

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **What benefits will LRT bring to the people of Hamilton?**

Rapid Transit – Light Rail Transit (LRT) in particular – will provide residents with fast, accessible, reliable, and frequent service. With higher capacity and higher speeds than other transit systems, LRT will carry passengers in reserved transit lanes apart from regular traffic. Vehicles will be low floor with multiple entrances that are accessible to customers with all levels of mobility. By enhancing service significantly, LRT will be an attractive public transit alternative appealing to private auto users. LRT can also help transform our community by spurring economic activity which contributes to vibrant streets and helps promote new development and reinvestment in existing developments which will help revitalize our city.

### **What are some of the anticipated benefits to Hamilton's economy?**

LRT has the potential to stimulate Hamilton's local economy by increasing property values – particularly within close proximity to station areas. LRT often creates high density, mixed use land parcels that can increase assessment value. The increased assessment can help cover both the capital and operating costs of the LRT system. LRT also encourages urban development and can help to attract private investment that can assist in re-building existing neighbourhoods and create new neighbourhoods.

### **What is the timeline for LRT in Hamilton?**

The City is currently working on the LRT Planning, Design and Engineering Study that will provide a preliminary LRT design for the B-Line from Eastgate Square to McMaster University and a feasibility study for the A-Line from the Waterfront to the Airport. Should Hamilton City Council approve the construction of LRT, and, pending project funding from the provincial government, the earliest construction start date is estimated to commence following the completion of the 2015 Pan Am Games. The length of phased construction is estimated to take 5 to 7 years.

### **How will the City work with the business community on the Rapid Transit project?**

One of the biggest concerns for businesses during large construction projects is anticipating impacts that may arise from construction. Such issues as business deliveries, local parking, and garbage pick-up are often also topics of concern. In Hamilton, on-going consultation is under way between the City and the business community. This collaborative consultation will continue throughout the Planning, Design and Engineering Study and beyond. Together, the City and local business owners will continue to work through the issues and concerns of businesses located along the corridor to ensure the continued viability of our local businesses.

**How much will the construction of LRT cost?**

As the LRT Planning, Design and Engineering Study has just reached the halfway point towards completion, financial estimates of the potential capital cost implications for the City of Hamilton remain very preliminary. The total estimated cost for construction and implementation of LRT in Hamilton, as quoted in the Metrolinx Business Case Analysis, is \$830 million\* (\*2008 \$). City staff continues to work with Metrolinx to determine the exact costs to be covered by the Provincial government.

**What are the advantages of Rapid Transit on King Street?**

More often than not, King and James Streets are identified as the centre of Hamilton's downtown. Planning the LRT line along King Street will enhance the pedestrian environment along King Street by eliminating through traffic. Because many significant destinations are located downtown and are closer to King Street, pedestrian traffic will increase to the benefit of local businesses downtown. If rapid transit were constructed along another east-west corridor serious consideration would be required to perhaps redistribute truck routing on King Street through the downtown core.

**How will LRT benefit the environment?**

LRT is clean and green with no emissions from the vehicle. LRT can lead to environmental benefits by reducing air pollution from vehicle emissions and greenhouse gases which can contribute to cleaner air and reduce noise pollution. With the potential of increased ridership, LRT can reduce the use of private automobiles which in turn reduces the number of kilometres travelled by automobiles.

**Hamilton already has the HSR. How will LRT add value to the existing bus service?**

LRT will connect key destination points within Hamilton. By increasing connectivity to other forms of transportation, LRT increases public access to employment areas, residential properties, commercial districts and municipal services. LRT will connect Hamilton's priority neighbourhoods to more employment, educational, healthcare, recreational and cultural opportunities. LRT will also expand the choices of travel that support and connect to each other locally (through our trail systems, cycling and walking) and regionally through GO Transit. Increasing connectivity through LRT can make Hamilton a more accessible, vibrant, urban area that encourages healthier lifestyles.

**What are the benefits of LRT compared to BRT?**

Both Light Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit have been identified as beneficial in communities that have set a goal to modernize public transportation. In many North American communities, transit user feedback identifies LRT as being more comfortable and quieter for riders with no emissions on the street, and is far superior in carrying capacity compared to private automobiles on our roadways. While providing high quality transit is one of several key objectives for Rapid Transit, objectives such as a safe and comfortable walking environment, bicycle lanes, attractive streetscaping and public art are also important. With the integration of municipal transportation and land use policies, LRT has the potential to increase property values and greater potential to create economic spin-offs including job creation, increased assessment value and private investment.