

# **POLICY PROPOSALS**

## **POLICY AREA**

Rail Transportation-VIA Rail Station in downtown Hamilton

## **INITIATOR**

Transportation Committee- Jerome R. Pier, Chairman, Rail Sub-Committee

## **RATIONALE FOR POLICY**

The Chamber is represented on the Hamilton Councils VIA Rail Task Force at the request of council. In this capacity, it is appropriate that we express our preferences with respect to benefits to the business community.

The former TH&B Station facility was remodeled in 1995 at considerable expense to include ticketing facilities, waiting room space and other amenities as well as high platforms for quick and easy passenger loading and egress. Even with the expanded GO service, which has been promised; it should have more than adequate capacity for VIA's present six round trips per day to the South and West.

The station is centrally located and serviced by HSR as well as taxi companies. While parking is limited, the intent of a downtown station is to encourage public transportation access rather than individual car parking. Kiss and Ride facilities are available for those who want to be dropped off. For those who want to get into their cars, drive a moderate distance and park, the existing Aldershot Station will meet their needs.

Rail access is by CPR track but we have been given to understand that connections to CNR track used by VIA for North-South and East-West traffic either presently exist or can be provided. CP Rail may not be enthusiastic about increased passenger traffic but since GO Transit is already there, this should be solvable. The tunnel has been cited as a possible "choke point" with increased traffic but the proposed usage would not be greater than that at the peak of the former TH&B freight service. A more sophisticated signaling system should be able to solve any such problems, which might arise.

## **POLICY PROPOSAL:**

That the Chamber supports a fully serviced VIA Rail Station in Hamilton with a preferred "downtown" location, subject to an understanding that a detailed business plan for such a location can be presented. Joint use of the former TH&B Station by GO Transit and VIA would seem to meet these criteria and should be given serious consideration.

Revised 29 June 05