

Hamilton Needs to get on with implementing a Rapid Transit System

But is LRT the right
technology for Hamilton?

Request

That Council direct staff to re-evaluate bus rapid transit (BRT) for use as an interim and/or permanent RT technology, in parallel with all existing efforts to obtain funding for light rail transit (LRT), and report back to the appropriate Committee(s) at the earliest opportunity

Why Re-evaluate BRT?

- BRT technology has been off the table since 2008
- The economic, financial and technical climates have changed since 2008
- The belief that LRT would generate more economic benefit than BRT and that LRT had greater potential to attract new ridership than BRT should be challenged

Reports to Council have noted...

"It is not believed that a bus rapid transit system would have the same potential for economic prosperity of that of a light rail system"

and

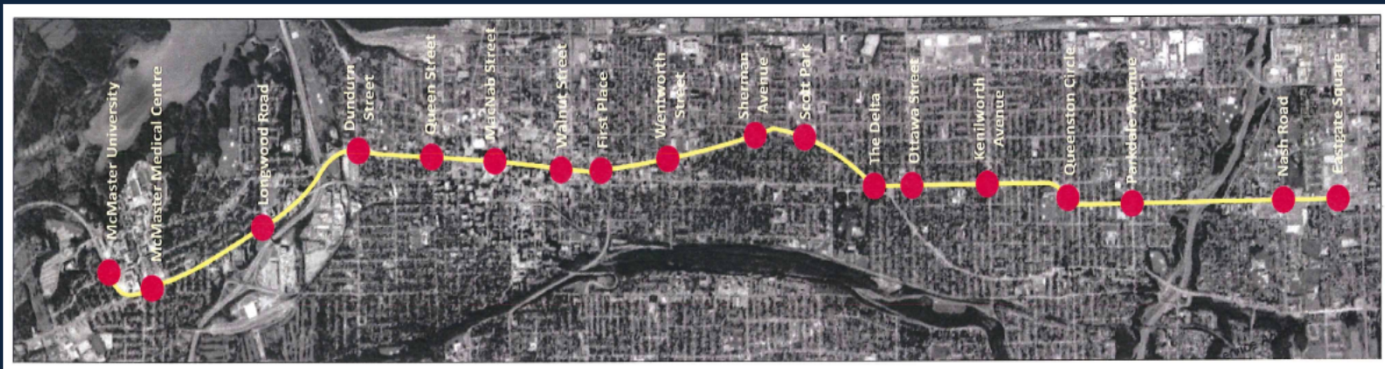
"it is generally accepted that LRT has a greater impact on investment decisions and economic growth than BRT"

The research is not that conclusive...

LRT may not necessarily result in greater economic benefit than BRT in Hamilton, *all other things being equal*...station locations, dedicated lanes, traffic signal priority for RT vehicles, high-quality urban design and streetscaping, modern efficient vehicles, and a proof-of-payment fare system

Let's find out!

It would be very instructive for the City to undertake a comprehensive review and to convene an expert panel or focus group to address the potential attractiveness of LRT or BRT for investment and development, with representation from the Hamilton area real estate and development communities





The Central Area





Around Proposed Stations



The matter of permanence...

The experience in York Region is that high-quality BRT infrastructure and stations are substantial, permanent, and supportive of higher density land use.



It would be possible to implement a BRT system that could be converted to LRT in future, if conditions warrant, as is happening in York Region's new VIVA system



Alternative fuels and propulsion...

Vehicle technology is changing, and electric, hybrid, and alternative-fuel vehicles are in use and/or are being tested in other jurisdictions



Benefits of BRT as Initial RT

- No immediate need for electrical substations, catenary wires and supports, or pantographs on vehicles
- No immediate need to remove, repair, or replace all underground infrastructure located 1.5m-3m below and beside LRT rails prior to implementation

Benefits of BRT as Initial RT

- The ability to provide more frequent service in early phases, because of smaller vehicle capacities
- Potential to proceed with the A-line concurrently with the B-line, to serve the new developments on the waterfront, at Fennell/West 5th, and elsewhere along the route

Benefits of BRT as Initial RT

- No immediate need to build rail connections to a maintenance facility on Wentworth Street North (that used to be an HSR bus facility), or to a potential alternate site in the Tiffany Block (between Barton and Stuart, west of Bay)

Benefits of BRT as Initial RT

- Ability to use James Mountain Road (the recommended route, with a grade of approximately 10.7%) instead of a new tunnel or less desirable routes such as the Claremont Access
- Ability to temporarily divert RT routes, such as on James Street North for Supercrawl, or for road or utility replacement and maintenance.

Summary

A re-evaluation of BRT as an interim and/or permanent RT technology should occur, in parallel with all existing efforts to secure funding for LRT in Hamilton. The investigation of BRT should look closely at the economic, environmental, and social benefits and costs relative to LRT in the context of the current economic, political, and technical climates. Should BRT be shown to be the preferred technology, Council can determine appropriate next steps in securing funding, ideally without going back to square one in the process.



Thank you for your
time and attention