

April 1, 2021

Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

Chair and Members of the Planning Committee:

RE: Temporary Amendments to the Cash-In-Lieu of Parking Policy for the Downtown Secondary Plan Area (PED21028) (Ward 2)

The West End Home Builders' Association (WE HBA) is the voice of the land development, new housing and professional renovation industries in Hamilton and Halton Region. The WE HBA represents nearly 300 member companies made up of all disciplines involved in land development and residential construction, including: builders, developers, professional renovators, trade contractors, consultants, and suppliers. The residential construction industry employed over 27,300 people, paying \$1.7 billion in wages, and contributed over \$3.0 billion in investment value within the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area in 2019.

Our industry is constantly facing challenges that affect our ability to build the necessary supply of new housing to meet growing demand for a variety of housing options in Hamilton. In February, WE HBA wrote to the Mayor supporting the recommendations in the report of the *Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery*. WE HBA had a direct role on the *Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery*, where WE HBA 1st Vice President Terri Johns worked collaboratively to provide our recommendations within a multi-sector approach to guide Hamilton's recovery.

The WE HBA would like to draw to the attention of Planning Committee members, the high cost of free parking. Parking should not be considered a public good, in fact it has many negative and costly externalities, especially in a city attempting to increase intensification during a declared climate emergency and in the midst of a housing affordability crisis. The City of Hamilton currently requires developers to provide a minimum number of parking spaces per residential unit built – a significant cost that gets passed onto homebuyers (or renters). In denser areas, creating an above ground parking structure costs about \$30,000 per space, whereas underground parking costs even more, at approximately \$60,000 per space depending on the water table and soil conditions.

Demand for parking is shifting as a result of societal changes and other factors. Requiring minimum parking standards makes no sense for developments near transit, in a society that utilizes "car sharing" apps, or for a city seeking to reduce GHG emissions. The *Mayor's Task Force Report* notes a short-term opportunity for, "cash-in-lieu of parking requirements – to create temporary City policy for 2-3 years that allows for a development in certain areas to have reduced parking requirements in exchange for cash-in-lieu of parking." The *Mayor's Task Force Report* further recommends taking action for, "staff and council to explore changes to parking requirements through the task force as an opportunity for economic recovery and stimulus."



The WE HBA strongly supports this initiative to modify the City's existing Cash-In-Lieu of Parking (CILP) Policy to provide for a temporary, reduced cash-in-lieu of parking fee within the Downtown Secondary Plan (DTSP) Area for a temporary period. The WE HBA believes that there are further opportunities moving forward to explore reductions to parking minimums and/or cash-in-lieu policies to improve housing affordability, encourage construction of transit-oriented communities, more efficiently use valuable land for uses other than surface parking, reduce GHG emissions in the City of Hamilton, and to reflect declining automobile ownership.

The WE HBA would like to highlight that other cities are taking action on this issue. Recently, the City of Edmonton eliminated minimum parking requirements, multiple American cities have reduced or eliminated parking requirements, and the City of Toronto tabled a report on January 5, 2021 to its Planning and Housing Committee to review and consider reductions of their minimum parking requirements. The previous provincial government under Premier Kathleen Wynne had begun initial steps through their Climate Change Action Plan through which the provincial government was aiming to eliminate parking requirements from municipal zoning bylaws. Simply put, minimum parking requirements are an antiquated planning standard for a modern 21st century city.

The WE HBA looks forward to working with the City of Hamilton to improve the public policy framework to deliver new housing supply in complete communities with reduced parking requirements. A collaborative approach between the construction sector and government is essential to delivering needed housing supply, spurring economic growth, and creating good jobs in our city. We look forward to working with the City of Hamilton to modify the City's existing Cash-In-Lieu of Parking Policy to provide for a temporary, reduced cash-in-lieu of parking fee within the Downtown Secondary Plan (DTSP) Area for a temporary period.

Sincerely,



Michael Collins-Williams, MCIP, RPP
Chief Executive Officer
West End Home Builders' Association



Terri Johns, MCIP, RPP
First Vice President
West End Home Builders' Association

c. Jason Farr – City of Hamilton – Councillor Ward 2

c. Jason Thorne – City of Hamilton - GM Planning & Economic Development

