

October 4, 2016

To Hamilton LRT Project Team:

### **Requesting a B-Line LRT Bay Street Stop**

The B-Line LRT Project is an unprecedented economic development opportunity for Hamilton. In recognition of its potential, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce has been an active participant, stakeholder and advocate throughout the planning process.

Our LRT Task Force extensively reviewed best practices from around North America, with a particular focus on the “business case” for rapid transit implementations. The LRT Project promises significant economic uplift for businesses, potential investors and current property owners. This will be realized through increased population and employment density around hubs, and by increasing transportation options for local residents, commuters and visitors.

### **The Need for a Bay Street Stop**

LRT station stops were planned during the ongoing project design phase by the City of Hamilton released to the public on April 27, 2016. For the critical “Highway 403 through Downtown” segment of the B-Line, there are currently only four stations proposed (Dundurn St., Queen St., James St. and Catherine St.).

While these station choices come with significant merit and consideration, after consultation with subject matter experts, businesses and anchor institutions located within the 400 metre vicinity of the Bay-King intersection, we believe that an additional stop at Bay Street is necessary to unlock transit oriented development in a key location in Downtown Hamilton.

As indicated in the appendices, and despite the fact that the intersection is plagued with 270° of surface parking lots, the station would be in close proximity to both Hamilton’s densest employment and economic clusters. The station would be used by visitors to some of Hamilton’s most prominent economic, health, civic and recreation destinations, including:

- Hamilton City Hall
- Art Gallery of Hamilton
- Government of Ontario
- Government of Canada
- Standard Life Building (120 King Street West) and Jackson Square Shopping Centre
- First Ontario Centre (Hamilton Bulldogs Hockey & entertainment venue)
- Hamilton Convention Centre
- Hamilton Place
- McMaster University, David Braley Health Sciences Centre
- Sheraton, Homewood Suites, Staybridge Suites

- Several multi-storey condominium facilities recently opened or under construction
- King West BIA

While it is recognized that a Bay Street station would be roughly equidistant to already proposed stations at Queen and James Street, we believe that there is a logistical and economic need for adding another stop.

### **Alleviating Potential Bottlenecks**

The Downtown business district has a significant existing and projected population and employment density. With the presence of a number of existing employers that employ 25,000 and the recent arrival of organizations like IBM and Hamilton Health Sciences to the Downtown core, properties in Downtown Hamilton are on their way to achieving maximum capacity within the next decade. The construction of new condominium and hotel facilities will also increase the pool of potential transit users.

In addition, the McNabb Street transit terminal is located nearby; the terminal serves as a key feeder into the B-Line corridor, with numbers expected to increase as the City of Hamilton grows the proposed “BLAST” rapid transit network over the next decade.

With the addition of the A-Line Spur up James North, the cumulative impact of these pressures has the potential to create a disruptive bottleneck in the long run near the James Station, with Bay Street ideally located to serve as a release valve and convenient option for residents and employees. In fact, our research of successful LRT stations across North America demonstrated several precedents for LRT stops being located within 300-700 meters within high density segments of the line.

### **Transit Oriented Development**

A key benefit of the B-Line project remains the potential for economic uplift along the corridor. The housing and commercial real estate economy has a significant preference for high density colocation around LRT stations.

This concept is defined as transit oriented development (TOD), which is generally understood as higher density, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly development around transit stations. These higher levels of population and employment densities attract investment from infill developers and retail businesses, create a larger market for overall transit ridership, and reduce automobile dependency.

There is no doubt that the Bay-King intersection catchment area is currently underperforming, with significant potential for transit oriented development through by infilling several municipal and private parking lots and low density mixed use building stock. A Bay Street Station would also positively impact future plans for the Sir John A Macdonald High School site.

### **Conclusion**

On behalf of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and several featured member organizations (as co-signed below), we would formally request the City of Hamilton, as part of the LRT Environmental Assessment addendum process, consider the business case behind an additional LRT stop at Bay Street.

We believe the assessment will show that a Bay Street Station would serve many of Hamilton’s most



important and popular destinations and would precipitate the most dramatic examples of transit oriented development anywhere along the length of the B-Line Corridor, leading to the transformation of one of Hamilton's most important, but underperforming intersections.

It is not a stretch to assume that the Bay Street Station would immediately be the second busiest station between the two end nodes of the B-Line. What it could unlock would make its presence even more essential.

Sincerely,



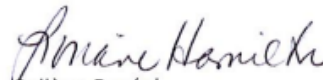
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