



Hamilton/Burlington
Society of Architects

May 29, 2016

City of Hamilton Mayor's Office
Hamilton City Hall
2nd floor - 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Attention: Hon Mayor Fred Eisenberger

Dear Mr. Eisenberger,

This letter is a reconfirmation of endorsement by the Hamilton Burlington Society of Architects (HBSA) for a Light Rail Transit (LRT) line in Hamilton. We as an organization feel that LRT is the right decision with the greatest benefits for our city – this echoes the conclusions of the City of Hamilton's two-phase feasibility study that was unanimously endorsed by our city council.

New and projected development leading the way for LRT

Currently Hamilton has over 20 new multiple residential developments in construction or planning stages within the city's core, representing approximately 1600 units. This is an unprecedented number not seen in decades. These developments demonstrate a clear trend towards denser urban living – a trend that will be supported and made more successful by the access to expedient and convenient high quality transit afforded by an LRT line.

These developments are just the beginning of a projected 100,000 new Hamilton residents over the next 25 years. To accommodate this influx, LRT will encourage development and densification along its route within the city's built-up area, supporting many of the principles laid out in the province's *Places to Grow* strategy by:

- Revitalizing our downtown to become vibrant and convenient centres,
- Curbing sprawl and protecting farmland and green spaces,
- Reducing traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation options.

Investment in LRT is the best long-term fiscal decision

While the upfront costs of LRT are significant, we have a largely unprecedented opportunity to accept full funding from the province. Both the City and the province have concluded it is a worthwhile investment with feasibility and benefits case studies determining that it will generate a large net benefit in increased tax assessment.

As LRT encourages concentrated growth within its proximity, the expense of new public infrastructure will be greatly reduced as the need for new greenfield developments will also be reduced. Furthermore, LRT has a lower per-passenger operating cost than alternatives such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or traditional buses. Long term, LRT has been demonstrated to be the investment with the best fiscal return for the future.

Hamilton has the commuting habits to support LRT today

70% of Hamiltonians live and work within the city. Among other regional cities provincially, that live-work balance is second only to Toronto at 80%. As an LRT line will run directly through our largest job cluster (the downtown core), many of these intra-city commuters will be given a new commuting option that is fast, reliable, and more environmentally sustainable.

LRT will ensure Hamilton remains competitive

As Hamilton's economy transitions from its predominantly industrial past, the city is emerging as a leader in healthcare and innovation with a diverse economy. We need to ensure we remain competitive, attracting new businesses and talent to our city and province.

An investment in LRT will send a clear message that Hamilton is serious about its future as a livable, sustainable, and economically vibrant centre.

It is the hope of the HBSA that you will invest in Hamilton by re-affirming Hamilton's support for LRT, accepting provincial funding of an LRT line.

Sincerely,

The Hamilton Burlington Society of Architects

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CC
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