

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Please support Bay St. LRT Station - a potential active transportation hub

From: Dave Heidebrecht

Sent: February-21-17 2:25 PM

To: Office of the Mayor; Johnson, Aidan; Farr, Jason; Green, Matthew; Merulla, Sam; Collins, Chad; Jackson, Tom; Skelly, Donna; Whitehead, Terry; Conley, Doug; Pearson, Maria; Johnson, Brenda; Ferguson, Lloyd; VanderBeek, Arlene; Pasuta, Robert; Partridge, Judi

Subject: Please support Bay St. LRT Station - a potential active transportation hub

Dear Councillors,

I am writing you regarding the decision made in last week's GIC meeting to vote against the LRT sub-committee's unanimous recommendation to pursue an additional LRT stop at Bay St. This is a missed opportunity to pursue the interconnected multi-modal transportation network that LRT has been envisioned to contribute to.

I realize that the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and others have made many of the economic arguments, so I will not add any further perspectives on these points, but rather would like to provide a few additional points for your consideration as they relate to active transportation.

Bay St. Bike Lanes

Over 2017, the City will be pursuing the installation of protected Bay St. bike lanes that will serve as the first major north-south two-way cycle track in Hamilton. These lanes will provide an important link between downtown and the Hamilton escarpment, not only providing much needed connectivity to existing cycling infrastructure in the lower city, but more importantly providing city-wide connectivity with both east and west ends of the Hamilton mountain as well as Ancaster and Dundas. To the north, the bike lanes will connect directly to the new West Harbour GO Station. At an estimated cost of \$600,000, these lanes will provide an integral north-south connection for cyclists and will further improve Hamilton's cycling grid in alignment with our Council-supported Cycling Master Plan.

An Interconnected LRT station

Given the plans for Bay St. bike lanes, and acknowledging that the bike lanes will directly link to the West Harbour GO Station, a Bay St. LRT station would provide the perfect multi-modal connection for those who use both transit and cycling to move around and through Hamilton. This station would be the most accessible station for cyclists connecting to the LRT from both the lower and upper areas of the City, and would also provide a direct 1.5km protected cycle route for those wishing to connect from the LRT to our regional GO transit system. As you're aware, the City's incredibly successful SoBi bike share system—already with over 10,000 users—was designed for exactly this type of ride (hence the reason it was funded by Metrolinx). Metrolinx would likely look favorably upon a proposal to better integrate the LRT with cycling infrastructure that has been Metrolinx-funded.

Bold Commitment to Active Transportation

The LRT project is being funded by Metrolinx as part of the Regional Transportation Plan, a plan focused on “developing an integrated transit system” that “articulates a vision for all modes of transportation in the region,

supporting both people and goods movement.” A Bay St. LRT stop would reinforce this commitment, acknowledging that we have an opportunity to improve existing plans by further integrating the system with our cycling system.

As we continue to work together for a bold and visionary future Hamilton, I strongly encourage you to consider the active transportation implications of this decision. A Bay St. LRT station will provide an excellent bridge between cycling and transit on a cycling route that is both connected to all major areas of the city—including the lower city and the escarpment—while also directly linking the LRT with regional GO transit via a short and active 1.5km cycling route.

Citizens Jury Recommendations: Be Bold, Innovative, and Creative

I realize that from a cycling perspective, the Bay St. bike lanes were not in play when the LRT planning began. But they are now. At the start of this project, the City’s Citizens Jury on Transit made a number of recommendations. While all of these recommendations are incredibly important and valuable, one jumps out at this point in the process. The Citizens Jury recommended that council “adopt a culture of learning; collaborate closely with stakeholders; *be bold, innovative and creative in implementing the improvements*. Apply best practices” (emphasis added). Though I haven’t been involved in any of the work that went into the Bay St. LRT station proposal, I imagine that those involved have taken this recommendation to heart while looking into the possible benefits of a Bay St. LRT station. At this time, and reflecting on the importance of this decision in contributing to a stronger and more integrated transit system that connects all modes of transportation, I’d ask you to do the same.

Considering the active transportation benefits, and in light of the many economic benefits identified by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, please be bold, innovative and creative in order to ensure that the LRT project is the catalyst for safe, sustainable, and healthy transportation options that it can be.

Please reconsider your position.

In the least, given the time and energy that has gone into this proposal—in response to the City’s own call for feedback on the LRT plan—myself and many others would appreciate council taking time to consider and discuss the merits of the proposal.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to touch base if you are interested in further discussing any of the ideas shared above.

Sincerely,

Dave Heidebrecht

Chair, Cycle Hamilton