

Presentation to Transportation and Environmental Services

Chair Wideman and Members of the Planning and Works Committee

First let me congratulate all those involved with presenting a tender that meets the financial expectations of a project so complex, and presents so many aspects.

Lets however remember that the media reports and some of the commentary is not quite accurate, On Budget and On Time is a bit premature when the project hasn't started and there are elements that can have a profound impact on the eventual outcome.

Much of the original contingency has been already utilized to ensure that the budget is uniform with the original expectations and leaves Regional Council of the future with less than a 2% contingency for unexpected outcomes. As many of you know, due to your long tenure in the public life, 2% isn't a very comfortable contingency to have going into a project, and should be even less comforting on a project of this size.

I don't expect this to be a deterrent to continuing, and I know some of the elements are protected from expense growth, but there are some areas that could alter the financial outcome and Members should be cognizant that exists. While I fully understand the motive driving this project, which is now based on the regions anticipated population growth increasing by 200,000, we should also understand that public transportation is still, has been for decades, and will probably always be for less than 10% of the total population.

This project has been bantered around for 30 plus years. In fact Chair Seiling once mentioned to me that it originally started out as a Kitchener Waterloo initiative, and the discussion about it coming to Cambridge really only started once Cambridge Transit and Kitchener Transit became the responsibility of the Region under the new GRT.

One other very major thing that should be understood. Adding 200 thousand people to the population of the region, likely providing public transportation for the 10 to 18 thousand of them who will want or need it will be a very minor issue compared to the expense that will be required to service them with Water/Sewage and the road work for the 180 or 190 thousand of them who will move here with a car or two. Regional Council will be challenged at telling the 90% you can't have it, when you've given the 10% already what they wanted. While I am sure staff know exactly what they will have to do to accommodate that growth, does everyone know how it will impact our property taxes? I'm not so certain of that. We're already creeping to the "unaffordable" area, our competition has already demonstrated they know how to win at this economic development game, cost of living in the region should be a principal priority and tax increases should never be taken lightly.

Many of you are aware that the Cambridge Chamber did a survey of it's members recently. It should also be noted that we have a viable percentage of our Members in the KW area who also do some business in Cambridge, we also have employees of Cambridge firms who live in the Kitchener Waterloo area as well. Approximately 40% of respondents were either KW residents or employees of KW businesses.

The results had an interesting twist however. While this is not very scientific and voluntary participation was an element so only those motivated on the subject one way or the other would respond. We had about 12% of our Membership respond to it. 66% of those who responded were not in favour of the

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project and likely motivated by the fact they don't use public transportation and likely feel they never will so paying for it is not of interest to them, others feeling that there is a lack of fairness with the entire benefit being in Waterloo and Kitchener so for Cambridge taxpayers to have to pay is unreasonable. These observations are taken from the comments received through the survey. However 34% did feel it was a worthwhile expenditure and it should be built for varying reasons, primarily based however on the aspects of movement for the high tech sector between the University and Communitech Hub, development opportunities along the route, and the feeling that this follows in the path of a visionary high tech community so we should try and stay ahead of the curve. As well taken from commentary from the survey.

However the most interesting element was from question two which asked if respondents wanted an opportunity to express their support or lack thereof on the fall municipal ballots. 81% of respondents both opposed and in favour said YES they would like to see the question on the ballot. This leads us to the conclusion that in fact both those who oppose and those in favour want to have the democratic right to express that through a referendum of some sort. If that is the opinion we wonder why it would be so opposed at the political level. If the opposition is perceived by members of Regional Council and Staff to be small and largely pockets of objection, then setting the record straight that the majority does in fact support this should be embraced not rejected.

I know some will say that the reason is because elected officials are put in place to make decisions for the greater good and on most initiatives there will be objectors and we can't do a referendum on everything as government would be paralyzed. I would absolutely agree, however I wouldn't agree in this case. This is the most expensive project that has ever been undertaken by the Region, While nobody really knows the extent, there seems to be widespread opposition, there is a feeling that Regional Council Members are ignoring the opposition and are basically saying that the opposition doesn't know what they are talking about and we know better. This is government, it is supposed to be government of the people, by the people, for the people and there is a growing number who feel their voice is not heard.

Please understand, my responsibility is to represent the majority feeling of the business membership of the Cambridge Chamber. While we do have KW businesses who are members, there is a KW Chamber so I speak for those Members in Cambridge.

I guess personally I would rather see a question on the ballot as opposed to area rating, however failing the question being added, as I do know that some members and staff would like to get on with this project regardless, I would ask that if you are moving forward with this recommendation, that you amend it to area rate Cambridge out of the funding model.

I know this is an unpopular subject as well, but it does appear by the numbers that you have an affordable well done formula for making this project work from a financial perspective. This agreement speaks to a 30 year commitment to this stage of the plan, and there wasn't any reference to amending or adjusting this during those 30 years to accommodate stage 2, so I can only conclude that even the most optimistic of you understand that even 30 years down the road it is remote that stage 2 would be implemented and frankly excludes nearly everyone in this room from the debate at that time. We know in 2014 dollars, the bridge alone to connect Cambridge is hundreds of millions which is the primary obstacle and we'll see that obstacle just get more out of range. We all know what has to happen before

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stage 2 can be built and if we're all honest with ourselves and turn our optimism into realism it is really most likely 50 years down the road, and in 50 years, who knows what will be the hot button issue.

I know you may be worried about setting a precedent, I think we can all remove that, Regional Council in this project has already done that. The Townships won't get it, so they don't pay for it. Woolwich gets a line and they pay for it. Cambridge should pay for the aBRT, but not for the LRT. When and if it comes to Cambridge, at that time, KW shouldn't pay for the part within the City of Cambridge limits either, Cambridge should. When the Region took on Solid Waste Collection for the municipalities, there were different levels of service at that time based on what the municipalities wanted.

I think there is a feeling that the Region acts as it sees fit, and the autonomy of the local municipalities is not recognized. I think we all know the Region exists because the Cities and Townships do, and while I supported the separation of Council's back in the late 90's I think it has done nothing but create a greater divide between the municipalities. Working together doesn't mean one player dominates another, or that one player says because we have what we have we should lead all and everything and our opinion should be yours. That is not cooperation, collaboration or working together.

The Region has legislative responsibilities, and then it has other responsibilities given to them by the local municipal jurisdictions. This project is not going to do anything to help move the goods manufactured out of Cambridge, or benefit the logistic companies that locate here to move those goods from our region. Yes Cambridge is a little different, it has different needs because of the fact that Cambridge is the Industrial core of the Region, and we're as proud about that as Waterloo is about the innovation and technology that comes out of the Universities. There is not one size shoe in this region and folks, that's a really good thing.

This project is already area rated based on who gets service and who doesn't, who benefits and who doesn't, the Townships are excluded. Consistency should be what Regional Council is looking for when it comes to projects like this. Sewage Plants, Water Supply, Roads, Central Service Projects, are all universally beneficial. Road works are performed on Regional Roads, not the local municipalities responsibility but the responsibility of the Region, and roads serve not just the 90 plus percent of us who used our own vehicles, but also serves the public transit users.

In closing, I know that delaying isn't your preference, so I ask on behalf of my Cambridge Chamber Members opposed, that in your approval of this you also area rate out Cambridge from the aspects of the LRT project. I think it's simple to do, as the formula is already there for the Townships, I've heard from many of you that you have an affordable project, seems like a simple request that won't affect the outcome, and what may be the sweet pea for you on this, it takes Cambridge out of the debate.