



*The Hamilton Transit Alliance (HTA) is a coalition of local organisations within the City of Hamilton who all agree on the importance of reliable and accessible public transit, and push for improvements and expansion of public transit within the city to achieve the social, economic and environmental benefits it brings to Hamilton.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - JANUARY 24th 2020**

Hamilton has some serious work to do on public transit. Excluding industry, greenhouse gas emissions from transportation is the highest source of climate change causing pollution in our City - and the vast majority of it comes from Hamiltonians driving private vehicles, often alone. Transit goes further than simply being the solution to this singular problem, it has a multiplicity of positive impacts on cities when it's improved and expanded.

Specifically, through meetings and ongoing discussions, the HTA has found alignment across it's diverse membership and agreement has been reached on the importance of various issues and solutions when it comes to improving and expanding public transit within the City of Hamilton. These recommendations are made within the context of the 2020 budget.

First, the HTA stresses the importance of a baseline maintenance of the Ten Year Local Transit Strategy and calls on City Council to continue with the strategy and it's funding requirements. This is particularly vital in leading to the full implementation of the BLAST rapid transit network.

The "Ten Year Local Transit Strategy" was approved by Council on March 11, 2015 and has been carefully implemented by Council every year with the exception of 2017. This same year that the planned funding was not approved, riders later experienced major missed service which resulted in HSR drivers temporarily being asked to work up to 68 hours a week. Conversely, city follow through on strategy implementation has resulted in significant service improvements for riders such as extended lower city B-Line hours on weekday evenings as well as Saturday service.

The HTA calls on Hamilton City Council's Transit Area Rating Review Sub-Committee to meet and discuss this serious political issue that affects our transit system, allowing the group to present recommendations on how to best eliminate area rating. The HTA wants area rating for public transit in Hamilton eliminated over a gradual period of time, for the purpose of both expanding and improving transit for all urban and suburban residents, and also to increase the revenue generated for the HSR.

The HTA believes area rating for public transit is a significant barrier standing in the way of expanding and improving our public transit system. Past councils have already eliminated area rating for other vital services in the municipality and it is time to do the same for transit.. For example, area rating means transit lines like the Barton bus and the West Hamilton leg of the Delaware bus end at the old invisible boundaries of the former city of Hamilton, and leave people stranded. If area rating

was eliminated, these busses could travel into Meadowlands and Winona to serve those growing areas of the city.

In addition to the above, the HTA also recognises the importance of other levels of government with regards to funding public transit infrastructure. The HTA also stands in solidarity with the City of Hamilton in its request to the province of Ontario to support the A-Line Priority Bus Corridor and the PRESTO device refresh. Both the A-Line Priority Bus Corridor and the PRESTO device refresh have been submitted by the City of Hamilton through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan (ICIP). The A-Line Priority Bus Corridor is a necessary precursor to the planned rapid transit route planned for the A-Line, as part of the Ten Year Local Transit Strategy - and will greatly improve the transit service on the route which will benefit Hamiltonians getting around the city. The PRESTO device refresh submission is necessary to both maintain the agreed upon ten-year operating agreement between the City of Hamilton and Metrolinx - the development and implementation of new devices is required and has a capital cost of around \$4.3 million. The HTA calls on the province to support these two applications through the ICIP.

The Hamilton Transit Alliance's full membership includes: ATU 107, Hamilton ACORN, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, Hamilton District Labour Council, Disability Justice Network of Ontario, Environment Hamilton, YWCA Hamilton, McMaster Student Union, Social Planning Research Council, Immigrants Working Centre, and Neighbour 2 Neighbour.

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