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PRESENTATION TO CITY LRT COMMITTEE OCTOBER 25, 2016

GOOD AFTERNOON, AND THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THIS PRESENTATION.

THE LRT STUDIES THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND ARE BASED ON (A) THE TRANSIT MASTER PLAN OF 2007 AND (B) PLACES TO GROW, THE ONTARIO ACT PASSED IN 2005.

LET ME START WITH THE TRANSIT MASTER PLAN. OF 2007. THIS PLAN WAS APPARENTLY UPDATED, WITH A REPORT PRESENTED TO COUNCIL SOMETIME EARLIER THIS YEAR, BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANYTHING ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE TO TELL ME HOW THE PLAN HAS PROGRESSED.

THE 2007 PLAN'S GOAL WAS TO INCREASE ANNUAL TRANSIT RIDES PER CAPITA FROM 40 UP TO BETWEEN 80 AND 100. LOOKING AT THE PAST 10 YEARS, TOTAL RIDERSHIP HAS INCREASED FROM 21,165,302 IN 2006 TO 21,906,762 IN 2015. A WHOPPING INCREASE OF 3.5%. TAKING A LONGER LOOK AT 30 YEARS, RIDERSHIP HAS DECREASED FROM 31,482,000 IN 1986 TO 21,906,762 IN 2015, A 30% DECREASE.

YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK AT WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MANUFACTURING IN HAMILTON TO EXPLAIN THIS DECREASE. INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER GONE, P&G GONE, FIRESTONE GONE, WESTINGHOUSE GONE, STELCO ALMOST GONE, ARCELOR DOFASCO HALF THE EMPLOYMENT OF 10 YEARS AGO, AND ALL THE GOODS AND SERVICES THAT WENT WITH THESE JOBS. NOW THE BIG EMPLOYERS ARE HOSPITALS AND UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES. NO WONDER THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SAID THAT HAMILTON'S MAJOR EMPLOYERS WANT THE LRT - THESE ARE THE ONLY PEOPLE THAT WILL BE USING IT. AND THEY DON'T WANT TO GO AGAINST ANYTHING THAT THE LIBERALS SAY - LIBERALS HOLD THEIR PURSE STRINGS TOO.

THE NUMBERS TELL US THAT RIDERSHIP IS NOT GOING TO MAKE THE 80 TO 100 ANNUAL TRANSIT RIDES PER CAPITA FOR A LONG TIME TO COME IF EVER. THE ONLY NUMBER THAT I COULD FIND STATED THAT HAMILTON IS AT 45 ANNUAL TRANSIT RIDES PER CAPITA.

SO WE HAVE AN LRT PLAN THAT HAS, ACCORDING TO TABLE A (PAGE 151) OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 2013 REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND GENERAL ISSUES COMMITTEE, AN INCREASE IN RIDERSHIP IN 2031 TO 33.86 MILLION, FROM 21,906,762 LAST YEAR, AN INCREASE OF 55%. DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT THIS IS REALISTIC, GIVEN THAT THERE WILL BE NO PLACE TO PARK CARS AT EITHER END OF THE LRT, NOR PARKING OF ANY CONSEQUENCES ALONG THE ROUTE.

THIS SAME STUDY, BY THE WAY, HAS OPERATING COSTS PER RIDE GOING DOWN SUBSTANTIALLY WITH THE LRT. AT THE FIRST MEETING THAT I ATTENDED ABOUT THE LRT, I ASKED THE QUESTION "HOW IS THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED HUGE INCREASE IN ELECTRICITY RATES GOING TO IMPACT ON OPERATING COSTS?" AND THE ANSWER WAS WE HAVEN'T LOOKED AT THAT YET. AT THIS POINT IT LOOKS LIKE THE INCREASE MIGHT BE OVER 40% IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS, AND GOING UP FROM THERE. HOW CAN YOU NOT LOOK AT THE IMPACT ON COSTS YET?

I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANYTHING THAT UPDATES THE OTHER TARGETS FOR THE TRANSIT MASTER PLAN OF 2007 - REDUCE THE NUMBER OF KILOMETRES MADE BY SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLES BY 20%; INCREASE DAILY TRIPS MADE BY TRANSIT FROM 5% TO 12% (THE NUMBERS I STATED EARLIER WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT THIS IS A PIPE DREAM); AND INCREASE WALKING AND CYCLING FROM 6% TO 15%. ARE THERE ANY NUMBERS TO INDICATE THAT THESE TARGETS ARE ANYWHERE NEAR BEING MET?

PLACES TO GROW HAD POPULATION GROWTH IN THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE OF 130,000 PEOPLE, WITH 90,000 NEW JOBS. IN RAPID READY - EXPANDING MOBILITY CHOICES IN HAMILTON - HAMILTON'S PROJECTED POPULATION IS 660,00 BY 2031. WHERE IS THIS GROWTH GOING TO COME FROM? WE KNOW THAT THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION IS NOT HAVING ENOUGH BABIES TO REPLACE THEMSELVES, NEVER MIND A RATE THEY WOULD NEED TO DRIVE GROWTH. WHY? TODAY'S HAMILTON SPECTATOR EDITORIAL SAYS IT ALL FOR OUR YOUNGER GENERATION - CONTRACT WORK. NO BENEFITS. PART-TIME WORK. UNCERTAIN AND UNPREDICTABLE WORKING HOURS. MINIMUM WAGE JOBS SO LOW IT REQUIRES PEOPLE TO WORK MORE THAN ONE JOB JUST TO STAY ABOVE THE POVERTY LINE. AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUNGER WORKERS BEING DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGH COMPARED TO OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS. .

SO, IS IT COMING FROM IMMIGRATION? ACCORDING TO ANOTHER RECENT HAMILTON SPECTATOR EDITORIAL, HAMILTON IS NO LONGER THE DESTINATION OF CHOICE FOR TOO MANY IMMIGRANTS, BECAUSE OF EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS AND OTHER MORE COMPETITIVE JURISDICTIONS.

AS I SAID EARLIER, YOU ONLY HAVE TO LOOK AT THE LOSS OF MANUFACTURING JOBS TO UNDERSTAND THAT 90,000 NEW JOBS IN THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE IS A DREAM. GOVERNMENTS CANNOT CONTINUE TO SPEND MONEY ON GROWTH IN HOSPITALS, UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES. IF POPULATION ISN'T GROWING, THE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS WON'T BE INCREASING. JOBS WON'T BE HERE TO KEEP THE ONES THAT DO REACH FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN OUR COMMUNITY.

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WHATEVER GROWTH WE HAVE IN POPULATION (IF ANY) WILL NOT RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN RIDERSHIP FOR THE HSR, AND THE MAJORITY OF ANY GROWTH WILL NOT BE ON THE LRT ROUTE. AND THOSE LIVING ON THE EASTERN AND WESTERN EXTREMES OF THE CURRENT B-LINE LOOK LIKE ME - AGING. YOU ARE TAKING AWAY THE NICE CLOSE BUS STOP, AND MAKING THEM WALK HOW FAR TO GET ON THE LRT? I THINK THAT I RECALL THAT EACH STOP IS ONLY 800 METRES APART, BUT THAT IS IN A STRAIGHT LINE BETWEEN STOPS, NOT FROM PEOPLE'S FRONT DOOR.

OTHER THAN MY TIME AWAY AT UNIVERSITY, I HAVE LIVED MY WHOLE LIFE IN THE HAMILTON AREA. I HAVE SEEN TOO MANY POLITICIANS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT SPEND MONEY ON THINGS THAT THEY THINK ARE NICE TO HAVE, WHILE LETTING PROBLEMS IN THE NEED-TO-HAVE GROW. WE ONLY HAVE TO LOOK AT THE RECENT PAN-AM GAMES TO SEE BILLIONS SPENT ON NICE TO HAVE, WHILE INFRASTRUCTURE CRUMBLES AROUND US. AND HAVEN'T THE PROBLEMS AT THE STADIUM SHOWN HOW WELL THAT HAS WORKED OUT SO FAR? DO YOU NOT THINK THAT THE LRT WILL BE ANOTHER TAXPAYER WHITE ELEPHANT? LET'S GET REAL AND SPEND TAX PAYERS DOLLARS WISELY.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.

DENNIS MARTIN