

To Hamilton Mayor Bob Bratina and City Councillors

Sept 6, 2011

For Hamilton to move forward with LRT, there should have been a comprehensive, coinciding cost benefit analysis comparing the B-Line and the A-Line. Why then, did the Planning and Economic Development Dept. prioritized the B-Line and neglect to give equal time and attention to the A-Line? In order to be sustainable and not create a tax burden LRT in Hamilton must service an area of suitable development land for intensification and job creation. This objective can best be achieved with the A-Line servicing hundreds of acres of vacant development land for business and residential intensification close to the Upper James Primary Corridor. This is the area in which Hamilton will be spending over 1 Billion Dollars on infrastructure to create 30,000 future jobs. The A-Line would be used for reverse commutes for the population of both the Upper and Lower City to access their jobs and activities. This North South A Line would service the Airport, Airport Employment Lands, Red Hill Employment Lands, Mohawk College, Lime Ridge Mall, Mountain Plaza, St. Joseph's Mountain Health Care Centre, St Joseph's Hospital, McMaster University, McMaster Innovation Center, Downtown Hamilton and the Harbour.

In strict contrast the B-Line along the King and Main Corridors will disrupt traffic patterns and require the destruction of established residential neighbourhoods and small businesses in order to create small parcels of land for development intensification. It will be a difficult, costly process requiring government (taxpayer's) subsidies or incentives. With all day Go-Train Service between stations on James St. South and Centennial Parkway, it does not justify a massive capital investment in an LRT B-Line for unnecessary duplication of service. Instead this capital investment could be used to connect Hamilton's Future Economic and Transportation Engine on the Mountain to the cultural and entertainment heart of the lower city. It would also connect our business and employment lands on the mountain with the the lower city's all day Go-Train Service to Toronto giving Hamilton Business access to a market of 5 million customers in the GTA. It is short sighted and poor economics to deny the business and employment engine on the mountain LRT access to its work force and its markets.

During the numerous public information sessions, with city planners and consultants from the LRT Industry, I did not receive any convincing economic justification for building the B line before the A-line. Their argument of greater Ridership for a B line is only true if it was in service today. However in this era of bureaucracy and politics it would be remarkable if an LRT Line was in service in Hamilton in 15 years. By that time in the future the Ridership on an A-Line will surpass that of a B-line and would be an integral part of the Employment and Economic Life Line of this City. I feel that after 2 years and 3 million dollars the Planning and Economic Development Dept. should provide both City Council with a reliable and un-bias cost benefit comparison study of both the A and B LRT Lines. Without this type of information many councillors are wavering on LRT. It is therefore necessary for Council to pressure its advisers for more dependable information and accountability. Without a proper study of the LRT A-Line, Hamilton could lose a great opportunity to move forward and not settle for second best.

Sincerely

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