

Dear Chair and Members of the CWC,

Presently, our BRT project is being designed for a future upgrade to light rail. However, an alternative to rail could be the promising new technologies that are approaching much more rapidly than expected.

It is a certain that autonomous transit vehicles will one day be providing first and last mile service. This is the degree of convenience that will incentivize riders to leave their cars at home. The puzzle of traffic congestion will then be solved since shuttles carrying 6-12 passengers will replace cars with single riders, leaving only a fraction of the vehicles on our roads. Imagine the system as a combination of the Uber Pool app, the Bellville bus hailing app and the autonomous ELA shuttles being tested in various locations.

It is vital that we decide quickly if our future will be autonomous vehicles or rail since the cost of the future upgrade will be greatly impacted by our design of the short-term BRT solution. We need current and quality information to make that decision and for this reason I hope you will support the following motion:

That an expert in the field of autonomous vehicles be engaged to speak to the Rapid Transit Implementation Working Group (RTIWG) in the first quarter of 2018 about the coming smart transit technologies and the likely timelines for their commercialization.

Sincerely,

Michael van Holst
Councillor Ward 1