June 2, 2026

Open Letter to Mayor and Members of Council: Immediate Action Required for Development Charges Reduction Program Application

Dear Mayor Horwath and Members of Council,

On behalf of the West End Home Builders' Association (WE HBA), the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce (HCC), the Hamilton-Halton Construction Association (HHCA), and the Cornerstone Association of REALTORS®, we are writing to urge the City of Hamilton to act immediately and decisively to submit an application to the newly announced *Development Charges Reduction Program* (DCRP)[1], introduced by the provincial and federal governments, prior to the **June 19, 2026 deadline**. The program provides municipalities with a significant opportunity to secure funding support for housing-enabling infrastructure while reducing development charges to stimulate new housing supply and economic growth.

The DCRP presents a rare opportunity for municipalities to secure substantial provincial and federal funding support for infrastructure while reducing development charges to stimulate new housing supply. Under the program, municipalities may receive funding covering up to 90 percent of eligible infrastructure costs associated with roads, water, wastewater, and transit infrastructure, provided municipalities commit to reducing development charges by 30 to 50 percent or more over a three-year period.

At a time when new housing construction has slowed dramatically, investment decisions are becoming increasingly competitive, and economic uncertainty continues to impact local industries and jobs, Hamilton must position itself to compete for private sector investment. Municipalities across Ontario will move quickly to secure this funding. A number of municipalities including Mississauga, Vaughan, York Region and Barrie have proactively taken action and are well positioned to receive tens of millions (potentially upwards of $100 million) in growth related infrastructure funding from senior levels of government. Hamilton must do the same.

The consequences of inaction are significant. Hamilton is already facing mounting affordability pressures, declining residential construction activity, and growing concerns regarding the city's ability to attract and retain investment. Missing this opportunity would place Hamilton at a further disadvantage at a time when every available tool to support housing supply, infrastructure investment, and economic growth must be pursued aggressively.

We acknowledge that Hamilton's recently approved 20 percent reduction in development charges was an important and positive first step. However, to maximize the City's competitiveness under the *Development Charges Reduction Program* and meaningfully stimulate housing construction, **the reduction must be broadened to apply to all residential development applications, including shovel-ready projects with previously locked-in development charge rates.** Excluding these projects would limit the program's ability to accelerate housing starts and bring new supply to market. In addition, it is essential that the City pursue at least a further 10 percent reduction in development charges as part of its application. The program criteria explicitly states, "through the program, municipalities will need to reduce DCs by 30% to 50% or more for 3 years". Municipalities across Ontario will be competing directly with one another to attract housing investment and secure the funding, and those municipalities that demonstrate the strongest commitment to

[1] https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-charges-reduction-program

meaningful development charge reductions will be best positioned to attract new housing development, jobs, and long-term economic growth. Hamilton must demonstrate that it is serious about supporting housing supply, investment attraction, and economic growth by putting forward the strongest and most ambitious application possible.

We recognize that the Province has established an extremely compressed timeline and that preparing a competitive application will require substantial coordination across Council and staff. However, **the urgency of the moment demands immediate action**. This is not simply a housing issue; it is an economic competitiveness issue, a jobs issue, and a city-building issue.

Our organizations want to be clear that the City has our full support in pursuing this funding opportunity. We are prepared to work collaboratively with the City and staff in any way that may assist in advancing a successful application prior to the June 19 deadline, including providing industry insight, economic perspective, market information, housing pipeline context, and stakeholder support.

Hamilton cannot afford to let this opportunity pass by. Programs of this scale and significance are truly once-in-a-generation opportunities that have the potential to reshape the city's economic and housing future for decades to come. This initiative presents Hamilton with a rare chance to secure transformative infrastructure investment, unlock new housing supply, improve affordability, stimulate economic growth and job creation, and position the city as a leading destination for investment and development in Ontario.

We respectfully urge Council and staff to move swiftly and urgently to ensure Hamilton submits a strong and competitive application.

Sincerely,

Mike Collins-Williams
Chief Executive Officer
West End Home Builders' Association

Greg Dunnett
President & CEO
Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

Stéphane Hamade
Government Relations
Cornerstone Association of REALTORS®

Sue Ramsay
General Manager
Hamilton-Halton Construction Association