

July 27, 2023

Re: Item 8.1 – Overview – Area Rating for Transit

Dear Members of the Transit Area Rating Review Subcommittee,

As President & CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, I have the privilege of speaking on behalf of over 1,000+ local businesses that drive our local economy while employing over 70,000 people in our community. Since amalgamation, Area Rating for Transit has long been debated in this community and the Hamilton Chamber is encouraged by the scope of work ahead for this Subcommittee.

As Hamilton's largest Chamber of Commerce, we would like to share several overarching considerations that have been raised by our membership about the economic and operational impacts of area rating for transit on their businesses. The Chamber shares these considerations in the spirit of collaboration and an eagerness to explore opportunities to greater connect our city and improve community experiences for businesses and residents alike.

The main theme that has emerged through years of discourse with our members is that what was agreed to over two decades ago is no longer reflective of the economic, social, or environmental needs of Hamilton's economy and residents. Our organization, and members, believe that the work of the Transit Area Rating Review Subcommittee needs to be mindful of how Hamilton has grown and will continue to grow when exploring what opportunities exist to improve the lives of Hamiltonians through improved transit connectivity.

Hamilton's demographics and landscape have changed significantly since the onset of the 21st century. This growth necessitates a reevaluation of how Hamilton's infrastructure serves the best interests for all stakeholders, and how financial contributions towards advancing the prosperity of our community are shared among all ratepayers in a fair and equitable manner.

Looking forward, Hamilton is poised to grow and intensify further over the next several decades. Failing to expand transit services and neglecting to fund the network effectively will significantly diminish the economic, social, and environmental opportunity in this community.

Transportation, whether for people or goods movement, is critical to the functioning of our economy. Private enterprise needs reliable access to talent, and additionally benefits from the additional roadway capacity for commercial vehicle traffic. We know that providing transportation options to residents is a matter of equity that can effectively

enable or inhibit social and economic participation in our community. It is critical to provide transportation options that connect all Hamilton residents to all corners of our community, regardless of which neighbourhood they live in.

Additionally, we know that we are in a climate emergency and that expanding effective transportation options for more Hamilton residents will serve to reduce overall transportation-related emissions. Providing reliable transportation alternatives to single-passenger vehicles ought to be a prime motivator going forward as we focus on significant housing intensification that will put additional strain on our existing roadway capacity.

Combined, these are compelling reasons to explore additional investments into our local transportation networks and ought to be motivating factors for this Subcommittee to shape the future of opportunity in Hamilton. We know that our community will experience significant population growth over the next three decades and we cannot wait any longer to prepare ourselves to accommodate the needs of our future residents. Otherwise, we risk the same logistics and reputational challenges as other gridlocked GTHA communities.

In closing, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce encourages members of the Transit Area Rating Review Subcommittee to consider the long-term impacts in its deliberations during the Term of Council that can potentially serve to transform how residents and visitors live, work and play in our City.

The Chamber looks forward to providing ongoing support to our members impacted by these deliberations and to continue our enduring relationship with the City of Hamilton to facilitate as smooth of a transition as possible to any new transit funding structure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GDD', written in a cursive style.

Greg Dunnett
President & CEO