

From: Craig Burley
Sent: October-11-16 2:12 PM
To: Johnson, Aidan; clerk@hamilton.ca; Eisenberger, Fred; Farr, Jason
Subject: Letter in support of LRT project re vote on October 25th

Dear Councillors Johnson and Farr and Mayor Eisenberger,

I understand the council is once again meeting on October 25th to re-re-re-re-re-consider (and reaffirm) the proposed Light Rail project as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (the "MOU") between the City and Metrolinx, the substance of which is reported in Appendix A to Report PED16042/LS16003, as approved by Council.

I understand that the desire on behalf of certain Councillors is to renege on the City's commitment to the project as expressed in the MOU; and on behalf of others to delay the project by approximately one year in order to require citizens to re-re-re-re-re-consider, via referendum (technically a "question" on a municipal election ballot), the City's participation in this one billion dollar free infrastructure, jobs and economic development program offered by the Province of Ontario. The desire for a referendum question is, according to its main proponent, connected to his personal desire to kill the project.

These desires are entirely without reason and should opposed in the strongest possible terms.
Killing B-Line LRT would be a policy disaster for this city, greater than any other self-imposed injury ever done to Hamilton.

The proposed B-Line LRT has been so frequently endorsed, reviewed, approved, and reconsidered that I do not really need to present arguments for the project here. I will say only that it is a massive boost to transit in the City of Hamilton as a whole and the beginning of a rapid transit infrastructure that we are decades behind already in building.

Jason, I write to you as the councillor for the ward where my business, Craig Burley Barrister and Solicitor, is located; it is a business I intend to grow along with LRT. I will be taking LRT here and back home, most days. Aidan, I write you as the councillor for my home ward that needs this project desperately to ease McMaster's growth pressure on our neighbourhoods.

I will spare you a review of the many distortions of fact that have been voiced in opposition to the LRT project. They are many, and troubling, but they are for another time and belong to the world of politics, not of policy.

First, let me say that there has been no organized opposition to the LRT project outside of one extremely vocal family. On the other side, there are organization with thousands of public supporters, hundreds of organizations and businesses, and most of the city's many BIAs. Including my BIA, the Downtown BIA, which is along the proposed route. If there were significant opposition outside of a few councillors to the project, there would be reason to re-re-re-re-re-consider a the project, or to consider (and reject) a referendum. There is not. ***Our city's business community desperately wants this project to go ahead.***

Second, let me reiterate key findings of your own staff's reports on the project. The proposed B-Line LRT project will provide infrastructure benefits, by being high-quality and economically efficient transportation and fixing ongoing and existing problems in street infrastructure along the route, without capital costs to the City. It will provide economic benefits, by stimulating growth and investment and development along a corridor hurt badly by the economic disaster of the 1990s. It will provide logistical benefits by better integrating our local and regional transportation networks. And it will provide environmental benefits, by encouraging mode-splitting, running green engines through the city, and boosting ridership versus driving.

Lastly, in anticipation of the attempt to delay and kill the project via referendum, let me say that the proposed delay to the project (for a public vote will stop project expenditures dead) is unconscionable. Our city is still in longterm recovery from an economic catastrophe is suffered in the 1990s. **We need jobs and investment.** *The time value alone* of the \$1 billion investment in LRT, if delayed by a year by Councillor Collins's referendum proposal, is \$30 million per 12 months, or \$2.5 million for every month's further delay. I don't have that money, the City doesn't have that money and the Councillor *certainly* doesn't have that money. That \$30 million is the real cost of the delay. It is the value of spending those moneys one year earlier rather than one year later. People who don't understand economics, such as those opposed to the project, discount this factor. Do not do this. The time value of the investment represents a very real (and extremely significant, in dollar terms) impact on this city's economy. We need economic relief, economic development, and jobs *now*. Not in a year's time, not in three years' time, not in five years' time, and certainly not when the city finds itself able to begin self-funding the BLAST network, which is likely to be never.

We need jobs, investment and better transport. The LRT project does all three without cost. As Councillor Skelly commented during her bid for election to Council: "the problem is, do you want to turn down a billion dollars?". She has presented, unwittingly perhaps, the ballot question for all of you: **do we want one billion (\$1,000,000,000) dollars from the provincial treasury invested in Hamilton, or zero (\$0) dollars?**

I am requesting that the City Clerk append this letter to the correspondence to council on this matter for the October 25th meeting.

Sincerely and with thanks,

Craig Burley

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Craig Burley
Barrister & Solicitor