

Hamilton City Council
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main St. W.
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

May 5/16

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am writing in opposition to the current plans to develop a Light Rail Transit (LRT) through downtown Hamilton for at least the following reasons:

- 1) I understand that Metrolinx requires that Hamilton assign this Toronto-based development company right of way on the streets where it has offered to build rail transit (Main, King, James). It seems to me that the Council that approves this will be selling the ability to ever do anything to those streets without approval from an out-of-city source. There will be no alternative for Hamilton to ever gain control of its transit or traffic affairs because Metrolinx can insist on any number of further changes in the future (which we could be obliged to carry out), or prevent any alternatives but theirs. The heart of our city will be sold.
- 2) The LRT is as inflexible as the behaviours in the period in which our previous streetcar system was created (1890's). In those days, the streetcars met the needs of an urban population. Competition for road space was with horse-drawn carts and occasional cars. That system was torn up because it no longer met suburban needs, bicycle traffic and increased traffic flow. The proposed LRT repeats this strangulation of city traffic by its inability to respond to snow problems, accidents, delivery schedules, and other road users. Robot vehicles and a battery transit system are at hand while dinosaurs are discussed.
- 3) Toronto's rail transit system should be the warning of all the patterns Hamilton seeks to avoid. While Provincial developers, based in Toronto, might seek to turn Hamilton into Toronto West, the proposed solutions will not move suburban riders in our city. Our Transit Problem is in how to put a public transit vehicle at a convenient stop every five minutes if you ever hope to offer voters an alternative to gas automobiles and meet carbon-footprint objectives for the coming decades – that and moving traffic up and down the escarpment. Council has been dazzled by smoke and mirrors.
- 4) The proposed supplier of rail cars, Bombardier, has a poor record for supplying its products on schedule and on budget. Its current failings to deliver aircraft to a world market without dizzying subsidies and rail transit cars for Toronto is testament enough. I do not think it is Hamilton's duty to support partisan objectives in Thunder Bay - Superior North
- 5) In order to finance the Billion Dollar price-tag that has been handed out with such seductive largess, it has sold the birthright of Ontario citizens that was established by Sir Adam Beck who sought to build a province that would never be at the whim of coal suppliers in a foreign country. For Hamilton to support this practice will require some explaining. It indents every taxpayer for a century to paying for an ineffective, obsolete system.
- 6) What Metrolinx will do to Hamilton small business along the right of way is already proclaimed by practice in Toronto. "Collateral Damage," its been called. Did the Toronto-based group who built the Stadium finish its job yet? The illusion of jobs in Hamilton will at best be accomplished by sub-contract work. Hamilton is being called upon to approve another means to pump funds to investors far away.