

Re: Item 8.1 Light Rail Transit Operations Models

Mayor Horwath and Council:

YWCA Hamilton is dedicated to championing the causes that impact our service users and our community. As the oldest and largest social service organization, we have seen every iteration of public transit in Hamilton, and we know that more women and gender-diverse people are impacted by this service than others as they represent the majority of public transit riders.

It is for this and other reasons outlined below that we have joined the call to Keep Transit Public. We write to request Council's support to ensure the future of the Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) is operated maintained by the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR).

The privatization of public services leads to long-term service quality decline, cost inflation, staffing issues, decreased ridership, and undermines workers' rights, severely impacting our community's fabric. A notable example of this is the UK's bus service, which was privatized 40 years ago and remains one of the most expensive and unevolved.

By contrast, we know that maintenance and investment in public services enriches our communities.

The highest quality transit is publicly owned. This is an opportunity to strengthen transit, add climate consciousness to more commutes and increase the number of women in non-traditional climate-resilient, unionized public sector jobs and to move further along the path of becoming a city that leads this work.

Relinquishing control of the Hamilton LRT to private entities would sever local oversight, control, and accountability which has been integral that the HSR and ATU Local 107 have upheld for over 150 years through their dedication to providing safe, efficient, and reliable transit services. This decision challenges us to consider how transportation choices disproportionately affect people at the margins, especially women and gender-diverse people. Further, it highlights the necessity of a transit system that is accessible, reliable, and responsive to our community's evolving needs.

We believe it would be shortsighted to relinquish control of public infrastructure - paid for by residents - for short-term cost savings, when we can safeguard that infrastructure for generations to come. Our vision for a Hamilton where public transit and its expansions remain a public asset, responsive to the voices and needs of all its residents. A Hamilton that champions public transit as the cornerstone of an inclusive, bold, ambitious, vibrant, and sustainable city.

Medora Uppal



CEO – YWCA Hamilton

YWCA HAMILTON, MacNab Location
75 MacNab Street South
Hamilton, ON L8P 3C1
Tel. 905-522-9922

Putman Family YWCA
52 Ottawa Street North
Hamilton, ON L8H 3Y7
Tel. 905-393-9091

**YWCA HAMILTON PROVIDES MEANINGFUL,
ACCESSIBLE SERVICES TO CREATE
OPPORTUNITIES, AMPLIFY VOICES, AND
CO-CREATE GENDER INCLUSIVE AND
EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES.**

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