

LRT Phase 2 to Cambridge

During Regional Council's exciting first ride at the inaugural launch of the LRT ION in 2019, we took our communities into the future as we planned for the significant growth in our Region's population and economy. Our Regional Councillor colleague Tom Galloway, declared "Onward to Cambridge!" As then Chair of Planning and Works Committee, he continued to champion the LRT Phase 2 to Cambridge, as the LRT was planned to serve the entire Waterloo Region. It is now time for Phase 2 to Cambridge!

As a former Ontario Minister of Transportation, I was aligned with the Region's overall transportation network to serve the entire Region of Waterloo. This comprehensive network included public transit: Grand River Transit, LRT from Waterloo to Cambridge, All-Day 2-way GO train service from KW to Toronto and the proposed GO train link connecting Cambridge to Guelph.

During my tenure as Transportation Minister in 2017-2018, several key projects were advanced to continue building that network: a Highway 401 expansion thru Cambridge now completed; a feasibility study that helped inform the business case for Metrolinx funding for a GO rail link between Cambridge and Guelph, upgrades to the Kitchener GO line progressing towards all-day 2-way service; planning for the Kitchener Transit Hub; support as the Region was planning for the Phase 2 LRT route. I supported the previous Provincial Government's policy change to fund the LRTs in Ontario partnering with the Federal Government for some projects.

The Region's Transportation network is essential for the projected growth to 1 million residents by 2051 and to strengthen our economic prosperity. It is vital in connecting universities and college campuses to students, employers to employees across the Region, health care centres to our communities and in serving the Region's rapidly increasing population that demands reliable and low emissions public transportation. A long-term vision that plans for the future has been the Region's guiding principle.

Why LRT? KW has benefitted from billions of dollars in investments from building housing and businesses along the LRT line. Because of the permanent LRT infrastructure, developers have the confidence needed to build housing and

increase density. Communities with Bus Rapid Transit instead of LRT do not have the same level of investment in housing and business permits. Housing is key to businesses looking to locate and expand in Cambridge, increasing revenues for the City and Region.

Those with mobility issues have clearly demonstrated that the LRT is far more barrier free than buses. That alone should be a reason to provide LRT rather than BRT in our inclusive community. Transferring between LRT and BRT is an inconvenient detraction from a seamless system and a deterrent to riders.

For the business case for Provincial funding, Municipal Councils need to continue to make decisions to build the required density for Major Transit Station Areas to apply for Provincial funding. Any delays affect building much needed housing and a strong business case for funding the LRT.

An overall seamless transportation network for the Region has been envisioned, planned for and continues to be implemented. It requires Council to make the best decisions for the future of our Region. That includes Phase 2 LRT to Cambridge.