

Good afternoon Councillors, Staff, and Honourable Mayor Bob Bratina,

I appear before you today on behalf of Garnering Support, a student-led campaign advocating for improved transit on Hamilton Mountain, specifically in regards to increased service on the 44-Rymal bus.

I want to begin by sharing my own story, and how it has led me to speaking in front of all of you. Then, I want to highlight some of the stories of fellow citizens who have contributed their voice to this campaign. Finally, I hope to give you a big picture look at why increasing HSR service on Hamilton Mountain would be beneficial.

I am currently a third year sociology and social work student at Redeemer University College. I spent my first two years living on-campus, and commuting via bus whenever I wanted to volunteer or hang out throughout the city. This past May, I decided to move downtown onto James St. North, and since then have commuted back and forth between my home and Redeemer. I currently connect to the 44-Rymal bus in order to get to school, but am limited by its lack of night-time and weekend service. So some fellow students met together, and we to organize this campaign asking the city to improve transit on Rymal Road. The catalyst for our organizing was the HSR Transit Enhancement Proposal which was presented to you last week, and which will be formally discussed at this Thursdays meeting.

This petition started in the walls of Redeemer. Most, if not all of you, may have noticed signatories from townships and cities across Ontario, Canada, and the World. Some of you regard this petition as invalid because of this. I want to bring this to your attention because those signatories are valid. My friends and fellow students may not have permanent addresses in Hamilton, but they live here, they spend money here and they can vote in this great city. Please keep this in mind, and please do not simply disregard this petition because a student wrote the address of their parents.

Currently, the 44-Rymal bus does not run all evening and it doesn't run at all on the weekends. Logically, night time and weekends are the ideal time for students to get off-campus to work, volunteer, or play. But this isn't just about a bunch of students who want to get away from school for a couple hours. The 44-Rymal route runs all the way from Eastgate Square to Ancaster Business Park, driving along and through 6 of this city's wards. This area represents approx.. 48% of Hamiltons population. This isn't just the story of students, but it's the story of thousands of Hamilton citizens who need this service to get from A to B.

It's the story of Karen Thomson, Executive Director of Ancaster Community Services:

AS the ED for Ancaster Community Services (ACS) I believe it is important to provide transportation 44-Rymal service route for many reasons, the very least to accommodate youth and students. There are those who use the various programs at ACS including the food bank. A service from east to west mountain would be a great route which would accommodate and ease

transportation for many. – Karen Thomson

It's the story of Tracy Harley, a Hamilton mountain mother:

I take the Rymal bus once in a while to get to my son's doctors appointments. I always found the service splotchy and irregular. Can get to the doctors appointments but have to take three buses home instead of just the Rymal because of no service at the time. If I wanted to go shopping along the Rymal road, I would be missing a bus and having to find alternative transit home or wait another hour plus+ for a bus. weekends and evening shopping or excursions are out because there is no service. – Tracy Harley

It's the story of Paul Leistra, a Hamilton Mountain employee who works in Ancaster:

Members of our household work Saturdays in the Ancaster Business Park. Their route 44 commute takes about 20 minutes; their Saturday commute takes over an hour with about 20 minutes of walking. – Paul Leistra

- Big Picture: Let's zoom out even further and recognize the facilities and institutions that exist along this route:

- there are currently four schools (Hamilton District Christian High School, Bishop Tonnos Secondary Schools, St. Thomas More Secondary School, Redeemer University College), as well as a proposed new high school, situated along the Rymal/Garner corridor who would benefit from increased bus service.
- a number of seniors' homes and childcare centres, and also the Les Charter YMCA and Hamilton Police Services are located on the 44-Rymal route.
- increased 44-Rymal service provides more frequent connections to north-south routes connecting with GO Transit and downtown Hamilton.

Let me remind you that:

- the City of Hamilton has endorsed the Hamilton Climate Change Action Charter, and has been recognized as one of the "Top 10 Cities in Canada tackling Climate Change", demonstrating the City's commitment to reducing its community GHG emissions.

Let me also remind you of the Transportation Master Plan, in which it is stated:

"Key objectives of the Transportation Master Plan include reducing dependence on single-occupant vehicles and promoting improved options for walking, cycling and transit, while maintaining and improving the efficiency of trips related to the movement of goods and servicing of employment areas."

February 25, 2014

Hamilton City Council

We, the undersigned, would like to bring to your attention our desire for improved transit between Redeemer University College and the greater City of Hamilton. Many students, staff, and faculty rely on the HSR buses for transportation in Hamilton, and current schedules make transportation difficult, particularly during evenings and weekends.

In a recent survey 82% of Redeemer students perceive "lack of frequency" as a top barrier to increased student bus usage. Students also report that with regular service to campus, student use of the bus system would double (from 3435 to 7017 one-way trips per week).

Increased frequency on 44-Rymal would facilitate student engagement in downtown Hamilton. Though Redeemer is located on the West Mountain, 37% of students report being engaged in some capacity with downtown Hamilton. Many Redeemer students live in downtown Hamilton, volunteer at various organizations downtown, and also participate in internships and professional placements. Many of us are engaging the arts scene, shopping downtown, and enjoying the parks along the Hamilton Harbourfront. We want to maximize our ability to flourish as a part of the community in which we are living; often, though, the long and infrequent transit times hinder us from doing so.

It is our understanding that HSR's 2014 budget proposes both increased service to the 44-Rymal line to include evening and weekend service, as well as increased service on the 20 A-Line Express. These changes would create a more direct and frequent route from our campus to the downtown core. Not only would this increase our involvement downtown, it would also improve the transit experience for students commuting to campus from various locations in the city. Furthermore, increased transit service to and from our campus would improve access for community members to enjoy a theatre performance, a free lecture, or a sporting event at the Redeemer Sports Complex.

In addition, increasing the frequency of 44-Rymal would benefit many of our neighbours along Rymal and Garner roads, including Hamilton District Christian High School, Bishop Tonnos SS, St. Thomas More SS, Elizabeth Village Seniors Homes, as well as a significant number of businesses.

We urge you to implement these changes in the earliest possible time frame.

Sincerely,

Darica Tromsen
Student Senate President

Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, Ontario
L9K1J4

To:

Mayor Bob Bratina, Mayor, City of Hamilton
Brian McHattie, Ward 1 councillor
Jason Farr, Ward 2 Councillor
Sam Merulla, Ward 4 councillor
Chad Collins, Ward 5 Councillor
Tom Jackson, Ward 6 Councillor
Scott Duvall, Ward 7 Councillor
Terri Whitehead, Ward 8 Councillor
Brad Clark, Ward 9 Councillor
Maria Pearson, Ward 10 Councillor
Brenda Johnson, Ward 11 Councillor
Lloyd Ferguson, Ward 12 Councillor
Russ Powers, Ward 13 Councillor
Robert Pasuta, Ward 14 Councillor
Judi Partridge, Ward 15 Councillor

During the 2014 budget cycle, HSR's proposed plan includes expanding bus service on the Hamilton mountain. In particular, proposed changes to the 44-Rymal are as follows:

20-minute weekday peak service

30-minute weekday off-peak service continuing to 1am

30-minute Saturday service, 7am-1am

30-minute Sunday service, 7am-6pm, 60 minute service to 1am

Whereas there is currently no bus service on Rymal/Garner road on weekends or on weekday evenings past 9pm.

Whereas there are currently four schools (Hamilton District Christian High School, Bishop Tonnos Secondary Schools, St. Thomas More Secondary School, Redeemer University College), as well as a proposed new high school, situated along the Rymal/Garner corridor who would benefit from increased bus service.

Whereas a number of seniors' homes and childcare centres, and also the Les Charter YMCA and Hamilton Police Services are located on the 44-Rymal route.

Whereas individuals without access to a vehicle - including Children, Students, Seniors and persons with disabilities - are identified as important Stakeholders in the City of Hamilton's official Plan, yet minimal infrastructure currently exists to provide for safe, effective mobility for these populations, particularly on the Hamilton mountain.

Whereas the City of Hamilton has endorsed the Hamilton Climate Change Action Charter, and has been recognized as one of the "Top 10 Cities in Canada tackling Climate Change", demonstrating the City's commitment to reducing its community GHG emissions.

Whereas 44-Rymal starts at Eastgate Square and ends at Ancaster business park, providing greatly increased transportation access to employment and recreational opportunities.

Whereas increased 44-Rymal service provides more frequent connection to north-south routes connecting with Go Transit and downtown Hamilton.

Whereas the 44-Rymal route travels through six city wards, which represent a combined total of 48% of Hamilton's population.

Therefore:

Be it resolved that council approve and implement proposed changes to the 44-Rymal fully and at the earliest possible convenience.

Sincerely,