

Chair Redman and members of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo Council,

I wish I could bring this delegation to you in person, but unfortunately that was not possible this time.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the motion to remove the reduction to 30-minute frequency in the evenings from the proposed budget. This decision reflects a commendable commitment to maintaining the high standards of public transportation that our community deserves.

However, I wrote to you today to discuss a matter of great importance regarding the proposed reduction. While I understand that the staff made this recommendation to adhere to the currently negotiated contract and to keep LRT service hours within the agreed-upon maximum, I believe that decision was misguided. It is essential to recognize that the reduction, although well-intentioned, neglected to understand the importance of evening service and compromises the practicality and usefulness of a community infrastructure integral to the Region's vision of a green and sustainable future.

In moving forward, I urge the Council not to shy away from the possibility of renegotiating the current contract for more service hours when ridership demonstrates the need. As the old saying goes, being penny wise but pound foolish does not serve the long-term interests of our community. The baseline service plans of the original contract with the service provider indicated regular increases in service every few years, implying a commitment to regular renegotiation as ridership increased.

I acknowledge the positive step taken in proposing to extend 10-minute daytime frequencies into the summer. However, it is crucial to emphasize that this should not be an excuse to refrain from increasing peak service when necessary due to a desire to maintain the current contract. While keeping 15-minute frequencies in the evening is valuable, our commitment to providing the best possible service to the community should override any reluctance to renegotiate the terms of the existing agreement.

In conclusion, let us reflect on the Regional messaging that proudly declares ION LRT as a great success, with ridership thriving at all times of day and every day of the week. It is time for our actions to align with these words. The community deserves the service levels that reflect the success of the ION LRT and contribute to the Region's continued growth and sustainability.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that, together, we can ensure the continued success of our public transportation system and fulfill our commitment to the well-being of the residents of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo.

Sincerely,

Cory Albrecht

Kitchener, November 28, 2023