

Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

June 1, 2021

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Members of Council:

For several years, the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction has followed the progress of the Hamilton Light Rail Transit discussions. The recent joint announcement of \$3.4 Billion in investment from the Federal and Provincial Governments provides a unique opportunity to develop a modern, environmentally responsible public transportation corridor in Hamilton for the twenty-first century.

While the project also has the potential to enhance and repair infrastructure, spur new housing development and create jobs, these priorities must be undertaken with clear outcomes for those who live, work and indeed struggle in our community.

A locally driven community benefits agreement needs to be the foundation upon which the Hamilton Light Rail Transit Project moves forward.

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) provide a simple tenet: If large-scale mega-projects are to be built in the community, then the community must benefit from that investment. Yet, in the past, the importance of that priority has not always been the driving force behind large-scale projects.

New infrastructure projects across North America, are starting to incorporate CBAs in their plans and have resulted in significant improvements for local communities, from affordable housing to green infrastructure while also helping local residents to obtain jobs and build skills.

Hamilton is in the midst of an unprecedented affordable housing crisis. Too many families are being forced out of their homes a result of skyrocketing rents and aggressive development. Income inequality is deepening as a result of the pandemic. If we are moving forward with LRT, a locally-driven community benefits agreement must address these priorities and be undertaken in collaboration with Hamilton's Community Benefits Network – a group that is established and has already been involved for months in important consultations in the community about the potential of this project. They are ready to work with Council, as we are through Just Recovery Hamilton, to support this critical community-building opportunity.

Sincerely,



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