

Sent: Wednesday, May 25, 2016 8:11 AM
To: Woolsey, Heather <hwoolsey@London.ca>
Subject: Shift Rapid Transit Public Meeting

Dear City Councillors of London and Mayor Brown,

I am unable to attend the public meeting tomorrow in person as I am out of town, but I am compelled to share my views with you in writing for the record.

I work at Western and was deeply dismayed when I learned that Western was not backing the LRT plan. I understand that there is specialized equipment on campus and that campus has a 'look and feel', but I find it ridiculous to think that challenges can not be overcome. Surely researchers at the University of Toronto and other very prestigious and research intensive universities around the world operate just fine with streetcars and subways in their midst.

The decision to go only with an extended bus route plan seems completely shortsighted. The writing is on the wall with climate change, all modern cities worth their salt have forms of light rail and use buses only for their periphery routes. Yes the up front costs are higher, but the operational costs - the ones that the city will primarily bear - are much less.

London does not retain workers well. Students do not stick around after graduating from Western and Fanshawe. Can this be blamed just on the lack of light rail? No, of course not. But the transit system does go a long way to setting an image of a forward thinking, modern city that puts its citizens and commuters first. The traffic congestion at many points in the city is abysmal and buses do not help with this.

London had a vision with a beautiful bike trail along the Thames. That is a massive public good that reaps its rewards for Londoners every single day. This LRT plan is another such time for vision-making. Let's not satisfice. Let's take this opportunity of infrastructure spending and do it right for the long term. Let's be leaders for other communities and build a city that improves our daily lives. More buses won't do that.

Thank you for your time. I sincerely hope that you stop your politicking and thinking about your own individual futures and put the lives and livelihoods of Londoners first in this decision.

Johanna Weststar

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