

**Douglas E. Bartholomew-Saunders**  
**CAMBRIDGE, ON, CANADA**

Thursday, October 31, 2025

Regional Chair Karen Redman, Regional Councillors, Regional Clerk:

**Re: Phase II LRT from Fairway Mall to Ainslie Street Terminal, Cambridge**

Being unable to attend Committee to delegate in person, I am presenting these comments in support of the full completion of the LRT from Fairway Mall to the Ainslie Street Terminal in Cambridge.

***Original Intent***

At the time Regional Council approved the plan for the LRT, Cambridge was included in the full plan, admittedly as a second phase. Notwithstanding the approved and intended deferral of Phase II, Cambridge was included in the financing from the outset. Council approved a “special levy” of 1% on the property taxes of citizens of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, a demonstration of the commitment to the citizens of Cambridge. This levy was intended to be collected to support planning costs and ongoing operational costs. Had there been any intention not to complete Phase II, Council ought to have area rated these costs and applied the “special levy” to the rate payers of Kitchener and Waterloo only. Given that is not the case, it is only reasonable to expect and insist that the full plan be realized with the LRT continuing from Fairway Mall to its intended terminus on Ainslie Street. To fail to do so is to have unreasonably placed a special levy on the rate payers of Cambridge whilst failing to meet the promise of the extended route. If that is the result, it seems to me that the Region ought reasonably to be expected to return the special levy funds collected from Cambridge rate payers less the cost of any lesser service provided to Cambridge.

***Economic Development Benefits***

A cursory review of the extensive development benefits in Kitchener and Waterloo, present clear and convincing evidence of the benefits that will accrue to Cambridge with the Phase II implementation. In addition, significant growth in business and residential development, the restructuring of surface transit routes to intersect with the LRT along its path, rather than requiring all buses to begin and end at the terminal will result in a much more effective and efficient transit experience for the citizens of Cambridge. The restructuring of the routes may even allow for coverage of residential and commercial areas not currently served by these routes ... again, a significant enhancement of service for everyone.

There are countless benefits to the struggling commercial areas in Cambridge, opportunities for increased residential development at or near the individual stops of the LRT, increased mobility of citizens who don't have and cannot rely on automobiles, potential reduction in automobile use in general which results in beneficial environmental impacts.

I won't address these benefits further given the number of reports, delegations and written submissions Council has received, detailing the benefits.

***Cost Considerations***

I support the staff report that speaks to advocating and applying for Federal and Provincial transportation funding to plan, develop and build Phase II. Funding from the senior orders of government will reduce the fears of residents who believe that such a project will result in exponential increases in taxes in Cambridge. If there is a need to increase

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taxes for operational costs, those should be born by all three cities just as the original special levy was. That would be fair and equitable to all three cities.

***Community Service Benefits***

In a region where Social Assistance rates are very high, increasing and unlikely to decline without greater employment opportunities, the LRT enhances the radius of job search for the unemployed, OW, ODSP and EI recipients, not to mention the working poor. The homeless, clients of social services and health care agencies will have enhanced opportunities to attend their appointments for counselling, physician care, mental health care, childcare and the full range of services provided by the host of not-for-profit agencies that are spread throughout the Region, not to mention the services directly delivered by the Region.

***Jobs, Jobs, Jobs***

The potential for employment for the unemployed with such a project is an opportunity that ought to be built into Phase II from the outset. This would not be the first time for such employment opportunities. During the construction of the Eglinton West subway line in Toronto, the United Way worked with the City of Toronto Social Services to develop a program that resulted in employment opportunities for unemployed and underemployed residents of the neighbourhoods through which the line ran. This had been discussed during the Phase I construction of the LRT in Kitchener and Waterloo. Unfortunately, the contacts with the various firms building the line had been signed and could not be amended to include such an opportunity.

When we consider the number of jobs, what we might have called entry level opportunities for the unemployed, eliminated by society's increasing fascination with technology, creating opportunities for jobs in the skilled trades and construction should be a welcome idea for the Region if it is truly committed to its role within the social assistance and employment programs defined by the province. Matching OW and ODSP clients to employment that would reduce, if not eliminate, their reliance on financial assistance, regardless of the order of government paying it has the potential to lower OW/ODSP caseloads and the cost burden of social programs on the Region. Gone are the days when clients could be matched to jobs like auto manufacturing that is now robot/tech assisted and requiring education not possessed by the homeless and unemployed; grocery cashier positions that are now replaced by the customer self check out; ticket sales at train stations, transit kiosks and movie theatres, all replaced by automated ticket kiosks. As technology progresses, the unemployed underclass will expand exponentially unless those services vested with placing clients in employment become innovative and attach employment to contracts operated by municipalities, other government and Crown corporations responsible for employment programs or at least municipalities that make referrals to employment programs. The Life Skills, Resume Writing and Budgeting programs offered by municipal program delivery are of little value in the absence of job creation that matches the education, skills and experience of the job seekers. Such programs may well lead to apprenticeships and permanent long-term employment in fields where Canada is lacking in such skilled workers.

***Finally***

These, among the plethora of compelling reasons presented by others are the reasons I fully support and encourage Council to approve the completion of Phase II of the Ion ... a light rail transit system running from Fairway Mall to Ainslie Street Terminal. Completion of the line would fulfill the original intent of the plan, bring equity in taxation and service to the city and citizens of Cambridge, and result in incalculable economic development, social and employment

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successes that will impact the current social conditions of Cambridge and the Region. Such a winning plan should not be ignored.

With best regards,

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Management Consultant, Barnes Management Group  
Former Commissioner, Community Services, The Regional Municipality of Waterloo

Copies:           Citizens for Cambridge  
                      City Council, The City of Cambridge  
                      The Waterloo Region Record