

November 27 2020



Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Council,

We are writing to you with regards to the status of transit in the City of Hamilton and potential concerns we have with how the provincial government has chosen to proceed with providing municipalities like Hamilton with essential funding as a result of the pandemic. As you know, members of the Hamilton Transit Alliance have advocated to both the federal and provincial governments to provide emergency funding to municipalities for public transit, and we have been pleased to see our higher levels of government responded with funding announced through the 'Safe Restart Agreement'. However, we are concerned that what the HSR truly needs - sustained funding from the province - will not be delivered in a manner that will benefit transit riders and the city-at-large.

The letter received from Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney laid out requirements that the City of Hamilton must fulfil to receive Phase 2 of the Safe Restart Agreement funding. Some of these requirements have raised alarm not just for us, but for transit advocates and professionals across the province. In particular we would like to flag the following requirements:

- "review the lowest performing bus routes and consider whether they may be better serviced by microtransit"
- "work with the Province and Metrolinx where appropriate to determine the feasibility of implementing microtransit options on viable routes"
- "participate in discussions with the Province on advancing fare and service integration"
- "participate in discussions with the Province to optimize transit through new possible governance structures"

These above requirements are vague as they are currently worded and, if followed through on by the City of Hamilton, have the potential to negatively impact public transit service, remove the ability of Hamiltonians to have input on their local service, and raise fares. The cancellation of Hamilton's LRT and subsequent uncertainty surrounding the province and the possibility of an LRT in our city contributes to our concerns around these conditions.

We are asking you to direct staff to consult with you and the public about what the province proposes to the City of Hamilton to be eligible for the second phase of funding from the Safe Restart Agreement. Moving forward, the City should clearly communicate to the public what conditions are attached to the funding and how that will affect transit in Hamilton. While the pandemic certainly has complicated matters, we are confident that the HSR team has the interest and capacity to adequately consult and inform the public and key stakeholders regarding conditions the province is proposing to place on this pot of federal and provincial tax dollars.

Thank you,

Submitted by Ian Borsuk of Environment Hamilton on behalf of the HTA - iborsuk@environmenthamilton.org

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.

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, Immigrants Working Centre, Neighbour 2 Neighbour, and Hamilton Transit Riders Union.