

**Deputation to Committee of Council
Brampton Board of Trade
January 17, 2024 Re: Light Rail Transit (LRT) Extension Re: Staff Report**

Good morning Your Worship and members of Council. I am Jaipaul Massey-Singh, CEO of the Brampton Board of Trade. We are Brampton's only accredited business association, serving our members for more than 135 years. Today our members employ 60,000 individuals, many of whom live and raise their families in this community.

As you're aware the Brampton Board of Trade has long history on this issue - I myself came to Council several times in my past role of Chair of Board in 2015 to advocate for support the LRT in Brampton. Over time, you've heard from many other Directors of our Board, staff, and BBOT members on this critical transit project. Throughout the years we've been consistent in our message – The Brampton Board of Trade is in support of completion of the LRT to the Downtown GO Station and is in support of whichever routing option that will be built soonest and will be responsibly funded.

Further, the Brampton Board of Trade is in support of an overall network plan for Brampton in alignment with our desire for solutions to the transit and transportation challenges to the prosperity of our city. This includes Queen Street - Highway 7 BRT between Brampton and Vaughan which we understand will reach the 30% design stage this summer.

The Brampton Board of Trade is appreciative of the report and presentation brought forward by staff today, and of the commitment by the City to continue to invest resources into this file. In particular we are pleased to see the analysis in support of the recommended tunnel option included consideration of:

- Travel times and impacts to vehicular and cycling traffic
- Operational and maintenance costs
- What option would best support further extension on the line into northern Brampton

Further, we're happy to see the review of funding for transit infrastructure in Toronto and Hamilton, indicating that the investment in the recommended tunnel option is a favourable one from a per capita basis, and a solid long-term investment when considering our growth in transit ridership relative to those communities.

The Brampton Board of Trade encourages Council to commence the TPAP process for the tunnel alignment as well as the supporting recommendations as per the staff report, while considering the following to ensure success for the project:

Likelihood of funding. Although we appreciate the sound planning logic behind the recommendation for the tunnel option, it's important that Council also has confidence our community can secure the resources for this \$2.8B project. As noted, Metrolinx in the past has identified the LRT as a priority project and the province has created a

transit fund and infrastructure bank to support such initiatives. That said, we cannot take it for granted that the funds will be made available to Brampton and advocacy will be necessary to ensure we get our fair share. We cannot afford to miss out and must be sure the desired route and associated cost will be supported outside of Brampton.

When the BBOT first supported the LRT in 2015 it was in large part because there was a clearly articulated business case with modelling that showed the economic benefits to home and business owners on the route as well as the LRT's projected impact as an investment attractor in our downtown. We believe this will continue to be a persuasive element in securing support for the LRT and encourage resources be allocated toward including such studies as well as a comprehensive review of project costing that validates estimates on ridership and takes into account inflation and other escalators.

In our latest annual Business Confidence Survey, the members of the Board of Trade cited transportation infrastructure as the top issue facing Brampton with 42% of respondents identifying it, up from 25% in 2022. In other words, we cannot risk any further delay to the completion of the LRT.

As such, we encourage you to move forward as per the staff report but also request that you take into account that which will be required to secure support for successful funding and expedient completion.

Once again, we appreciate the work done by City staff and look forward to the next steps on this project.