

Pilon, Janet

Subject: #YesLRT - Letter of support for LRT

From: Johanna [mailto:johanna.bleecker@newhopecommunitybikes.com]

Sent: April-09-17 1:25 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; clerk@hamilton.ca

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Dear Mayor/Councillors,

The facts support LRT. There is no way around that.

LRT is being paid for, we do not get to use the money for anything else if we don't implement LRT (and I was shocked to hear councillors who should know better implying otherwise at the March 28 meeting). If we don't implement LRT, there will be a financial loss for taxpayers as their provincial taxes will not be going towards a project that impacts them directly, and the city will also be on the hook for the \$70 million that has already been spent on the LRT preparations.

A consistent refrain of LRT non-supporters is that we don't know how much LRT will cost. We will not know the exact number until the RFP has been announced and a winning bidder has been selected. At that point, the City will participate in negotiations for the Operating Agreement and council will have the final say on what we pay the operator. If the fact that we don't know the cost is being cited as a downside of LRT, why wouldn't we go ahead with the RFP and negotiations so that we can work with the bidders and Metrolinx to get the answer to that question and make sure that it's a reasonable amount?

LRT will also create new revitalization and development. There may be some temporary hardship for businesses along the construction route--in fact, my workplace in the East End, New Hope Community Bikes, has received a notice of potential expropriation. However, we are still strong supporters of LRT. We know we can weather the storm and find a new location in the neighbourhood, and that in the long run, the uplift that will be brought to the neighbourhood and the increase in active transportation that will accompany the LRT will be well worth it. The greater development and investment in Hamilton will bring a surge of tax revenue for the city.

LRT will create more opportunities for active and sustainable transportation. As an active member of the cycling community, I have been impressed with Metrolinx's commitment to replace any cycling infrastructure being removed to accommodate redirected traffic with infrastructure that's as good or better. I see many opportunities for future collaboration and I'm excited for Hamilton to have a modern rapid transit system which will contribute to complete streets and act as an important step in the BLAST plan.

To be honest, I'm disappointed that I even have to write this letter given that Council has already voted to support LRT 52 times. I spent 5 hours of my day on March 28 sitting in council in order to deliver my 5 minute delegation. I am unable to do that again on April 19 as there is only so much staff time a small charity can spare, so I'm hoping this letter can stand in my stead. I think it's a real shame that this process has been so held up after so many citizens have dedicated so much time towards holding Council accountable to the Memorandum of Agreement in which they agreed to "proceed expeditiously, diligently and in good faith and in a co-operative and collaborative manner" to "facilitate and expedite the construction and completion of the Project." You've heard from us. You've heard from Hamilton Anchor institutions. You've heard from the many businesses who are featured in the attached graphic. You are all smart,

Vice-Chair
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