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Media Release

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Response to the Provincial Transit Announcement

It is laudable that this provincial government appreciates the importance of investing in public transit. This is an incredible opportunity for Hamilton to begin the first phase of building the BLAST network with 100% capital funding from the province. I have remained consistent in my messaging regarding LRT that the Council approved plan from McMaster to Eastgate is the most viable plan. I've also made it clear that any consideration of an A-Line should not come at the expense of not implementing the original Council approved plan. The Eastgate destination would provide greater linkage to Stoney Creek and alignment with the mountain for future expansion; this concept was not chosen by accident. It is unsettling that the province imposed a spur line down James Street North, truncating the original plan and changing the system to a destination to node system.

The province unilaterally shortened the original Council approved LRT route in order to run the spur down to the GO station. When I first heard the announcement on Thursday, I expected that the re-establishment of the Eastgate destination would be a key part of the announcement. Now, the province has once again unilaterally changed the route by eliminating the spur and not restoring the original plan of a destination to destination route. Hamilton has been shortchanged again thereby putting taxpayers in our community at risk. I thought this was a joke.

It is unsettling that the province has unilaterally carried out yet another change in the design with the announcement last week. Why is it that the province can decide to truncate the Council approved plan to add the spur line, to take away the spur line, then to implement a BRT A-Line?

General

Issues

Committee

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Police Services

Board

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Emergency &
Community

Services

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Board of

Health

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DARTS

Why is it that the province is compromising the viability of LRT by not implementing the original plan approved by Council?

This announcement raises more questions than answers. Is it unreasonable for Council to have equitable decision making power on this process based on studies and risk to ensure that we get it right?

This feels like a political ploy to shore up votes because of the vulnerabilities the provincial government has in this community. What data was used to conclude that the James Street spur was not viable?

The auditor general has already had concerns with other Metrolinx projects in the past. Based on how this project has been managed so far, I am considering asking the auditor general to look into this project to ensure the most cost effective approach has been taken and that tax payers are being protected.

Moreover, here is the following motion that I supported and that was passed by Council at the October 25th GIC meeting: "That staff be directed to communicate with Metrolinx to determine the possibility of adding the LRT A-Line at the same time as building the B-Line and report back to the LRT Sub-Committee." Clearly as a result of this announcement they did not deliver.

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