



November 12, 2020

Mayor Brown and Members of Council
Corporation of the City of Brampton
2 Wellington Street
Brampton, ON L6Y 4R2

Re: City of Brampton's October 22nd, 2020 presentation to Region of Peel Council regarding Planning for the Heritage Heights Community related to the regional GTA West Corridor highway update

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

Further to our letter of July 17th, we are writing today to express concern that Brampton City Council has approved a concept for development of Heritage Heights and has sought endorsement from Region of Peel Council, without sharing key information vital to the success of the Heritage Heights development. We are concerned that Regional Council is being asked to make a decision to endorse a flawed 2020 concept plan, without full information.

On behalf of Brampton's business community, we have a number of questions and comments regarding the City of Brampton's presentation to Region of Peel Council on October 22nd. In that presentation, Brampton planners provided only two potential development concept options: one from 2014 which doesn't account for a GO Station and hospital, and the other, a 2020 boulevard option, which is both radical and untested anywhere. Further, the October 22nd presentation to Region of Peel Council seems to have omitted a number of important facts, namely, that the Transportation Minister has clearly stated that the concept plan is incompatible with current provincial plans.

As well, it is important to note that Minister Sarkaria has made it clear to us that he is supportive of development at Heritage Heights but is not working with the City of Brampton on advocacy for the boulevard concept. Both he and MPP Sandhu understand the importance of supply chain to our regional economy, and are on record supporting the GTA West Corridor highway. In our July 17th letter, we encouraged Brampton City Council to ask administration for another concept plan. **Can you clarify, has City Council asked planners for an alternative plan to be fully-scoped and shared with Brampton citizens?** Simply put, without asking City of Brampton planning staff to present an alternative and more realistic concept plan, development and job-creation at Heritage Heights will hang in the balance.

Trust in municipal administration falters when oversight from elected leaders falls short. In reviewing the October 22nd presentation to regional Council, it is the Board of Trade's opinion

that City of Brampton staff inappropriately suggested that, due to potential complexities, the GTA West corridor highway “may never happen”. It would seem from these comments, and from comments from some members of Council, that there is a bias and an urgency to rush Peel Region Council to making a decision to approve the boulevard concept. Indication from the Province is that work on the GTA West corridor highway is moving forward, in fact, being accelerated. The comments made at Regional Council would, therefore, appear to be misleading to the Peel community. Let’s be clear. It is inappropriate for staff to convey a reality which is inaccurate: there is not widespread support for this flawed concept plan. Staff presentations should not convey a stance of the Province of Ontario, that is contrary to the Province’s public position, especially at a public meeting where provincial staff are not present.

The Board of Trade is disappointed that City of Brampton staff provided a presentation that lacked the identification of realistic options, omitted the concerns of the business community, failed to engage the goods movement industry (to which 44% of Peel’s workforce owes their livelihood) and seems contrary to the proposed direction provided by provincial ministry staff.

Further, we share the concerns expressed by regional council about the concept plan and are also concerned about respect for taxpayers. In addition to many technically incompatible transportation issues in the 2020 concept plan, no information on cost nor funding mechanisms for the 2020 concept plan have been analyzed. The potential cost to the goods movement industry, in particular, must also be ascertained.

The GTA West corridor is essential to goods movement and to industries and logistics companies situated not only in and around Brampton, but also across the province. There has been no focused engagement or technical analysis conducted related to goods movement impact, yet unsupported claims are being presented. The Board of Trade requests that far more engagement take place, to highlight the views and concerns of our key businesses and that, up to date technical analysis be undertaken.

The Board of Trade disagrees with the assumptions and potential economic impact identified within the Watson report. In our opinion, the estimates provided are incomplete and inaccurate given the narrow scope of the study. Again, had more options been identified and fully analyzed, this would have provided a better analysis and greater transparency to the community.

The Board of Trade believes that more analysis is required to sustain the argument made by City staff that the proposed boulevard would be a superior option in economic terms, and as a business address, than development that included a highway. There are no relevant examples in the world of a similar design of a boulevard in the middle of an expressway, being successful in a suburban context. By comparison, a good and relevant example of a highway close to home is the 403/QEW, which bisects Oakville and is home to prestigious employer addresses along

the highway such as Siemens, Avia and the WSIB headquarters. City staff refer to the Champs Elysees, which would not seem to be a relevant comparator.

In addition to the lack of identification of all available options, it would seem that City staff have presented the argument that the proposed boulevard can be constructed within a faster timeline. Given the lack of identification and analysis of other potential options, it is unclear how this determination can be made, and how the City would have control of such timelines. The Board of Trade would like to signify further disappointment that City staff stated at the October 22nd presentation to regional Council that support for their proposed single-focused approach was widespread. The Board of Trade has articulated its concern with the proposed approach and request that clarification be provided to Regional Council to correct this inaccuracy.

In summary, City staff must provide greater transparency to Council, to Brampton businesses, and to the community. This includes developing realistic alternative options, conducting proper, un-biased appraisals of each option to offer comparisons, developing costing information and analyzing funding options.

Sincerely,



Vanessa White
Chair, Brampton Board of Trade



Todd Letts,
CEO, Brampton Board of Trade

cc:

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation
Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction
Amarjot Sandhu, MPP, Brampton West
Nando Iannicca, Chair, Region of Peel and Members of Regional Council
Bonnie Crombie, Mayor, City of Mississauga and Members of City Council
Allan Thompson, Mayor, Town of Caledon and Members of Town Council