

Committee: **London Transit Commission**

Organization/Sector represented: **myselt**

Name: **Stephanie Marentette Di Battista**

Occupation: **lawyer**

Work experience: **I am presently a commercial litigation lawyer with my own practice, focusing on construction law and estate law. Prior to opening my practice, I worked with a large, full-service firm and a boutique litigation firm. Before becoming a lawyer, I worked in the federal civil service as both a civil servant and a ministerial staffer.**

Education: **I have an Honours Bachelor of Social Science from University of Ottawa in International Development and Globalization with the FLS 3500 certificate (French as a second language designation), a Juris Doctor from Western University and a certificate in international and European business law from Jean Moulin III. I am currently working towards my Master of Law (LLM) at Western University. I am presently a licensed barrister, solicitor and notary in the Province of Ontario.**

Skills: **In terms of practical knowledge, I believe that my experience as a candidate in the past election has provided me with strong insight into our transit system's strengths and opportunities. I have also had the experience in London as a transit user when I was a law student at Western. I also believe that my knowledge of the provision of government services and my legal background would allow me to impartially analyze challenges and opportunities facing the London Transit Commission with a view to strong service delivery.**

Interest reason: **I am writing my request for consideration for this post approximately 5 days following London's municipal election, which I ran in but was unfortunately not successful. The reason why I ran for a counsel position is simple: I think London has given a lot to me and I wanted to return the favour. But just because I lost does not take away my desire to serve my community. Consequently, I made the decision to apply to a handful of vacancies for committees that complete work in areas that formed large parts of my platform with the hope that I might still be able to contribute to the city that has given me so much. The transit commission is of particular interest to me because we are at a crossroads in terms of how we move people around the city. Also, central part of my platform centered on transit, particularly concerning improvements in routes, stops and schedules, to move people around more efficiently and ensure that those dependant on transit can get to work on time. I am also very interested in improving accessibility in our transit system, not just in terms of actual ridership, but the transit website and what have you. This was something that was raised with me by a couple of potential constituents while I was canvassing and I would like to be able to help fix some of the barriers to use they identified. To me, it is so important that we have a comprehensive transportation strategy that moves people around efficiently, regardless of their chosen method of transportation, and public transit plays a huge role in that. As a Western student, I took the bus to school every day, to my part-time jobs, and what have you, so I certainly know what the positives are and where there are opportunities to be better. I would really like an opportunity to be a part of the group that is at the forefront of these issues and have a chance to play a role in improving London transit.**

Contributions: **During my election campaign, I canvassed like crazy and attended town halls, debates and other forums where I was able to hear from a wide cross-section of Londoners on issues such as BRT (those in favour, against and somewhere in the middle), improving routes and improving schedules. I think that as a result of this, coupled with my own transit experience, I have a fairly well-rounded perception of what London residents feel is needed to improve our transit and I feel that this would allow me to meaningfully participate in discussion and the decision-making process in a comprehensive way as I have quite literally had all possible arguments concerning improvements to transit presented to me from Londoners from all walks of life. I think that this experience makes me unique as an applicant because I will be able to approach problems and ideas in a way that accounts for a wide diversity of perspectives with a view to collaboration to generate the best overall approach.**

Past contributions: **Presently, I serve on the Red Shoe Society Board of Directors as Volunteer Chair, the Big Bash Committee in Support of Big Brothers Big Sisters and the London Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee. I also served as a Board Member to the London Chamber of Commerce, however, I unfortunately had to resign this**

**position in order to be able to run for City Council. In all of the above capacities, the main goal is to analyze challenges and opportunities with a view to service delivery. This is true whether we are discussing the biggest fundraiser to support mentoring programs at Big Brothers Big Sisters, a meal prepared by volunteers at Ronald McDonald House or a policy paper that will be submitted on behalf of business owners in London by the Chamber of Commerce. I believe that my problem-solving experience, particularly with a view to collaboration, is applicable in this case and would allow me to be an effective member of the London Transit Commission.**

**Interpersonal: First, I am a litigation lawyer, so I primarily spend my time debating with others. This may not seem like a job that would embody the qualities listed by this question, but a legal career is actually a fantastic teacher in the rules of civility. The practice of law demands that lawyers behave collegially and respectfully at all times despite often being required to advance diametrically opposing views either during negotiations or a hearing. Case in point, in Court we refer to opposing counsel as “my friend”. Second, as I noted above, prior to becoming a lawyer, I was fairly heavily involved in partisan politics and the federal civil service. Again, this occupation might seem counterintuitive to the question, but the reality is that you cannot accomplish anything on Parliament Hill or in a ministerial department if you are not willing to sit down with your opposition to work through a problem. I think that these two experiences have allowed me to develop into someone who listens to understand and sees criticism as an opportunity for improvement. I am someone who sees the value in a debate, and not an argument, where everyone has the chance to respectfully say their piece before a decision is made that, at minimum, considers all viewpoints, and hopefully results in the best possible outcome. This is the type of approach I would bring to the committee if I were given the honour of being selected to serve on it.**

Interview interest: **Yes**