

For the consideration by Mayor's Taskforce on Economic Recovery

I am writing today on behalf of the Hamilton Transit Alliance. The Hamilton Transit Alliance (HTA) is a coalition of local organisations within the City of Hamilton who all agree on the importance of reliable and accessible public transit, and push for improvements and expansion of public transit within the city to achieve the social, economic and environmental benefits it brings to Hamilton. Our coalition has for two years now been advocating for continued investment in Hamilton's public transit service and infrastructure - and within the context of the pandemic we strongly believe that transit resilience is as important as ever.

While ridership has suffered globally, it's vitally important that we all appreciate and understand that as COVID-19 is overcome, Hamilton must be in a position to expand and increase our public transit ridership beyond the current "floor" that we are experiencing now with essential workers (many of whom are working class, women, and racialized). If decisions are not made today to ensure that the HSR is ready to regain ridership, and to encourage workers to travel sustainably around our community, the City will fail to achieve its climate emergency greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, and we will see increases in air pollution and traffic congestion. If we miss our opportunity to ensure that Hamilton's public transit system recovers in tandem with the rest of the economy, not only will we be hindering the economic recovery of Hamilton, but we will be doing a disservice to our children and all future generations of Hamiltonians.

During the pandemic the Hamilton Transit Alliance and its individual members have called on both the federal and provincial governments to provide sustained emergency funding for the HSR. While this emergency funding has been provided, the pandemic has underscored how vulnerable municipal public transit systems are when a crisis hits because of the lack of on-going operational funding from the provincial government. Additionally, the Hamilton Transit Alliance continues to support the use of promised provincial B-Line LRT funding for transit infrastructure only.

Centering the viability and growth of public transit in your decisions and recommendations is vital to the economic recovery of Hamilton, both in the immediate short term as we overcome the pandemic - but also in the long term as we continue to grapple with the climate emergency and work towards building a truly resilient city.

Thank you for your service to the City of Hamilton and for your consideration,

- Ian Borsuk, Climate Campaign Coordinator, Environment Hamilton
Facilitator for the Hamilton Transit Alliance (iborsuk@environmenthamilton.org)

The Hamilton Transit Alliance's full membership includes: ATU 107, Hamilton ACORN, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton District Labour Council, Disability Justice Network of Ontario, Environment Hamilton, YWCA Hamilton, McMaster Student Union, Social Planning Research Council, Immigrants Working Centre, and Neighbour 2 Neighbour.