

Yes to LRT in Hamilton presentation to General Issues Committee March 28, 2017

Check against delivery

Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Councillors. Thank for agreeing to hear us on the subject of the LRT. It seems that at every turn, opponents of the LRT project raise up a call to scrap the whole thing. We think it's well past the time for that consideration, and it's time to keep moving ahead. I'd like to start by explaining how I got here. Matthew first asked if I would help him with some of the social media for his community advocacy work. When he told me it was Yes to LRT Hamilton, I was a little put off. Living in Stoney Creek about 5 miles away from the traffic circle I was not a fan. But I dug into some of the facts and tried to discern if I were being fair. I had heard that the plan was to use the occasion of tearing up the streets for LRT to upgrade all our underground infrastructure, which would have needed to be upgraded soon anyway. That made sense to my practical side, but it wasn't enough to convince me.

Then my conscience kicked in and I reflected on how I'm not in this alone. What's good just for me isn't the only question to think about. I don't expect the LRT to be built and operated without some additional cost that will eventually land on my tax bill. But I have rarely been called upon to sacrifice much for the next generation – certainly not the way my parent's made their sacrifices in wartime or the Stelco strikers made their sacrifices just after the war. So I now say Yes to the LRT in Hamilton, not for myself today, but for the future.

And to speak for the future, here is my friend Matthew Carrabs.

Thank you Doug.

Good morning Mr. Mayor, and councillors. Today I am here to try to convince you to vote yes to LRT. The LRT will change the way we move around Hamilton. I know many of you are in support, but some of you have your doubts. Some people think anyone living away from the

LRT route is opposed to the project because it won't help them. Well it isn't about themselves. It's about all of us working and living together.

I live in Winona, but I CARE about people living downtown. My grandmother lives near the traffic circle and the LRT will indeed help her. Her car is getting old and maybe by the time we have the LRT she won't need to buy a new car which will save her tons.

Another thing about the LRT, it will relieve pollution and congestion. By providing a comfortable and reliable alternative to driving, the LRT could take thousands of cars off the road. Having an efficient way to get around the city, without contributing too much pollution and congestion, is quite important to me.

We just can't keep on adding more cars, buses and parking lots to our crowded downtown.

An LRT getting people in and out of the city centre is the solution lots of communities have embraced: in places like Calgary, Stockholm and Edmonton.

Like the backbone of a person, the LRT line will connect our city's different parts and give us a closer feeling of community.

In my school we learn about community: people living and working together in harmony, people who are connected with each other and God. One thing that helps people connect with each other is being able to get around. The LRT won't solve all our transit problems, but will take some cars off the road and encourage more of us to use public transit.

Right now, I know that people in Winona, like me, and people in Dundas don't feel much like we are in the same community. The project being reviewed today does not include Winona or Dundas, but we are on the master plan for Hamilton Transit. As our whole transit system gets stronger and stronger, starting with the new LRT, our connections will grow stronger and

stronger. These strong connections will help us build a stronger Hamilton. Of course this won't happen overnight, but you gotta start somewhere.

And about why a teenager from Winona would care about the rest of Hamilton: well it's not just about me. It's about all of you, Hamilton

It takes a leap of faith to get on board with a project this big. I'm a believer. How about you?

Thank you, Mr. Mayor, Councillors