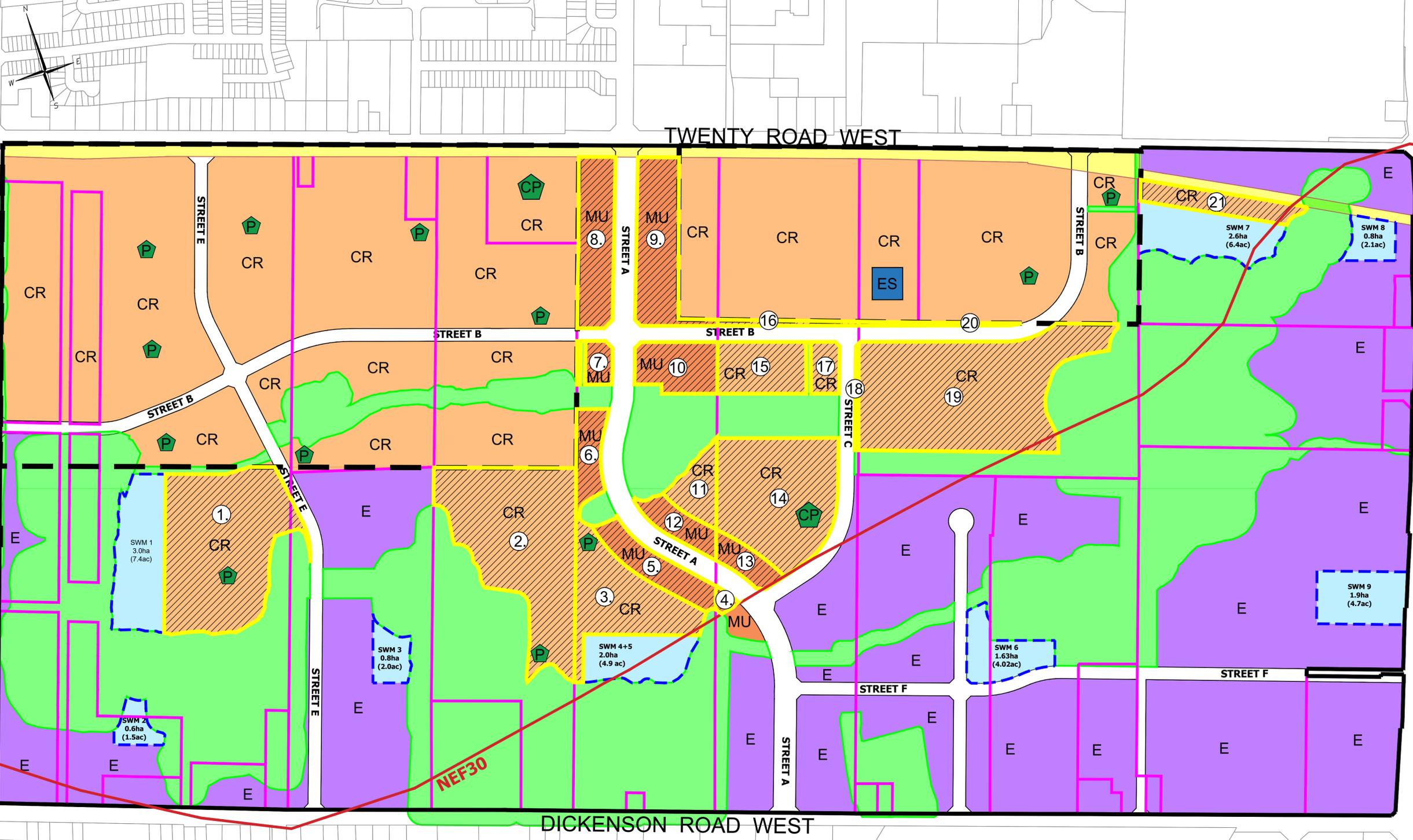
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CC: Clerk, City of Hamilton  
Jason Thorne, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development  
Steve Robichaud, Chief Planner



## **APPENDIX A**



KEY MAP:



LEGEND:

- Compact Residential Development:
- Mixed Use Development:
- Employment:
- Natural Heritage System:
- Stormwater Management Ponds:
- Hydro Corridor:
- Lands to be Converted:
- Block Boundaries:
- Property Lines:
- Community Park:
- Parkette:
- Elementary School:

BLOCK STATS:

Block Number:	Area:	Block Number:	Area:
1.	8.77 ha /21.66 ac	12.	0.96 ha /2.37 ac
2.	8.35 ha /20.64 ac	13.	0.79 ha /1.95 ac
3.	3.52 ha /8.69 ac	14.	5.73 ha /14.16 ac
4.	0.12 ha /0.30 ac	15.	1.87 ha /4.63 ac
5.	1.51 ha /3.74 ac	16.	0.30 ha /0.75 ac
6.	1.04 ha /2.58 ac	17.	0.61 ha /1.51 ac
7.	0.54 ha /1.34 ac	18.	0.15 ha /0.37 ac
8.	2.54 ha /6.27 ac	19.	10.81 ha /26.70 ac
9.	3.07 ha /7.58 ac	20.	0.20 ha /0.49 ac
10.	1.67 ha /4.12 ac	21.	1.37 ha /3.38 ac
11.	1.08 ha /2.66 ac	Totals:	55.00 ha /135.91 ac

# Proposed Lands to be Converted

## Upper West Side Community Plan

Scale: N.T.S.



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