

**Chair, Sustainability, Infrastructure and Development Committee,
Region of Waterloo.**

Dear Ms. James,

Re: Stage 2 ION Initial Business Case

More than seventy years ago, on April 23, 1955 to be exact, all rail passenger operations ceased on the Grand River Electric Railway. But on June 21, 2019 rail transit returned to Waterloo Region with the inauguration of the ION Light Rail service, once again connecting Kitchener and Waterloo. Six years later, the ION Light Rail operation has exceeded all expectations and continues to perform impressively. Unlike several other rail transit projects in Canada, the design, construction and implementation of the ION LRT has been an outstanding example of competence and ingenuity. Moreover, the public acknowledgement and acceptance of the ION LRT have been a case study of *how-to-build transit* that succeeds in not only generating ridership but also guiding urban development positively and meticulously. In fact, the Region's foresight and skill in amalgamating all local transit within the Region of Waterloo to form Grand River Transit on January 1, 2000 paved the way for the development of Canada's best public transit service for its size.

Way back in 1973, freshly holding my Master's degree in "public transportation and urban planning" I was hired as a consultant by Kates, Peat Marwick. One of my first projects was helping to devise a bus transit system for the newly amalgamated City of Cambridge. I have attached two segments that I personally wrote for the November 1973 Final Report - Cambridge Transit Study. The first is an "Historical Background" of public transit in the new City of Cambridge. The second is my "Concept Number 4" that was brief but prescient. Both are incredibly pertinent in formulating your Committee's recommendation to Regional Council.

In closing, I urge you to vote in favour of the Stage 2 ION business case, in essence the first step in seeing my November 1973 recommendation *finally* materializing. I have waited fifty-two years but I am optimistic that you and Council will follow my advice.

Thank you and good luck.

Howard J. Levine
Grimsby, ON