

Pilon, Janet

Subject: LRT - Thorough analysis

From: Michael Pawlowski

Sent: December-07-16 3:08 PM

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

Subject: LRT - Thorough analysis

December 7, 2016

Dear Mr. Mayor and Hamilton Councillors,

Regarding the LRT, the ongoing confrontation is once again destroying the fabric of our community. You must so enjoy making this city the 'laughing stock' of the country. You did it with the Red Hill Valley, and you seem intent on doing it again.

The debate and opinions regarding "LRT" are not restricted just to these recent years or this decade. The idea was first proposed in October of 1977, when John Agro, Q.C. prepared and presented plans to revitalize the corridors of Barton and James Streets. The suggestion was rejected then although no valid reason was ever presented. No doubt cost at that time was a factor.

Mr. Agro's plan was for an 'Elevated Rail Line' from Eastgate Mall, north on Centennial to Barton, then west on Barton to James, north on James to the city core, then west on King going through Westdale to McMaster. He recognized the importance of rapid transit to Ivor Wynne Stadium, Hamilton General Hospital, McMaster Medical and the university. Part of his plan allowed the possibility of using available land in the east end for apartments, perhaps a college or university campus, or another medical facility. The commercial districts of Barton and James had much to benefit from his design. Mr. Agro considered it essential to keep traffic flowing on both King and Main Streets, especially on the latter.

To clarify, he showed me the diagrams in October 1977. As a supervisor with an insurance company and with his firm being our preferred defense counsel, our meetings were quite regular.

Six years later, the City of Hamilton refused to accept a 'total freebee' when an engineering and transit firm offered free of charge to install an above ground elevated train-transit system from Walnut and King to Limeridge Mall. The intention of the engineer was to test the system that had worked elsewhere. "We the People" refused the generous offer. If you wanted to ride the transit system offered to us, you then had to travel to Vancouver's Expo 86 to ride the train. It was free and we rejected it!

Similarly, the present LRT is being offered to us. TAKE IT!

But if I may continuing with this analysis, affirm the reservations I have concerning the present-seemingly-accepted-proposal.

1. If installed, it must be extended east to Eastgate Mall and not stop at DeWildt's Traffic Circle. If it isn't, we can assure you that there is a snow ball's chance in hell that residents east of the traffic circle will not climb aboard two public transit vehicles to get downtown. We stopped that requirement in 1983 with the inauguration of the BeeLine. Why should we consider returning to our primitive civic culture?
2. The LRT, that is available in Toronto between Union Station and the Exhibition, has its obvious failings:
 - a. If it's so wonderful why was the system abandoned for east-west downtown transit?
 - b. The cost of maintaining the tracks and elevated-concrete can become horrendous
 - c. Operation is restricted and at times prevented in ice and snow when tracks are not thoroughly cleared
 - d. Maintenance of transit shelters can be grossly significant
 - e. Customer parking in front of businesses is restricted
 - f. Rider satisfaction is reduced with the reduced number of stops
 - g. Liability claims will escalate with more serious accidents. The speed and force of these units will not just injure, but end the lives of pedestrians. Pedestrians crossing streets will more likely trip on the elevated concrete and tracks. More passengers will fall getting on and off the cars as the units are not equipped to adequately lower themselves to accommodate the physically challenged.
 - h. The Collective Bargaining Agreement will have to be reviewed to identify any issues regarding LRT operators

My first encounter with the Toronto LRT was frightening. We had parked our car at Fort York intending to go the Exhibition. When we started crossing the LRT tracks the train was more than two blocks away. In spite of all of the pedestrians around us crossing the tracks at the same time, the train barely missed us. Two blocks in four seconds is an outrageous speed. Whatever you decide, please consider Hamiltonians.

Stop the delay. Get rid of your committees and sub-committees. Avoid their incompetence and indecisiveness.

In 72 hours as a council, you can made a decision. Isn't that enough time?

Thank you.

Michael Pawlowski