

LRT, really?

“They have one, why can’t I?”

TOC

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The sounds of steel wheels on a curved steel rail

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Years old data.

Elsewhere, if the underlying numbers for an expansion project were manipulated to achieve a preferred result and that project was pitched at a cost of \$100,000 to implement, then 5 years pass and it is brought back to the decision maker except now at a cost of \$340,000 with unknown yearly costs and no understanding of how it would interact with the current processes:

Everywhere else would be ordering a new cost benefit analysis, especially in light of the auditor general findings that all the projects were not considered equally.

The LRT canard

The current canard goes like this “The Transit Corridor (this is 1-King, 5-Delaware iterations, 10-Blaine and the seasonal 51-University) is the city’s busiest transit corridor—a corridor that carried more riders pre-pandemic, daily. So the city will still get to keep the fares from the corridor, LRT will cost less than the current buses on the line, freeing them up for service elsewhere in the city. A sleek and shiny LRT doesn’t have the same low-class connotations that the bus has and a new multi-billion dollar system might help people overcome their class bias against transit enough for them to park their car and give it a try.[1]”

With the canard comes numbers

To justify the as yet unknown operating and maintenance costs the city of Hamilton will be responsible for paying to for profit, private corporations, supporters trot out the numbers[2] (albeit from 2015)

Route	Gross Cost	Revenue	Net Cost
01-King	\$9.7 million	\$5.6 million	\$4.1 million
05-Delaware	\$13.7 million	\$5.5 million	\$8.2 million
51-University	\$4.4 million	\$2.2 million	\$2.2 million
10-B-Line	\$5.7 million	\$2.1 million	\$3.6 million
Total	\$33.5 million	\$15.3 million	\$18.2 million

“What a great deal”

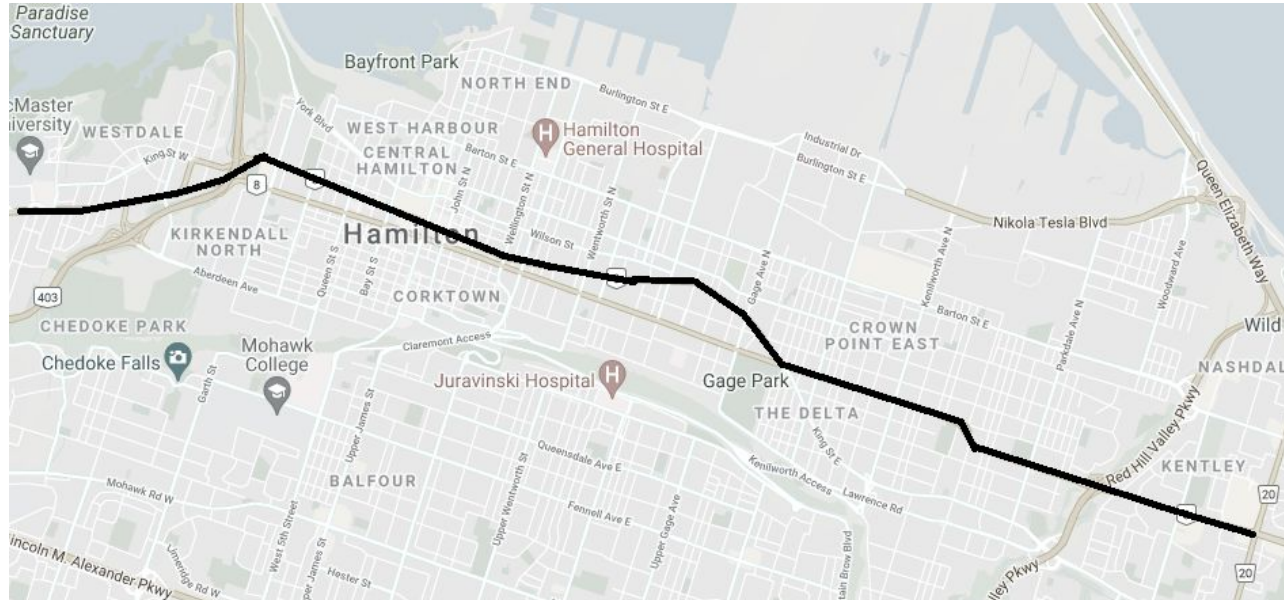
“If the current corridor buses cost \$33.5 million(2015) and generated \$15.3 million in revenue, then swappity swap look at that we can have LRT!”

This belies a major fact about the transit corridor - for the most part, the ridership does not start and end in the transit corridor. It may start, but not end; or it may end but it did not start. Anything less than starting and ending requires HSR to pay for buses for the ridership needs outside the corridor.

The worst thing Metrolinx did was cost benefit analyse using the population within 800 m, but who wants to walk everyday 800m for transit?

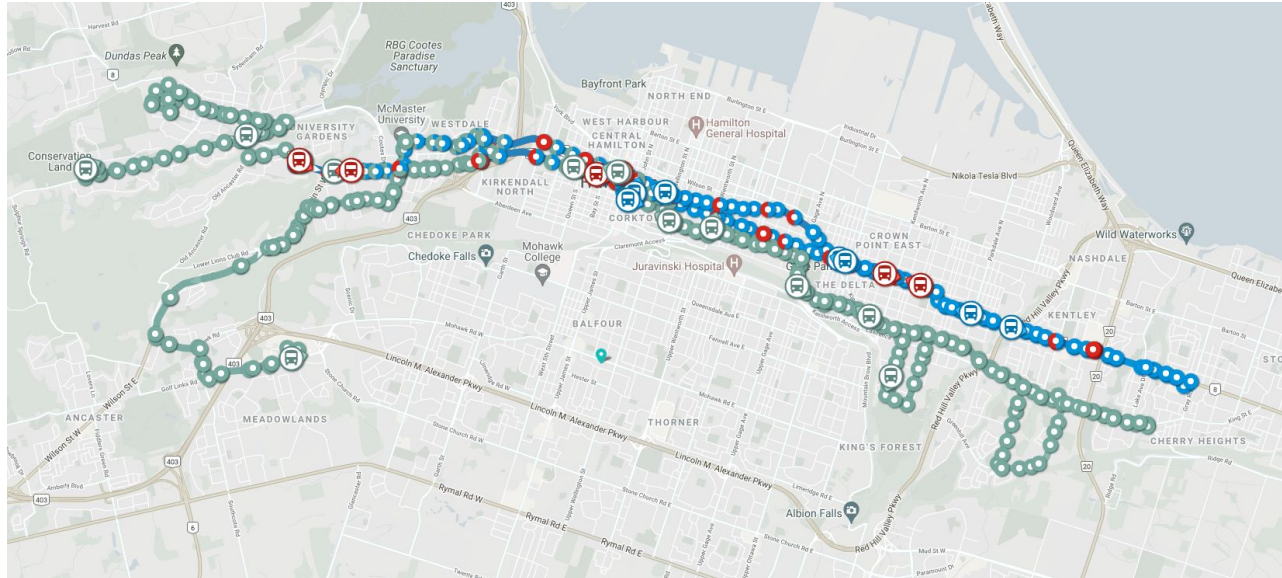
The Transit Corridor

The corridor is considered Main St. W. at McMaster then over the 403 and King St at Dundurn to Gage Park and back on Main St. E, then Queenston to Eastgate Square at Centennial Parkway



Current HSR Operations

Routes that use the transit corridor primarily are the 1(blue),5(light green),10(red) and 51(not shown), yet the coverage area of these far outweigh the tiny piece that is the transit corridor. [3]



The Swap

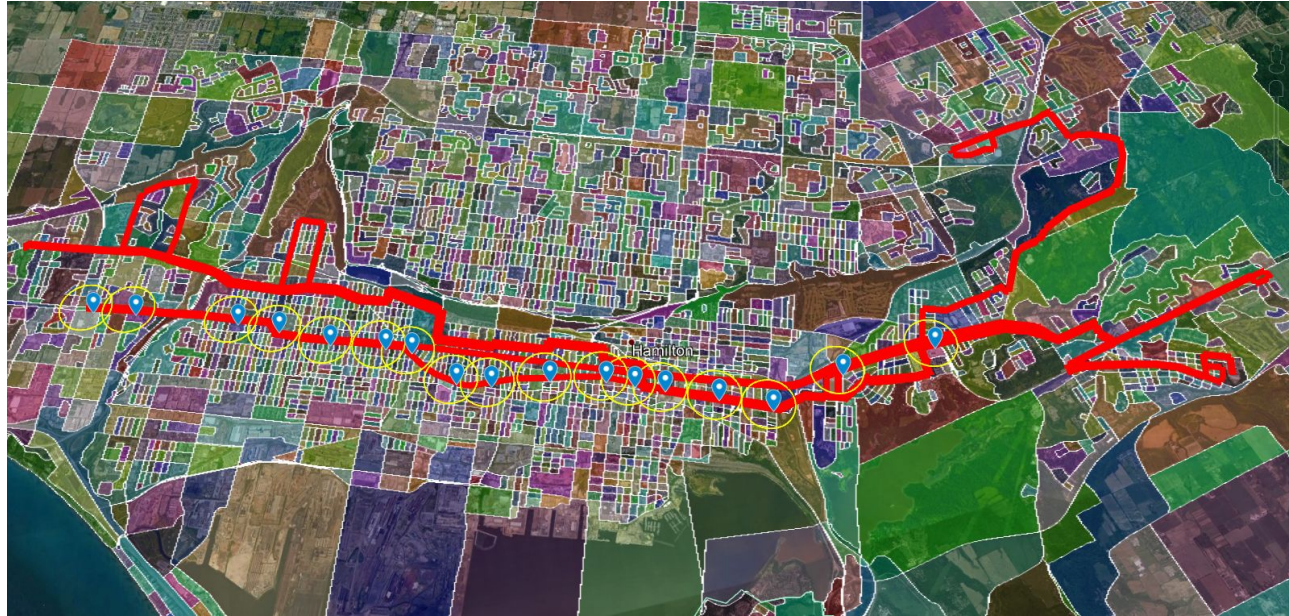
When talk is of taking the current operating costs of the transit corridor buses (\$33.5 million(2015)) and offsetting the revenue from them (\$15.3 million), essentially the argument is being made that ridership in these areas don't deserve transit:

Bond, Head, and Governor's in Dundas, Whitney, Main W, Wilson, Mohawk, Golf Links into Ancaster, Stinson, Delaware, Maplewood, Gage, Lawrence, Rosedale, Greenhill, Cochrane, Quigley, or King St E into Stoney Creek. Or Westdale. Or express bus service to University Plaza or at Main and Sherman.

Public transit should be accessible within 400m

Hamilton, south viewing, overlaid census tracts, red lines are 1, 5, and 10 bus routes. Blue pins approx LRT stop and yellow circle is approx 400m radius.

It's such a tiny percent of the system.



No one knows LRT + HSR interaction

Re-Imagine HSR was supposed to address this but never did. Unlike other systems, Hamilton has a functioning spiderlike east west lower city transit system. In Mississauga, the Hurontario replaces 2 bus routes (essentially the same line) and 1 express route. It's very like for like.

That is not the case in Hamilton. A private for profit operator running 6 min headways is going to demand buses flowing to stops to ensure some level of ridership. How will these buses run? Scrap east/west and go north/south?

No one knows. It could be more to run HSR operations to interact with LRT than it currently costs!

Costs for Profit

People like to talk about Waterloo and how their system is, except they always use the old data.

Waterloo ION was projected back around 2015 to cost \$8.5 million yearly in operations and maintenance, and all-in \$30 million to cover the costs of the system they own as part of the DBFOM model they signed on to.

In December 2019, the Regional Planning and Works chair stated:

"I think people probably have noticed the Ion at a \$43-million a year cost to the local taxpayers. It's pretty hard to suggest we're cutting back."

Galloway said he will "find a way" to get the (bus) expansion fully funded "somehow or another." [4]

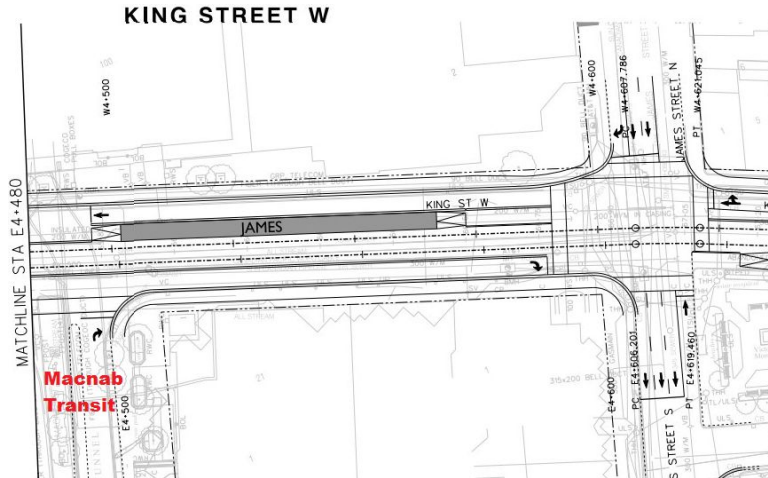
Only 50% increase in a couple of years

And the worst part is the impact it has on the Region of Waterloo planned bus expansions.

2 Lane King is a disaster for Mountain buses

Almost 10 Mountain routes descend John St turning left on King St and then left into the Macnab Transit Terminal.

Traffic congestion created by LRT will ensure backups. Originally the plan called for a single lane at James. Car traffic + 10 buses is chaos.



A lane has since been added to westbound King but it will still cause bus delays, similar to the delays that caused headaches for riders thru the International Village when the bus lane was installed.

2 Lane King is a Disaster for GO Buses

7.4 20.01.08 McMaster Bus Terminal

The proposed bus terminal is located within McMaster University campus area, east of Cootes Drive and adjacent to McMaster LRT stop. The bus terminal will be built on ground level which allows passenger interchange between HSR & GO Bus services.

The proposed bus terminal also integrates with 3 stories parking structure which can accommodate more than 513 parking spaces with 107 spaces with electrical vehicle chargers. The scope includes:

- Site development such as site servicing, pavement, curbs and sidewalks;
- Existing site and road demolition and modification;

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Infrastructure Ontario
Hamilton LRT Class D Estimate
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- Curtain wall and perforated metal assemblies and sidings on the ground floor;
- Exterior glazing system, mechanical and electrical systems which is able to comfort passenger waiting area;
- Other related IT, communication and security scopes such as Public Alarm System, CCTV system, etc.

7.5 20.01.09 McMaster Parking Structure

The proposed parking structure is located within McMaster University campus area, east of Cootes Drive and adjacent to McMaster LRT stop. The parking structure will be built in 3 levels of structural steel and precast structures which allow passenger "parks and rides" choose variety of transit services, in LRT, HSR & GO Bus services. The scope includes

- Composite Wall Panels and Perforated Metal Assemblies;
- Other related IT, communication and security scopes such as Public Alarm System, CCTV system, etc.

With the adoption of LRT, the death certificate for downtown GO buses is being signed with the eventual move to McMaster Transit Terminal, with plenty of parking and easy highway access. [5]

It's the only place to park

With 500 parking spaces being added at McMaster (sure the students will love all that added parking) how do you ensure that HSR riders have options available? What if 500 GO riders decide they want to park and ride?

Remember, “a new multi-billion dollar system might help people overcome their class bias against transit enough for them to park their car and give it a try.”

Calgary offers their riders almost 14,000 parking spots at LRT stations across the city. Hamilton is offering 1 location, spaces to be fought over and no guarantee it will even be cost effective.

No more revenue ridership

If McMaster riders push the ridership up to the ‘aha what did we tell you!’ levels, the problem is the UPass that every student pays for each year, at a cost of approx 25% for 8 months what everyday Hamiltonians pay.

There is no more revenue there, even if each one of the 27,000 Presto passes uses the LRT.

If the UPass is increased to reflect the real cost of LRT, there is a possibility the Student Union votes no to continuing the program and then HSR loses that revenue, with no guarantee individual riders will make up the difference.

The dream never reflected reality

What was sold

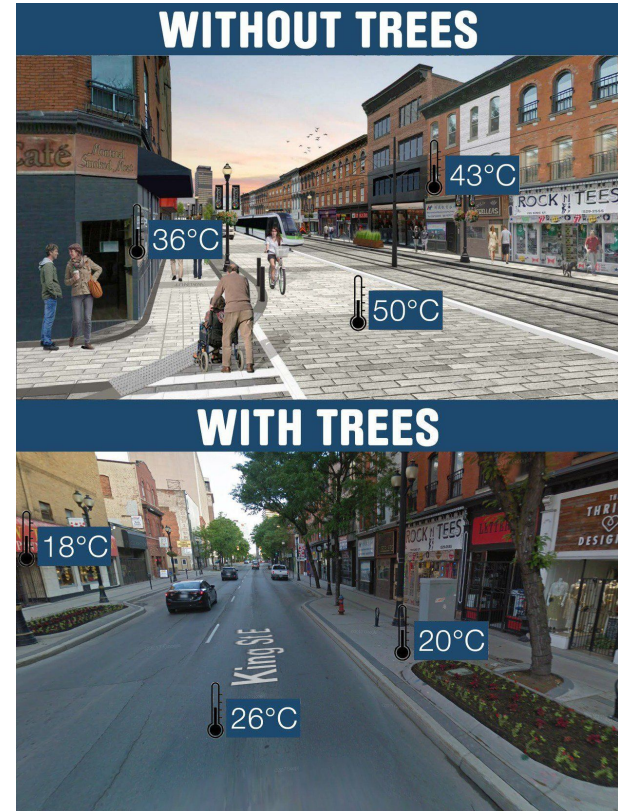


Design Plates Disappear Downtown
Hamilton Arch.



To save something, trees must be murdered

An estimated 600 trees will be culled along the transit corridor to accommodate LRT and not replaced in the transit corridor. International Village will become a soulless dreck of society. (take note of that sidewalk, it's literally 2m - buildings on one side and tracks on another)



Closing International Village to cars doesn't magically disappear them

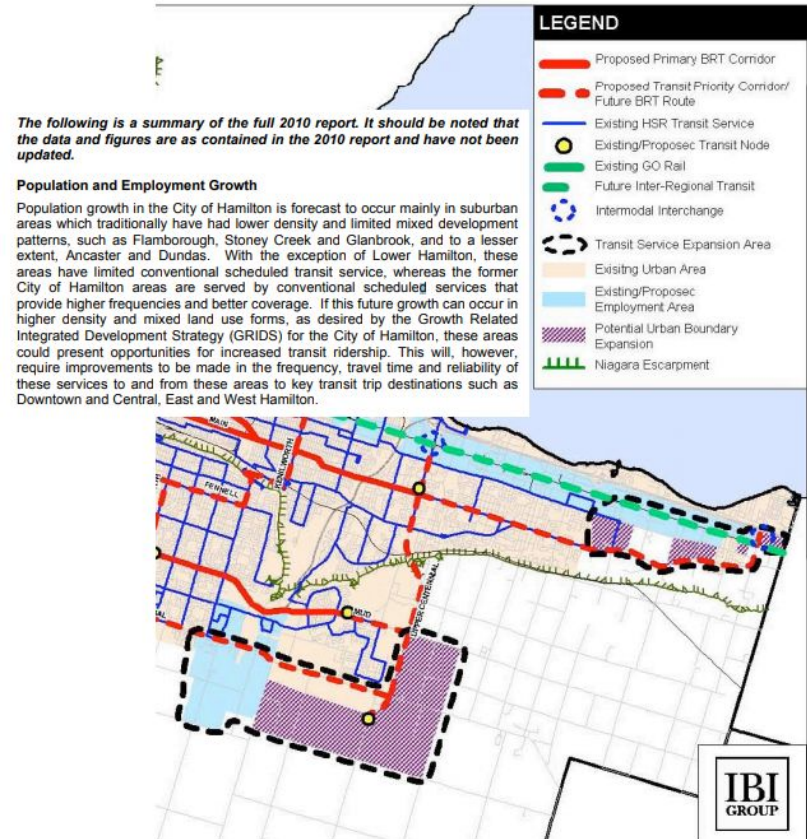
No one ever claimed that LRT was a solution for congestion, but once King St. Westbound traffic is closed down, now drivers (some of them may not live on the corridor and aren't interested in getting on a bus to get to the LRT and then vice versa on the way home) will find alternate routes; probably Hunter/Charlton/Aberdeen/Dundurn in the south and Cannon (home of the bike lane)/Barton on the north side.

We're creating congestion.

The population growth required isn't what people think it is

Population growth has always been #1 for 'why we need LRT' yet we've known since 2010, also reported in 2012 Rapid Ready, that the growth would occur in mainly lower density, including the boundary expansion; that supporters conveniently forget and somehow today it's a 'current proposal'. The Planning General Manager is on record in 2015 stating the corridor is only slated for approx. 5000 new units.

People who live in houses really shouldn't be arguing everyone else can live in apartments.



LRT just compounded Housing Unaffordability

People can't be told for 10 years "But we'll make so much money on increased valuations it will pay for itself" and not expect capital to flow into our city waiting for the payday.

Confirmation of LRT will just ensure that affordability is a misunderstood word. Lower than 125% of CHMC Market Rental Average is still a lot more than some Hamiltonians can afford and if the Hamilton median income is \$75,000, housing prices are 50% higher than what most people can afford.

We took the Bronze in Canadian Unaffordable Cities!

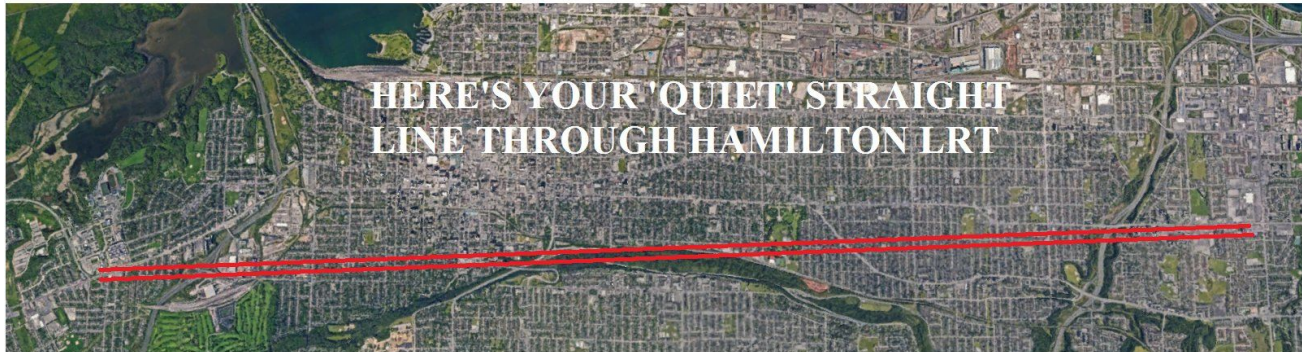
It will just create an enclave of people who can afford to live on the line, vs everyone else who cannot (and take buses to get to the dream)

The sounds of steel wheels on a curved steel rail

Perhaps an engineer can elaborate on what the pitch sounds like. A quiet LRT requires a straight line, or a very slow speed. Yet a slow speed would bottom out the cost benefit analysis...

THIS IS A STRAIGHT LINE.

'QUIET' LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT REQUIRES A STRAIGHT LINE



Who's excited for Fare Enforcement Officers?

They have them in Waterloo and every other city that has LRT. No private for profit corporation is signing to run a system for their profit to let people ride for free.

If anything will create 1000's hours of work, it's Fare Enforcement Officers.

If it was good, it would be funded.

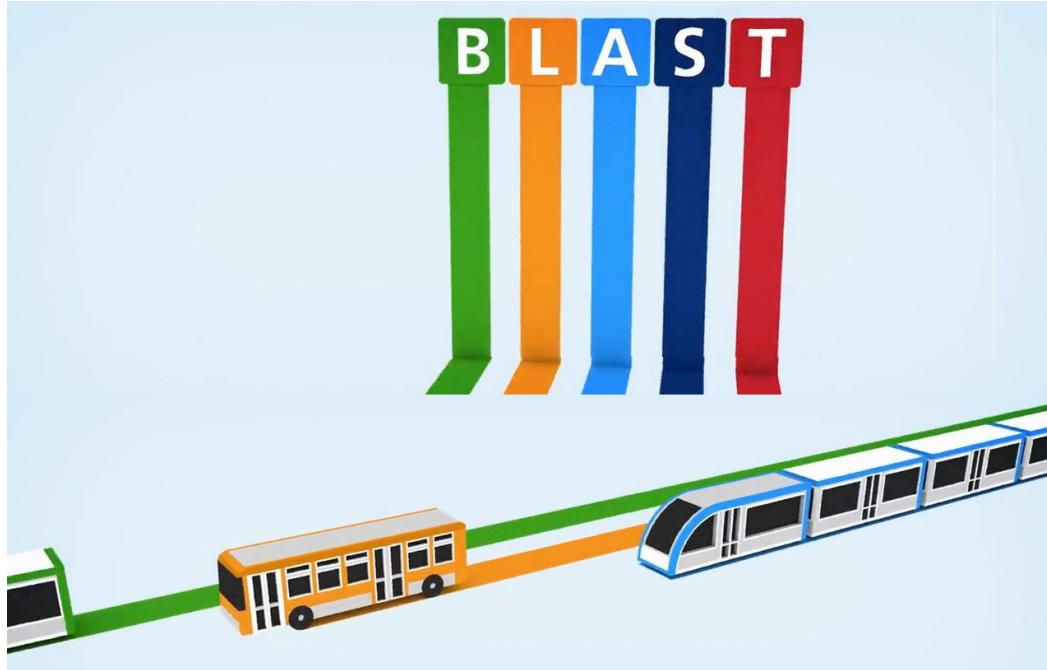
The hometown Federal Infrastructure Minister, potentially in an election year, extorts the Provincial government to fund a project at an additional cost of \$700 million dollars or

LOSE OUT ON \$10 BILLION DOLLARS IN FUNDING IN TORONTO.

Any guesses why they said yes?

Not the first time we've been electioneered

Hamilton was promised 2 fully funded LRT lines, in another cynical election ploy.



Today occupies all the thought

According to another Federal minister, Hamilton is currently planning future expansions for more LRT lines. We'll build the B, and then rip up parts of it in the future to install the necessary cross pieces for the other additional lines staff are working on...

City officials also have future plans, she said, to expand the LRT throughout the city, including providing transit options to the Hamilton airport, the waterfront and maybe even to Dundas, where Tassi lives.

"I would love to see it go to Dundas," she said.

NEXT STEPS

A new cost benefit analysis should be undertaken, with the cooperation of HSR providing expected interaction costs; and considering not only B Line LRT, also A Line LRT and A + B Line BRT. (the original cost benefit analysis, that was lower than the BRT, was costed at \$1 Billion capital cost; and it cannot be juxtaposed to a \$3.4 Billion capital cost.)

Options should go to referendum where the 2014 promise of “I’ll accept the recommendation whether it’s BRT, LRT or nothing at all” can be fulfilled finally.

Topics We Missed

Increased Height Limits on buildings built in the urban boundary to accommodate growth plan requirements.

The myth of the 'infrastructure benefit'. City staff are on record - the underground infrastructure is in fine condition and expected to last a long time. The value derived from replacement is only 15-20% of the estimated \$130-\$160 million valuation of this infrastructure. We don't need 2 out of 3 bridges. The Area Rated Special Capital Re-investment levy will cover the cost of the third bridge.

People are using the Site Specific section in the Turner and Townsend report of almost \$700 million dollars and believing that is the benefit we will get.

"BRT is the better performing system" This was according to staff in 2010.

Dec 2018 - Metrolinx should have studied BRT more before Hamilton LRT pledge (CBC Headline)

Destroying Dundurn St. front yards and removing the bike lanes to make space for an extra lane

Rapid transit on King St (picked over Main because it 'runs thru downtown')

Notes

[1] The canard is a mashup of statements from LRT supporters Sean Hurley, Ryan McGreal and Margaret Shkimba.

[2]The numbers were posted to Ryan McGreal's website and posted to social media by Karl Andrus

[3]Image taken from HSRNOW website <https://hsrnow.hamilton.ca/#/app/tripplanning>

[4] Dec 2019 CBC website - "GRT expansion could be scaled back as Region of Waterloo looks to trim costs"
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/bus-region-of-waterloo-budget-transportation-master-plan-1.5378045>

[5] Turner and Townsend Hamilton LRT report -
<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/7031240-Turner-and-Townsend-Hamilton-LRT-Report-Password.html>