

The Mayor and City Councillors

City of Hamilton

04 August 2010

"To Discuss"

I write on behalf of the Rapid Transit Citizen Advisory Committee (RTCAC), regarding recent comments in the media concerning the future development of Light Rail Transit within Hamilton.

The RTCAC members, who represent a broad cross-section of citizens, have been extensively involved with engaging the public in this project over the last year. Based upon this interaction in various locations across the city we believe that there is strong public support for the LRT proposal. Recent statements of city representatives to the media would indicate that there has probably been a mis-reading of public support for the LRT by certain members of Council.

The fact is that current planning work has not been finished and so the current "public" message from City representatives is one that appears to indicate a premature loss of interest in LRT, one taken BEFORE all the facts are known. In light of this the RTCAC strongly believes that the recent decision by the City Manager to curtail planning and evaluation of the LRT is unfounded and unwise and it has given the public an inaccurate message that the project has been stopped in its tracks.

The recent statements also make it appear for our choice to be between GO Transit and LRT. It is well known, understood and agreed that GO Transit is a prior priority and will be implemented first, and largely paid for by the Province through Metrolinx with the city-building LRT to be developed as late as 2020 or even later.

Therefore the RTCAC believes it would be appropriate for City Council to make it clear to the public now that there is continued support for the LRT proposal on Council, subject, of course, to the necessary funding being secured.

Further, although there is a perception that LRT will have significant costs there is no current message given to the media by City representatives to reassure the public of the benefits of such a system nor of efforts being made to secure funds.

Given these perceptions we feel we must emphasize that public messages should be based upon accurate and up-to-date information that only develops as all aspects of this significant endeavour are explored in the planning stages. Without such information any statements to the media are subject to misrepresentation of where the city stands on the issue.

The members of the RTCAC believe that it would be beneficial for the city to have both the LRT system and daily GO service. It is not a matter of an either/or scenario, since both are considered important for the city, although for different reasons.

As a practical measure to be taken now we also believe that planning for the City's 2012 budget should include funding for the continued study of LRT and for the staff required for such studies. Staff should be directed to proceed as usual to plan their budgets for 2012 and it could then be modified or removed during Council's budget discussions, if Council so decided.

Given that this LRT project represents an opportunity to develop the city in a manner that will serve all of its citizens well for many years and generate millions of dollars in much-needed tax revenues, the RTCAC believes that we cannot afford to be left out in the cold while other cities move ahead by accepting the funding opportunities offered by the Province.

On behalf of all the members of the RTCAC

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sharon M. Woodrow", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

RTCAC Members c/o 3226 Hall Road, Binbrook, Ontario. L0R 1C0

Respectfully request copies be distributed to: City Manager, General Manager of Public Works, General Manager of Planning & Economic Development, General Manager of Finance, General Manager of Community Services, City Clerk, Medical Officer of Health and the Executive Director of Human Resources.