Present were: Chair J. Wideman, L. Armstrong, T. Cowan, J. Haalboom, B. Halloran, R. Kelterborn, G. Lorentz, C. Millar, J. Mitchell, and S. Strickland

Members absent: J. Brewer, D. Craig, R. Deutschmann, T. Galloway, K. Seiling, and C. Zehr

OPENING REMARKS

J. Wideman opened the meeting and welcomed members of the public. He advised the purpose of the meeting was to receive public input on the project and that no decisions on the project will be made at this time and that Committee members are present to hear comments from the public only. J. Wideman provided advertising history, project history and the procedure for registered delegation including time expectations, and also public decorum within Council Chambers.

DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT

None declared.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Nancy Button, Director, Rapid Transit provided a brief presentation on growth, cost of business as usual, public consultation, preferred Light Rail Transit (LRT) over Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), L3 preferred, phases, and the next steps. A copy of the presentation is attached to the original minutes.

DELEGATIONS

1. Gary Promhouse, Kitchener appeared before Committee providing background on his experience. He talked about Flexi-Bus Rapid Transit (FBRT) and the advantages to FBRT. He highlighted that LRT is a high risk and BRT is easy to upgrade. He noted that Toyota is a supplier of coaster buses and if FBRT was adopted in the Region they could be produced at the Toyota plant in town. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

2. Ruth Haworth, Tax Payers for Sensible Transit appeared before Committee providing numerous reasons as to why the current plan for rapid transit in Waterloo Region would not work. She stated that if the Region proceeds with LRT then the Region should provide and examine comparable options, hold a referendum, have an independent review projecting ridership and costs, and defer any decision until all concerns are answered honestly and fairly. She highlighted her support for a BRT system.
3. Mirek and Eva Stehilk, Kitchener appeared before Committee noting that opposition for LRT comes from the uninformed. They talked about their own experience with transit in the Czech Republic and highlighted the benefits of LRT and explained how it works. They stated there is no reason we can’t have a similar system in the Region, it is convenient and easy to use. They highlighted they support LRT and noted if it is planned well people will use it.

4. Chris Klein, Kitchener appeared before Committee stating he is transit user and supports LRT. He pointed out organizations support LRT because of various reasons that benefit. Waterloo Region but the tax payers are the ones who have to pay for it and they have a hard time seeing how it benefits them. He explained to Committee how he went from being a car driver to using transit and the benefits it provides him. He stated that the Region needs a more attractive transit system to attract ridership and feels LRT will do that.

5. Tim Mollison, TRITAG, Kitchener appeared before Committee providing background on TRITAG. He stated it is important for the Region to plan for the 185,000 people the Region is expecting in growth in the next 20 years. He noted that LRT will help with urban sprawl. He highlighted his support for option L3 and stated if we don’t start with something we may end with nothing. He talked about different financing options and the use of development charges to help with tax rates from increasing. He pointed out that currently the iXpress is already struggling to hold capacity and that is why he strongly supports LRT.

6. Judy Garrett, Kitchener appeared before Committee stating she is an environmentalist and firm believer in walking and cycling as much as possible. She cautioned against comparing the Region to Ottawa’s transit because they are very different cities. She highlighted that LRT is not an improved transit service and that BRT would work much better. She stated that consideration should be made to the Aerobus because this could link all 3 cities. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

7. Ken Hoyle appeared before Committee in support of Rapid Transit in the Region. He stated that he supported Phase 1 construction of LRT in the cities of Waterloo and Kitchener and aBRT in Cambridge. He asked Committee to consider and support the idea of realigning the approved route in the Galt Core to the Beverly, Dundas Street Corridor. He asked that phase 1 go to Ottawa Street rather than Fairview Mall. A copy of the presentation is attached to the original minutes.

8. John Shortreed, Waterloo appeared before Committee not in support of LRT and stated his disappointment in the Region’s biased, myth based approach to transit investment. He provided several myths of LRT. He concluded his presentation by stating BRT is a much better system. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

9. Sheila Hultquist, Kitchener appeared before Committee congratulating Council on their hard work so far and that she strongly supports LRT. She pointed out that option L3a is worth spending the extra money but supports L3b indicating it is a good first step. She stated she would like to see Cambridge receive LRT once ridership merits it. She highlighted LRT will attract development in the core to help save the farm lands. She stated transportation staff have done their homework for 8 years and chose LRT. She asked Regional Council to make the Region of Waterloo an appealing place to live.

10. Byron Weber Becker, Kitchener appeared before Committee stating he regularly commutes on iXpress to the University of Waterloo. He compared rapid transit and owning an automobile. He feels LRT is the way to go but would like to see more research into suspended light rail. He provided many advantages to suspended light rail suggesting that suspended light rail may address concerns with LRT. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.
11. Helen Ellis, Waterloo appeared before Committee providing a brief personal history. She talked about downtown Kitchener and thinks it’s a tragedy and feels LRT will seriously damage the City of Waterloo. She expressed concern with distances people will have to walk to access the LRT stations. She highlighted people need access to the businesses on King Street in Waterloo and with LRT, Uptown Waterloo will lose 50 parking spaces. She feels LRT will hurt business in Uptown Waterloo.

12. Brian Turnbull, Taxpayers for Sensible Transit appeared before Committee and highlighted his knowledge of Portland and stated there is an ugly side of Portland. He briefly described the disadvantages of the transit service in Portland. He urged Regional Council to be visionaries. He stated he is opposed to LRT. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

13. Craig Beattie, Perimeter Development Corporation, Toronto appeared before Committee stating he is a strong believer that LRT is the right way to go and the right technology to further intensify the core area and employment opportunities. He highlighted that LRT will take the Region to a whole other level that BRT can’t do. He noted LRT represents change and change is difficult and challenging for people but that change represents opportunity. He stated there are a lot of major business and employers who are in favour of LRT.


15. Michael Druker, Waterloo appeared before Committee stating people are changing and technology is changing. He pointed out residents under the age of 40 support LRT and that occasional riders are overwhelming in favour of LRT. He highlighted that he wants to have farm land and doesn’t want to see urban sprawl. He stated ultimately it is Regional Council’s decision; they are responsible to shape our future.

16. Susan Koswan, Grand River Environmental Network (GREN), appeared before Committee in support of LRT. She gave a brief summary of GREN. She provided a recommendation that combines L9 and L3. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

17. Hilary Abel, Kitchener appeared before Committee stating she is a resident of downtown Kitchener and advocate of Waterloo Region. She provided a personal history and noted that she uses RQ Magazine as a platform to raise awareness about issues and causes in the Region. She highlighted that on her website she had 100 votes for LRT. She hoped that the residents of Waterloo Region elected visionaries and that they move forward with LRT.

18. Stewart Thomas, Kitchener appeared before Committee highlighting LRT is proposed on certainty and speculation. He stated LRT is proposed on a 20 year projection that may not materialize and the cost of LRT will probably be over budget and not guarantee higher ridership. He highlighted that he is not surprised that the latest report favours LRT and there has been no attempt to find the most effective approach without rail. He stated Councillors are elected to make a decision on the will of the people and LRT isn’t what the people favour. He noted he is in favour of BRT because it is flexible.

19. Ramy Nassar, Waterloo appeared before Committee noting he is a top 40 under 40. He stated he is happy to live in the Region of Waterloo and asked Council to think about the kids in the future. He highlighted there are common themes around LRT costs. He stated increase in property taxes will impact him significantly since he owns multiple properties in the Region but that hasn’t changed his support for LRT. He asked Council to vote in favour of LRT on June 15th, 2011.
20. Dianne Ensing, Waterloo appeared before Committee highlighting human and environmental impact of urban sprawl. She talked about obesity and noted that in areas with the most density with the best transit, obesity is very low. She stated that clean air and a pedestrian environment form part of the solution and that LRT will support and curb the impact of sprawl. She stated the real debate is what will our community be in like in 20 to 30 years. She noted LRT is central for a healthy environment and she is in support of LRT and LRT to Cambridge.

21. Ondrej Recnik, Virtual Properties.ca, appeared before Committee highlighting grid lock on Hespeler Road and the huge demand on the road systems in the west end of Waterloo. He noted that we need to learn from our mistakes and make a plan on how we are going to handle the growth of the Region. He pointed out that when Toronto built their subway system they weren’t at capacity but they are now and suggested the Region needs to build a system that won’t be at capacity right away. He noted he is in favour of LRT option L3 but that he will support L3b. He highlighted building LRT is an investment that will last for a long time that could reshape the Region. He asked that Cambridge receive the same treatment as Kitchener and Waterloo.

22. Benton Leong, Waterloo appeared before Committee stating it’s impossible to change the lifetime behavior of residents; the only time you will get people out of their car is by dragging them out. He suggested offering a different view. He asked Committee to please improve public transit in Waterloo Region by spending money on public transit not on expanding roads. He stated if you have faith in the Region it’s time to make the right decision and vote for LRT.

23. Sam Ducklow, Kitchener appeared before Committee not against rapid transit but against using rail line. He talked about the rail lines; the great depression caused by financial debt and asked if we don’t learn from the past when will we learn. He highlighted that governments are in serious debt, the signs are out there, financial debt is happening everywhere. He stated that people won’t give up their vehicle and use LRT. He asked that Council make a good decision on June 15th, 2011.

24. Ron Hackett, Wallenstein appeared before Committee noting his support for rapid transit but did state he has 3 serious reservations; the cost of construction, trains belong on rail corridors not on roads, and LRT should include Cambridge. He suggested that LRT should follow the rail corridors from the Farmers’ Market in Woolwich Township to the Delta in Cambridge. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

25. Emil Frind, Waterloo appeared before Committee in favour of LRT. He highlighted the need for LRT because of expected growth and to encourage intensification in our core areas to take off development pressure in our outlying areas. He went into great detail about the financing of the rapid transit project. He suggested that since investors and developers will reap an immediate windfall profit of the LRT perhaps imposing a development surcharge on properties along the core would help with the shortfall of the current estimates to complete the LRT project. He noted that development charges should pay not only for water, sewers and roads but also for the necessary upgrades in the transportation system. He stated that households on fixed incomes don’t benefit from growth so they should not pay for the capital costs of LRT. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

26. Art Sinclair, Greater K-W Chamber of Commerce, Kitchener appeared before Committee stating they have had challenges drawing a position on this particular issue. He referred to their Media Release and background paper on Monday, May 30th, 2011 that states they are in support of LRT if it is implemented in a reasonably and sound fiscal and financial responsible manner. He highlighted some brief concerns expressed by some members that are outlined in the background paper. He notes that one of the major concerns is with the implementation of
development charges to help fund the project. He also highlighted another concern is the impact on services, not just on rapid transit.

Committee took a 10 minute break at 9:15 p.m.

27. Don Bourgeois, Kitchener appeared before Committee in support of LRT and not BRT as an alternative. He highlighted many services he and others don’t use that waste tax payers money and stated taxes are the price we pay for civilization. He noted LRT is a price we pay to have the benefits of LRT. He stated if the Region chooses BRT they will be making a huge mistake just like the City of Ottawa did.

28. Robert Milligan, New Dundee appeared before Committee regarding smart staging of the LRT. He provided Committee members with specific reasons as to what is currently wrong with the Region’s Rapid Transit Options and provided suggestions to improve the plan. He asked that the Region use the existing rail line from Stockyards Market to Ainslie Terminal.

29. Taylor Byrnes, Kitchener appeared before Committee in support of LRT. He explained in great detail aerobus and how that is not a form of LRT technology. He highlighted the advantages LRT compared to BRT pointing out that BRT would reach capacity in 10 to 15 years. He stated that Cambridge deserves all the benefits of LRT as much as Kitchener and Waterloo. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

30. Christopher Letnick, Kitchener appeared before Committee providing a brief personal history. He stated that Regional staff have presented an objective report determining that the best solution is light rail and that the discussion should be why that choice is important to different groups. He noted that Waterloo Region is diverse, it has many technology companies, and innovation is very important. He stated his support for LRT as the current preferred option. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

31. Josh Hoey, Kitchener appeared before Committee in support of LRT. He talked about his time spent in Portland. He stated that improvements made to the current transit service have made a difference. He highlighted that LRT will stop sprawl, increase intensification and that currently the Region has money secured from Provincial and Federal Governments. He pointed out that people are not passionate about road expansion or more parking lots but they are passionate about the need for improved transit.

32. Paul Cyr, Kitchener appeared before Committee stating his support for option L3b. He highlighted that LRT is the most cost-effective use of our tax dollars and the best choice for our Region’s future. He noted there is no way to justify choosing BRT except for lower capital cost. He highlighted that LRT will help drive urban development, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, attract highly sought workforce talent, lowering labour costs, generate choice riders, provide accessible service to seniors and persons with disabilities and will strengthen our local economy. A copy of his presentation is appended to the original minutes.

33. Scott Piatkowski, Kitchener appeared before Committee noting his support for LRT. He highlighted that the Region’s current transit system requires improvements. He talked about the misinformation regarding LRT while he was campaigning in the last election and urged Council to proceed with LRT because the plan is visionary, practical and more affordable than the alternative. A copy of the presentation is appended to the original minutes.

34. Douglas Gregory, Kitchener appeared before Committee providing Committee with a brief history of his business why he had to relocate to Toronto. He stated his reasons for remaining as a resident in Waterloo Region. He highlighted that IXpress is already at its capacity thanks to its success. He stated by investing in LRT today we will ensure the Region continues to thrive
in the face of massive growth that is happening everyday now and without rapid transit that means urban sprawl will be eating into our farms and townships.

35. Stan Rektor, Waterloo did not appear as a delegation.

36. Greg Michalenko, Waterloo appeared before Committee in favour of LRT. He briefly talked about his experience with the transit system in Portland. He highlighted that low income residents and immigrants rely heavily on transit. He pointed out that the rapid transit public consultation centres were the best he has ever been at. He also noted that businesses in Waterloo and Kitchener will thrive with LRT.

37. Roger Farwell, Kitchener appeared before Committee stating inbound commutes has exceeded out bound commutes. He highlighted that he is proud about the decisions the Region as made in the past about the Region’s future. He stated he feels LRT is a competitive asset the Region needs to attract talent to this area. He talked about the importance of sustainability, the purpose of the Regional Official Plan (ROP) and LRT and transportation infrastructure is a necessary part of the official plan to work. He highlighted the decision about rapid transit is a decision that will affect future generations and that the decision will require leadership.

38. Susan Bryant, Elmira appeared before Committee representing Woolwich Healthy Communities. She gave a brief history about the organization and stated their support for LRT because it’s important for health and the environment. She highlighted that LRT should be considered for the townships. She stated with the implementation of LRT it will help with urban sprawl. She noted with LRT the Region will have the best of both worlds: vibrant prosperous city cores surrounded by viable farms and healthy small town centres. She asked that Regional Council vote for LRT to ensure the townships don’t become the donut of sprawl.

39. Sarah Witmer, Waterloo appeared before Committee opposed to LRT but in support of BRT. She highlighted her personal concerns with LRT noting money spent on LRT should be spent on other things like road expansions; Ira Needles Boulevard and Trussler Road. She noted that other programs that will suffer from LRT. She stated that only people who live in the downtown cores will use LRT and asked Committee not to forget about the people who don’t live in the downtown cores. She stated she was upset with the referendum being turned down. She expressed her concern that there no longer will be the Octoberfest parade with LRT.

Chair Wideman stated that is misinformation, the Oktoberfest parade will still occur as well as all the other parades.

40. Alan Hawes, Kitchener appeared before Committee opposed to LRT. He stated the cost will be over 1.5 billion once it’s all said and done. He provided examples of other projects that cost double once they were completed. He asked who will be paying for the cost increase. He highlighted he is not in favour of LRT and this does not mean he is misinformed.

41. Ellen Shields, Waterloo appeared before Committee not in favour of LRT. She expressed her concern with LRT already being the preferred option and the residents can’t even plead for a referendum. She stated she is bothered by the statement that LRT could change the shape of our urban form as she feels it’s the cities responsibility to change their own urban form not up to Regional Council. She noted that LRT will have a much greater effect on Waterloo as compared to Kitchener or Cambridge.

42. Pat Kinsella, Kitchener did not appear as a delegation.

43. Jeffrey Beckner, Kitchener appeared before Committee expressing his concern with the Region not presenting an architecture model to show how LRT will look. He presented his own
model to show how LRT will impact cyclists, GRT and people with disabilities. He pointed out that if LRT is implemented there will be curbs in the middle of the road and it will be a disaster for many people.

Chair Wideman brought forward a motion to have the Public Meeting extend past 11:00 p.m.

MOVED by Strickland
SECONDED by Armstrong

THAT the Planning and Works Committee be extended until 12:00 a.m.

CARRIED

44. Margaret Santos, Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee appeared before Committee in support of LRT. She noted that LRT with integrated bus routes will make car-free travel more convenient, encouraging people of all ages, income and abilities to walk and use transit. A copy of her presentation is appended to the original minutes.

45. Ravi Upadhyay, Waterloo appeared before Committee stating what hasn’t been discussed is our ability to act versus not acting. He highlighted that Waterloo has the opportunity to thrive and some form of rapid transit is needed. He indicated that Waterloo Region is expected to grow by 200,000 in population and a LRT system is needed to support the growth. He stated he is in favour of LRT.

46. Rosa Bustamante, Waterloo appeared before Committee highlighting young people want to live in a viable community. She pointed out that not everyone will use transit but not everyone uses our pools, libraries or courthouses. She asked Committee to please vote for LRT on June 15th, 2011.

47. James Maaser, Waterloo appeared before Committee stating he is a transit user and cyclist and is strongly opposed to LRT. He highlighted that there isn’t enough density to support LRT in any of the 3 cities. He suggested that urban redevelopment can be achieved by other means and felt there was a bias from Regional government regarding LRT. He stated that BRT has the best cost benefit and performs best overall. He noted his support for a referendum.

48. Kareem Shehata, Kitchener did not appear as a delegation.

S. Strickland thanked Chair J. Wideman for chairing firm but fair public meetings.

ADJOURN

MOVED by J. Mitchell
SECONDED by G. Lorentz

THAT the meeting adjourn at 11:10 p.m.

CARRIED

COMMITTEE CHAIR, J. Wideman

COMMITTEE CLERK, E. Flewwelling
Waterloo Region
Rapid Transit
Costs of Business-as-Usual

No rapid transit

- Road expansion costs of $1.4 to $1.5 billion
- More lanes, more congestion in mature areas

With rapid transit

- Road expansion costs reduced by $400 to $500 million
- Provincial & Federal funding up to $565 million
February-March and April-May Public Consultation

- 25 public events
  - 17 public consultation centres
  - 8 information booths
- Over 1900 people signed in
- Over 1600 comments submitted
Rapid transit is preferred over business-as-usual.
LRT is preferred over BRT
Stage 1
Preliminary Preferred
Rapid Transit Implementation Option
Stage 2
Rapid Transit System
Next Steps

May 31/June 1: public input meetings

June 15: Council approval

July-Sept: Environmental Project Report

Oct: begin Transit Project Assessment
Questions?
Flexi-bus Rapid Transit
An LRT/GRT Alternative

by
Gary Promhouse
About Me

- 15 years as Chief Scientist at Open Text Corp
- Developed first web search engine (OTI)
- Interest in Energy (NRC)
  - Transportation (US DOE:2.12(all):2.2(LRT))
- Interest in Waterloo region transit plans
- Developed FBRT transit plan
### Motivating Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Bike</th>
<th>Car (GD)</th>
<th>Car (SL)</th>
<th>FBRT!</th>
<th>GRT+*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westheights to UW RTP</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>31-36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18-37</td>
<td>52-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hespeler (River Rd) to UW RTP</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>90-114</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>32-52</td>
<td>107-109</td>
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<tr>
<td>Krug to Colby</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>45-52</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td>57-65</td>
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<td>Stonybrook to Stirling</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8-15</td>
<td>23-36</td>
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<td>Wheatfield to Grand River Hosp.</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>47-53</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21-31</td>
<td>46-55</td>
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<td>Bankside to Sun Life</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>19-23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>13-28</td>
<td>30-45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is Flexi-bus Rapid Transit?

- Five key inter-related concepts
  - A two level grid topology (not GRT/LRT type hub-spoke)
  - Express routes use main roads
  - Very frequent vehicles
  - Flexible smaller vehicle sizes (28, 18, 12?, 6, 3)
  - An honor based payment scheme
- Hong Kong example
Inter-city transit integration

• Low cost and easily accessible station locations with parking
  o Victoria and Expressway
    ▪ Go Train?
  o 401 and Townline
    ▪ Go Bus?
    ▪ Continuation of FBRT philosophy for inter-city
What if? / All eggs in one basket

- FBRT has a 5 year upgrade cycle (low risk/cost)
- LRT is 20-30 year bet (very high risk/cost bet)
- Real PRT on the horizon

Communication analog
Toyota

- Coaster bus
- Hybrids
- Waterloo region jobs
FBRT Summary

- Major costs/performance advantages over GRT/LRT
- Implementable today
- Risk/benefit equation
- A migration path to better options
- FBRT justifies an independent study
Waterloo Region LRT Proposal: Concerns

By Ruth Haworth

May 24, 2011
Author details

I am a resident of uptown Waterloo, a past member of the Uptown Vision Committee, and an enthusiastic booster of the uptown. I am a University of Waterloo alumna (MA Economics, 1984) and an employee in Waterloo’s high tech sector. I am the spokesperson for Taxpayers for Sensible Transit (T4ST).

I am not a political insider and some of what I say here is second-hand information and speculation, but I hope I have provided enough evidence to convince politicians, staff and others that LRT should not be approved unless some very serious issues are resolved.

I welcome all criticisms of my analysis. This is a work in progress. Please feel free to contact me with comments, questions, or related thoughts: rhaworth@sentex.ca

Parts of this report are excerpted from my blog: http://yappadingding.blogspot.com/search/label/lrt

More information: http://www.t4st.com

I have also published articles in local papers:

- Questions of rail plan go beyond money
- Public will never give up their cars
- No: We need other mass transit solutions
- Do residents want an LRT?

You can hear me in an online debate on LRT here: http://media.slightlysauced.com/SlightlySauced-Episode-33-The-Great-LRT-Smackdown.mp3

I am adding to this report regularly. A link to the latest version will always be available at http://www.t4st.com. In addition, here is a direct link to the download page for this report: http://www.t4st.com/index.php?title=File:LRT_impact_on_Waterloo.pdf

Are you interested in speaking out about LRT? All the contact info you might need is here: http://www.t4st.com/index.php?title=How_to_Help
Executive summary

This document provides evidence for the following propositions. The current plan for rapid transit in Waterloo Region is:

- **Unnecessarily costly**: Transit could be greatly improved at a much lower cost.
- **Not justified by reasonable ridership projections**: When analyzed from a number of angles, the region’s ridership estimates are far higher than is credible.
- **Bad for transit**: LRT is so expensive that it will result in a reduction of overall transit quality in Waterloo Region.
- **Inconvenient**: By stopping every 1.5 kilometers, it is not the right system to run on our main streets. In addition, in many cases the stops are too far from destinations, such as the malls and R+T Park.
- **Not designed for work commuters**: Increased ridership may occur due to university students living further from campus, but that won’t significantly reduce car use.
- **Unlikely to significantly reduce the need for road expansion**: The route is such that LRT will not lure commuters out of their cars and so will not reduce the need for road expansion.
- **Disruptive to other uses of roads**: LRT will be a major cause of congestion.
- **A threat to the vibrancy of uptown Waterloo**.
- **A threat to other important activities that need funding**: LRT will stretch regional and municipal budgets to such an extent that there will be cutbacks to the arts, recreation, parks...
- ** Likely to raise taxes so much that some people will move to the townships and commute in to town, and businesses will relocate**.
- **Not supported by facts**: In the region’s attempt to sell rapid transit to residents, there have been many confusing, questionable or downright incorrect claims.

My proposal for how to proceed is:

- Look into applying aBRT to the entire route. (aBRT, or adapted bus rapid transit, travels in the same lanes as other traffic but utilizes signal priority, queue jumping, bus bypass shoulders on hiways, and other “smart transit” techniques.)
- Request the provincial and federal governments to allow the dedicated funds to go towards aBRT and more iXpress routes. (Note: This appears to not be a problem.)
- Rethink the route. For example, the route should not go through Waterloo Park and the University of Waterloo, but should instead go straight north on King.

If we proceed with LRT, then we must:

- Provide and examine comparable options: same route, different technologies.
- Hold a referendum.
- Subject all the region’s projections of ridership and costs to independent review.
- Defer any decision until all the concerns in this document are answered honestly and fairly.
aBRT: The better alternative?

Instead of spending a billion dollars to replace the iXpress route with LRT, the region could replace the iXpress route from end to end with adapted bus rapid transit, or aBRT. This is the technology they are currently proposing for part of the route from Fairview Mall to the Ainslie Street Station.

The aBRT option is like the iXpress but adds traffic signal priority, queue jumping, bus bypass shoulders on hiways, and other “smart transit” techniques. It would provide speeds comparable to LRT or BRT at a much lower cost. Brampton and York have both implemented aBRT.

After we have fixed our current bus system, we should start to attract more business commuters to transit. As transit usage grows, we may want to consider an LRT in future. The problem with BRT is that it is an expensive solution involving curbs or raised pavement to create dedicated lanes for the entire route, and switching it to LRT is very expensive. aBRT does not present this problem. It provides sufficient capacity for years to come, and it can be transitioned to LRT without financial loss.

aBRT also provides more flexibility than BRT and especially LRT. Buses can be diverted temporarily in case of accidents or construction, and the route can be changed if need be.

Brampton recently installed an aBRT system called Zům (pronounced Zoom). Zum buses are light-weight hybrid diesel-electric. They operate on Brampton’s most high-demand corridors. The first five routes are budgeted at $295M and they criss-cross the city.

York region has an aBRT system called Viva.
Disruptions to normal uses of our roads

No left turns
The LRT tracks will either be raised or have curbs around them, and it will not be possible for cars to cross them. This means that, except for at specially designated intersections and certain exceptions in core areas, there will be no left turns over LRT tracks. Driveways and many streets will be inaccessible unless drivers continue past their destination and make a U-turn.

As I discovered recently when driving on St. Clair in Toronto on a Sunday morning, all those U-turns make traffic very slow because the traffic light has to have a U-turn only segment.

The following snippet of the region’s LRT map shows King Street where it crosses John and Union. There will be no left turns on to John or any of the driveways on King, so drivers will have to go to the next “full movement intersection” (such as John) and make a U-turn.

Buses alongside trains
The LRT stops on average only every 1.5 kilometers, so buses will be required to drop people off between stops. This means that a lot of buses will run alongside the LRT. The problem is that the LRT permanently obstructs two lanes of the street, so in most spots there is only one lane for cars and buses beside it. This is going to cause problems.

Traffic congestion
With the need for U-turns and extra buses, along with the reduction of streets from four lanes to two, there will be a lot more traffic congestion – even if the LRT can lure a lot of commuters out of their cars and on to LRT. But the route is so inconvenient, as described in earlier sections, that this does not seem likely.

Other transit
What Waterloo Region needs, much more than an overpriced luxury train, is more GRT buses. Enhancements are planned, but the region has decided that due to the cost of LRT, they will have to delay most of the bus enhancements until 2018.
Unknown costs of LRT

- **Downloading** — The region intends for the municipalities to pay for a portion of capital costs related to LRT. These are costs such as moving hydro vaults and poles, resurfacing roads, rebuilding curbs and sidewalks and moving light posts, and the cost to municipalities will at the least be related to the length of time before they require replacement. The region intends to shift the location of water pipes so that they are not under the tracks – an added cost. There may be costs to the municipalities to build parking garages at some LRT stations. In addition, for utilities such as gas, telecommunications and electricity, the region intends to download all or most of the cost to the company, which will be added costs passed on to consumers.

- **Possible causes of cost overruns** — Land acquisition costs could be higher than expected because the region will have to acquire a lot of land at one time. I have heard this issue described as “the black cloud hanging over LRT.” LRT could go over-budget before the shovels hit the ground. Another common local problem is contaminated soil.

- **The effect of cost overruns** — Our region pays one third of the cost of LRT up to a limit; after that we pay all of the cost. Large cost overruns are common (it has been estimated than on average in North America, LRTs run 40% over budget).

- **Tax increase estimates misleading** — A recent article in the Waterloo Chronicle revealed that the region’s figures for property tax increases are misleading. See Confusion over tax impact of rapid transit, March 15. Plus, the estimated tax increases don’t appear to include the much higher operating costs of LRT. We need an independent review of the figures.

- **Total transit costs not known** — LRT is part of a transit solution that includes a lot of other bus lines. The cost of the Transportation Master Plan over 20 years is estimated to be $3.75B, according to regional staff. It is disingenuous at best to tell us the tax effect of LRT without telling us the tax effect of the total transit solution.

- **Costs of true alternatives not known** — In the region’s February 15 eleven-option report, the only bus option was a “Cadillac” version of BRT that goes all the way to the St Jacob’s market. We need to be able to really compare the options: LRT, BRT, aBRT, iXpress; same route, different technology.

- **Economic impact of construction** — Uptown Waterloo is booming with construction projects, which will exacerbate the disruption caused by construction of the LRT. As businesses in Toronto launch a hundred million dollar class action law suit against the TTC for disruptions caused by construction of the St. Clair LRT (link), it is especially important to understand where disruption will be severe and to estimate the costs.

- **Net economic impact of LRT** — The influx of federal and provincial money for LRT construction would have a positive benefit for our community. The high debt and high taxes caused by the local contribution would have a negative impact. What is the net impact?

- **Social impact of LRT** — Here are some questions we should be trying to answer: What programs will be cut when we are paying off our high debt from LRT? Will our relatively higher property taxes discourage people from living in Waterloo? (Paradoxically, the LRT, by raising taxes, could encourage more development in the surrounding countryside.) What is the impact on seniors and others on fixed incomes?
Questionable ridership Estimates

Currently there are 9,000 riders on the iXpress route that is slated to be replaced by LRT. The Region projects that ridership to rise to 27,000 the day LRT opens, and to rise to 56,000 by 2031.

The following table shows current population and daily LRT boardings for seven North American cities, and compares those figures to the Region’s projections for an LRT in 2031.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Boardings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>4.5M</td>
<td>57,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>2.9M</td>
<td>42,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>2.7M</td>
<td>34,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>2.3M</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>1.8M</td>
<td>20,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>1.4M</td>
<td>37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>1.1M</td>
<td>26,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo Region (2031 est.)</td>
<td>462K*</td>
<td>56,000 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The population of Waterloo region is estimated to reach 729,000 in 2031. However, the LRT route covers only K-W, whose population is estimated to reach 462,000 in 2031.

** These estimated boardings were reported in memo to Council, 23/12/09 File No. D10-40.

The figures for the other cities are from Wikipedia.

This analysis was done by Dave Ramsey. Here are Dave's conclusions:

- The estimated daily boardings of 56,000 in 2031 are overstated by at least 40,000.
- Just like every city in North America with a population of less than 1M, K-W will not need the LRT or BRT to cope with its public transit needs now or when the population reaches 462,000 in 2031.
- If LRT is installed, the numbers show it will be a financial disaster. With 15,000 daily boardings rather than the estimated 57,000, subsidies will skyrocket over those forecast. In 2002, after 24 years, Edmonton’s LRT had 36,000 boardings with an annual subsidy of $13.7M (see “ETS Light Rail Transit” bulletin). With less than half the boarders, the region’s subsidy will be about $21.7M instead of the $3.8M forecast (see ‘Connecting to the Future’ Summer 2009).

The region has decided that due to the huge cost of LRT, they will have to delay many of their planned enhancements to bus routes until 2018. This will affect the ridership estimates for LRT because buses are needed to get commuters to the LRT.
The effect on taxes

This is how the region presents information about its preferred option (link):

Notice the “average annual incremental household impact (for six years)”. It says it’s only $22.63. This was accepted for months until an investigative article in the Waterloo Chronicle revealed that “incremental” means that the $22.63 figure is valid only for the first year. In the second year the tax increase is $22.63 + $22.63, and so on, so by 7th year, the tax increase is close to $200.

But that figure is also suspect, for the following reasons:

- We pay one-third the capital costs of LRT up to $810M. If there are any cost overruns we pay 100% of the overrun. That means that a cost overrun of 33% will double what we pay. Recent North American LRTs have been 40% over cost, on average.

- Interest rates are rising. The regional figures assume low interest rates will continue.

- The figures are based on a region-wide average home assessment of $225K, which is much lower than many of our homes, especially in the city of Waterloo.

- It’s unclear how to calculate the tax after the first year because we don’t know if it will be compounded. For example, if the tax increase was 2% on $100, then the first year the tax is $102, but the next year it’s not $100 * 1.02; it’s $102 * 1.02. This can have a big effect by the 7th year.
False claims about public opinion

During the spring of 2011 the region held public forums at which they distributed comment sheets. These comment sheets listed 11 options for participants to evaluate. The comment sheets were not valid surveys. However, the region is claiming that their analysis of these comment sheets is an accurate measure of public opinion. For example:

- In the Preliminary Preferred Rapid Transit Implementation Option report says things like, "Staff have identified that rapid transit is preferred over business-as-usual... This is supported by the public response, with 78 per cent of all respondents stating support for rapid transit."

- A recent Record article says: “Councillors heard Tuesday that of the 705 people who attended region-held public meetings on transit in February and March and completed a questionnaire... “Based on these findings, there is strong support for rapid transit and specifically for light-rail transit,” Nancy Button, regional director of rapid transit, told councillors.”

The results of the comment sheets are invalid as a measure of public opinion, for the following reasons.

- **The question was biased** — The only option on the comment form that was not rapid transit was phrased like this:

  "BU11 - Business as usual - no rapid transit (not considered feasible, especially because of its quality of life impacts, disruptive road expansion and because it does not align with the Council-approved Regional Official Plan and Regional Transportation Master Plan)."

  I spoke with several people who are opposed to LRT but chose one of the other options because they thought the description meant that they weren’t allowed to choose that option. In any event, you can’t tell people that an option is not feasible and then use the results to claim that they don’t want that option.

- **The options were never real, comparable options** — The 11 options presented on the option sheet were described in the report Preliminary Preferred Rapid Transit Implementation Options. The 11 options included nine for light rail, one for BRT, and one for neither. The route for the single BRT option was longer than the LRT options, making it impossible to compare costs. Plus, there was no option for aBRT for the entire route. What we needed were real, comparable options that people could think about. The 11 options seemed designed to manipulate the discussion towards LRT.

- **The respondents were not a representative sample** — The first round of LRT forums were held two years ago, and many Waterloo region residents were extremely put off by them. They seemed to be little more than public relations exercises that talked down to attendees. Consequently, many people who are not pro-LRT simply refused to go to this round of forums.
Impact on the City of Waterloo

A Waterloo politician recently said to me, “I’m afraid that LRT is going to destroy the City of Waterloo both physically and financially.” This rest of this report details why that may be true.

In North America, the last few decades have shown us just how fragile downtown cores are. Uptown Waterloo is facing competition from new Wal-Marts, malls, and big box store complexes. Waterloo Town Square is currently losing nearly half its stores. Uptown Waterloo is a beautiful, friendly place and is much beloved by local residents, but we can’t assume that it will continue to flourish without great care.

There are people who believe the solution to our environmental problems is to make driving so inconvenient that people leave their cars at home. That’s not how it works. There are wide roads and big parking lots at the Wal-Mart that was built just outside the boundaries of Waterloo. The expressways go right to the malls, the big box stores, and the industrial parks.

When you make it difficult to drive and park in a downtown core, you kill the downtown. Once it's killed, it is really difficult to revive it. We need improved transit, but we need transit that coexists with other uses of the roads: cars, buses, bikes, and pedestrians. Even the financial district of Toronto, arguably the busiest area in Canada, provides multiples lanes and is as convenient as possible for drivers. Creating traffic congestion in uptown Waterloo is not going to increase the use of transit; it will just decrease the use of the uptown.

**Impact of LRT on traffic in Uptown Waterloo**

The following sections describe problems with the currently planned LRT route at some of the uptown’s major intersections. Here is a map showing the route through the uptown. The red line in the map (on the right) shows the LRT route from Kitchener heading through the uptown towards north Waterloo, and the purple line shows the LRT heading back towards Kitchener. There is one uptown stop on each side of the loop, and each is near Willis Way (marked here with rectangles).

**Impact of LRT on the King-Erb intersection**

The major intersection in uptown Waterloo is King and Erb. It is the busiest intersection in uptown, both for cars and pedestrians. Of all the problems that the proposed LRT will cause for uptown, this intersection may be the most serious issue.
The proposed LRT tracks run along the right side of King (the east side), and then turn left across the Erb Street intersection to run along the north side of Erb. The region’s map is a little difficult to read, so here’s my rendition of what the LRT planners are proposing for this intersection:

Currently Erb has three lanes that continue across King Street and is very busy: Erb is the main east-west artery across town. The LRT plan has only two lanes on Erb Street approaching King. One is a left turn lane, so only one lane on Erb will cross King. That single lane is also a right-turn lane. In addition, the LRT is estimated to run every 7 minutes, so every 7 minutes all traffic at King-Erb is going to come to a halt to let the LRT through. That is in addition to regular traffic signals.

**Impact of LRT on the junction of Albert and Erb**

When Erb crosses Bridgeport-Caroline, it becomes a one-way street heading east. It is a very busy street, taking traffic from the west end of the city to the Conestoga Parkway, as well as taking people to destinations uptown and elsewhere.

As it approaches King Street, two lanes of Erb Street split off to the left and become Albert Street. At the moment there is an orderly flow of traffic onto Albert. The region's LRT proposal, however, creates a problem here, because the LRT is going to run against traffic right through the lanes that are splitting off.

Here is a snippet of the region’s LRT map with some annotation by me:

Erb Street is one-way with traffic running towards the top of this map. The LRT (represented by a thick pink line) is also one-way but is running towards the bottom of this map, against traffic.
Traffic on Erb that wants to split off to Albert will have to cut across the LRT tracks. The LRT is scheduled to run every 7 minutes, but there are no traffic lights to protect cars turning on to Albert: they have to drive on the tracks towards the oncoming trains. It’s not even possible to put a stop sign here, unless they put one in the middle of Erb Street. A lot of cars turn off Erb on to Albert. This will cause traffic problems, but also it appears to be extremely unsafe. This plan could cause accidents.

**Impact of LRT on the Erb-Bridgeport-Caroline intersection**

Bridgeport Road becomes Caroline Street when it crosses Erb. It’s a very busy intersection, and will get much busier when the Barrel Yards development is completed 100 meters to the west on Erb; the Balsillie School across the street is open; and the west-side subdivisions are built, as Erb is the main route across town to the Conestoga Parkway.

Here’s a drawing I’ve prepared that reproduces the Region's LRT map for this intersection:

![Diagram of LRT intersection](image)

The heavy dashed lines are the LRT, with one line coming from King Street and heading into Waterloo Park, and the other line coming out of the park and heading back to Kitchener. The map also shows the current train tracks; these are infrequently used and a train employee walks across the road ringing a bell when the train crosses.

"Railway gates" will have bars that come down and flashing lights, like this:

As you can see, there will be three railway gates at this intersection (marked in red), on Bridgeport, Erb and Caroline. The LRT is estimated to run every 7 minutes, but there are tracks running in two directions so a train will go by every 3.5 minutes. That means that every 3.5 minutes the gates will come down, lights will flash, bells may ring, and everyone will have to wait until the LRT goes by. That is in addition to the normal red lights that regulate traffic.

These changes to this very busy intersection are obviously going to cause mayhem for cars, bikes, and pedestrians. I myself drive, bike or walk through that intersection every day: it’s extremely busy, and it will get busier as Waterloo densifies. Besides long backlogs of idling cars, this is going to cause motorists to flood onto side streets to avoid the mess, and to cut through the Waterloo Square parking lot. That means that the disruption is going to spread far beyond this one intersection.

Other potential problems of LRT in Uptown Waterloo

The following issues should be seriously examined to ensure that LRT does not harm the uptown.

North Uptown (King Street north of Erb)
What will the impact of LRT be on the part of uptown on King Street north of Erb? The northern part of uptown is being bypassed by LRT, which may make it appear more of a backwater. On the north-bound uptown loop, the LRT stop (at King-Willis Way) is not convenient to North Uptown, and the station on the south-bound loop (at Caroline-Willis Way) is really inconvenient.

The core of uptown: King between William and Erb
LRT will remove 30 to 50 parking spaces on King Street between William and Erb: all the parking.

Waterloo recently spent a lot of money creating a pleasing streetscape on King between William and Erb. The building of the LRT will require that the trees, planters, etc on King between William and Erb be destroyed. Waterloo has no budget to replace the streetscaping. The region is apparently not planning to pay for such reconstruction.

Because of the length of the trains, LRT stops are planned to be 180 feet in length. The King Street uptown LRT stop runs on the east side of King from Willis Way to Janet Lynn’s restaurant. This is not a wide sidewalk so it’s not clear how pedestrians can get by.

South Uptown (King Street south of William)
King Street between William and Union is on the verge of becoming “Uptown South” with all sorts of new development. None of that development will be served by LRT (as there is no stop in that stretch), but LRT will go down King Street in that area, disabling left turns into driveways and most streets, and disrupting traffic. Because LRT stops are so infrequent, buses will have to run alongside LRT, which will cause even further disruption to traffic.

Caroline south of William; and Allen between Caroline and King
LRT will potentially cause a great deal of traffic congestion on William, Caroline, Allen and Park streets at the same time as a 23-story condo and a townhouse development are being built in the area.

LRT is planned to run along Caroline, turn left at Allen, and then turn right onto King to head back to Kitchener. The tracks are planned to run along the west side of Caroline. Norman, Fullerton, and Freemont streets will all be closed at Caroline, so that they are dead end streets with access only from Park Street. It is unclear how the residents of the Catalina townhomes will be able to get garbage pickup. Car access to their residences will be difficult from Park.

Truck access to Vincenzo’s, Brick Brewery and the Erb & Good Funeral Home will all be negatively affected by LRT. The parking for the Adult Recreation Center will be decreased markedly. The Iron Horse Trail, which runs along Caroline, may be affected as it is unclear how LRT can coexist with two lanes of traffic without cutting into the trail.
**Waterloo Park**

In the following map, I have marked the LRT route through the park in red. That corridor currently has train tracks for an infrequent train and a wide walking/biking path.

The proposed LRT route cuts Waterloo Park in two. As with most parts of the LRT route, the park does not benefit from LRT (there are no stops) but it will be materially harmed by having LRT run through it.

Regional transit staff have not committed to whether fencing will be required alongside the LRT tracks. Given that a walking path runs alongside the train tracks, the zoo is beside the path, and there are usually children and dogs there, it seems likely that fences will be required. This “Berlin wall” could be an eyesore and will make it difficult to move between the two halves of the park.

Waterloo Park is the jewel of Waterloo. The current train traffic through Waterloo Park is infrequent, slow, and picturesque. We can’t allow Waterloo Park to be cut in two by LRT.

In the following photo, the path and tracks cross the entrance to the park across Silver Lake. The path is on the bridge to the right.
Creating density nodes in Waterloo

Public transit needs density to be successful, which is a major factor in why our regional sprawl doesn’t have successful transit. Density nodes are a much-needed development for Waterloo Region. In Waterloo, the proposed LRT stops do not seem to be well-located to increase density nodes. The proposed stops are:

- **Uptown** — The core is booming without any assistance. LRT is actually a threat to the densification of uptown because of the negative impact on car, bike and bus traffic.

- **University of Waterloo** — UW has LRT stops planned at Seagram Drive, the main campus, and the R+T Park on the north campus. As almost all the surrounding land for those locations is university owned, I’m not sure how LRT will help densify this area. Will LRT cause UW to enroll more students?

- **Northfield/Parkside** — This site may have densification potential. It is near the expressway.

- **Conestoga Mall** — This area is booming all on its own. LRT is not convenient to the mall; the buses stop right by the entrance, but the LRT station is up on King Street - quite a hike. Also, the region appears to be assuming that commuters will park at the mall and then take the LRT, which could force the mall to introduce parking fees. LRT could very well hurt the mall.

Let’s take a step back and consider how to create useful density nodes in Waterloo. From the perspective of creating density nodes, a better route might go down King, making uptown north of Erb more attractive; and have stops at King-University, King-Columbia, and on King north of Weber. That would create density nodes that might actually draw commuters out of their cars, instead of the current route which seems to be designed to give UW students a convenient way to live farther from campus.

**David Johnston Research & Technology Park**

The LRT is going to replace the existing iXpress bus route. As the following map shows, the iXpress currently stops in the middle of the David Johnston R+T Park (the bus stop is labeled iXp). The LRT, however, has to run along the rail tracks, so it stops in the north-east corner of the Park – more than a kilometer from some buildings. The university is planning to run a shuttle to take employees to their buildings.

![Map of David Johnston Research & Technology Park](image)

When I was at Open Text there was insufficient parking and so some employees had to park behind the Optometry Building (in Lot X). Lot X is much closer to Open Text than the LRT stop will be. There was a
shuttle that stopped only at Open Text (not a dozen buildings, as the LRT shuttle will), and yet employees were disgruntled about having to park there, especially in winter. Women in particular were uncomfortable getting to their cars after dark. Open Text handed out free movie passes to try to placate employees who had to park in Lot X, and promised that the situation was temporary.

We are not going to lure commuters out of their cars by providing inconvenient transit. In this climate, a large percentage of our days are cold or rainy. Employees in the Park can easily afford vehicles; they work long hours; and they have no place in walking distance for lunch. They are hardly prime candidates for transit, and currently virtually no-one other than coop students takes the iXpress to the Park. Currently, the R+T Park is booming — lots of construction, and much more announced. To continue to attract highly skilled workers, the Park needs to provide adequate parking and convenient transit. The proposed LRT stop is not convenient for the majority of buildings in the Park.

**Conestoga Mall and Fairview Mall**

The LRT is going to replace the existing iXpress bus route. At Conestoga Mall and Fairview Mall, the iXpress stops right by the entrance to the mall. The LRT stops will be on the main road, a hefty walk from the entrances.

The following map shows Conestoga Mall in purple. The iXpress stop (X) is conveniently located right by the main entrance of the mall. The proposed LRT stop (asterisk) is up on King Street. The red line shows the route LRT riders will have to walk to get to the closest mall entrance.

![Map of Conestoga Mall and Fairview Mall](image)

The walking distance, according to the legend at the bottom, is about 300 meters — well under the 600 meters that the region considers an acceptable distance from an LRT stop to a destination. However, if you have shopping or children, if you are elderly or have mobility issues, or if it is winter or raining, this distance is a problem. The LRT is much less convenient than the iXpress bus that it is replacing.

The situation is similar at Fairview Mall. The LRT stop is on Fairway Road, while buses stop conveniently close to the main entrance of the mall.

For both malls, another issue is that LRT riders will be able to park at the mall and take the LRT into town. This could result in the malls charging for parking, which is what happened at several Toronto malls that doubled as transit hubs.
Presentation to Waterloo Regional Council, re: Light Rail Transit. June 01, 2011

Thank you for allowing members of the public to come tonight to voice our concerns. I know how tired you must all be. My name is Judy Garrett and I've been a resident of Kitchener for the past 35 years. I am and have always been an avid environmentalist. I am a firm believer in using the car as little as possible and I walk and bike when I can. And I am pro good, well thought out, forward thinking, fiscally prudent transit.

I believe that regional transit planners decided years ago that they wanted LRT in Kitchener/Waterloo/Cambridge. In other words, instead of starting with the idea that they wanted good transit, suitable to our area, they started with an end product. It's fairly easy to find studies that will fit an end product. Jarrett Walker, a world renowned urban transit planner originally from Portland, Oregon, cautions against this very thing: he says "when thinking starts with the love of one technology, you're in danger of producing an inferior transit service, because when compromise needs to be made, technology-first thinking will tend to sacrifice the goals to save the technology" (1). That is exactly what has happened here.

In spite of the fact that the early public "consultation" meetings showed a preference for a better bus network, this data was ignored and further meetings have been held to push the LRT viewpoint. It has been almost impossible for unbiased information on any other option to be heard by the general public. At one of those public "consultation" meetings, I was cautioned that I'd better get on board because look at what happened in Ottawa. First of all, we aren't anywhere near the size of Ottawa. Secondly, a 2001 stats Canada report indicates that 22.4% of employed people in Ottawa use transit. That is just behind Toronto with 22.4% and Montreal with 21.7% (2). Thirdly, 120,000 jobs are right downtown in Ottawa's central core area and a further 40,000 immediately across the river in the Gatineau. We have nowhere near that population and aren't likely to in the next 20 years. Our transit modal share is 5% and our jobs are scattered throughout the region. Right now, the largest employer in the region - RIM - is not even served by the LRT plan. Even if the Tri-cities grow by 200,000 over the next 20 years, our population and the number of core jobs will still be far less than Ottawa's today. So, the comparison with Ottawa simply doesn't wash. Buses will meet more demands for the foreseeable future. On busier routes with greater modal share of transit, more frequent, articulated buses could be used.

Already, in order to have the region's desired LRT system, the bus system upgrades have had to be scaled back by 60%. An inferior feeder system equals less ridership. Less ridership means greater operating costs to the taxpayers. Indeed, how can an inferior transit system encourage transit use? And what if growth predictions are inaccurate? Remember, we were supposed to be a city of 1 million by the year 2000. 11 years ago.

Research tells me that an LRT system that replaces a bus line is generally not a mobility improvement. It's not going to get anyone anywhere any faster (3). Its only advantage is capacity and right now and into the future, we simply don't need that much capacity. An adapted BRT system with dedicated bus lanes and special priority signaling and with segments of full BRT where appropriate could work very well. And at a cost of $187 million (4). Wouldn't it be better to work with what we have and use the government grants to purchase new technology like electric buses which could then be used on the feeder lines in the event that some other system (perhaps Aerobus) did become necessary. Electric buses are widely used in China and other parts of Asia. The city of Umea in Sweden is now using an electric bus called the Arctic Whisper. Closer to home, Manitoba is developing an all-electric bus through New Flyer, Mitsubishi, Manitoba Hydro and Red River College (see news clipping below). Buses are evolving to simulate the rail experience with lower floors, reduced noise, wider doors, signal priority systems, green technology etc. I'm not sure that in the future, people would choose an expensive and inflexible system with fixed rails and wires overarching the street over a more flexible, but similar electric vehicle.

I feel that our transit planners have overestimated ridership and underestimated cost. Cost, not just in dollars, but in the total upheaval of two down town areas. The St. Clair West LRT is a case in point. The construction and delays were hell on business. Fifty businesses moved and some did not survive. There is currently a million dollar class action law suit by business owners. The St. Clair line was finished in four years instead of one and the cost was 100% higher than estimated (5). No one wants to drive down St. Clair West anymore due to decreased traffic capacity. I feel that the same scenario could take place here, with traffic jams and therefore more vehicles deciding to take less congested, quieter, neighbourhood side streets. When we lose half of our main street to a form of transit that is only going to carry about 8 to 10% or even 15% of passengers, how will that affect the other through streets?
The unintended effect of increasing density is an increase in auto trips per unit area – in other words, congestion. Although it’s highly likely that, as time passes, a greater number of trips will be taken by transit in some form, it is a fact that in cities – including Portland – where LRT systems are in place, the modal share of transit trips has decreased while the modal share of car trips has increased. If our population does increase by 200,000, many of those newcomers will most likely have at least one car. So we’ll need to have a good road system in place. Right now roads throughout the region are in great need of resurfacing and repair and we barely seem to have the money to do this very necessary work on a timely basis.

Can our transit planners be absolutely sure that their current figures are not going to escalate? The cost of steel is set to jump 66% this year. Taxpayers are already being asked to dig deeply into their pockets and even if some of the costs are downloaded to other parts of government, taxpayers will still have to reach into a different pocket to pay – either the region or the municipality. Any cost overruns are paid 100% by the taxpayers.

The region has recently said that the real reason for building the LRT is not so much about mobility or really about transit at all, but is an incentive to intensify the downtown cores, particularly Kitchener. However, densification is already happening in the KW core with former factories being turned into lofts, the School of Pharmacy, the Tannery, the medical building to name just a few of the many ongoing projects. Densification will continue to happen without LRT. It is not LRT that drives densification, but a multitude of other factors. A study by Kenneth Deuker and Martha Bianco at Portland State University’s Urban Planning Department showed that, in a comparison of the LRT route (about 8 years old at the time) and a parallel bus corridor in Portland, Oregon, the inner bus corridor showed greater densification than the inner LRT line. After this report, tax incentives and subsidies were put in place to encourage greater growth along the LRT line. Results of this study state that “empirical analysis provides evidence that LRT alone HAS NOT been sufficient to have an appreciable impact on development patterns, residential density, auto ownership, and transit modal behaviour. Examination of the data suggests that it may be advisable for planners to entertain more modest expectations of LRT”(6). An excellent modern, possibly at least partly electric, bus service linking suburbs to core could work just as well or even better for the next few decades. Why not be really forward thinking. Aerobus, another option that hasn’t been well-studied, could link all three cities right now at far less than the cost of LRT. Any leftover funds could be put towards electric buses. With two fantastic universities and bright young minds, we could even develop them right here.

In the past 14 years, Waterloo Region has consistently levied tax increases higher than the cost of living. Will taxpayers be squeezed even harder over the coming years? Will the expensive LRT system put us in the position of underfunding things like roadwork, police, waste collection, public health and other regional services? Will taxes go up even further to cover these costs? Do you really have all the answers you need to make a decision of such magnitude? If you are listening only to our transit planners, you’re hearing only one side of the story.

Thank you.

(1) Jarrett Walker: www.humantransit.org

(2) The forth highest ridership is Calgary with 13% and also most jobs centred in the core.

(3) In size, we are often compared with Edmonton or Portland. However, it is interesting to note that the first LRT systems in both cities were constructed in large part, on already existing unused rail right of ways. A better example of a city the size of Kitchener- would be Canberra, Australia. At 345,000 people, it is almost exactly the size of the twin cities. Like us, they have a good transit system which does not, at this time, need the capacity of LRT. So they are, wisely, going forward with a plan for an improved bus system.

(4) The cost was given as $687 million with 500 million in roads.

(5) Stats from: www.getterontimemoving.ca

(6) Effects of Light Rail Transit in Portland: Implications for Transit oriented Development Design Concepts
By Kenneth J. Deuker and Martha Bianca
Manitoba puts up cash for all-electric bus. The Canadian Press.

Posted: Apr 26, 2011 12:00 PM ET

Last Updated: Apr 26, 2011 12:00 PM ET

Beginning of Story Content

The Manitoba government is investing $1 million to develop a model for an all-electric transit bus that the province says could one day be used all over North America.

Premier Greg Selinger says Manitoba is aiming to be a leader in developing electric vehicles to help cut greenhouse gas emissions.

He says the bus should be ready within 12 months and will be tested in the province for two years.

The $3-million project includes Winnipeg-based bus manufacturer New Flyer Industries, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Manitoba Hydro and Red River College.

New Flyer already has experience building hybrid and hydrogen fuel cell buses.

The province is also putting up $100,000 to create an electric-vehicle learning and demonstration centre at Red River College.

"This is exciting. We are working together to develop an entirely electric bus to get families around in cities all over North America [and] we're also creating opportunities for young people right here in the province to become leaders in developing and building clean, electric vehicles and helping cut greenhouse-gas emissions," Selinger stated in a news release.

Ottawa’s Transit use:

Strong transit use

Ottawa is the only Canadian city without a subway where more than one-fifth of commuters use transit to go to work. Only the two cities served by a subway, Toronto (22.4%) and Montreal (21.7%), have a higher transit usage than Ottawa (20.1%).

For the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA, transit use falls to 18.5%. Calgary (13.2%) and Vancouver (11.5%) follow. Edmonton (8.6%) is the only major city with a transit usage rate below one-tenth.

Within the city, the highest rates of transit usage are in outlying neighbourhoods served by rapid transit (Orléans, Alta Vista, Bayshore) and in areas with frequent transit service (Civic Hospital, Vanier, Hintonburg, Manor Park). In these areas, over 30% of working people commute by transit (see Map 2).

Much of the urban area inside the Greenbelt shows a transit use rate of 20% to 30%, although downtown neighbourhoods are closer to 20% due to the high walking rate in those areas.

Most cyclists
Rapid Transit Plan for the Region of Waterloo

This presentation has three purposes:

1.0 To support Rapid Transit in the Region
2.0 To support Phase I construction of Light Rail Transit in the cities of Waterloo & Kitchener & aBRT in Cambridge
3.0 To ask you to consider and support the idea of realigning the approved route in the Galt Core to the Beverly, Dundas Street Corridor.

Presentation to Regional Council
June 1, 2011
1.0 I support Rapid Transit in the Region as it will:

- Encourage investment
- Concentrate growth
- Maximize use of infrastructure
- Reduce automobile dependency
- Slow climate change
- Improve the design and appeal of streets
- Improve the health of its citizens
- Be funded in large part by all the taxpayers of Canada and Ontario
2.0 I support Phase I construction of LRT in the cities of Waterloo & Kitchener & aBRT in Cambridge because:

- Light Rail is a proven technology
- aBRT is affordable and can accommodate LRT in the future without major disruption to service
- It provides funding to improve Grand River Transit
- It gives us time to accommodate advances in technology for future phases
- It gives us time to refine the Cambridge route alignment
- It gives us time to negotiate LRT in Hwy #401 corridor
- It gives of time to negotiate LRT in the abandoned Grand River Railway ROW at Dundas, Samuelson and Beverly Streets
Implement LRT in three phases **to manage costs**

**Phase I:**
Conestoga Mall to Ottawa

**Phase II:**
Ottawa to Sportsworld

**Phase III:**
Sportsworld to Galt
3.0 Realign the approved route in the Galt Core to the Beverly, Dundas Street Corridor.

1. This area of the Galt is barely on the radar screen of the Province, Region & City
2. Growth is coming
3. Rapid Transit is coming
4. **Our climate is changing**
5. Our built heritage is at risk
6. BDS area needs significant land re-investment
Regional Official Plan identifies one urban growth centre - Galt.
Growth distributed throughout Cambridge.

- Distribute growth among 5 **urban growth centres & 5 growth nodes** *

* Provincial Growth Plan does not distinguish between UGC’s and nodes
Rapid transit at 6 of 10 centres.

• Intensity of proposed development along route required to support RT

• 6 nodes well suited for intensified re-urbanization along the proposed RT route:

Legend:
- Growth Centre
- Node
- Approved Route
- Proposed Route
Intense development in the floodplain.

- Approved LRT route proposed within Grand River flood plain or Special Policy Area.
- Approved route requires intensification along the river – impacts on Galt core, heritage character, use & enjoyment of riverfront (limit access, views & vistas)
- Steep gradient at Water Street & Samuelson
- Re-construction of CPR bridge at GCI
- Consideration for increased risk of flooding
- Special Policy Area is **not** intended for intensified development or site alteration when feasible alternatives exist outside the flood plain – **Provincial Policy Statement 2005**
- Proposed feasible alternative exists
Extend Galt Growth Centre Boundary to the Beverly, Dundas, Samuelson Corridor

Legend
- Urban Growth Centre Boundary (KJH)
- Urban Growth Centre Boundary (ROP)
- Recognized Heritage Buildings
- Growth Node Rapid Transit Station
- Urban Growth Centre Rapid Transit Station
- aBRT Route (2012)
- LRT Route (2030)
Attributes of the Beverly, Dundas, Samuelson Corridor

- Major entrance to Galt Core
- Abandoned & under utilized industrial lands
- Significant but few heritage resources
- Significant natural resources – Mill Creek
- Significant public facilities – Soper Park, Galt Arena
- Significant re-urbanization potential
- On existing CPR (future GO Transit service) line
- Outside the Grand River Flood Plain
Existing Conditions
Dundas, Samuelson, Beverly Corridor

- Considered with an intermodal connection to GO Transit
- aBRT for next 20 years
- LRT on abandoned electric railway right of way Minimum potential impact on built heritage

Legend
- aBRT 2012
- LRT 2030
- 5 minute walk

CPR tracks
Questions
Reality check on LRT versus BRT
June 1, 2011, Region of Waterloo Council

John Shortreed

• Resident of Bauer Lofts (no left turn from King with LRT)
• Professor Emeritus University of Waterloo (Transport Planning)
• Convinced data and theory prove LRT in not a good choice for Waterloo Region but BRT is
• Very disappointed in the Region’s biased, myth based, propaganda, approach to Transit Investment
## Travel Times by mode

for recommended plan C – High frequency low low Transfer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Trip Times</th>
<th>Car trips</th>
<th>Transit trips</th>
<th>Extra Minutes Transit-Car</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2031</td>
<td>PM Peak (% trips)</td>
<td>Note 3% car users to walk/bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.2 min.</td>
<td>17.5 min.</td>
<td>85.2 % (68.7 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Minutes</td>
<td>23.2 min.</td>
<td>20.9 min.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>105% more</td>
<td>119% more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Moving Forward approved Plan – Annex A – cities only)
Myth #1 – Why would 1 car user in 6 shift to transit by 2031 when transit takes 20.9 min. more? (42 minutes for round trip plus access and wait times)

Note that the increased average trip time (car and transit) is (16.5% x 20.9) or 3.45 minutes for all 115,000 Car plus Transit trips in the PM Peak hour

Over the day this is an extra 66,000 person hours per day in resident’s travel time. For a year 20 million hours extra

Loss to the community is about 140 million per year (value of time = 1/3 wage rate)
Current Transport Investment Plan (20 yrs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>PM peak trips 2006 (1000s)</th>
<th>20 yr capital + operating (millions)</th>
<th>Dollars per 2006 PM peak trip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>$1,389</td>
<td>$15,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>$3,183</td>
<td>$691,957 (46 times car)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>$4,572</td>
<td>$47,134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Moving Forward plus RT capital for cities)
Myth #2 – Good Public Policy is to spend 3.2 billion for transit for 4.3% of trips and 1.4 billion for cars for 85.2% of PM Peak Trips

Note 1 - investment ratio of 46 times for transit is way to much emphasis on transit and shortchanges 85% of the Region’s travelers.

Note 2 - road investment is a sure thing but the Transit investment is highly risky and may not lead to more people choosing transit
Myth #3  If you build it they will come

Note 1 - LRT ridership estimates are higher than Edmonton with 1.1 million population compared to K-W in 2031 of 0.5 million

Note 2 - Targets for cross town transit use (for example 25% crossing King St between Kitchener and Waterloo) are unlikely to be realized given the present day estimates of 5.5% - unlikely 5 times as many non downtown trips will take transit

Note 3 – Targets in Ottawa (successful) only for 120,000 downtown employees and Federal Government started to charge for 25,000 parking places
Myth #4 – KW today is just like Calgary in 1976

Note 1 – In 1976 (5 years before the LRT opened) Calgary had more than 80,000 downtown employment. Kitchener downtown has about 17,000 downtown employment

Note 2 – In 1976, Calgary had more than 40% of trips choosing transit (on 9 express bus routes). Kitchener today has about 8% trips on transit

Note 3 – The number of parking places is about the same for Calgary and Kitchener, this mean low parking costs (Kitchener is the lowest in Canada)

Note 4 – Waterloo Region is a shadow of Calgary 5 years before LRT opens – **Premise is false**
Myth #5 – if we do nothing then gridlock

**Note 1** – K-W will be 500,000 population in 2031. Quebec City, Winnipeg, Hamilton and Mississauga, all today have about 700,000 population with a single core city, no RT, and traffic has not ground to a halt, traffic delays will increase but traffic will adapt.

**Note 2** – traffic will increase mostly around the edge of the KW area not in routes to downtown Kitchener since it will only grow to 24,000 employment – still too small for choice transit users.
Myth #6 – LRT will lead to significant development

Note 1 – LRT Stations (only LRT stops are proposed) attract development in proportion to downtown employment. Toronto’s 500,000 employees and Calgary’s 180,000 employees drive the condo and retail land use around commuter stations. With only 24,000 employees in downtown Kitchener in 2031 there will be some development at stops but it will not be significant and likely not even measurable.

Note 2 – The LRT is supposed to encourage growth in UpTown Waterloo, Kitchener, and Cambridge (Galt). Only Kitchener will benefit in any significant way and it is limited by not having a well defined and unique function like Calgary’s Oil and Gas
Myth # 7 – LRT will encourage growth in UpTown

Note 1 – UpTown has a buzz and is on track to reach Provincial and Region 20 year land use goals in the next 5 years – success without LRT !!!!

Note 2 – LRT will surround UpTown with tracks on King, Erb, Caroline and Allen streets. There is always the “wrong side of the tracks” and this is the east side of King where all the independent merchants are (the key UpTown strength). They will be on the wrong side of the tracks and 50 parking places in front of their stores will be lost. LRT tracks threaten the continued growth of UpTown. See St. Clair Ave.

Note 3 – Bus Rapid Transit does not have tracks and would support UpTown growth.
Myth #8 LRT will have a net Transit benefit

Note 1 – At Bauer lofts (400 condos, 300 office employees, 25 stores) there is no LRT stop, it is 600 meters to the nearest stop. But traffic is down to one lane each direction. There will be traffic delays. King St. #7 busses are in traffic and will be delayed. They will have more transit passengers than the LRT and the total effect will be increased travel times for transit users.

Note 2 – BRT on pavement level counter flow lanes (go against the traffic flow with center street stations) would allow for local buses to use the reserve lanes and bypass traffic to make for a net benefit for all transit users. Also ambulances from Grand River could use the bus lanes.
Inconvenient truth is that most of the Region’s statements are wrong & BRT is much better
Out of time (more below)

• There will be significant cost overruns
• Moving Forward plan is fatally flawed since transit and car PM peaks do not align (huge)
• Revenue estimates are about 10 million per year high
• Maintenance cost estimates of 1.5 % of investment rather than 3-5% will lead to millions more per yr.
• Two malls, UpTown, and Tech Park LRT stops are much less convenient and ridership may actually fall at those locations
Byron Weber Becker

• Kitchener-core home-owner for 23 years
• Regularly commutes on iXpress to UW
• Teaches Computer Science
Rapid Transit vs. Automobile Costs
Rapid Transit vs. Automobile Costs

- 1994 van purchased used in 1996
- $18,750
- 41,750 km
Rapid Transit vs. Automobile Costs
Rapid Transit vs. Automobile Costs

- 1999 Mazda purchased used in 2001
- $17,700
- 59,032 km
Rapid Transit vs. Automobile Costs

- Purchase, gas, maintenance, licenses, insurance (but not financing)
- 14.5 years
- $110,000
- $7,600/year
# Rapid Transit vs. Automobile Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Annual Transportation Costs for Cars</th>
<th>Average Annual Transportation Costs for Cars</th>
<th>Plus Our Share of LRT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Note:** The table above presents a comparison of average annual transportation costs for cars and includes an additional column for the cost of LRT. The costs are estimated and subject to various factors such as fuel prices, maintenance, and insurance.
A Community...

Divided

United?

LRT
BRT
Rocks

SLRT?
Rocks?
Unites our community because...

**Advantages of LRT**
- Helps shape growth and intensification
- Capacity for the long term
- Attract/retain tech talent
- Attract more riders
- *Rapid* rapid transit

**Addresses Concerns with LRT**
- Doesn’t consume traffic lanes
- Undisrupted traffic patterns
- Lower costs than LRT
- Fewer cost uncertainties
- Include Cambridge immediately
Summary

- LRT is affordable
- Suspended LRT could unite us
- Suspended LRT should be explored further
Thank you.

Dr. Bryan Weber Becker.

The advantages of traditional light rail while I'm hopeful about suspended light rail because it would be wonderful to have a way forward that would be consistent with our community vision.

In summary, light rail is a vision for our community.

I think these ideas come together in a common theme.

With the advantages of traditional light rail, and the potential of suspended light rail, I think our city can explore more.

This plan would be almost entirely funded by new taxes on developer fees.

The plan is drawn with only the most feasible and non-disruptive options.

With both ideas, we can explore more.

Our community is ready.

As you know, if you're over 30, you're probably not going to ride light rail.

The city of Verona.

The plan is for suspended light rail.
Portland: The Other Side of the Story
Brian Turnbull
June, 2011
“We have not seen any of the kind of development—of a mid-rise, higher-density, mixed-use, mixed-income type—that we would’ve liked to have seen” along the MAX line.

—Mike Saba, Portland City Planner, 1996
“It is a myth to think that the market will take care of development along transit corridors.”

—Charles Hales, City Commissioner, 1996
10 year property tax exemption

"The primary reason for underbuilding in urban areas is the lack of financial feasibility. There is little evidence to support the conclusion that the high densities required in Urban Centers, in the absence of public assistance, are profitable under current market conditions, and that developers and property owners are either unaware that they could make more money by building denser, or prohibited from doing so by physical or policy constraints."


From Portland City Council Agenda:
1620 Grant a ten-year property tax exemption to Hoyt Street Properties, LLC for new multiple-unit housing on the block bounded by NW 11th, 12th, Lovejoy, and Marshall Streets (Second Reading Agenda 1587) Disposition: Ordinance No. 175047.

details: www.saveportland.org
$16,850,000.00 Exempt from Property tax (for 10

“The primary reason for underbuilding in urban areas is the lack of financial feasibility. There is little evidence to support the conclusion that the high densities required in Urban Centers, in the absence of public assistance, are profitable under current market conditions, and that developers and property owners are either unaware that they could make more money by building denser, or prohibited from doing so by physical or policy constraints.”


From Portland City Council Agenda:
1226 Grant a ten-year property tax exemption to Hoyt Street Properties, LLC for new multiple-unit housing on the block bounded by NW 11th, 12th, Lovejoy and Kearney Streets (Second Reading Agenda 1179)

details: www.saveportland.org
Urban Renewal (TIF) Districts (subsidies in millions)

- $335.0
- $72.6
- $233.9
- $167.5
- $165.0
- $143.6
- $66.3
- $288.6
- $164.2
- $75.0
“Urban rail transit investments rarely ‘create’ new growth, but more typically redistribute growth that would have taken place without the investment.”

_Cervero & Seskin, FTA Report #TCRP-7_
Right of way gets green light as cities increasingly look to dedicated bus lanes

Sayonara light-rail, au revoir subways. Across North America, express bus corridors are leaving pricier transit options in the dust

JONATHAN YAZER

Fast, comfortable and reliable are not normally words that spring to mind when people think of bus transit.

But as the populations of cash-strapped North American cities continue to grow, express buses that travel on dedicated lanes are becoming an increasingly popular alternative to pricier transit options, such as light rail and subways.

Roughly 120 cities around the globe have Bus Rapid Transit or express bus corridors, with 97 of them having launched in the past decade alone, according to a recent survey. The BRT movement has been most pronounced in developing countries, but several major projects are now reshaping the transit picture in the Toronto area.

These and other BRT initiatives are also changing the public's attitude toward bus travel. Express buses are higher occupancy than the average city bus, and some have fixtures such as wireless Internet to entice new riders.

As for speed — a common knock against typical bus travel — it's been greatly enhanced under the BRT model. Although no two systems are exactly alike, the essential element of any rapid bus service is a dedicated laneway that permits buses to travel at speeds up to 10% greater than subway trains, which is why some advocates refer to BRT as "surface subway."

Jeff Casello, an associate professor of transportation at the University of Waterloo, said the BRT movement can largely trace its origin to the South American export of the bus rapid transit service that is central to several cities' transit networks. In North America, he said bus rapid transit and light rail are increasingly filling the transportation gap between conventional buses and subways.

"Typically, we use BRT for longer applications," Prof. Casello said. "But as the demand grows and you start to need buses more frequently, then the labour costs of BRT grow really quickly."

In these cases, light-rail service may be the better option, he added.

In recent years, both Los Angeles and New York have started successful bus express services. The Orange Line BRT in California's largest city opened in 2009, serving about 23,000 passengers a day, and carrying nearly 27,000 people daily. It's been more popular..."
While Bus Rapid Transit is a novel technology in most of North America, other cities around the world have experimented with it for decades. As populations grow and gas prices rise, more cities are catching on to BRT.

Canada, Brasil and still the largest BRT system in the world. It carries two million people a day and is regularly used by as many as a third of the city's inhabitants. It has inspired other Latin American cities such as Bogota and Mexico City to adopt large-scale BRT systems.

The new BRT service in Guangzhou, China's third-largest city, moves 800,000 people a day across a network that stretches 275 kilometres and was built at one-tenth of the cost of a subway extension. Although the buses are often congested – up to one every 20 seconds in the peak hour – they still move on average 30 per cent faster than before, when they operated in mixed traffic.

The new BRT service in Guangzhou, China's third-largest city, moves 800,000 people a day across a network that stretches 275 kilometres and was built at one-tenth of the cost of a subway extension. Although the buses are often congested – up to one every 20 seconds in the peak hour – they still move on average 30 per cent faster than before, when they operated in mixed traffic.

Los Angeles' Orange Line BRT opened in 2005. It runs 22.5 kilometres and carries nearly 27,000 people every day. There are concerns that the line is so popular that it has become a victim of its own success, nearing its peak capacity within a short time of its opening, far sooner than was expected.

Ottawa has long operated one of North America's most successful BRT networks, moving 230,000 people on an average weekday. But the system is experiencing congestion problems in the downtown, where buses meet mixed traffic and it is expected to reach its peak capacity by 2017. The city is planning to replace some portions of its BRT with an underground line in the downtown.

Jonathan Yazer

[Bus Rapid Transit] in general is definitely an option worth exploring because it can be a cost-effective way of moving people around. But any BRT needs to be done properly, with its own right-of-ways.

Karen Stintz
Chair, Toronto Transit Commission

Light-rail supporters, however, observe that trains have longer operating lives, lower overall maintenance costs and lower costs per passenger because they carry more passengers than buses. Roads also tend to require more frequent repairs than rails. Indeed, BRT cannot always compete on the day in Mississauga. Last year, Mississauga City Council endorsed LRT instead of rapid bus service for its master plan of Hurontario Street and Main Street. A major reason for the decision was that developers said they prefer the sense of permanence attached to light-rail transit.

LRT advocates often argue that light rail has better interaction with the streetscape and is a better way of achieving dense, transit-oriented development than BRT.

With a report from Renata d'Aliesio
Debunking Portland
The City That Doesn’t Work

by Randal O’Toole

Executive Summary

Though many people consider Portland, Oregon, a model of 21st-century urban planning, the region’s integrated land-use and transportation plans have greatly reduced the area’s livability. To halt urban sprawl and reduce people’s dependence on the automobile, Portland’s plans use an urban-growth boundary to greatly increase the area’s population density, spend most of the region’s transportation funds on various rail transit projects, and promote construction of scores of high-density, mixed-use developments.

When judged by the results rather than the intentions, the costs of Portland’s planning far outweigh the benefits. Planners made housing unaffordable to force more people to live in multifamily housing or in homes on tiny lots. They allowed congestion to increase to near-gridlock levels to force more people to ride the region’s expensive rail transit lines. They diverted billions of dollars of taxes from schools, fire, public health, and other essential services to subsidize the construction of transit and high-density housing projects.

Those high costs have not produced the utopia planners promised. Far from curbing sprawl, high housing prices led tens of thousands of families to move to Vancouver, Washington, and other cities outside the region’s authority. Far from reducing driving, rail transit has actually reduced the share of travel using transit from what it was in 1980. And developers have found that so-called transit-oriented developments only work when they include plenty of parking.

Portland-area residents have expressed their opposition to these plans by voting against light rail and density and voting for a property-rights measure that allows landowners to claim either compensation or waivers for land-use rules passed since they purchased their property. Opposition turned to anger when a 2004 scandal revealed that an insider network known as the “light-rail mafia” had manipulated the planning process to direct rail construction contracts and urban-renewal subsidies to themselves.

These problems are all the predictable result of a process that gives a few people enormous power over an entire urban area. Portland should dismantle its planning programs, and other cities that want to maintain their livability would do well to study Portland as an example of how not to plan.

Randal O’Toole is a senior fellow with the Cato Institute and the author of the forthcoming book, The Best-Laid Plans: How Government Planning Harms Your Quality of Life, Your Pocketbook, and Your Future. Now a resident of Bandon, Oregon, O’Toole is a native Oregonian who has spent most of his life in the Portland area.
In 1995, Portland started calling itself “The City That Works” without any sense of irony that it borrowed the slogan from a city famous for patronage, pork, and a political machine.

Introduction

The city of Portland, Oregon, has received enormous publicity in recent years for its land-use and transportation planning. The New York Times calls Portland “the city that loves mass transit.” Portland is “successfully getting people out of their cars,” says the BBC. From all over the country, city planners, elected officials, and reporters travel to Portland to examine the region’s urban-growth boundary, rail transit system, and transit-oriented developments. “It sometimes seems as if the whole country is looking to Portland as a role model for 21st-century urban development,” says Governing magazine. Portland’s plans have won numerous awards from the American Planning Association, and Congress happily gives the city more than its share of federal transit dollars to fund expansion of the region’s light-rail system.

Residents of the Portland area are not as enthusiastic about the region’s planning process. Recent elections reveal that most citizens are upset by the unaffordable housing, traffic congestion, increasing taxes, declining urban services, and disappearing jobs that have resulted from the plans.

In 1995, the city council adopted the slogan, “The City That Works.” No one on the council felt any sense of irony that Portland was borrowing a slogan first applied to Chicago by Mayor Richard J. Daley. Daley, of course, was famous for using a political machine of patronage and pork to get himself reelected five times. Since few Portland mayors remain in office for more than two terms, no one imagined in 1995 that the Northwest city was also run by a machine.

The head of that machine, Neil Goldschmidt, had been mayor of Portland in the 1970s. President Carter appointed him Secretary of Transportation in 1979, and in the late 1980s Goldschmidt served as governor of Oregon. In 1991 he left public office and started a political consulting firm that used his federal, state, and local contacts to promote seemingly idealistic schemes that quietly diverted billions of dollars in public funds to Goldschmidt’s clients and cronies.

Known to insiders as the “light-rail mafia,” Goldschmidt’s machine suffered a huge setback in 2004 when the public learned that, while mayor, Goldschmidt had a three-year sexual relationship with a teenage girl starting when she was just 14. The former mayor disappeared from view, leaving his allies to fend for themselves. Today, public employee unions, neighborhood groups, and county officials are among those challenging what remains of the machine, and the main goal of many of these groups is to halt the diversion of funds from essential urban services to expensive transit and land-use projects.

History

The planning that made Portland famous attempts to integrate land-use and transportation. Urban planners have long believed in a land-use-transportation connection that would allow them to manipulate one through the other. So Portland plans land uses to try to reduce the amount of driving people do while it plans transportation to try to slow the conversion of rural land to urban purposes.

No such integration was contemplated in 1973, when the Oregon legislature required every city and county to write plans that conformed to goals and guidelines established by a Land Conservation and Development Commission appointed by the governor. The rules aimed to protect farmland from leapfrog development (subdivisions not physically adjacent to the nearest urban area) by requiring all cities in the state to draw urban-growth boundaries. Development inside the boundaries was allowed to proceed unchecked while development outside was strictly limited to rural uses.

The commission’s rules specified that the initial urban-growth boundaries should include enough land to accommodate twenty years worth of growth. As that land was developed, cities were to expand the boundaries to maintain land and housing affordability.
Indeed, due in part to a severe recession, housing in Portland and other Oregon cities remained very affordable through 1989. The goal was to keep development orderly and efficient, not to slow or stop development.

Transportation planning was a completely separate process, responding mainly to federal funding and mandates. Inspired by federal support for 90 percent of the cost of urban interstate freeways, Portland had planned a gridded network of such highways. But the early 1970s saw a backlash against urban interstates from neighborhood residents who argued that freeways reduced their property values. In response, Congress passed a law allowing cities to cancel planned interstate highway projects and to spend the money on mass transit capital improvements instead.

Under Mayor Neil Goldschmidt, Portland became one of the first cities to take advantage of the law, canceling a road known as the Mt. Hood Freeway in 1974. But that created a dilemma for the city. The federal share of the freeway cost would be enough to buy hundreds of new buses. But Portland’s transit agency did not have the funds to operate that many new buses. Moreover, simply buying buses did not create the local construction jobs and profits that would have been gained from freeway construction.

Goldschmidt’s solution was light-rail transit, a sort of heavy-duty streetcar that sometimes operated in streets and sometimes on an exclusive right of way. The term light rail had been coined in 1972; light referred not to weight of the vehicles or the rails but to the smaller numbers of people carried by these rail vehicles relative to the large numbers carried by the New York City subway or other heavy-rail lines such as Washington’s Metro.

For Goldschmidt, the big advantage of light rail was that it was expensive, easily costing enough to absorb most of the federal funds that had been allocated to the Mt. Hood Freeway and (as it turned out) much more. Rail construction also provided lots of jobs and profits for local contractors.

At the time, few observers noted the irony that an urban transit technology was selected precisely because of its high cost. President Carter was so impressed with Goldschmidt’s innovative solution to the freeway controversy that he made Goldschmidt his second secretary of transportation. As it turned out, light rail required so much planning and design work that construction did not begin until Goldschmidt had left that office in 1981 and was not completed until Goldschmidt was running for governor of Oregon in 1986.

Until that point, there was still no connection between Portland’s land-use and transportation planning. But when the light-rail line opened, the city zoned much of the land near light-rail stations for high-density housing in order to allow more people to live within walking distance of the light rail.

During Goldschmidt’s term as governor, the Land Conservation and Development Commission began writing a transportation-planning rule. This rule was heavily influenced by controversy over another proposed freeway, this one skirting the southwestern suburbs of Portland. A land-use group called 1000 Friends of Oregon argued that the highway would lead to expansion of the urban-growth boundary and that the city could avoid such expansion by integrating its land-use and transportation planning to emphasize compact development that relied on transit, walking, and cycling instead of driving.

The proposed highway was never built and the final transportation-planning rule endorsed the 1000 Friends’ ideas. The rule directed planners in all of Oregon’s major urban areas to change “land-use patterns and transportation systems” so as to reduce per capita driving by 10 percent in 20 years and 20 percent in 30 years. To reach those goals, the rule specified that planners must increase residential densities, promote mixed-use developments, mandate pedestrian-friendly design (meaning, among other things, that retail shops should front on sidewalks and not be separated from streets by large parking lots), and various related policies. In 1996, Maryland governor Parris Glendenning applied the term smart growth to this planning philosophy.

The transportation rule effectively killed

In the 1970s, Mayor Neil Goldschmidt selected light-rail technology precisely because its high cost would allow him to spend lots of federal dollars creating construction jobs and profits for local contractors.
the idea of expanding urban-growth boundaries to make room for growth. In 1993, Oregon homebuilders asked the legislature to require that boundaries be expanded to maintain a supply of land, but Portland planners convinced the legislature to allow them to instead accommodate growth by rezoning existing neighborhoods to higher densities.

In the meantime, Goldschmidt announced in 1990 that he would not run for re-election as governor. His decision, which he blamed on marital issues, was mysterious, as most people believed he would have easily been re-elected and probably gone on to the U.S. Senate. Portlanders later learned that the woman he had seduced when she was a teenager was seeking a settlement—he eventually paid her $350,000—and he feared the statutory rape would be made public.12

Out of office, Goldschmidt immediately started a political consulting firm that eventually became known as Goldschmidt Ioneson Carter. Early clients included Bechtel, Nike, and Weyerhaeuser. Goldschmidt used his many federal, state, and local political contacts to grease the skids for those companies to operate in Oregon’s regulatory environment. Goldschmidt also used his political muscle to have friends, relatives, and political protégés appointed to various high offices.

The resulting light-rail mafia shaped Oregon’s integrated land-use and transportation planning system to favor Goldschmidt’s clients and friends. Some of the members of the mafia included:

- **Bechtel Corporation**—Goldschmidt arranged for Bechtel to receive a no-bid contract to build an extension of Portland’s light-rail line to the city’s airport. Under the contract, Bechtel was paid $95 million and given a 99-year lease to 120 acres of valuable land near the airport.
- **Tom Walsh**—Longtime Goldschmidt friend and co-owner of Walsh Construction, which specializes in building high-density housing projects. Goldschmidt arranged for Walsh to be appointed general manager of Portland’s transit agency. From that position, Walsh hand ed out millions of dollars in subsidies to high-density, transit-oriented developments, many of which were built by Walsh Construction.
- **Homer Williams**—Goldschmidt arranged for hundreds of millions of dollars of federal and local subsidies to an urban-renewal area popularly known as the Pearl District. Goldschmidt client Homer Williams built many of the developments in the Pearl and, later, the North Macadam District.
- **Schnitzer Group and Zidell Marine**—Owners of a large block of former industrial lands on Portland’s Willamette River waterfront south of downtown, an area called either the North Macadam or South Waterfront district. They hired Goldschmidt to help them plan a low-rise residential development, but Goldschmidt persuaded them to go for a high-rise development instead. The development, which is being built by Homer Williams, is enjoying nearly $300 million in public subsidies.
- **Oregon Health Sciences University**—Goldschmidt served on the board of directors of this nominally public school that operates a hospital two-thirds of a mile away and 500 feet above the Schnitzer-Zidell land. Goldschmidt persuaded the hospital to build an aerial tramway to access offices and clinics in the waterfront development and convinced the Portland city council to help subsidize this tram, whose cost ballooned from Goldschmidt’s initial $5 million estimate to $57 million.13

Goldschmidt’s efforts were not entirely directed to land-use and transportation issues. In 2003, he was involved in a shady deal to take over Portland General Electric, a utility that served two-thirds of Portland’s residents.14 The State Accident Insurance Fund paid him a million dollars to help shield the government agency from private competition. Goldschmidt’s wife was superintendent of Portland’s schools, which hired Goldschmidt’s brother in a lucra-
tive consulting contract. His wife was also a vice-president of Pacific Power & Light, Oregon’s largest electric utility. In response to that power, “the city and the Portland Development Commission went crazy,” observes Lewis & Clark law professor (and popular blogger) Jack Bogdanski, “throwing money at Goldschmidt clients like there was no tomorrow, making all sorts of dubious deals.”

Was Portland’s land-use and transportation planning system nothing more than a giant real estate scam for Goldschmidt’s clients and cronies? To help answer that question, this paper will first examine some of the benefits claimed for Portland’s planning system and then look at some of the costs.

The Portland Myths

Portland planners and officials have done their best to promote claims that their integrated planning process is successful. In particular, they say that

1. Investments in transit and land-use changes promoted by planning rules have significantly reduced auto use;
2. Transit-oriented developments have proven commercially successful and have moved many people out of their cars;
3. Rail transit has, in turn, stimulated billions of dollars of land-use developments;
4. The urban-growth boundary and other planning rules have significantly reduced sprawl; and
5. Portlanders love their plans.

Myth #1: Portland Loves Transit

“Car junkies like me are becoming an endangered species,” enthused a reporter visiting Portland for the BBC. Portland “loves to ride” transit, said the New York Times. But the sad truth is that Portland’s transit numbers are little better than mediocre.

More than 97 percent of all motorized passenger travel (and virtually all freight movement) in the Portland area is by automobile. Though transit’s share of passenger travel has fluctuated between 1.8 and 2.6 percent over the past 35 years, it has never made a significant dent in auto usage.

Portland’s transit agency, TriMet, accurately brags that Portland transit usage grew faster than driving in the 1990s. But it fails to mention that transit’s share declined in the 1980s, when the region’s first light-rail line was under construction. In 1980 more than 2.6 percent of motorized passenger travel in the Portland area used transit. By 1990, that had fallen to 1.8 percent. Over the next 12 years, it slowly climbed to 2.3 percent but still remained well below the 1980 level. Since 2002 it has stagnated or slightly fallen.

Even if it were still increasing, the difference between 1.8 and 2.6 percent means taking less than 1 percent of cars off the road.

Because transit’s major market is commuters, many prefer to measure transit by its share of commuting rather than of total passenger travel. During the 1970s, TriMet made many improvements in bus service, including building a downtown transit mall, increasing bus frequencies, and providing commuters with park-and-ride stations. Between 1970 and 1980, total transit ridership tripled and the share of commuters taking transit to work increased from 7.0 to 9.8 percent.

After construction began on Portland’s first light-rail line, however, cost overruns forced TriMet to raise bus fares and reduce service. By 1990, four years after the light-rail line opened, only 6.7 percent of commuters rode transit to work—less than in 1970. Ridership recovered in the 1990s, but by 2000 the share of commuters using transit was still only 7.7 percent, well under the 1980 rate. By comparison, buses in Portland’s rival to the north, Seattle, carried a smaller percentage of travel than Portland in 1980, but...
Despite light rail and streetcars, between 2001 and 2005, the number of downtown Portland commuters taking transit to work declined by more than 20 percent, while the number driving to work increased.

Transit works best at taking commuters to centrally located jobs. In 2001, TriMet was proud to say that 46 percent of all downtown Portland workers rode transit to work. Only 11 percent of Portland-area commuters work downtown, so on a regional level this is not very important. But transit did help relieve congestion and parking problems in the downtown area. By 2005, however, the number of downtown workers commuting by transit declined by more than 20 percent, while the number driving to work increased. The result was that transit’s share of downtown commuting fell to just 38 percent.

One reason for this decline is that TriMet had to make service cuts due to the 2001 recession. The high cost of new rail lines and inflexible light-rail mortgage payments forced the agency to cut deeper than would have been necessary if it operated a debt-free, bus-only system.

High gas prices in 2006 led to record ridership levels for many transit agencies. But due to budget and service cuts, Portland transit ridership grew by an anemic 0.1 percent.

Even with adequate budgets, Portland planners themselves do not predict that their plans will lead to a huge shift in travel habits. A 1997 regional plan called for a 70 percent increase in population densities within the urban-growth boundary and the construction of 125 miles of rail transit and scores of high-density, transit-oriented developments. Planners projected that these actions would reduce the share of trips taken by automobile from 92 percent in 1990 down to 88 percent in 2040. Since planners also anticipate a 70 percent population increase during that time, the small decline in driving’s share of travel would not prevent a huge increase in traffic congestion.

In short, Portland’s integrated land-use and transportation planning has not produced any miracles for transit. If transit plays a slightly greater role in regional travel than in some other cities, it plays a smaller role than in Portland’s closest peer, Seattle, which until 2000 had no rail transit.

**Myth #2: Transit-Oriented Development**

One of the highlights of any tour of Portland offered by planning officials is a visit to one of the many transit-oriented developments that have sprung up all over the region. These high-density, mixed-use developments are supposed to herald a new lifestyle that uses less land and resources because people live in multifamily housing or in homes on tiny lots, walk to shops, take transit to work, and generally drive far less than people living in traditional suburbs.

Many transit-oriented developments, or TODs as planners call them, are built right next to light-rail stations. A typical development is four to five stories tall, with shops and offices on the ground floor and apartments or condos above. One famous transit-oriented village, Orenco, was built when a light-rail line was constructed across prime farmland with the express purpose of subdividing that land into a high-density development.

Tour guides usually neglect to mention several important points about Portland TODs:

1. They are heavily subsidized, many receiving tens of millions of dollars of support in the form of tax breaks, infrastructure subsidies, below-market land sales, and direct grants.
2. Despite the subsidies, vacancy rates are often high, particularly in areas designated for shops.
3. While these developments may attract some people who prefer not to drive, there is little evidence that they have significantly changed people’s travel habits.

As previously noted, when Portland’s first light-rail line opened for business in 1986, the city zoned much of the land near light-
rail stations for high-density development. Ten years later, city planner Mike Saba sadly reported to the Portland city council, “we have not seen any of the kind of development—of a mid-rise, higher-density, mixed-use, mixed-income type—that we would’ve liked to have seen” along the light-rail line. City Commissioner Charles Hales noted, “We are in the hottest real estate market in the country,” yet city planning maps revealed that “most of those sites [along the light-rail line] are still vacant.” To correct this, Hales convinced the council to offer developers 10 years of property tax waivers for any high-density housing built near light-rail stations.

Over the next decade, the city experienced a boom in high-density developments, virtually all of which were subsidized. Even with the subsidies, planners and developers soon learned that so-called transit-oriented developments only work if they have plenty of parking.

For example, the state of Oregon owned land next to a light-rail station in east Portland. In 1998, the state sold the land to developers at below-market prices and developers received a total of $13 million in subsidies to build a $31 million, high-density project called Center Commons. The development provides less than two-thirds of a parking space per dwelling unit, but residents handle that by freely parking on the sidewalk and in areas clearly marked as fire lanes.

Despite those problems, the city considers the project a success. When asked for a definition of success, an official replied, “When the construction was completed, the project became a success.” In other words, “it’s not just a matter of ‘build it and they will come,’” comments John Charles of the Cascade Policy Institute, “simply building it is enough.”

Another development called The Round is located in the Portland suburb of Beaverton. Beaverton gave $12.4 million in subsidies to the developer, who was supposed to build a retail-office-housing complex surrounding a light-rail station. Yet banks were unwilling to finance a development with inadequate parking, so the developer went bankrupt and the project sat half-completed for several years. Finally, the city found a new developer who finished it—on the condition that the design would be modified to include 700 parking spaces. “The key component is parking,” said the developer. Yet vacancy rates remained high after construction, partly because the development still had parking shortages.

Another development, Beaverton Creek, is located next to a huge light-rail park-and-ride lot. But the parking is open only to light-rail riders. With little or no parking available to customers of the ground-floor retail shops, nearly all of those shops remain vacant several years after it was completed.

Parking problems also plagued Orenco, the pride and joy of Portland-area planners. Planners allowed only limited parking in the areas closest to the light-rail station, and more parking further away. As a result, the areas near the station were the last to be developed, so most of the residences are not within walking distance of the station. The developer who built much of Orenco called it “our nonprofit wing,” implying that his company only built it so it could get permits to build more lucrative developments of single-family homes on larger lots.

A survey of Orenco residents by Lewis & Clark College researcher Bruce Podobnik found that most of them liked the development but that few had changed their travel habits. “Though some have increased their reliance on mass transit for occasional trips since moving into Orenco Station, most residents of the neighborhood report using alternative modes of transportation far less than do their counterparts in Northeast Portland,” says Podobnik. “A key objective, that of significantly altering resident transportation habits, therefore remains to be achieved in Orenco Station.”

One of the most embarrassing failures of Portland’s transit-oriented planning was Cascade Station, an office-and-retail park that was supposed to be built on the 120 acres of land given to Bechtel in exchange for the company building the airport light-rail line. Because the land was immediately adja-

Even when they are next to light-rail stations, transit-oriented developments only work when they have plenty of parking.
If light rail works so well, why was a new garage needed and in what sense did rail stimulate its construction?

cent to the airport, it was not suitable for residential use, but planners zoned it for small-box retail—shops no larger than 60,000 square feet—because big-box retail (stores of 100,000 to 300,000 square feet) would be too “auto dependent.” Although the city spent $28 million on parks, utilities, streets, and sidewalks, no one wanted to lease a small shop or office on a site that was miles from any residential areas, so the area remained vacant for five years after the light-rail line opened in 2001.37

Rail skeptics were amused that every light-rail car going to and from the airport dutifully stopped at both of Cascade Station’s rail stations, even though no one wanted to get on or off. Apparently, not stopping would have disrupted the schedules. Critics were even more amused when a passenger did board the rail car one day: a coyote looking for solitude aboard one of TriMet’s empty trolley cars.38

Finally, planners caved in to developers who insisted that small-box retail made no sense at the site. Instead, the city has persuaded IKEA to build a 280,000-square-foot store on the site and hopes to attract at least one other big-box store (though not one headquartered in Bentonville). Apparently, cheap Asian-made goods sold by a Scandinavian retailer are more politically correct than cheap Asian-made goods sold by an Arkansas retailer. Though IKEA will deliver purchases to any customers who arrive by light rail or stow their bikes in one of the mandated 75 bike racks, the store expects most of its customers to use one of its 1,200 parking spaces.39

Myth #3: Development-Oriented Transit

Portland planners believe in the “field of dreams”: “Build it, and they will come.” TriMet claimed that Portland’s first light-rail line stimulated more than $1 billion worth of development.40 After Portland built a downtown streetcar line, planners claimed that it stimulated $2.3 billion worth of development.41 And after Portland’s aerial tram was built, planners claimed it generated $1 billion worth of development.42

The first problem with these claims is planners’ assumption that correlation proves causation. In counting developments supposedly “stimulated” by transit, planners simply added up all the value of developments within a few blocks of transit lines or stations. They made no attempt to insure that the developments really had anything to do with transit.

Measured by value, the vast majority of the $1 billion of investments supposedly stimulated by the light rail consists of government buildings, some built in response to executive orders by President Clinton and Oregon’s Governor Barbara Roberts that all federal and state agencies should relocate to downtown areas.43 One government-funded building supposedly stimulated by the light-rail line was a $5 million downtown parking garage. If light-rail works so well, why is a new garage needed and in what sense did light rail stimulate the construction of that garage?

The second problem with claims that transit stimulated new development is that they are based on double counting. For example, the streetcar and aerial tram both serve the same area, so all of the $1 billion in development supposedly stimulated by the aerial tram is included in the $2.3 billion in development supposedly stimulated by the streetcar.44

The biggest problem with the claim that transit stimulates development is that most of the private developments themselves received huge subsidies. The Portland Development Commission (the city’s urban-renewal agency) uses tax-increment financing and federal grants to subsidize developments in urban-renewal areas. In recent years, those areas have focused on transit zones and corridors. (For a description of how tax-increment financing works, see “Problem #3” below.)

The Portland streetcar, for example, travels almost entirely within the River, South Park Blocks, and North Macadam urban-renewal districts. New developments in these districts received more than $665 million of
tax-increment financed subsidies from the Portland Development Commission. The North Macadam District, which received at least $289 million of these subsidies, is also the location of the aerial tram. It is fair to say that the subsidies played a much larger role in redevelopment than a 7-mile-per-hour streetcar line or 13-mile-per-hour tram.

Other subsidies include Federal Transit Administration grants to transit-oriented developments; U.S. Department of Transportation grants for "congestion mitigation," and (as previously mentioned) below-market land sales and 10-year tax waivers for high-density housing. When tax-increment finance districts aimed at supporting new light-rail lines are added, subsidies to Portland-area transit-oriented developments probably come close to $2 billion, not counting the cost of light rail, streetcars, or other transit projects.

Portland's story of spending $90 million on a streetcar line to get $2.3 billion of development, or $57 million on an aerial tram to get $1 billion of development, sounds attractive to officials from other cities. It might not sound so attractive if Portland admitted that it really had to spend $665 million, in addition to the cost of the streetcar line and tram, not to mention 10-year tax waivers on at least $100 million of development, to get that $2.3 billion worth of development.

"It is a myth to think that the market will take care of development along transit corridors," said Portland City Commissioner Charles Hales in 1996, when he proposed to subsidize such developments. "The $55 million streetcar line has sparked more than $1.5 billion (and growing) in new development," said consultant Charles Hales 10 years later, working to sell streetcars to other cities and conveniently forgetting about the subsidies he promoted when he was on the city council.

"Look at all the cranes in the city," says developer Homer Williams. "Outside of two or three exceptions, it's all because of the streetcar." Yes, because of the streetcar and the hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies in the areas served by the streetcar. While transit may be a catalyst for subsidies to development, it is not itself a catalyst for development.

**Myth #4:**
**Portland Curbed Sprawl**

Even if Portland's integrated land and transportation planning is not changing people's travel habits, planning advocates content themselves with the thought that Portland is at least preserving farmland and curbing sprawl. After all, according to the Census Bureau, between 1990 and 2000, the population density of the Portland urbanized area increased by 10.6 percent.

One problem with this reasoning is that many urban areas that have no urban-growth boundaries increased their densities by even more than 10.6 percent. During the 1990s, Kansas City's density increased by 39 percent; Phoenix's by 34 percent; Dallas-Ft. Worth's by 33 percent; San Antonio's by 26 percent; Houston's by 20 percent; and Orlando's by 13 percent. One reason for these increases is that the Census Bureau changed its definition of urbanized area so as to eliminate vacant lands that had previously been included.

Another reason for Portland's increased density is that much of the growth took place as "infill" on prime farmlands, such as Orenco, that happened to be inside the region's urban-growth boundary. This suggests that planners are not so much protecting farmlands as determining which farmers get to enjoy windfall profits because they are inside an imaginary line.

At the same time that newcomers increased the Portland area's density, large numbers of other people escaped Portland's planning system by moving to Vancouver, Washington; Salem, Oregon; and other communities outside the reach of Portland planners. As land-use rules drove up housing prices, many people with Portland-area jobs moved to communities outside the boundary. "Middle-class people are moving to the suburbs for bigger houses," admits Portland city commissioner Erik Sten.
Between 1990 and 2000, Portland grew by 21 percent, while its Oregon suburbs such as Beaverton and Gresham grew by 30 to 40 percent. Meanwhile, Vancouver, Washington—directly across the Columbia River from Portland but beyond the reach of Portland planners—grew by 210 percent. Though Vancouver started the decade with barely 10 percent of Portland’s population, it actually gained more new residents during the 1990s than the city of Portland.

Meanwhile, 45 miles south of Portland, Salem grew fast enough to overtake Eugene as Oregon’s second-largest city in 2001. Like all Oregon cities, Salem has an urban-growth boundary, but planners there were less aggressive than in Portland and so Salem’s housing market has remained more affordable.

Rather than preventing sprawl, Portland’s planning has to some degree accelerated it. Instead of leading people to drive less, the plans are forcing people to commute long distances to find affordable housing.

**Myth #5: Portlanders Love Planning**

Portland’s planning represents “true direct democracy in action,” says the BBC. Hardly: Several recent elections and other events have seen defeats for the planners, but they continue to plan anyway.

- In 1995, planners began rezoning neighborhoods to higher densities. The first neighborhood targeted for densification was Oak Grove, where I lived at the time. When planners held public hearings to find out how residents felt about the plan, they were confronted by hundreds of angry homeowners. Local government officials reluctantly asked Metro, Portland’s regional planning agency, to take Oak Grove off the list of neighborhoods slated for rezoning, saying “there is no community support” for the plan. Metro and other local governments responded by not holding public hearings in most other neighborhoods slated for densification. Instead, plans were written by committees consisting of a few neighborhood residents who were prescreened to insure they supported Portland’s densification, along with many more nonresidents, such as officials representing TriMet and other government agencies.

- In 1997 voters in the Portland suburb of Milwaukie recalled their mayor and a majority of their city council from office because the council had approved a plan to zone part of the city for higher densities. Planners were greatly relieved when no other city followed the suburb’s example.

- Public hearings held in 1998 on light-rail expansion plans revealed planners’ lack of commitment to the democratic process. At the first few hearings, planners intimidated anyone who attempted to distribute anti-light-rail literature, even just copies of their testimony, by threatening them with arrest for “criminal trespass.” Metro changed this policy after it realized that the First Amendment allowed people to express their opinions at public hearings.

- In November, 1998, Portland-area voters rejected, by 47-to-53, the proposed expansion to the light-rail system. Yet TriMet is expanding anyway, using tax-increment financing—the only way local officials in Oregon can use property taxes without a public vote—to finance the new lines.

- In 2002 planning opponents put a measure on the ballot that would forbid Metro, Portland’s regional planning agency, from requiring that more neighborhoods be rezoned to higher densities. Having already densified dozens of neighborhoods, Metro responded with its own measure that put a moratorium on densification through 2015. Planning advocates claimed victory when Metro’s measure won—but if they had really believed that voters supported...
their density plans, they would simply have opposed the original anti-density measure.

- In 2004 property-rights activists put measure 37 on the ballot, allowing any-
  one whose property values had been reduced by planning and zoning to ask for
  either compensation or to have the rules waived. Planning advocates spent
  $2.7 million to argue that this would destroy Oregon's land-use planning
  system. Though measure 37's support-
  ers spent barely a third of that amount promoting it, the measure passed by 61
  percent, winning a majority of the votes in every county in the Portland area.

- In 2005 Portland's incoming mayor, Tom Potter, announced a "VisionPDX"
  process that would allow Portland resi-
  dents to "create a vision for Portland
  for the next 20 years and beyond."

After collecting people's opinions for more than a year, a draft report revealed
significant uneasiness with the Portland's plans. Respondents "worry about a growing gap between
Portland's have and have-nots—in schools, health care and the priorities of city government," says the draft. In
particular, many people think "the tram/South Waterfront/North Macadam
development (not to mention the Pearl, which seems to have become a verb, as in 'to Pearlize') was a total waste of
money."

Far from representing direct democracy in action, Portland's programs are a classic example of arrogant government planners doing their best to sidestep the public's wishes.

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Problems with Portland's Plans

The previous discussion has already hinted at some of the major drawbacks of Portland's integrated land-use and transportation planning. These include the following:

1. Increasingly unaffordable housing prices.
2. Increased traffic congestion.
3. Higher taxes or reduced urban services as tax revenues are diverted to rail transit and transit-oriented development.
4. A reputation for having an unfriendly business environment, leading to higher unemployment.

Problem #1: Unaffordable Housing

During the 1990s, housing affordability declined by more in Portland than in any other urban area in the United States. Today, Portland remains more affordable than most California housing markets, but it is far less affordable than many less-regulated housing markets, such as Atlanta, Raleigh, and Houston.

A standard measure of a region's affordability is median home price divided by median family income. A price-to-income ratio of 2 or less is very affordable, whereas markets with ratios above 3 verge on unaffordable. At current interest rates and a price-to-income ratio of 3, a family devoting a quarter of its income to mortgage payments would need 17 years to pay it off. At a ratio of 4, it would need 32 years, and at a ratio of 5, it could never pay it off.

The decennial census estimates both median family income and median home value for the year prior to each census. Census data reveal that almost all U.S. regions outside of Hawaii (which passed growth-management planning legislation in 1960) had affordable housing in
1969. During the 1970s, many counties in California imposed urban-growth boundaries and other growth-management tools. By 1979, most California housing prices had become as unaffordable as those found in Hawaii.

Oregon urban-growth boundaries were imposed in 1979–85, but a severe recession that caused the state to actually lose population during some years in the 1980s kept housing affordable through 1989. As the state's economy recovered after that year, prices rapidly accelerated.

Growth boundaries limit the supply of land available for new home construction. In 1990, builders could buy an acre suitable for residential use in the Portland area for $25,000. By 1997, the cost of the same acre was between $150,000 and $200,000. Because median incomes had not increased significantly, the National Association of Home Builders ranked Portland the second least affordable housing market in the country.

Growth boundaries are not the only cause of unaffordable housing. Other problems include impact fees and an onerous permitting process that allows anyone in the state to challenge a proposed development without hiring an attorney. One result of this regulation is reduced competition in the housing market. "The urban growth boundary has really been our friend," says a leading Portland homebuilder. "It kept the major builders out of the market." Of course, in this case what is good for homebuilders is bad for homebuyers.

In 1989, Portland's value-to-income ratio was less than 2. By 1999, it had increased to more than 3. It was no fluke that this increase was greater than that of any other U.S. urban area: the second- and third-greatest increases were in Salem and Eugene, Oregon. Today, as noted in the discussion of Mayor Potter's VisionPDX, housing affordability is a major concern for many Portland-area residents.

Unaffordable housing hits low-income families particularly hard. With the growth boundary limiting new home construction, many young families are gentrifying low-income neighborhoods in Portland, pushing former renters in those neighborhoods out of single-family homes and into multifamily housing. "People who don't have choices are getting pushed out as rents go up," says city commissioner Eric Sten.

Although planners never actually said they wanted to increase housing prices, it is not clear that they see high prices as a problem. "If people want a compact urban area," said Metro's chief land-use planner in 1996, "some increase in the price of housing is going to occur." Higher prices would discourage people from living in homes with large yards and encourage more people to live in multi-family housing, which planners considered to be a good thing. In 2005, planners were elated to find that land and housing prices had gone so high that -- without any subsidies -- developers were tearing down suburban homes and replacing them with high-density housing.

Yet high housing prices cause several serious problems. First, they deny low-income families the opportunity to achieve the American dream of homeownership. "Insidiously, the burden of site-supply restrictions will fall disproportionately on poor and minority families," says Portland economist Randall Pozdena. Pozdena estimates that if Portland's planning measures had been applied nationwide during the 1990s, more than a million young and low-income families would have been prevented from buying homes.

High housing prices may create windfall profits for some homeowners -- but it is merely a paper profit unless they plan to sell and then move to a lower-cost region or a smaller home. However, this windfall, too, is inequitable, as the people buying their first homes tend to be less wealthy than those who already own their homes.

High housing prices also slow the growth of urban areas. Silicon Valley saw an exodus of firms to the Portland area in the early 1990s, when Portland was still affordable. But by 2000, Portland's high housing prices led many potential employers to look to Boise, Omaha, or other affordable communities.

Research in Britain, which has practiced growth management since 1947 and suffers from some of the highest housing prices in
the world, found that neighborhoods with high homeownership rates tend to have higher unemployment rates than communities with high rental rates. High housing prices make the cost of moving unaffordable, effectively immobilizing the population.

Harvard economist Edward Glaeser has found that growth management makes both housing prices and local employment rates more volatile. "In the long run, firms generally leave high-cost areas," says Glaeser, so "places with rapid price increases over one five-year period are more likely to have income and employment declines over the next five-year period." It is not surprising, then, that in much of 2001 and 2002 Portland had some of the highest unemployment rates of any major metropolitan area.

Problem #2: Congestion

Between 1982 and 2003, the amount of time the average commuter wasted in traffic increased more rapidly in Portland than in Atlanta, Boston, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, or San Francisco—more, in fact, than in almost any other U.S. urban area. This was not an unintended consequence of Portland's planning—in fact, it was part of the plan.

Increased congestion will "signal positive urban development," says a 1996 report from Portland's Metro. Three years later, Metro's regional transportation plan declared, "transportation solutions aimed solely at relieving congestion are inappropriate." In fact, Metro has decided that "level of service F"—the transportation engineer's term for near gridlock—is "acceptable" during rush hour throughout most of the Portland area. Why? Because, says Metro's leading transportation planner, relieving congestion "would eliminate transit ridership." Following are just a few examples of how Portland planners are letting congestion increase.

- The biggest bottleneck in the Portland area is on Interstate 5 between Portland and Vancouver, just south of the bridge crossing the Columbia River, where the three southbound lanes shrink to two lanes for just 0.8 miles. The result is huge traffic backups as all the Portland workers who found affordable housing in Vancouver try to get to work each morning. Metro's 1995 transportation plan estimated that it would cost only $10 million to add a third lane to this segment, but to this date nothing has been done. In 1998, Henry Hewitt, chair of the Oregon Transportation Commis-sion, told a legislative commit-tee that Metro had asked the department not to fix the bottleneck.

- U.S. Representative David Wu (D), who represents west Portland, earmarked federal funds to expand state highway 217, which may be the second-most congested freeway in the Portland area after I-5. Metro turned the money down, saying it had other priorities.

- Portland's 82-year-old Sellwood Bridge, the busiest two-lane bridge in Oregon, is structurally failing and was closed to trucks and buses in 2004. The Bechtel Corporation offered to replace the bridge by 2010, but Metro and Multnomah County (which owns the bridge) turned them down. Due to their lengthy planning processes, they don't even expect to begin construction before 2010. When they finally do, they almost certainly will not add capacity for anything except bicycles.

- Rather than increase roadway capacity, Portland is actively reducing the capacity of many arterials and collectors to handle traffic. Speed humps and curb extensions have been added to such collectors as Belmont and Stark streets, while arterials such as Sandy, Barbur, and McLoughlin have been slated for boulevardizing, also known as arterial traffic calming, which means removing right- and left-turn lanes.

The Texas Transportation Institute estimates that congestion cost Portland-area
“While some poor mentally ill guy lay there with his life ebbing away,” blogger Jack Bogdanski scathingly comments, “the big-shot real-estate sharpie sat with his cloth napkin on, eating his braised veal ravioli with truffles.”

commuters more than $500 million in wasted time and fuel in 2003, a 1900-percent increase from 1982. A study prepared for Metro and the Portland Business Alliance estimates that the cost of congestion to businesses is of the same order of magnitude.

In its 2020 regional transportation plan (published in 2002), Metro predicted that its plans would increase the amount of time Portlanders waste sitting in traffic more than 6.6 times. Congestion would increase despite all of the region’s land-use and transit plans because those programs, predicted planners, would attract no more than about 4 percent of auto drivers to other modes of travel. When asked about those predictions, which were in his own agency’s report, Mike Burton, Metro’s elected executive, told a legislative committee, “Nobody believes those numbers.”

In 2007, the Federal Highway Administration chastised Metro for its anti-auto transportation plans. “It is difficult to find the transportation focus” in Metro’s regional transportation plan. Metro “should acknowledge that automobiles are the preferred mode of transport by the citizens of Portland,” added the agency. “They vote with their cars every day.” Based on that “vote,” “The transportation solution for a large and vibrant metropolitan region like metropolitan Portland should include additional highway capacity options.”

Problem #3: Increased Taxes/Reduced Urban Services

On September 17, 2006, developer Homer Williams was eating dinner on the patio at the Bluehour, the ritziest restaurant in the Pearl District, when he saw police subdue a man on the sidewalk outside. Williams later told police he was struck by the “casualness” of the situation.

It was anything but casual for James Chasse, the man in custody. A talented musician who had schizophrenia, Chasse was fine as long as he took his medications. But a nonprofit mental health clinic received a report on September 15 that he was not eating and had probably stopped taking his medicine. When someone working for the clinic tried to find him, Chasse fled in panic.

Two days later, police officer Christopher Humphries saw Chasse and assumed he was drunk or on drugs. When Humphries tried to approach, Chasse ran away. Humphries tackled him and, according to witnesses, punched and kicked him several times. While in custody, Chasse died of chest injuries.

Portland mental health advocates were outraged that many of the programs that could have saved Chasse’s life had suffered recent budget cuts: community policing, a crisis triage center, and the city’s mental health program. Yet the city continues to spend tens of millions of dollars a year subsidizing high-density developments. “So while some poor mentally ill guy lay there with his life ebbing away,” blogger Jack Bogdanski scathingly comments, “the big-shot real-estate sharpie sat with his cloth napkin on, eating his braised veal ravioli with truffles.”

Between 10-year property tax waivers for high-density housing and tax-increment financing for transit-oriented developments, Portland has diverted tens of millions of dollars of tax revenues a year from schools, police, fire, public health, and other urban services. This has contributed to funding crises for many of those services, even as developers like Homer Williams continue to enjoy hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies for their projects.

As of 2003 nearly $1.4 billion worth of property had received tax waivers in Multnomah County (where most of Portland is located). About $214 million of that was specifically for Portland’s high-density or transit-oriented plans, representing lost tax revenues of about $4 million per year. Another $600 million is for improvements and renovations to historic properties. About 60 percent of these improvements, by value, are near the light-rail or streetcar lines, and many were counted by Portland planners as developments stimulated by rail transit.
Portland has 10 urban-renewal districts, at least 7 of which were created specifically to support rail transit and transit-oriented developments. The city uses tax-increment financing (TIF), a technique first developed to promote urban renewal in California in 1953. Since then, TIF has become the primary means of financing urban renewal in every state but Arizona. Tax-increment financing provides the funds used for eminent domain in urban-renewal areas; without TIF, cases like Kelo v. City of New London would never have happened.

Originally, urban renewal was supposed to be a way for cities to kick-start development in areas so blighted that property owners and developers would not invest in improvements. Today, it is often used by planners to shape development in areas that developers would gladly invest in without subsidies. Planners use the TIF money to subsidize developments that are less marketable but more politically correct than the ones developers would build without subsidies. Often, that means high-density, mixed-use developments.

Under tax-increment financing, the existing property taxes collected from an urban renewal district are frozen, meaning they are distributed, as before, to schools and other services. All property taxes collected on new improvements—the increment—are used to subsidize those improvements. In most cases, planners estimate the revenues they will get from those improvements, then sell bonds that will be repaid by those revenues. The bonds are used to pay for infrastructure, below-market land sales, and sometimes direct grants to the developers.

Portland has authorized the sale of $1.7 billion worth of TIF bonds to support its 10 urban renewal districts. About $1.2 billion of the bonds are for the seven districts created specifically for rail and transit-oriented development.

They include the River District (created for the streetcar and the Pearl; $234 million), Airport Way (created for the airport light-rail and Cascade Station; $73 million), North Macadam (created for the South Waterfront/air translating station; $289 million), Interstate (created for the Interstate light-rail; $335 million), Gateway (created for the airport light-rail; $164 million), Lents (created for a proposed light rail to Clackamas County; $75 million), and Central Eastside (created for a proposed light-rail line and transit-oriented developments; $66 million). It is likely that bonding authority for the Central Eastside and Lents districts will increase as plans for those areas progress.

At least some of the money spent on the districts not created specifically for rail transit and TODs has still gone to support those activities. The streetcar was built with the help of $7.5 million of the $144 million in bonds for the South Park Blocks District. Many of the improvements in that district and the Convention Center District ($168 million) were counted by planners as investments generated by rail transit.

According to Multnomah County, the actual taxes diverted to Portland urban renewal totaled $66 million in 2006, $41 million of which went to the rail-TOD districts. That amounts to about 6 to 7 percent of total property tax collections in Multnomah County. Many of Portland’s suburbs, including Gresham, Wilsonville, and Tualatin, have their own urban-renewal districts used to subsidize their own transit-oriented developments.

The Chasse tragedy symbolized the many problems caused by the diversion of funds from schools, police, public health, and other services. Portland’s schools are particularly squeezed by tax breaks and urban renewal.

Due to Portland’s high housing prices, a disproportionate number of families with children have moved to suburban or exurban areas where they can afford a house with a yard. As a result, only 21 percent of city of Portland residents are under the age of 18, compared to 27 percent of Portland’s suburban residents. While suburban school districts are building new schools, Portland’s is closing five to seven schools per year. Despite the closures, Portland’s school district projected a $57 million shortfall in its 2007 budget. Such shortfalls are only driving more families with children to the suburbs. When Portland’s mayor suggested a city income tax to help schools, the idea sank like a lead aerial tram.
All of these diversions have raised the ire of the public employees’ unions and others who work for or rely on the services that are being cut. These groups are engaged in “a huge battle for the control of the Rose City,” observes writer Phil Stanford, author of *Portland Confidential*, a book about corruption in the 1950s and ’60s. “What’s left of the old Neil Goldschmidt machine,” says Stanford, is “struggling to maintain the hold it’s had on the city’s purse strings.”

One of the leading opponents of the Goldschmidt program, City Commissioner Randy Leonard, represented firefighter unions before being elected. Since Portland firefighters get more than 90 percent of their funds from property taxes, they are understandably concerned about tax-increment financing. Another opponent, Amanda Fritz—who challenged an incumbent Goldschmidt supporter for city council in 2006—has represented nurses unions. Although Fritz did not win, Leonard survived a strong challenge from a Goldschmidt supporter in the same election.

Most recently, groups ranging from the League of Women Voters to the chair of the Multnomah County Commission are opposing an extension of the Portland streetcar that would require more TIF money. The League worries that TIF saps spending on schools and social services. Multnomah County says that urban renewal costs it $14 million per year. In any case, says Stanford, “it looks like the political machine that’s called the shots in Portland for almost 50 years is crumbling.”

### Problem #4: Business-Unfriendly Environment

Columbia Sportswear, one of Oregon’s largest companies, was headquartered in North Portland but wanted to relocate to a larger space. In 2000 it found a location in the Central Eastside urban-renewal district, and the city of Portland was pleased to welcome the company there.

After making plans for the new office, however, the company was told by Portland planners that it could not have any surface parking at the site because “it’s a light-rail station.” There is no light-rail line anywhere nearby, and voters had turned down funds to build such a line, but the city hoped to eventually build the line anyway, so it declared the parking rule to be “nonnegotiable.” The company moved to suburban Washington County instead, and its CEO blasted the city for its anti-business climate.

Homer Williams may find Portland to be a business-friendly environment. But for those who cannot hire a Neil Goldschmidt to smooth their way to riches, the cost of doing business in the Portland area is high. That cost includes:

- The high cost of land for office, industrial, or retail operations;
- The cost of overcoming Oregon’s lengthy and onerous land-use planning process when siting such operations;
- The cost of congestion, especially for businesses that make daily deliveries of goods and materials;
- The cost of paying workers enough so that they can afford housing and other consumer costs; and
- The high tax rates needed to support rail transit and other expensive programs.

Portland seemed to have a business-friendly environment in the early 1990s. Housing was still very affordable, especially when compared to housing in California. In 1993, the state legislature was prompted by Intel to pass a law allowing cities and counties to tax only the first $200 million of the value of chip-making plants, which were often worth $1 billion or more. This seemed reasonable to many because such factories did not consume any more public services than, say, sawmills or other pre-silicon plants.

As a result, at least 10 chip factories located in the Portland area, each employing thousands of people. Between 1992 and 1998, the region gained nearly 200,000 new jobs, a 26-percent increase. Then job growth slowed as high prices for land and housing led employers to look to
Boise and other low-cost regions to site new facilities. At its peak, in December 2000, the Portland area had just under a million jobs. By January, 2004, employment had fallen nearly 8 percent to less than 920,000 jobs. Since then, employment has recovered but today stands only slightly above the 2000 peak.108

Conclusions and Recommendations

Portland planning did not start out as a real estate scheme aimed at enriching Neil Goldschmidt and his friends and clients, but it ended up that way. Portland’s planning process was conceived by ideologues who disliked the automobile and wanted to preserve all of Oregon’s abundant open space no matter what the cost. It was endorsed by politicians who refused to believe, or simply ignored, predictions that it would hugely increase congestion and housing costs. And it was manipulated by a cabal of politically connected businesses seeking to divert the flow of tax dollars into their own pockets. The opportunities for such manipulation were so obvious that, if Neil Goldschmidt had not started the light-rail mafia, it would have been someone else; and if it were not for Goldschmidt’s statutory rape, many Portland-area residents never would have learned about this cabal.

The results have been a disaster for the average Portland-area resident. The light-rail and streetcar lines, vibrant downtown streets, and scenic vistas outside the urban-growth boundary may seem attractive to visitors. But residents have to live in unaffordable housing, creep along in traffic congestion, and pay higher taxes or suffer reduced urban services so that the region’s political leaders can fund their rail transit and transit-oriented development schemes.

Portlanders always hoped that planning would save their region from becoming like Los Angeles, the nation’s most congested, most polluted urban area. When Portland planners were in the midst of writing their plan for densifying and railifying the region, they examined the nation’s 50 largest urban areas to see which was closest to the vision they had for Portland.

It turned out that one region almost precisely matched that vision. The nation’s densest urban area was also the major urban area with the fewest number of miles of freeway per capita. That same area also happened to be spending billions of dollars building new rail transit lines. Which urban area was that? Why, Los Angeles.

Despite the popular belief that Los Angeles is the epitome of urban sprawl, it is actually the densest urban area in America—about one third denser than the New York urban area (which includes southwestern Connecticut and northeastern New Jersey). The Los Angeles urban area (which includes Pasadena and much of Orange County) also has only about 53 freeway miles per million residents, compared with a national urban area average of 108 miles. Los Angeles is congested because it packs so many people into a small area and doesn’t have enough roads for them to drive on. It is polluted because cars pollute the most in stop-and-go traffic.

“In public discussions we gather the general impression that Los Angeles represents a future to be avoided,” wrote Metro in 1994. Yet “with respect to density and road per capita mileage it displays an investment pattern we desire to replicate” in Portland. Rather than see this as a sign that there might be something wrong with their plan, planners merely attributed this to a difference between “perception and reality.”111

Portland and Oregon can take several steps to remedy Portland’s problems before they get any worse:

- Portland-area voters should dissolve Metro, the regional planning agency, and return planning functions to local governments.
- The state legislature should repeal the land-use planning laws that are driving up housing prices and immobilizing the region’s transportation systems.
- As an intermediate step, the state should

The opportunities for manipulating the system were so obvious that, if Neil Goldschmidt had not started the light-rail mafia, someone else would have.
People who want to see their regions remain livable should look at Portland only as an example of how not to plan.

Until these changes are made, cities outside the Portland area should scrutinize Portland's claims with skepticism. People who want to see their regions remain affordable, uncongested, and livable should look at Portland only as an example of how not to plan.

Notes


3. Alan Ehrenhalt, "The Great Wall of Portland,"


5. U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Table P107A (median family incomes) and Table H061A (median home values).


15. Redden, "Neil's Network."


18. Warsi.


28. Quotes from the October 23, 1996, city council meeting are taken from a videotape of that meeting made by the city of Portland, a synopsis of which is available at tinyurl.com/2nhrnj.


30. Ibid.


46. Charles.

47. Quoted from the October 23, 1996, city council meeting taken from a videotape of that meeting made by the city of Portland. Transcript available at tinyurl.com/2nhgnj.

48. Charles Hales and Robert Cone, “Streetcars Bringing People, Businesses Back to the City,” HDR
TransitLine, 2006, tinyurl.com/2nx6x5.


51. U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, table CPH-1 for urbanized area; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census, table GCT-PH1 for urbanized area.


55. Warsi.


58. I was threatened with arrest for passing out my testimony at a hearing on April 8, 1998. Metro planners called sheriff's deputies, but by the time they arrived I had given a copy to everyone who wanted one. At the next hearing, on April 13, Metro denied that it threatened anyone with arrest.


68. Dana Tims, "Land Value 'Tipping Point' Hits Suburbs," The Oregonian, October 20, 2005.


70. Andrew Oswald, "Theory of Homes and Jobs," working paper, University of Warwick, September 18, 1997, tinyurl.com/2pww.


77. Metro, Regional Transportation Plan, 1995, p. 5-17.

78. Henry Hewitt, chair, Oregon Transportation Commission, Testimony before the State Senate Natural Resources Committee, April 1, 1998.


84. Metro, Region 2040.

85. Mike Burton, executive officer, Metro Regional Government, Testimony before the State Senate Natural Resources Committee, April 1, 1998.


89. Steve Duin, “The Fix Is In,” The Oregonian, October 21, 2006; tinyurl.com/2rzcm.


91. Rosie Sizer, “The Death of James Chasse Jr.,” The Oregonian, October 25, 2006; tinyurl.com/yne6b5z.


98. Portland Development Commission.


100. Ibid.


112. Housing Affordability Act, S303, February 16, 2007; tinyurl.com/2d2jzn.

June 1, 2011

To: Waterloo Regional Council

**Grand River Environmental Network Position on Proposed LRT/aBRT**

The Grand River Environmental Network (GREN) recommends the following:

1. That the Region adopt the staff’s recommendation to council: a combination of L9 & L3. This is a commitment to a light rail train system from St. Jacob’s Farmers Market to the Ainslie Street Bus Terminal in Cambridge (L9), starting initially with rail only from St. Jacob’s Farmers Market to Fairview Mall and Bus Rapid Transit to Cambridge (L3);

2. That the Region commit to and immediately begin rapidly implementing a reformed bus system throughout the three communities, with new Express Bus Routes and new local bus route system as shown on page 10 of the “Connecting to the Future” document;

3. That the road system needs be reassessed given that the bus and rail system is dramatically improved;

4. That the Region continue to explore new technologies while the details of the LRT system are being developed over the next two years; and

5. That planning policies, as described in the Region’s new official plan, are implemented to support the transit system.

GREN members:
- are activists, watchdogs, guardians, stewards and concerned citizens,
- support each other by sharing information and expertise,
- foster environmental awareness and literacy, and
- promote respect for our natural world and our place in it.
Which Rapid Transit Option Provides the Best Value to our Community?

Mr. Chairman, Members of Regional Council, Staff, and Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am involved in the Community as Chairman of the Wellesley Township Heritage & Historical Society, a member of HPAC, Kiwanis Transit, the Board of Directors of the Elmira Sugar Kings, Wellesley Township Seniors’ Networking Group, as well as other committees and boards. I have followed the process regarding Rapid Transit for quite a number of years. I have attended workshops, open houses, various meetings of Council and tried to keep abreast of opinions of the General Public as expressed in letters to the editor and comments in local newspapers. Although I am a member of many groups, the Opinion expressed tonight is my personal opinion and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of other members of the committees and boards to which I belong.

Generally, I support Rapid Transit, but with three serious reservations.

1. The Cost of Construction, particularly for ripping up roads to lay LRT or BRT Rapidway.
2. Trains (LRT) belong on tracks in the Rail Corridors and not on roads while Express Busses (aBRT), belong on the roads.
3. To be fair to all of Waterloo Region cities, LRT should be built to include Cambridge immediately. LRT should follow the Rail Corridors from the Farmers’ Market in Woolwich Township to the Delta in Cambridge.

LRT in the Rail Corridors and high quality aBRT will encourage intensification along the proposed routes – King/Charles/Duke Streets and Hespeler Road as well as downtown Galt (Cambridge). Already intensification is occurring in the King/Columbia area where there is no proposed rapid transit. Proper zoning can go hand-in-hand with this adapted Rapid Transit Proposal.

Dedicated LRT Rapidway and even BRT Rapidway would limit the amount of roadway available to vehicular and pedestrian traffic on already narrow roads. According to your estimates on proposed travel times, neither LRT nor BRT will be much faster than the present I EXPRESS. Construction of rail lines on roadways and even a BRT rapidway would be too expensive and disruptive and only add to the congestion already thereon without decreasing travel times. Traffic accidents could shut down the system. It would also disrupt various events that presently use King Street, like the Oktoberfest parade.

Unless the Rapid Transit System is rapid, there will be limited use and congestion will only become worse. Light rail rapid transit, if properly built and outfitted, should take no more than 35 minutes, from the Delta to St. Jacobs Farmers’ Market, including stops. Depending upon signaling and scheduling, double tracks may not be needed along the whole route. That is better left to more informed people than I. aBRT, if properly routed and equipped with signal changing devices should be rapid between LRT stations, especially on King, Eagle and Hespeler aBRT’s.

Cost is a concern to many and upgrading and utilizing the present rail lines from St. Jacobs Farmers’ Market to the Delta in Cambridge would be far cheaper. While major road widening is being done on Weber St. with considerable building demolition, the LRT line could be swung down the west side off Weber St. around to the proposed Multi-mode station at King and Victoria Streets. There would be a minimum amount of disruption to traffic, and expensive roadwork for LRT would be almost unnecessary. Busses could connect between key rail transit stations and use the roadways with minimum stops as presently proposed. Even they would not need a BRT rapidway if equipped with signal changing devices. Current busses or even smaller or larger busses, (depending on ridership) could be used as warranted. The only roadwork necessary would be the painting of white lines on the roadways to designate where the aBRT has priority on the road, much like the bicycle lanes currently designated now. Thank you.

Ron Hackett,
Presentation to Regional Council, June 1, 2011
Summary of letter May 24, 2011, with some additional points
Emil Frind

Needs
- if we continue to grow at the present rate we need an efficient transportation system
- we also need to encourage downtown development to take pressure off countryside, preserve agricultural lands
- LRT addresses both needs
- may also help to get some people out of their cars

Concerns: What will it cost?
- staff report misleading: states 1.5% per year increase, ramping up to 10.5% over 7 years, or $175/year, suggests taxes would then stay at that level
- but that’s not the case – other transportation upgrades are just delayed, will follow later
- taxes will continue to go up – 1.5% every year for 23 years? – to pay for the other parts of the transportation system
- in that case, actual cost to taxpayer will ramp up to $575/year compared to 2011 base year – not $23/year
- inflationary increases (salaries) come on top of that – the ramp-up may become 3%/year, not 1.5%, every year for 23 years – this would bring the increase to $1150/year relative to the base year
- potential cost overruns: 30% on $800 million = $240 million, a ~100% increase relative to the $250 million shortfall – another doubling?
- where is this runaway train going to take us? Another RIM Park?
- Are we putting all of our resources into transportation – leaving nothing for other needs – health, education?
- (City of Waterloo: program for special needs children (~$75,000) was not funded)
- we need clarity about funding

Is an across-the-board property tax increase fair?
- across-the-board tax increases may be acceptable for people with incomes that stay ahead of inflation
- but it would not be fair for people on fixed incomes (CPP or OAS) – an ever-increasing portion of their incomes would go to taxes
• These are people who built this community with their tax dollars – some may now be forced out of their homes because they can no longer afford taxes

Cost of LRT = cost of growth
• Do we have to pay for growth by raising taxes every year forever?
• If that’s the case, there is something wrong with our funding model
• Growth should pay for itself through the increase in the tax base
• If it does not, funding model is not sustainable

Innovative funding sources
• Consider a development surcharge on properties along the LRT route – these properties will appreciate in value
  – Toronto: Mayor promised new Sheppard line will not be financed through tax increases – instead there would be a development surcharge on properties within the corridor
• Sell shares in the LRT – similar to what is being done in Guelph with their solar park, developed with City blessing, supported by selling shares to citizens
  – Enthusiastic supporters of the LRT will want to own shares
• Invite local businesses to sponsor parts of the system (e.g. LRT stops)
  – Precedent: EIT building at UW
• We need to explore innovative funding sources

Key question that will not go away even after this is over
• How much growth do we want/need?
• If growth is good, is more growth better?
• Present growth is mandated by the Province – but that should not keep us from thinking about how much growth we can realistically handle in this Region
• The question will come back to haunt us with the water issue (but that’s a question for another day)

Bottom line
• A qualified yes to LRT
• Funding should be put on a sustainable basis, not by loading the burden on people with fixed incomes
Rapid Transit Speech - June 1 2011
Taylor Byrnes

Good evening councillors. The decision on rapid transit is one that without a doubt has the potential to transform our community. We know that continuing to sprawl outwards and consume farmland is not sustainable, that it would destroy everything that was worked for in the Regional Official Plan, and the Regional Growth Management Strategy. In addition it would endanger our ground water supply and reduce our air quality.

Therefore the question is: which rapid transit system will give us the results we need? The answer is light rail (that is, LRT). Having listened to much of the current public debate, and to the presentations last night, I feel the need to further clarify what is LRT. LRT is trains running on steel rails at ground level in a dedicated right of way, be that reserved lanes or separate rail corridors. Aerobus, or aerorail as some are now calling it, is not in any way, shape or form an LRT technology. Rather, aerobus is a distraction from implementing a practical and useful LRT system.

In the entire history of aerobus, just two small test tracks have been constructed. One operated as a ski lift, the other was in a rural field. In the more than 30 years since those test tracks were built, neither of which is operating today, not a single new aerobus system has been constructed. The modern aerobus that some have proposed is nothing more than some drawings by a small company. Trusting the hundreds of millions of dollars such a system would cost to three guys from Texas who have never built a working system of any sort would be a serious mistake. The costs that are claimed by aerobus proponents have never been validated, rather they’re the sales pitch of a company that has no real world experience. Waterloo Region cannot afford to be gambling with hundreds of millions of dollars. The environmental assessment process for rapid transit did consider aerobus, and it was discounted with good reason.

Moving on, that leaves us with the two practical rapid transit solutions up for consideration, LRT or Bus Rapid Transit (that is, BRT). So, why does LRT make sense over BRT? The biggest reason is one of simple capacity. This region’s own ridership forecasts indicate that BRT would reach capacity just 10 to 15 years after its construction. The expert review panel, which was comprised of many of Canada’s leading transportation planning experts, concluded the ridership forecasts were conservative and would likely be exceeded. Quite simply it makes little sense to invest hundreds of millions into a BRT system that would have such a limited life. That option means paying for both systems, it is not a route to saving money. That reason alone should make you choose LRT over BRT.

In addition to the capacity issues however, there is the question if BRT will truly meet our objectives. While moving people is of course a vital part of a transit system, a transit system is about more than just that, it is about the urban character of a city. By looking at Calgary and Ottawa we can see a tale of two cities, one that built LRT and one that built BRT, both with populations at the time smaller than Waterloo Region today. Calgary has succeeded in transforming itself into an urban city with North America’s most successful LRT system. Ottawa however continues to battle with sprawl, and has a significantly over capacity BRT system which is now being replaced with LRT. Calgary has also enjoyed much greater success in intensifying station areas.

I also feel it is important to clarify what BRT is, as many of the arguments I have heard against LRT apply equally or even more to BRT. BRT is buses operating on a raised median in the middle of the road, separated from other traffic. As a result BRT causes equal street disruption during construction,
and requires the same degree of utility relocation. In addition, BRT requires a wider median than LRT, taking more valuable street space that could go to sidewalks, trees or cycling lanes.

After having recognized the need for rapid transit, and the problems related to BRT, that leaves one viable choice: LRT. But it's not that LRT is an option of last resort, LRT is also the strongest option on its own merits. By building LRT we have the option to truly transform our community. To reduce sprawl and to build the kind of vibrant urban community that is the ideal for such a progressive and innovative region.

You've heard over the past several years from people, businesses and community organizations all across this region. World leading organizations such as the Perimeter Institute have endorsed LRT as a key part of attracting the kind of talent our region needs for its continued prosperity. The spin-off benefits of LRT are too many to list in my 10 minutes, but I know many other delegations have covered them well.

That brings me to final point, and that is Cambridge. I really want to see LRT in Cambridge, it deserves all the benefits of LRT, just as much as Kitchener and Waterloo. Unfortunately, the money to build the system in one phase is simply not there. The best thing to do now is to build where the highest ridership is, then expand it as soon as possible. We can return to provincial and federal governments to request additional funding, backed by solid evidence of success. Building BRT in the name of being equitable will simply leave us all worse off. If you believe that Cambridge should get LRT as soon as possible, supporting LRT for KW is the fastest realistic way to make that happen.

Thank you for your time, and on June 15 please vote yes to LRT.
Light Rail Transit

The Light Choice: Speech Notes

By, Chris Letnick

A few points about me:
- Computer Engineering Student at the University of Waterloo.
- I have moved here from British Columbia.
- Light Rail Transit it important to me.
- I am considering staying in the Region of Waterloo after graduation.

Why I believe we are here:
- Not for objective reasons. The regional staff has already presented an objective report determining that the best solution is light rail.
- We are here to discuss the subjective reasoning. Why the choices are important to different groups and how.

Why I am here:
- I am here to advocate why me and many I know in my demographic support the regional staff's decision that light rail from Conestoga to Ottawa street is the preferred solution.
- To advocate on general support of light rail over the alternatives.

What I came to Ontario. (I often get asked why I would leave BC for Ontario)
- Learning opportunities.
- Career opportunities.
- An innovative community.

What I gave up in BC.
- Skiing (Real Mountains)
- Sunsets on the ocean.
- Hiking.
- Moderate weather.

Our community
- Diverse culture.
- Diverse technological innovation.
  - Relies on innovative people.
    - Innovative people desire an innovative way of life.

Innovation
- Innovate: means to apply technology and knowledge in a way that provides change to our way of life for the better.
- Innovation is not staying the same.
  - Road expansion is not innovation is.
- Innovation does not mean using abandoned unproven technology.
  - Aerobus is not a path to innovation.
- Innovation is about educated change.
  - Light Rail is a path towards innovation.
Light Rail
- High speed inter-node access to the region.
- Reliable.
- Distinguished, more attractive.
  - To commuters who want stability.
  - To visitors who want an easy to understand system.

Urban growth
- Light rail will help focus urban growth.
- Urban growth is important to me and my generation.
- Urban growth keeps the region from being forced to expanding the cities into the farmland.

Small cities have advantages over big cities. (Why people who want urban, don’t move to Toronto.)
- Easier to travel throughout a small city than a big one.
- Most of the excitement and resources, but in a smaller area.
- Easier to get out of the city and enjoy the countryside.
- Easier to live in the outskirts and work in town.

Cars are expensive.
- I have owned one and regretted it.
  - Too expensive.
- CAA estimates an average of $9,000 a year per car
  - Enough for a great deal of vacation.
  - Enough, such that if I started saving when I graduate, I can retire with over $2,000,000.

I would like to own only one car
- Use Transit for work and most outings.
- Not require me driving my kids around when I am much older.

I am, and will be paying taxes.
- Students who are renting pay their landlords.
  - Landlords often hold the properties for investment, they are making money.
  - Landlords then pay taxes with the money students provide.
- Students graduate and buy property.
  - The younger generation will be paying taxes longer than anybody else.

Conclusions:
- I support the decision to build light rail as the current preferred option suggested by regional staff. (From Conestoga Mall to Ottawa street.)
Mr. Chair and members of Regional Council,

I thank you again for another opportunity to address you today, this time regarding the rapid transit proposal itself. As someone who was here for last night’s meeting, I will endeavour to keep my remarks brief.

I strongly support staff’s proposal for rapid transit option L3b. As it has been made clear by your staff and my fellow delegates, light rail transit is the most cost-effective use of our tax dollars and the best choice for our region’s future. Light rail is superior over bus rapid transit in its ability to drive urban development, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, attract highly sought workforce talent, lower labour costs, generate choice riders, provide accessible service to seniors and persons with disabilities, and strengthen the local economy. Bus rapid transit has only one advantage: lower capital cost. As Council correctly confirmed earlier this afternoon, it will be up to you to weigh the pros and cons of each option. Is the added cost of LRT worth the benefits it brings? While some opponents and members of Council use scare tactics and claim that the cost of LRT would force residents into poverty, I believe Council is wise enough to see past these attempts at fear-mongering. Simply put, BRT would save the average taxpayers less than $3 in each year of incremental tax spending, and only for the next 15-20 years. At the same time, we stand to lose much more in economic efficiency and development. When BRT reaches capacity within 15-20 years, we would face massive disruption: a potential multi-billion dollar bill, in order to convert BRT to LRT. To save $3 today, we would lose the numerous benefits LRT brings us right now, and will be right back where we started, before BRT is even paid off.

Are there critics to option L3b? Certainly. With a project of this complexity and scale, it is impossible to address all issues raised by opponents, including the issues that actually exist. Regardless of what position you take on June 15th, you will have supporters who will applaud you and critics who will attack you. Above all else, however, the majority of your constituents will be glad you took leadership on this. You were elected to evaluate the information and choose the option which is the best choice for the future of this region, long-term and short-term. After nearly a decade of study and public consultation, staff have meticulously and diligently completed their studies and you have done your homework; it is now up to you to lay the tracks for our future. And when the first LRT train leaves the station in a few years, you will know that you made the right decision, and so will your constituents.

There is no way to justify choosing BRT. There is no way to justify choosing a system that is inferior in driving urban development, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, attracting highly sought workforce talent, lowering labour costs, generating choice riders, providing accessible service to seniors and persons with disabilities, and strengthening the local economy. There is no way to justify choosing a system that will have to be replaced with the better option we have right now, before we’ve even finished paying it off. There is no way to justify this, just to save $3 today.

On June 15th, I ask you to be the leaders the residents of this great region deserve, and support option L3b.

Sincerely,

Paul Cyr

PH4-100 Queen Street North
Kitchener, Ontario
N2H2H6
Good evening Councillors, staff and assembled members of the public.

My name is Scott Piatkowski, and I am speaking to you tonight both as a longterm resident of this community and as someone with a considerable interest in transportation, planning and environmental issues.

In my lifetime, I have been a pedestrian, a cyclist, a transit user and a motorist. From all four perspectives, I believe that the Light Rail Transit proposal currently in front of Waterloo Regional Council merits support.

One of the first things that visitors or newly-arrived residents to Waterloo Region comment on is the disjointed and confusing nature of our transportation system. Indeed, to call it “a system” at all would be to stretch the meaning of that word.

Of course, if we were able to redesign from scratch a way to get around Waterloo Region, our road network would surely look quite a bit different. While we obviously don’t have that luxury, we do have a tremendous opportunity to vastly improve the way that people get around in the Region, the way our cities are developed and the quality of life for people living here.

I’ve always found it interesting that people who complain about congestion on roadways often forget that they are part of the problem (i.e. they're not just "caught in traffic"; they are also traffic). If you think you get a lot of complaints about that now, you can expect a lot more in the future. Both the Places to Grow Act and the Region’s own Official Plan project our population to grow by another 200,000 people. How those people get around – or whether they are able to get around at all – is in your hands.

It has been argued by opponents of the LRT plan that, despite the fact that all incumbent Regional Councillors who had backed the proposal were re-elected, voters spoke out strongly against LRT in last October’s municipal election.

As a candidate in that election, I certainly heard from a lot of voters who expressed such sentiments. This was despite the fact that I was running for Kitchener City Council, which has no decision-making authority on this issue (although they currently appear to be confused about that).
What I found was that much of this opposition was founded upon misinformation. Unfortunately, that misinformation is still being cited as a reason to turn our backs on LRT.

Opponents will say that the proposed LRT merely connects two malls. By that logic, it could be said that the Conestoga Parkway merely connects New Hamburg and St. Jacobs.

Opponents will say that they will personally never use the LRT. But, if it’s not built, it is automobile users that will be caught in traffic behind buses and other cars.

Opponents will say that Bus Rapid Transit will do the same job as Light Rail Transit. But, unless dedicated roadways or lanes are built to accommodate these buses, they will be caught in the same gridlock that is already a feature on our roads. And, because fewer passengers can be accommodated on buses, they won’t move enough people around to make the impact that trains would have.

Opponents will say that buses are cheaper than building rails. This is true in the same sense that buying disposable furnace filters is cheaper than buying reusable ones. The longterm maintenance and replacement cost of buses greatly exceeds that of trains.

It’s not surprising that those basing their positions on misinformation are often opposed to proceeding with LRT. But, as Regional Councillors, you have all of the information and studies that supports proceeding with the plan that you have in front of you. The plan is visionary, practical and more affordable than the alternatives.

The movie “Field of Dreams” features the oft-quoted phrase, “If you build it, they will come.” In the case of LRT, that advice gets turned on its head: “They are coming, so you had better build it.” I urge you to do exactly that.
Re: Regional Municipality of Waterloo Rapid Transit  
Public Input Meeting  

June 1st, 2011

Mr. Chair, and Regional Councilors,

We’re here today representing the Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee expressing our support for the Light Rail Transit proposal.

Walking is the most ancient and universal form of travel. It is also an important form of exercise and recreation. Every personal trip involves walking, alone or in combination with public transit, driving or cycling. The health and vitality of a community can be measured with the number of people who inhabit the city’s streets. The LRT model, with a promise of modern and improved service and increased population density and mixed use buildings will increase the number of people who walk and will improve the health and vitality of this community.

We believe that Light Rail Transit is a seductive and modern solution that is in keeping with the needs and expectations of the 21st century urban traveler, providing a smooth and comfortable experience. Traveling within the Region by combining walking or cycling with LRT is a realistic option now and even more so, in the future. LRT prepares the Region for the expected population growth, and has the ability to persuade citizens into a lifestyle of progressive travel choices.

A Light Rail Transit network in our Region, with integrated bus routes, will make car-free travel more convenient, encouraging people of all ages, incomes, and abilities to walk and use transit.

We commend the Regional staff for their hard work in researching and creating the Regional Transportation Master Plan. We support Regional staff in the proposed rapid transit and Light Rail transit system. We are delighted that to see that the principles of the Pedestrian Charter, as adopted by the Region of Waterloo, have been a guide in the planning of the new public transit proposal.

The high cost of car dependency has been unquestioned for too long; indeed, the healthy debate about the LRT system reveals just how embedded private-car-based thinking is in our Region. The LRT network and the new transit proposal are investments in the future – investments that we can’t afford not to make!

We look forward to living in a Region that supports a progressive and sustainable transit system that includes an efficient and environmentally sustainable LRT network. On June 15th, we encourage you to vote for LRT.

Thank you,

Margaret Santos, Member of the Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee
June 1, 2011

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www.region.waterloo.on.ca/rapidtransit

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Thank you on behalf of the PCSC.

Rob Martin
Co-Chair Pedestrian Charter Steering Committee

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