

Open comment to Councillor Jackson, Ward 6,

Peter O'Hagan

Re- Hamilton L.R.T. Project

Good afternoon Tom, C/C Mayor, Councillors, City Clerk, LRT Team, Media

Hoping you had some quality time over Easter break with family and friends.

Can you stand yet another constituent opinion on L.R.T.? some background:-

I have been keenly interested and involved with transportation/urban design and transit issues for more than 40 years, (as well as my regular career) was on transportation committee at Hamilton Chamber for many years, co-chaired an LRT committee (about 8 years ago) and chaired a Chamber L.R.T. Committee to build transit here in Hamilton region. I am no longer a member of Hamilton Chamber.

About 3 years ago, I decided to concentrate on job creating projects that I am working on, and put LRT on one side for me personally, and not be involved directly with LRT with any public comments, as debate was no longer relevant as both sides had dug in with closed minds.

Writing to you now, goes against this decision, but feel my input to you at this stage may be helpful in your present deliberations.

Recently I attended 2 of the 3 public meetings to have an update to be familiar with any new developments.

Initially, I was more than 100% in support for a Hamilton Rapid Transit conceptual system, as I have personally seen the benefits for city building world wide from good transit, and fully believe that it is the way to go long term. Questions were raised at Chamber (2008/9/10?) when we were asked to support the LRT Concept (these are still unanswered), as we had to keep in mind we were supporting a *concept*, detail questions were to be asked later.

To me, the fatal error in this entire process was that the concept quickly became the only option considered, so questions raised were never answered. Initially it was recognized that putting both lines on King would cause congestion, suggestion was to have West-bound transit on King, East-bound transit on Main, or both on Main, using existing bridges over the 403. Split system proposed would have been from McMaster to the delta, then both on Main, onto Eastgate Square.

To me, any proposal other than running from McMaster to Eastgate Square is not good planning, eliminating benefits from system.

Regarding present decision that you need to make tomorrow (April 19th):-

-1) voting – YES :-

would authorize continuation of the process, and allow *procurement to start* (more funds committed) before final approval from Hamilton is given in about a year (after all costs are known).

*Do not believe that this is acceptable.*

-2) voting NO :-

would stop project before all questions are answered, *again unacceptable* after the effort that has gone into this.

-3) Proposal:- option

Yourself, or others, *introduce a motion that would delay approval until after all costs are known* to that satisfaction of Council, and that this *final vote* should be held at the end of October this year (2017).

I fully realize that this would move up final approval by about 6 months, and would require additional effort on the part of City and MetroLinx staff working on project, but feel that this is justified to get an answer to this project, one way or the other.

Between now and end of October, I believe, will give all time to have a real, serious debate, get all facts out, alternatives looked at and let us move on.

One item that came up at public meeting in Dundas (news to me) was that it would not be HSR running system (i.e. local control) but rather a "Consortium", like 407, who would build and operate system, with no details available of who, nationality of company, or any restrictions/rules that would govern them.

For me, I am opposed to this arrangement without knowing all details.

As I understand it, with us signing the European "Free Trade" agreement (CETA), project construction (and operating profits) may not be of *any* benefit to local (Ontario) economy, something that should be clarified before finalization.

I applaud Councillor Ferguson for recognizing that this project *may* reduce residential tax load (eventually?), however firmly believe that expanding our industrial base is the best answer to reducing residential taxes. (1980 – about 70% industrial, 30% residential, Now - about 70% residential, 30% industrial).

Re-recent "poll?" – we have elected a federal government with 38/39%, not sure why 48% opposed to this project is even considered an issue.

An additional 6 month delay, that would move "final decision" *forward* by about 6 months, I believe is a plus.

At present, in Canada, we have an uncertain future with our major trading partner that buys about 75% of our exports, even the Canadian Minister of Finance with his recent budget, has essentially put changes, expansion programmes, etc. on pause until there is greater clarity, hopefully in 6 months we will have a better idea of what the future holds for Ontario (and LRT?).

Only mention this as I am sure that there will be many negative comments about any proposal, which although moves forward the final decision, has the appearance of delaying tomorrow's (April 19th) vote.

Although I live in Ward 6, and may never use LRT, I believe that this project has the potential for creating and growing our overall city, if done properly.

We provided funding for Red Hill/Linc that did not benefit lower city much, but improved overall city, believe that it is now time to invest in improved transit that benefits lower city, and Hamilton as a whole, but it must be done with a higher vote of confidence from overall city, which can only be attained after questions and concerns are answered to the approval of the majority.

Hoping that this suggestion is of some use to you and Council in your deliberations, I do not expect a reply, as you will be busy with matter at hand.

Glad that we have a system to provide input in a respectful manner.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter".

Sincerely, Peter