

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSITIONS

28<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Mayor Patrick Brown and Council  
City Hall  
2 Wellington Street West  
Brampton ON L6Y 4R2

Sent via email to: [cityclerksoffice@brampton.ca](mailto:cityclerksoffice@brampton.ca); [peter.fay@brampton.ca](mailto:peter.fay@brampton.ca)

Dear Mayor Brown and Councillors

I trust everyone and their families are well in these very troubled times and that the post-pandemic recovery looks promising for the City of Brampton.

I am writing to you now because I want to convey my profound disappointment that the City does not yet have a formal commitment to proceeding with BramptonU from the Province of Ontario. When I was instructed by Ms. Kaur to cease work on the project in early March 2020 (just after completing a comprehensive draft submission to the Province with the support of many senior staff of the City), it was my position that the City had a cast iron case for political and financial support for BramptonU. The project was absolutely ready to go, with a number of world leading universities signalling their readiness to commence delivery under the BramptonU banner within two years.

As you know, together with many others, I invested a good deal of time, energy, international connections and advocacy into helping build an unassailable case for BramptonU. Like others, I committed at the level I did because - as the people of Brampton made crystal clear to us in late 2019 and early 2020 – the City deserves nothing less than an independent, comprehensive university to drive social, cultural and economic growth in the City. Given the resources invested in the development of the Vision 2040 document and the Blue Ribbon process in the previous term of Council, and the fact that their conclusions were 100% in line with our analysis, it is clear that BramptonU must remain a strategic priority for Brampton and its residents.

Over time BramptonU should develop into a billion dollar per annum activity in the City, ie equivalent to the impact of the University of Waterloo to Kitchener-Waterloo. It is not clear to me what other initiative could be as transformational. So I would urge you to not walk away from the case for BramptonU and instead to redouble your efforts to make it happen and to generate whatever political unity is required to ensure the Province delivers for

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Brampton. BramptonU will surely happen one day; so why not make it the legacy of this Council, this year?

I would also like to place on record my deep disappointment with the current politicization of the BramptonU project and the fact that I (personally) together with organizations I have been affiliated with have been caught in the crossfire, with commentary in local media verging on the defamatory. None of us deserve this and I would respectfully request that you and your colleagues do everything in your power to stand behind the decisions that were taken throughout this process, including the sanctioning of the Council's wholly independent procurement processes, and the clear guidance of the Integrity Commissioner in August 2019 that no conflict of interest existed between Councillor Santos and myself. For the record I am including as an annex to this letter a time line and extent of my involvement as this still seems to be a source of confusion and of apparent interest to local media.

Naturally, I am as disappointed as anyone that political support was not forthcoming in 2020 when the project was ready to run. And although I had no involvement in the government relations dimensions of the project, I tend to agree with commentary we heard from local stakeholders that the Province is effectively running a colonial post-secondary strategy in Brampton – happy to use the City as a receiving station for inadequately supported international students, but not happy to give the 9th largest and fastest growing City in Canada the institution it really needs and deserves.

However, it is a reasonable question to pose – as I understand some Councillors have - as to why a positive decision has not yet been delivered. We know that certain institutions were implacably opposed to the idea of BramptonU from the outset, even refusing to participate in what was a unanimously agreed Council-mandated process. Unfortunately, as a senior executive of one of these institutions said to us (without any apparent irony or humility): “If Brampton gets a University, every town in Ontario will want one”.

Whatever has or has not occurred behind the scenes in terms of lobbying against Brampton's long term interests with respect to post-secondary provision, and whatever debates there may have been around reporting back to Council (understanding the confidentiality restrictions that apply in government relations), it is wholly wrong, unfair and completely against Brampton's interests to attack the process that has been followed to date. As far as I am aware the process has always proceeded with full Council endorsement, and it is completely self-defeating to criticize individuals (including Councillors) and associated organizations that have tried diligently to deliver the case and the political support.

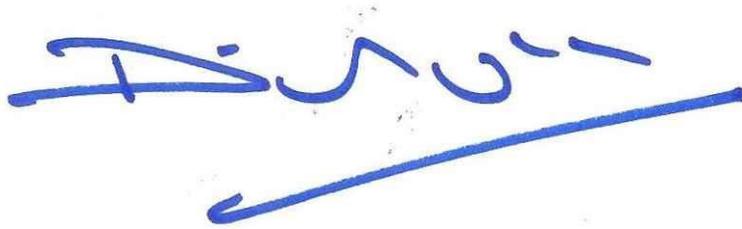
I believe it should be incumbent on everyone now to take the high road and remobilize behind the case that was submitted to the Province and to ensure the delivery of a positive political decision. The people of Brampton and future generations of Brampton residents deserve nothing less.

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I remain ready to answer any legitimate questions about the work I completed and the strategy that I will continue to advocate. But given the continuing noise levels I also wanted to flag for you that if it proves necessary, I will have little choice but to defend my personal reputation and my work on the BramptonU project in the public domain.

I hope you understand my position.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'David Wheeler', written over a horizontal blue line.

Dr David Wheeler

## Annex

### David Wheeler Consulting Activities on BramptonU 2019/2020

#### **Voluntary Activity**

David Wheeler authored an article for *Academica* entitled 'A University as it Might Be' in response to the withdrawal of Provincial funding for a branch campus for Ryerson University. This article was published in January 2019 and made the case for a full scale, comprehensive university for Brampton. The draft of the article was shared with the President of Ryerson University prior to publication as a matter of courtesy.

#### **Phase 1**

Based on interest expressed in the *Academica* article and discussions with the Mayor's Office a \$25,000 sole sourced contract was awarded to Stakeholder Research Associates April 15<sup>th</sup> 2019 entitled 'White Paper Development – Post Secondary Activity for the City of Brampton'. The contract was authorized by acting CAO Joseph Pittari based on a proposal requested by the City and submitted by Stakeholder Research Associates entitled 'A Strategy for the Development and Establishment of the University of Brampton ('Brampton U')'. It was clear at this point that Ryerson was not going to invest significant resources of its own in expanding post-secondary provision in Brampton.

DW Outputs – Consultations with Councillors, senior officers of the Council; travel; primary and secondary research. An 82 page 'Draft Strategy for the Development and Establishment of Brampton University' dated 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019. David Wheeler was the principal consultant on this project. NB DW devoted approximately double the time originally budgeted for this activity (equivalent to 15 days unpaid).

#### **Phase 2**

Based on a competitive tender process initiated by acting CAO Al Meneses and the submission of a proposal by the Academy for Sustainable Innovation dated October 17<sup>th</sup> 2019, a contract was authorized dated November 4<sup>th</sup> 2019 by CAO David Barrick regarding 'Request for Proposal Call No. RFP 2019-80 – Consulting Services for Academic Engagement and Planning for a Brampton University' value \$99,800. David Wheeler was one of a number of consultants working on the project and played a significant role.

DW Outputs – Numerous meetings and briefings for Councillors and senior officers of the Council; outreach to numerous universities in Canada, the UK and Australasia; travel; participation in public meetings (one hosted by Councillor Williams); further primary and secondary research. A draft comprehensive 112 page submission to the Province of Ontario dated March 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 supporting the case for BramptonU, coordinated, co-edited and signed off by several departments of the Council, including finance/treasury, real estate planning and economic development. Contributions to drafting, editing and finalization of three non-commercially sensitive Green Papers drawing on elements of the draft submission for publication on the BramptonU website in coordination with senior City staff. In

principle agreements from a number of leading universities in Canada, the UK and Australasia to support the launch of BramptonU with the prospect of delivery of world-leading degree offerings under the BramptonU brand by September 2022. NB DW devoted approximately 30% more hours (equivalent to 10.5 days unpaid) than were contracted and remunerated on this contract and incurred several thousand dollars of personal expenses that were not reimbursed.

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DW Outputs – Numerous meetings and briefings for Councillors and senior officers of the Council conducted alongside the ASI project; outreach to various stakeholders as directed by the City including major employers, property developers and local associations; advising on public polling and participation in tele town hall. NB DW devoted nearly double the hours (equivalent to 9.5 days unpaid) than were contracted and remunerated on this contract.

### **Phase 3 (SRA Contract Extension)**

No involvement.