



April 19, 2023

**Re: Item 8.2 – Five-Year Review of the ERASE
Community Improvement Plan and Associated Financial Assistance Programs**

As President & CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, I have the privilege of speaking for our nearly 1,000 member organizations that employ over 75,000 people in our community, and have the privilege of welcoming so many new businesses to Hamilton each year looking to contribute to our growing and evolving economy. I would like to take this opportunity to express our support for the continuation of the Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement (ERASE) Community Improvement Plan and the associated program updates contained within PED23076.

The ERASE Community Improvement Plan is a worthwhile municipal investment that generates not only additional municipal tax revenue, but also spurs economic activity and job creation in an environmentally sensitive manner. The program has successfully supported the remediation and redevelopment of vacant, derelict or under-utilized environmentally contaminated properties in the City by providing financial assistance through cost-sharing grants and/or low-interest loans to private sector players looking to grow or establish an economic footprint in Hamilton.

What makes this program so unique is how it levels the playing field such that contaminated properties can be considered for redevelopment on an equal footing, financial or otherwise, as non-contaminated properties. These incentives ensure that the City's brownfields are not overlooked for easier development prospects in undeveloped and agricultural greenfield lands and demonstrates that brownfields can support City goals and policies particularly with respect to the directing of population and employment growth to vacant and underutilized properties in our existing urban area.

The Chamber would like to echo the comments from staff about the significant positive impact that the ERASE Community Improvement Plan and associated programs have had on generating new assessment and municipal tax growth from under-utilized and vacant brownfields, specifically, noting that since 2001, the ERASE program have leveraged approximately \$18.00 in private sector investment for every \$1.00 provided in municipal financial assistance towards site remediation and resulted in the creation of over 3,300 new residential units and over 1.9 million square feet of industrial/commercial/institutional floor area on brownfield sites. This contributes to an estimated total of over \$11M in annual municipal property tax revenue, and the program is only expected to maintain its momentum.

The Chamber is supportive of the continuation of these financial incentives and support the amendments being proposed by staff to increase the eligibility of the program and improve overall program efficiency. It is also important to note that the ERASE Community Improvement Plan supports key City policy objectives including improving environmental conditions for residents, increasing new assessment and municipal property taxes to support broader tax reliant services and initiatives, directing population and employment growth to existing urban areas through intensification of vacant and under-utilized properties, all the while enabling new economic development opportunities.

In closing, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce would like to express its support for the staff report as drafted and believe that this is a productive investment into Hamilton's economy that will generate significant environmental and economic returns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G.D.', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Greg Dunnett
President & CEO