



The Rolston Neighbourhood Planning Team

Rolston.Planning.Team@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/rolston.neighbourhood

Dear Honourable Mayor and Council,

Re: Supporting Light Rail Transit (LRT) in Hamilton

The Rolston Planning Team (RPT) is writing to you today to affirm our support for Light Rail Transit (LRT) in Hamilton. At our monthly meeting for residents on May 17, 2016, a fruitful discussion concluded with agreement regarding the great overall benefit of LRT for our city.

In 2005, The Province of Ontario introduced the Places to Grow Act and the Greenbelt Plan in order to require cities like Hamilton to develop in sustainable ways by requiring urban density and limiting suburban sprawl. In order to meet provincially required targets like ensuring that 60% of growth occurs in already built-up areas, cities like Hamilton developed plans like our “Rapid Ready” report in order to prepare for the development of LRT which will help to drive this kind of sustainable development. In 2015, The Province of Ontario announced that it would give the full cost of \$1 billion to the City of Hamilton to construct the LRT B-Line which Hamilton’s city council had approved several times over the course of previous years. The RPT is thankful for this gift from the Province and is excited about what it means for the future of Hamilton.

As you already know, the benefits of an LRT in Hamilton are vast and include health, transportation, economic and cultural benefits. Quality public transit is an important civic value for many Rolston residents who regularly benefit from the HSR services in our neighbourhood. In fact, one of the most exciting aspects of the current B-Line LRT process is the sense that it means the A-Line LRT of Hamilton’s BLAST network is closer to becoming a reality as well. The A-Line will run along the East side of the Yeoville portion of the Rolston neighbourhood and will be a welcome benefit to the residents here.

We understand that the city councilors who represent both the Ward 7 (Donna Skelly) and Ward 8 (Terry Whitehead) sides of our neighbourhood have publicly expressed concern about the current LRT project, which we understand and respect. The RPT recognizes that the tax benefits of LRT outweigh the tax benefits of refusing LRT (due to the dense, urban development that LRT is a catalyst for and the road maintenance costs saved by diverting vehicle traffic, among other things). However, we want to thank our councilors for voicing around the council table our concerns about the tax impact that the LRT could have for residents. In accordance with the RPT’s hope that the tax impact of LRT on Hamiltonians is kept to a minimum, we both applaud our councilors for their efforts in ensuring this and request that they re-affirm council’s support for the project should a motion to do so come to a vote. We hope that the Mayor and all councilors will do the same.

The other significant concern from the RPT is that of maintaining affordability for various income levels along the LRT corridor. Rolston is a diverse neighbourhood with various income levels. We recognize that LRT brings economic benefits, including often increasing the value of properties along its route, but for some of us this brings with it economic hardships. Ensuring that affordable housing is included in developments along the LRT line, perhaps by the adoption of inclusionary zoning policies, is important to us.

Thank you very much! Keep up your good work and all the best,

The Rolston Neighbourhood Planning Team
cc: Clr. Terry Whitehead and Clr. Donna Skelly