

September 7, 2021

Re: Item 8.1 – Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Memorandum of Understanding

Dear Members of the General Issues Committee,

As President and CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton's oldest institution at 176 years old, I have the privilege of speaking for our 1,000+ members that employ over 75,000 people in our community. The Chamber would like to take this opportunity to express our steadfast support for the Committee's adoption of the Hamilton LRT Project Memorandum of Understanding as presented to further strengthen our local economy and begin work on this long-awaited, transformational investment for our community.

With the federal government's contribution to this project announced earlier this year, it is essential to begin construction on the 14-kilometre B-Line LRT as soon as possible. The development it will catalyze and the jobs it will create will be crucial to the Hamilton region's post-pandemic recovery. As well, it is important to begin planning the additional investments required to complete the full implementation of Hamilton's future rapid transit network, commonly referred to as the BLAST Network.

Our long-standing advocacy of the Hamilton B-Line LRT project meets a number a critical city-building opportunities and priorities identified by our membership. It is just one of many opportunities in Hamilton's near future that will help sustain the exciting renewal of this great Canadian city.

B-Line LRT is the first step in the Council-approved five-line, 25-year transit vision called BLAST that will see efficient transit reaching all corners of the city. The B-Line will be the spine of Hamilton's future transit system, improving local transit options and modalities, and reduce congestion. Moreover, the transformative potential of this major infrastructure investment will provide 7,000 jobs for Hamilton and neighbouring municipalities, that will in turn boost our economic recovery.

The Hamilton LRT project will also completely modernize all Hamilton taxpayer-owned underground infrastructure along an important 14-km swath of the city. Usually out-of-

sight, out-of-mind, we were reminded not too long ago just how important underground infrastructure is to the foundation and functionality of our city.

Finally, this is about bringing more tax revenue into the City's coffers. The growth we've already seen in the Lower City is primarily based on the promise of LRT. And it's just the start. We don't have to look much further than Kitchener-Waterloo to see the development that this type of transit unlocks. In fact, the province estimates that one dollar of investment in LRT generates seven dollars in return. Over the course of a 40-year lifespan, that's not at all unrealistic for Hamilton.

With the vast benefits provided by the LRT, it is no wonder why over the past decade there has been an overwhelming demonstration of support, not just from the Hamilton Chamber Commerce, but from a broad coalition of businesses, labour unions, public health professionals, environmental groups, educational institutions and many others who have the foresight to understand the impact that this higher-order, modern transportation system will have for the city, for the province and for our country.

After more than a decade of planning and politics, we have come to a critical moment. We heard loudly and clearly from both provincial and federal governments that their \$3.4 billion investment deal is for the only shovel ready project that exists in Hamilton: B-Line LRT.

We would like to commend all of our community partners for their long-standing advocacy for this transformative, community-building project. Additionally, we would like to congratulate members of the General Issues Committee, as well as City Staff, for their work to date on this major infrastructure project and look forward to the adoption of a memorandum of understanding to get shovels in the ground as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Keanin Loomis,
President & CEO
Hamilton Chamber of Commerce