

February 20, 2012

E-Mailed to:

Hamilton City Hall

2nd floor - 71 Main St. West

Hamilton, Ontario, L8P 4Y5

Fax: 905-546-2535

Dear Mayor & Members of Council,
Brenda Johnson,

I am a concerned condo owner in your Ward. We know that you understand we do not receive equal services for equal taxes.

As you know, condominiums are classed by MPAC as "residential" properties, exactly the same as non-condo single family homes. That means tens of thousands of Hamilton condo homeowners are assessed property taxes on the same basis as non-condo homeowners. However, that is where the similarity ends. While non-condo developments receive all municipal services automatically, their condo neighbours do not. These services include fire hydrant testing and repairs, street-lighting, sewer maintenance, larvae-ciding for west Nile virus, snow plowing, city road signage, road maintenance, and the list goes on.

Condo' corporations are forced to outsource many municipal-type services' and pay for them with condo' fees. Thus condo owners' end up paying twice for services - it's double taxation! Ironically at the same time as condos pay twice for services, they provide municipalities like Hamilton with 20% to 30% more tax revenue per hectare than do non-condos - not to mention the added city benefit of costing much less to connect utilities. In many instances condos also use less energy per household than non-condos. Condos lessen the burden on civic recreation facilities by providing fitness centers, pools, party rooms, hobby facilities, etc.

Access to private property is not an issue. All levels of government already access condo properties on a regular basis - whether to enforce private property parking by-laws, install post office super mailboxes (and bulk boxes) and enforcement of handicap and Fire Route parking restrictions. Forward-thinking planners recognize the advantage of condos to municipal infrastructure management.

We do appreciate that in 2010 Council directed staff to "investigate and report back with a plan for attempting to mitigate the costs of services provided to condominiums". As a concerned taxpayer, I would ask that Council respond now to address this unfairness, such as:

- Provide the same services to condos as non-condos.
- Provide rebates for services not delivered as does Brantford.
- Make available a city's bulk rates for delivery of a service to be used by condos.
- Urge the provincial government, as did Markham, to establish new property classes for single, townhouse and high-rise condos.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your reply.
Sincerely,