

From: Ryan McGreal [<mailto:editor@raisethehammer.org>]

Sent: Sunday, April 21, 2013 5:53 PM

To: Bratina, Bob; McHattie, Brian; Farr, Jason; Morelli, Bernie; Merulla, Sam; Collins, Chad; Jackson, Tom; Duvall, Scott; Whitehead, Terry; Clark, Brad; Pearson, Maria; Johnson, Brenda; Ferguson, Lloyd; Powers, Russ; Pasuta, Robert; Partridge, Judi; Caterini, Rose

Cc: Gallagher, Mary

Subject: Once Again, Council Must Affirm Its Support for LRT

Dear Council,

Due to the unfortunate string of comments that Mayor Bob Bratina has made recently regarding Council's position on Hamilton's LRT plan, the city finds itself once again engulfed in confusion and uncertainty. As a result, Council must once again clarify its support for the B-Line LRT to mitigate the damage.

Council needs to make it perfectly clear to the Province, Metrolinx and the people of Hamilton that Council's unanimous approval of the Rapid Ready report does, in fact, confirm Council's support for City's plan to implement the B-Line LRT with full provincial funding.

Before Council's unanimous February 26, 2013 vote to submit the Rapid Ready plan to the Province, Mayor Bratina insisted that he could not "champion" the plan because Council had not yet voted to submit it.

In a September 28, 2012 email, Bratina wrote, "Council can, if it wishes, pass a resolution calling for the Mayor to demand 100 percent capital funding, which I would present to Metrolinx and the Province." He said that without Council approval, he did not have a mandate to champion the plan.

The Council vote on February 26 conferred that mandate, and in a February 28, 2013 email, Mayor Bratina wrote, "Council has now provided direction with the expectation of 100 per cent of capital funding and that will be our position dealing with the government." Asked directly whether he will now champion LRT, Bratina responded, "Yes."

Unfortunately, that has not happened. Now the Mayor is suggesting that Council did not actually vote to confirm Hamilton's LRT plan after all.

In an email published on April 19, 2013 by The Hamiltonian, Bratina suggests that the vote was actually to increase bus service levels in preparation for possible future LRT. He wrote, "If Council wishes to put forward a motion stating that 'the City of Hamilton requires that upon approval of the Metrolinx funding plan work begin immediately on the B-line

LRT project' I will of course make Council's decision known to the Provincial Government."

This is unconscionable. The Rapid Ready report was clearly a vote to approve and submit Hamilton's LRT plan to the Province, as the Mayor himself understood before the vote, if not after.

But the harm does not stop there. Last Wednesday, the Mayor told the Hamilton Spectator that we would have to choose between LRT and extending all-day GO service to Stoney Creek. When the Province clarified that the city does not have to make such a choice, the Mayor denied having made the claim and accused the Hamilton Spectator of fabricating the story.

However, the Mayor has a history of claiming the city would have to choose between LRT and all-day GO service. He said this several times in 2011, and both the Province and Metrolinx have had to issue clarifications, confirming that both all-day GO and LRT "are viable and can co-exist. Hamilton's current rapid transit situation is not an 'either-or' scenario."

It gets worse. Last week, the Mayor told Steve Paikin on TVO's The Agenda and Bill Kelly on AM 900 CHML that he is not convinced about Hamilton's economic development argument for LRT and that he thinks the city should build a north-south line before the east-west line because "you can get anywhere in 20 minutes" in a car. When Paikin asked him why he is "not completely sold" on Hamilton's LRT case, he went on to talk yet again about extending all-day GO service to Stoney Creek.

This behaviour of questioning and undermining LRT while positing false alternatives between LRT and extended GO service has been ongoing for years. In 2011, the Mayor claimed the city was "not hearing any kind of clamour from the public" and "no solid interest" from developers, that LRT was "not a priority" and would only make sense "if somehow a million people move to Hamilton over the next five years". This is directly contradicted by the research, which indicates Hamilton stands to enjoy a large net benefit from LRT investment.

Metrolinx, the Province, and a McMaster Institute for Transportation and Logistics (MITL) study have all confirmed that a successful LRT implementation requires a political champion. The MITL study notes the importance of "strong political leadership" as "a critical element in the success of any rapid transit and [transit-oriented development] project. A political champion can help to realize success by marshaling resources, building coalitions, and resolving disputes. Coordinating institutions,

streamlining processes, and minimizing red tape are seen as crucial in implementing TOD projects and are dependent on strong political leadership."

Similarly, Metrolinx Vice-President John Howe has told the City that we need to champion the project. In December 2011, Howe told the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce's transportation committee, "LRT will be very difficult if we don't have a strong partner alongside it."

If left unchallenged, the Mayor's steadfast refusal to champion the LRT plan may well doom it to failure.

We are not operating in a vacuum. At the same time our Mayor has refused to support Hamilton's LRT plan, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion has been busy promoting her city's Hurontario LRT plan, which is still in the planning stage. Contrast Mayor Bratina's commentary with this press release Mayor McCallion issued on November 30, 2012:

"Light Rail Transit continues to be a priority and we know it represents the future for our City. Light Rail Transit on Hurontario can be found in all aspects of our future planning. It will not be easy. Anything worth doing takes time, money and effort and we respect that and are thankful for the support we have received."

This is why Council needs to take the lead away from Mayor Bratina and take control of the message going to the Province: we are competing with other GTHA cities for transit funding and approval, and we will lose out if we continue to send mixed signals about the city's commitment to LRT.

Respectfully,

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