

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3. SHIFT Rapid Transit

- Tom Costello – asking when the next election is and suggesting that a question be put on the ballot.
- H. McRandall – indicating he submitted a report to the London Transit Commission and to Council Members, but has not heard back; and suggesting there is a problem with London Transit management and that the Council Members don't care.
- Citizen – enquiring if there would be certain tax incentives for businesses affected by the rapid transit project; noting the system has to serve the entire City and that funding has to come from outside the City as well; suggesting there should be a linkage down to the 401 and that the route should extend as far west as possible.
- J. Green, 536 Ridout Street North – indicating he remains 100% opposed to the westbound route on King Street and expressing concern about the elimination of parking spots; emphasizing the need for safe drop off spots; advising that he supports a couplet route.
- Ian Coventry, 98 Baseline Road West – asking how people in a wheelchair will cross over to the centre lane on Richmond Street; noting sidewalks are already congested and wondering where the funding is to improve current deficiencies in the Paratransit Service.
- Saul Morrison, 803 Waterloo Street – noting a number of concerns regarding the geotechnical report and technical memo provided by the consultants and suggesting that the plan has been developed for a train system.
- Gina Brummet – noting she operates a Downtown business and was wondering when the alternative routes were reviewed; questioning some of the information on which the plan has been based; asking that the plan be put on hold and a comprehensive reassessment be done based upon the City's current needs.
- Kate Arnett – asking if there will be pumps in the tunnels for safety reasons, what will happen when emergency vehicles need to make their way down the route and how many people on Council use the bus system.
- Wayne Love – noting the extensive opposition to the plan, including a letter from Ellis-Don; commenting that there have been engineers who have indicated that the plan is going to be a big problem; stating that London is a great City and that we don't need to compete with other cities on the basis of whether or not we have rapid transit; expressing concern that there seems to be a lot of guessing and unanswered questions regarding the plan and that the funding is insufficient; and stating that if Council votes for BRT it will be political suicide.
- Helen Riordin – noting she can ride her bike faster than taking a bus because London doesn't have dedicated bus lanes; suggesting that merchants can have events and sales during the construction phase and we can support them to help their businesses; indicating support for twinning King Street and Queens Avenue and for moving ahead with rapid transit.
- Rod Morley – noting the City has not done anything to get people moving efficiently so it is now time for this, for getting people to use public transit and for moving London into the 21st century and allowing it to complete with other cities in the country.
- Danielle, Hamilton Road – asking how people using power chairs will get on and off buses that will be moving rapidly, without the door shutting on them, like has happened in Toronto on the subway; also asking if buses are going to be in the centre lane, how will the general public access the bus across other traffic lanes, let alone people in power chairs; also enquiring if there had been any thought about a ring road, and connecting buses to it; and wondering if plans could include a route out to Veterans Memorial Parkway and to Highway 401 because workers need transportation to those areas 24/7.
- Bill Fellner – reiterating concerns he raised in a letter regarding the underground aspect; noting he spent his entire career as an engineer so is well aware of the area and its challenges; and encouraging political and fiscal responsibility.
- Tony Schuster, 536 Huron Street – indicating it takes him to hours to get anywhere on a bus and that $\frac{3}{4}$ of that time is spent waiting for the bus; noting the new express buses work great but that that London Transit management don't care about riders and should be replaced with someone who cares about people.
- Steven O'Connor – indicating support for the idea, but concern with the current plan; suggesting the monies could go toward improving level crossings and other infrastructure works that need to be done; stating that the real elephant in the

- room is whether the City wants freight trains in the middle of the City; asking why information cannot be found regarding freight trains running through the City; challenging the City to take the railway to the highest Court to get them to move and then reuse the vacated space for other purposes; suggesting that the City go with Richmond Street at grade and use the unspent dollars to deal with moving freight trains outside the core of the City.
- Bill Smith – discouraging bus lanes that are not at grade because people in wheelchairs still need to get around; and noting that there is enough road congestion now without taking a lane away and creating more of a problem.
 - Shmuel Farhi – indicating that no Council Member has replied to his emails; encouraging Council Members to listen to Mr. Fellner and to look at what London's neighbours are doing; expressing concern for all the Mom and Pop businesses on Richmond Street; speaking against a tunnel on Richmond Street and noting that there are 87 tenants that are putting together a combined law suit; observing that Dundas Street is dead and that the public pays the City workers to make the right decision.
 - Gail Harrison – noting there is a difference between data and solid research; advising that based upon the questions and concerns it is evident that this is not a good plan for London; indicating that this will only help a limited number of bus routes; suggesting that a bank wouldn't give money for something that had this many questions; advising she is not against public transit, but wants the best transit system, which is not this one.
 - Doug Hoag, Suffolk Place – stating BRT has major concerns for taxpayers footing part of the cost and the routes seem to favour a minority of the population, many of whom do not pay taxes and will never use the BRT; indicating he does not want to see something result in a monstrous tunnel.
 - Craig Glover – advising his mother has accessibility issues and wondering how bus stops could be extended; noting that few questions are being answered and he hopes there is a commitment to have the questions answered.
 - Sid Noel – indicating that after researching the matter he has come to the conclusion that BRT would be a disastrous mistake for London; noting that the system will be obsolete by the time it is built so the City should skip BRT and move to the latest transit technology.
 - George Georgopoulos – noting that the uncertainty about what is going to happen on Richmond Street is scaring businesses; encouraging the City to speak to Kitchener managers about their experience with rapid transit in terms of business loss and budget implications; and asking if a simulation could be done and if all Council Members would leave their cars at home and take a bus for two weeks to see what that is like.
 - Jay Jeffrey, 380 King Street – indicating that he is appalled about the lack of concern about the impact of BRT on Downtown businesses; and stating that the process is tantamount to expropriation without compensation.
 - Jamie Hildebrand, Queens Avenue/Colborne Street – indicating that what he hears is fear and that he is not adverse to a detailed look at rapid transit; stating that he is hearing a million reasons for not doing rapid transit and that he does not think Council Members are hearing a fair debate.
 - Alice Karakianidis – expressing concern about the related costs; noting her business could not recover from this project and questioning why the City would consider sabotaging her future.
 - Cosmos, Richmond Street – advising that he is a young business owner with his future tied up in his business and his business will be negatively impacted by the BRT and the related construction; expressing concern that dedicated lanes are not required, details on design are not available, it is unclear where diverted traffic will go, and it is also unclear how emergency vehicles will gain access to an emergency situation; and asking that BRT be put to a referendum.
 - Dev Vanderboomen – stating that rapid transit will attract people to the City and that he was born and raised here and returned because he was attracted back by the London Plan, Back to the River, SHIFT, etc.; noting that people are looking to move to more compact and affordable cities like London but they still want some of the big city amenities that they have been used to; advising that we can't make decisions based upon people who don't live here but it is important to consider the needs of future residents.
 - Michael Halloran – indicating support for better transit, but not at the expense of other modes of transportation; noting there are no details from the average voter about the decision; indicating that some information is still missing and the route appears to have some safety challenges, making it important to look at a traffic impact analysis, as well as the environmental impacts of cars in gridlock; and stating that the City should not be afraid to put the question on the ballot.

- Gerry – indicating that he thinks he would support an underpass on Richmond Street and asking if anyone has looked at a stacked tunnel; and noting that eventually something will have to be done with Richmond Street, otherwise there will be a bottleneck into infinity.
- Holly Murphy – indicating support for the plan and encouraging tax relief for businesses; stating that ridership needs must be taken into consideration and noting that some people are wondering how they will be able to make their next car payment; advising that this Council says it cares about the less fortunate and this system would support them; and indicating that this plan is a great starting point and when it is completed it will be a great benefit.
- Ted Fauldron, 39 Giles Street – noting he has used public transit extensively and has lived in a number of cities, however London's system is inadequate; suggesting that people rely on cars because they are forced to; advising that this City needs a change and he hopes that consideration will be given to adjusting the traffic light system and making other changes that will help traffic flow.
- Sean O'Connell – stating he would like London, Ontario to live up to London, England and there is no reason we can't have a rapid transit system because we are smaller; enquiring if the City has spoken with CP Rail to see if we could remove the need for a tunnel and indicating that if we don't invest now we will be paying 10 times more in the future in order to attract employers and ensure mobility.
- Nivek Hutchison, 159 Briscoe Street East – indicating that he didn't go to university in London because he was worried about relying on London's transit system; stating that we need to fix the transit system and he doesn't think the solution is to wait to make an infrastructure change.
- Chris Vinden, 782 Wellington Street – noting there are 5 trains a day on Richmond Street and they should not be assembled at Adelaide Street, but near the Airport; if trains were not assembled at Adelaide Street you could forget about the Adelaide Overpass and you would not need a tunnel, so that option should be investigated.
- Paul Beechey – seeking notes from previous public meetings held on the matter; asking why Council is not considering less expensive options and meeting with Rocky Moretti who is an expert in this field and who lives in London and whose information can be found at tripnet.org.
- Derek Driver, owner of a plaza at Piccadilly and Richmond Streets – noting that there is a lake right under Richmond Street and this plan is ridiculous; stating that he is having difficulty renting space because people are afraid of what is going to happen; advising that there are a large number of property owners who are going to sue the City collectively and that the City better take care of everyone who will be affected, not just the businesses on Richmond Street.
- Sally Potter, Professor, Kings College – wondering if the City knows how ugly these systems are and indicating that she does not understand how Council would think that this system would be more attractive for London; noting that London is the hub of Southwestern Ontario; suggesting that people won't want to walk 150 meters to a bus stop; and asking for other options.
- Shawna Lewkowitz – indicating support for rapid transit and the proposed routes suggested by staff; suggesting there are other ways to address concerns and tangible ways to reduce impacts on businesses; advising that transit affects lower income earners and marginalized people and the needs of the minority need to be addressed too; suggesting the City needs to proceed with rapid transit sooner rather than later, that residents are not technical experts and that the investment is reasonable for a city the size of London; and asking that we come together as a community to get this done.
- Gil Warren, William Street – noting he is wearing his "business" hat; advising that the tunnel is being pre-built for light rapid transit and people need to consider how much the City would spend on bridges and streets; advising that London has underfunded transit and this is an attempt to catch up; stating it's time to end the war on buses and say cars can't have the monopoly; and noting City staff are adept at traffic calming.
- John Bestard – indicating that the information that has been provided to date has been a gross perversion of the truth and that the plan has been packaged on transit need; and asking Council if they were driven to implement rapid transit because there is a legitimate need or if it was for other reasons.
- Josephine Pepe, 783 Richmond Street – indicating she runs a business on Richmond Street and also owns the building; noting it is absolutely ridiculous how hard it is to get across the City, other than the express buses; questioning why we cannot have feeder buses to express buses; wondering how people can be so unsympathetic to small businesses; noting she is prepared to have to go out

- of business, but will be fighting that with every ounce that she has; advising she lives, works and plays in Downtown and buys everything Downtown, but Downtown businesses are just staying afloat; stating that being called elitist is insulting and that the plan will hurt her; advising that the tunnel will be the nail in the coffin and that the lack of empathy is appalling; noting that Bill Fellner has worked in the proposed project area and there are some real concerns; and concluding that people will turn to peripheral businesses and not even the University supports light rapid transit.
- Paul Cheng – noting that everyone here would sacrifice their home for the betterment of London but this is not a scheme that will improve London; advising that BRT is not a good system---it is a fraud; suggesting that claims that the project won't cost taxpayers any additional money is not correct and it will be the taxpayers that will have to pay when the project goes over budget; advising that having to walk one block to catch a bus is not acceptable.
 - Sandy Weir – indicating that she has sent several emails, but has only heard from one Council Member; noting there is contradictory information on the website and a number of holes in the information; and noting that this is not a class debate and will only add to her tax bill.
 - Jeff House, Commercial Real Estate Agent – stating that this is a dated plan and the City needs a progressive plan that won't end up being a multi-million dollar mistake; advising that transportation technology is growing and the current case study is based on false assumptions; indicating that the fact the City is still considering rapid transit is ridiculous and asking who will step up and be a leader as people have put their entire lives into their businesses; and urging Council Members who are against BRT to step up.
 - Mary Anne Larsen, 19 Cathcart Street – indicating that a recurring theme is the current bus system is not working; citing the negative experience her mother has had with the current transit system; noting she is in support of rapid transit for all of the reasons that have been given; urging the City to take a chance and think about the needs of the most vulnerable, marginalized people; and noting that we have choices and we should not be making decisions from a place of fear, but should make sound decisions for 7 generations forward.
 - Candice Miller, Old East Village – indicating that she had not heard anything about the plan and was wondering how Rapid Transit would affect her property and how much of her frontage will need to be taken; stating she wants more transparency and wants to ensure that the City keeps property owners informed; and asking how the City will compensate property owners.
 - Brian Aziz, Oakridge – questioning the business plan and suggesting that population growth has been inflated; indicating that the time savings are not accurate and that in his estimate the time savings is only about 1 minute so the system is not rapid.
 - Dave Mitchell – indicating he does not have a car, but learned to drive in the country for utility purposes; stating that London doesn't experience rush hours like other cities and that savings would fall off if trains come through the City; advising that he believes in SHIFT and the London Plan; indicating that it is an impossible problem to move the train because it is something that we do not have any power over; and stating that he doesn't love the proposed routes and a compromise is necessary.
 - Jerry Fisher, 301 Dundas Street – indicating that the Rapid Transit route should be on Richmond Street, he likes rapid transit and we should listen to the experts.
 - Mike Faulds – noting that roads should be for everyone; suggesting that the business case was clearly written from a pro-transit perspective and would crumble if faced with the smallest amount of scrutiny.
 - Don Bartlett, London Community Neighbourhood Association – stating that the decision should be evidence based, but the evidence doesn't support bus rapid transit or rapid transit; indicating that no traffic calming will help mitigate the impacts of the project and that the tunnel will be over budget; and requesting that the matter be put to a referendum.
 - Megan Carlson – speaking in support of the proposal on the basis that the current bus system is inadequate and cars are not affordable; and asking that priority be given to the views of transit users.
 - Albert Boniface, Richmond Street business owner – noting that construction on Richmond Street will result in lost business and advising that while there was concern about the 430 jobs recently lost in London, there will be a lot more affected if the tunnel proceeds.
 - Rick Doyle, Thistlewood Drive – questioning whether the Council is still listening, or if they have already made up their minds; asking why it's been determined that

- a tunnel is the best solution; noting the additional taxes residents will have to pay in the double digits to cover operating costs.
- Mohammed Moussa, 155 Thornton Avenue – a better transit system is needed but none of the current options is the right solution; urging Council to listen to the public and advising that a lot of businesses will be negatively impacted; and asking that the plan be reworked.
 - Mike Tidy – indicating support for BRT and the tunnel; suggesting that underpasses should just happen at rail crossings and asking that a decision not be dragged out.
 - Sharon Layman, Richmond Street Business Owner – noting that the plan will result in the closure of their stores and people will stop going Downtown; speaking against the construction of a tunnel and asking Council why they would want to rip the heart out of Downtown London and urging Council to come up with another plan.
 - Elizabeth Caucutt, Economic Professor, Western University – indicating she does not support this plan, but does support better transit; stating she does not understand why Richmond Street is being chosen over Wharncliffe Road; expressing concern that people who do not agree with the plan will be faced with tax increases; and stating she is not interested in subsidizing university students having a faster ride to school.
 - Edgar Alan Smuck, 928 Western Road – indicating there are two flaws with the Plan: permanent reduction of driving lanes and the negative impact on a significant portion of the business community; suggesting a compromise is necessary, like the elevated rail in Chicago; noting he is not against rapid transit but other options really need to be given genuine attention.
 - Wendy Young, 519 Huron Street – wondering if there was a correlation between this plan and the storm sewer built in Huron Woods; suggesting there are environmental impacts and we need to remember the impact on animals and the environment; and emphasizing the need to consider the financial implications of any plan.
 - Jason Wright, Downtown Resident – suggesting that the plan be taken to experts we have within our own community and those experts be challenged to come up with a better plan.
 - Stan Goss – speaking against the plan and against the tunnel; indicating that there are other routes that could be better and that he supports rapid transit, just not the current plan and tunnel.
 - Christopher Santana-Barnes, Londoner, taxpayer and business owner on one of the proposed routes – indicating that he is 100% supportive of London Transit, the London Plan and the environment; encouraging Council to run the routes to the Airport and Highway #401 in the first phase and stating the rapid transit represents our environment, our tax dollars, our future and our way to get around better.
 - James Roberts – noting he works and lives in the core, but still operates a car; indicating full support for BRT and the current plan so he can get rid of his car; noting that BRT is not the full solution, but is a part of the piece; indicating he is empathetic to Downtown businesses and will continue to support them; suggesting that the plan be left up to the Planners and experts and that any plan include high frequency lines to the airport.
 - Matthew – asking how Council can expect to move London forward when it makes decisions that move London backwards.
 - John Hassan, Old South – indicating that he sold his second car in order to use public transit and that his spouse owns a Downtown business; noting he has some concerns but is very much in favour of moving rapid transit forward; and noting that governance is hard and that he appreciates the work that staff and Council does.
 - Bob Eamon – noting a few points that resonated with him: improving public transit, express buses and funding better public transit; indicating support for pilot projects; advising he is hearing that the tunnel is a non-starter and that a couplet makes more sense; and stating he cannot support the plan as presented.
 - Gary Brown – indicating full trust in Council; asking where the safety considerations are for pedestrians and cyclists; noting that engineers will figure out Richmond Row and wondering if it would cost less to reroute the trains from the Downtown core.
 - Martin Horak, 935 Waterloo Street – noting that he teaches Political Science at Western University and does research on transit systems; advising that from a professional perspective he is convinced that London is large enough to support rapid transit and that it needs to be built as soon as possible in order to be ready for the spillover from the Greater Toronto Area; advising that he thinks BRT is

- right for London, is the most cost effective rapid transit system, is the most flexible, has environmental benefits and supports those who can't access or drive a vehicle; pointing out that the system has to go Downtown as the Downtown is the biggest employment centre; noting he is probably the only one of his neighbours that supports the plan.
- Danielle Aziz, Oakridge resident – advising that the current transit system does not meet her needs raising a number of questions about the plan: Will there be reduced stops with a central terminal? How much will ridership increase? What happens if Western and Fanshawe don't include bus passes as part of the tuition? What happens if the project goes over budget? Will the Queen Street bridge be widened to 6 lanes? Will Oxford Street be widened to 6 lanes? What about electric vehicles and charging stations? How much more subsidization will be necessary? What will the new operating costs be?; asking Council to think outside the box and make the solution a win-win and less costly and intrusive.
 - Daniel Hall, Arbour Glen Crescent – indicating that transportation matters in order to protect the environment; suggesting that rapid transit saves money and is the right choice for today and tomorrow; noting London's share is only \$125 million and the plan provides a choice since driving has very often been the only practical option; and advising that he supports BRT, it saves money, it provides choice and is the right solution for today and tomorrow.
 - George, works in the taxi industry – indicating a potential solution that would not cost anything would be to use a shared taxi system like they have tested in Laval, Quebec; and indicating that more information on this option can be found at www.stl.laval.qc.ca.
 - Ellie Layton, Ward 14 – indicating she is a young professional who supports rapid transit because it is economical and eco-conscious; advising she has found the discussions isolating as a rider; and noting we all care about the City and its people.
 - New Home Owner in London – advising they believe that BRT is unnecessary and undesirable; noting there has been a 13% tax hike in Waterloo and their system is killing businesses; advising she currently uses London Transit buses and is happy with the service; noting London needs more buses, more express routes, and better traffic signals; and suggesting that staff should speak to economic experts.
 - Caley Givens, business owner – advising a standard of service should be set, but you can't follow the plan; indicating she has always had a driver's license, but has always relied on public transit; and suggesting that the plan is not going to work for us.
 - Amanda Stratton, Ward 11 resident and Dundas Street business owner – noting that the information is already available and most arguments have been made and heard; advising that a decision has to be made based on values and priorities and to what extent the City wants to stand behind the plan; suggesting that people are making this personal; noting that her fear is this plan will be whittled away and we will end up with an inadequate BRT system; advising we need better amenities and spaces for transit users and that going without a good system for so long is not a good enough reason for continuing to go without a good system; and pointing out things can be done to mitigate impacts on businesses and there are far more riders than people who work Downtown.
 - Desiree Terrabon, Westminster Housing Cooperative – noting a number of deficiencies in the current transit system and how it affects her as she has health considerations; asking that the City look at traffic signals and traffic flow; advising she fully supports London Transit, but thinks they need to have more and larger buses on the routes and that BRT should not proceed at this time, but it is wonderful.
 - Resident – noting the concerns about Lake Horn and the drainage issues surrounding it and asking that those considerations be looked at very carefully.
 - Susan Smith, 4-124 Bruce Street – noting she has, for years, considered the Downtown to be organic; advising that she likes the London Plan but is less enthusiastic about Dundas Place; citing that accessibility is very important; and encouraging Council to proceed with BRT.
 - Joel Adams, Old South and Downtown Business Owner – noting small business owners would like to see lower taxes; asking that Council support BRT and the plan; advising he is also a Director of Engineering in the automotive sector and is aware of evolving technologies and there are a lot of fallacies about transportation technology out there; noting that while autonomous vehicles are out there, you still need the spine for the system to work and all the pieces have to work together; suggesting that we need to invest in areas of the plan like the tunnel and the high capacity elements; and stating that this meeting has been

“us” versus “them” and the Council has had an opportunity to hear the needs of all sides.

- Jeff Pastorius – advising that BRT is a very good idea that needs to be moved forward on now; and suggesting that a small number of voices are extremely loud and that he is afraid those voices will dominate the topic.
- Resident, Hellmuth Avenue – indicating that he supports the BRT, the tunnel and the couplet and encourages Council to listen beyond the loud minor majority and to listen to both sides in order to understand the pros and cons; noting that he has lived through major road construction in the Hyde Park area and only two businesses went out of business because of the construction.
- Resident – indicating that the putting a tunnel on Richmond Street would be a mistake; noting that he emailed a map to Council Members suggesting another route that would save a lot of money; and stating that transit does need to be improved and a ring road system would be a good idea.
- Resident – asking how much it would cost to move the train tracks parallel to Highway #401; advising that she feels the BRT is a moronic project, but acknowledging that the bus system needs to be improved; stating that all factors (underground water, building safety, etc.) need to be addressed; and advising that if this is being built to accommodate Western and Fanshawe students, they are not in the City for 4 or 5 months during the year.
- Resident, 195 Taylor Street – indicating that he hopes any improvements result in attracting more than minimum wage jobs; noting that his first draw to a City would be because of finding a good job and being able to buy a house in this crazy real estate market; also noting that ridership statistics are down; and stating that he hopes that Downshift puts its money where its mouth is.
- Kathy, Colborne Street – advising that the most painful thing is waiting for the bus, but that the drivers themselves are pretty good; emphasizing the need for better transit and that she would love to see rapid transit go through and be productive and functional; noting that the proposed route won't serve where she needs to go, so we need to do better with what we have; advising that rapid transit is fine if some things are guaranteed, but if not, don't build it.
- Don Boudreau, 10 Angus Court – acknowledging that BRT is something we need, but not in the present form; noting that BRT is all about flow and that London is a car city, so BRT has to work with other vehicles besides buses; suggesting that bus stops should be placed before intersections and offsets should be built for buses; advising that he is from Saskatchewan, where they have a ring road and are now constructing a second ring road and have gotten rid of trains in the Downtown, so they don't have to do tunnels; and stating that in Europe they have greater populations and they don't have tunnels, but still get around.