

Dear Regional Councillors,

I strongly urge you to fund the LRT extension to Cambridge.

I will be honest: it's for selfish reasons. I am a senior Waterloo resident who has a number of friends and contacts in Cambridge who I visit often. I also like trying out Cambridge's many interesting restaurants and shops, and attending lectures and events at the School of Architecture and Cambridge Library and Gallery.

Before too long, like many of my senior friends, I will likely lose my ability to drive a car. It breaks my heart to see my friends become shut-ins when they lose or give up their driving licenses. A few can afford to regularly hire taxis or Ubers, but many just sit home until a friend has time to take them places.

Even now, I vastly prefer to use transit for my Cambridge visits. It's less stressful. It's cheaper -- just \$3.00 for two hours of unlimited transfers. I get to catch up on my reading. I love it!

In 2021, 1 in 6 people in Waterloo Region were 65 years of age or older. This proportion will grow to 1 in 4 by 2041.[i] Do you really want to sentence all these people to isolation and a lack of mobility (if they wisely decide to lessen their car driving) or risk others' lives if they continue to drive when their reaction time and abilities decline?

Transit is the way to keep seniors connected to the community.

GRT could do more to encourage and support senior ridership. Many of my senior friends fear taking transit, never having used it before. A once-a-year Ride A Bus event[ii] for a very limited number of people at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex (a transit-in accessible location!!) just doesn't cut it. Free Seniors Transit Days, where seniors and a volunteer transit guide or teacher could ride free, could help grow this ridership.

And, increasing senior ridership could help pay for the LRT extension to Cambridge.

Optimistically awaiting your supportive vote on Tuesday November 4,

Kae Elgie