

April 16, 2010

Dear Mayor Burton, Members of Council, and Staff:

We understand that Staff is currently studying a zoning by-law amendment with respect to drive-through facilities. While they present financial opportunities for businesses and serve as a convenience for consumers, it is equally important to consider their negative impact upon communities and the environment.

A review of the literature indicates that many municipalities share the following issues related to drive-throughs.

1. Such facilities encourage idling, rather than parking, resulting in the needless emission of greenhouse gases. This is of particular concern to CMGRA, as our community lies within the boundaries of the Clarkson Airshed where air quality is already overtaxed. While there are not any studies which prove how much drive-throughs affect air quality, two reports conclude:
  - a. It would be extremely difficult to attribute a human health impact related to the burden of air pollution specifically from idling vehicles at drive-through facilities. Simply from a total air shed contribution theory, any reduction of vehicle exhaust by limiting the amount of idling that may occur at drive-throughs would be a positive step (City of Hamilton, p. 6).
  - b. In terms of poor air quality, of particular concern is the cumulative health effect of drive-through clusters when combined with busy intersections, shopping areas and major roads (Region of Waterloo, p. 1)
2. Drive-throughs increase traffic congestion on streets and in parking lots (e.g. Tim Horton's at Trafalgar Road/Postridge Drive, Maple Grove Plaza) and pose safety and inconvenience issues for pedestrians and local residents. While arguments in their favour include convenience for the elderly and the disabled, it is also these groups and children who are at most risk when traffic blocks sightlines.
3. Drive-through facilities increase noise pollution from queued vehicles, vehicle speaker systems, and intercom order stations.
4. There is also an increase in litter from take-out food packaging

Within the mandate of creating a more “Livable Oakville”, we urge council and staff to consider the health and safety implications of such facilities upon its residents and the impact upon our environment, and to review other municipalities in Canada and the United States which have banned or are currently studying banning any new drive-throughs. As the authors of the Region of Waterloo Study conclude, “The benefit of the convenience of drive-throughs is generally small in comparison with the ease of turning off the engine and walking into the facility for service” (page 5).

If the Town opts to allow for drive-thru facilities, we encourage a strong zoning by-law which would protect its residents by incorporating the following minimums in its planning process: a minimum distance of 80 metres from any residence, 20 car stacking queue to prevent overflows onto sidewalks and streets, and a site size of 1 hectare. An example of a drive-through with less impact on the community would be the Tim Horton’s drive-through on Wycroft Road, across from their head office, which is situated on a large piece of land away from a residential area with a large stacking queue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dani Morawetz  
President, Chartwell-Maple Grove Residents Association

References:

City of Hamilton, Planning and Economic Development Department. *Prohibition or Regulation of Drive-Through Facilities within the City of Hamilton (PED09082) (City Wide)*. March 16 2009. <http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/7CCDF9C4-D8AE-4E82-A736-E6A3F3285E94/0/Apr07PED09082.pdf> (accessed April 15, 2010).

Region of Waterloo, Public Health. *Drive-through Facilities and Health Impacts*. May 13, 2008. [http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/region.nsf/8ef02c0fded0c82a85256e590071a3ce/C4D543DD1E70237E8525744400490252/\\$file/PH-08-023.pdf?openelement](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/region.nsf/8ef02c0fded0c82a85256e590071a3ce/C4D543DD1E70237E8525744400490252/$file/PH-08-023.pdf?openelement) (accessed April 15 2010).