



March 18, 2025

From:
West End Home Builders' Association
1112 Rymal Road East
Hamilton, Ontario L8W 3N7

To:
Members of General Issues Committee
City of Hamilton
71 Main St W, Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

WE HBA Letter: Hamilton Downtown Office Conversion Pilot

The West End Home Builders' Association ("WE HBA") is the voice of the land development, new housing and professional renovation industries in Hamilton, Burlington, and Grimsby. WE HBA represents 320 member companies made up of all disciplines involved in land development and residential construction.

WE HBA understands that the City is proposing to bring forward to GIC a proposed pilot Downtown Hamilton Office Conversion Grant program, which will provide grants on a per-unit basis as well as for the cost of feasibility studies. Downtown Hamilton is facing two related challenges; difficulties in offices in finding and retaining tenants, as well as an extremely difficult new condo market in Downtown and across the City. As identified in the report, office conversions can be extremely difficult to carry out at great cost to developers. This program is welcome to help address challenges in Downtown and in office conversions, and supporting the new home industry. While WE HBA appreciates and supports the program being brought forward, we are concerned there will be a lack of uptake due to the amounts proposed. WE HBA appreciates the intent to create an incentive for long-term office investors to reconsider long-term plans, as well as a desire not undercut affordable housing development incentives offered by the City. However, in future, a Tax Increment Equivalent Grant system directed at office conversions, or higher grant values if approved, would improve uptake and drive economic development Downtown. Additionally, WE HBA encourages 21a. to be modified to allow for a longer lapsing period in better alignment with proposed Site Plan lapsing provisions presented to DILG in January. Those proposed provisions allow for two-one-year extensions and extension criteria for clearance of conditions needed to be cleared by an outside agency or where the applicant is unable to clear a condition due to delays in the completion of City infrastructure projects. WE HBA greatly appreciates the focus of Planning and Economic Development in advancing Community Improvement Plans and development incentives. We are eager to work collaboratively with Council to ensure Hamilton is an attractive place for investment in housing supply and for jobs in construction as we work together to achieve Hamilton's housing target of 47,000 new homes by 2031.

Sincerely,

Anthony Salemi, BURPI
Planner, Policy and Government Relations
West End Home Builders' Association